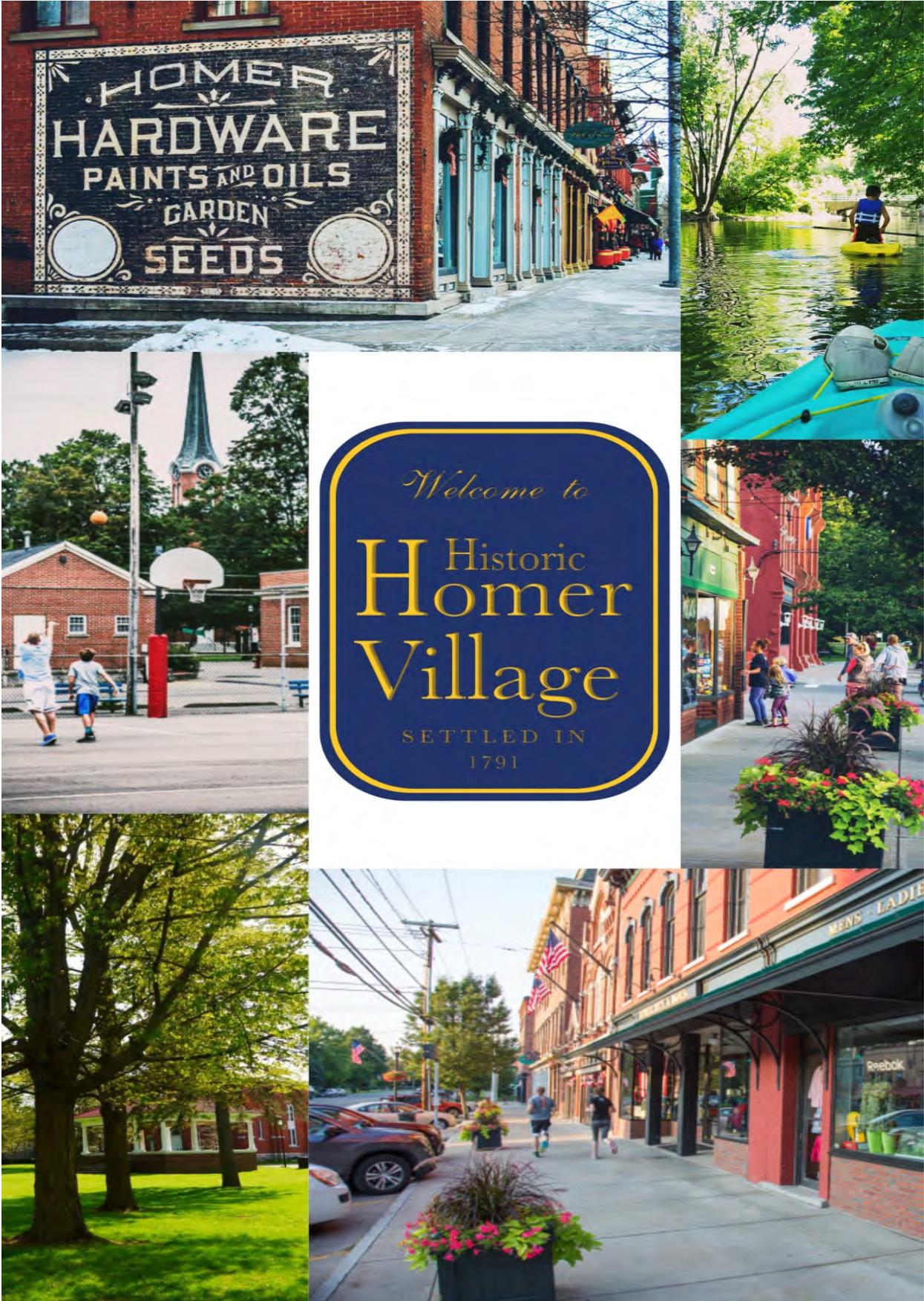


Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative



September 15, 2021

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative



Grant Application Services Provided By:



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Codes: 607-745-3177
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September 14, 2021

Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
Central NY Regional Economic Development Council
620 Erie Blvd. W, Suite 112
Syracuse, NY 13204

Mr. Fayle,

With great pleasure, I present to you and the Central NY Regional Economic Development Council our official Downtown Revitalization Initiative application for the Village of Homer, NY.

I would draw your attention to the following items of note which make our application a strong one:

1. **Location.** The location is a blighted, 4+ acre section of the Village of Homer, which sits between the mighty Tioughnioga River, and our Main Street Business District, making it a natural location for a multi-use development to increase access to the waterfront and strengthen our downtown. We also sit on the NY Peace Trail bicycle route, which we are developing, and the Route 11 Corridor project creating a linear park along the river and improving the area between the Village of Homer and the City of Cortland.
2. **Buy-In.** We have buy-in from the majority of property owners in the zone to be redeveloped, as well as enthusiastic support and interest from two of the largest developers in the County, Yaman Real Estate and DM3 Holdings, both of whom have executed multiple successful grant (and DRI) funded projects within Cortland County. As a result, they are ready to begin development immediately.
3. **Comprehensive Plan.** This re-development of this section of the Village of Homer is consistent with the guidance of our most recently adopted Comp Plan, which calls for increased public access to the riverfront and improvement of many of our blighted properties.

I hope when you review our application, you will do so with the knowledge that we have worked hard to develop a truly transformative project that fits within the guidance and direction of NY State as well as within our comprehensive plan. A project destined to positively impact the Village more so than any that have come before it.

Sincerely,

Hal McCabe
Mayor, Village of Homer
Executive Director
NY State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

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Basic Information

REDC Region:	Central New York	
Municipality Name:	Village of Homer	
Downtown Name:	Downtown Homer	
County Name:	Cortland	
Applicant Contact(s):	Mayor; Darren “Hal” McCabe -	mayor@homerny.org
	Deputy Mayor; Patrick Clune -	pclune@homerny.org



Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Vision for Downtown

The Village of Homer has stood the test of time. It was originally settled over 230 years ago, yet people still continue to settle there today. The Village was attractive to those original settlers for many of the same reasons that it is an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family today. The scenic hillsides and rolling waters of the Tioughnioga River provide a very desirable backdrop for everyday living. The Village and surrounding communities provide employment and business opportunities for the residence to support themselves, their families, and lifestyles. The main challenge of these new settlers is finding available housing in the Village to make their home.

The Village's original structures were built during the early to mid-1800's, and they are still vital and bustling with activity today. Combined, these properties now make up a Historic Riverside Village with banks, restaurants, cafés, clothing stores, a grocery store, a performing arts center, a post office, and a library along with many other occupants. Most of these buildings have been or are now in the process of being restored to their original grandeur by their current owners and are fully occupied. The biggest obstacle to these property owners is funding the high costs of restoring and maintaining 200-year-old buildings.

The Village of Homer's walkable tree lined streets, multiple green spaces, and clean and safe surroundings have allowed it to thrive over many decades when other small communities have not been so fortunate. The vision for the Village today is to continue to build on what has made Homer a vital, viable community for over two centuries. The New York State DRI grant funding would allow the Village to continue to improve on this history by giving the Village and its regional Developers the ability to transform a very important section of the Village from a blighted, vacant, downtrodden neighborhood into a hub for new housing, sustainable, hi-tech commercial settings, riverfront recreational green space, and a much-needed parking facility. It would provide the seed money needed to leverage the redevelopment of the four-acre corridor that connects the existing community to the many attributes of the Tioughnioga Riverfront. When completed, this vision would lead to economic prosperity for the Village and its residents, Cortland County, Central New York, and the surrounding regions of the State through an increase in residency, employment, business volume, tourism, tax revenues and a continued high standard of life. With the help of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant, the Village of Homer will transform this all-important neighborhood into an asset that will allow the Village to stand the test of time for centuries to come!

Justification

This project will be truly transformative for the Village's Historic Downtown District by eliminating blighted properties, creating new sustainable contemporary mixed-use structures, and developing the adjoining Tioughnioga Riverfront into a community recreational gathering space. This funding would make the Village's Historic Downtown Business District a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work and raise their families.

The Village of Homer's location in New York State and its proximity to many rivers and lakes, the interstate highway system, SUNY Cortland and many other surrounding colleges and universities, ski resorts, numerous local and regional medical facilities, and many other existing amenities will make it an obvious attraction to anyone. The Village of Homer DRI project would make the Village a major attraction in this developing network of the State's surrounding regions.

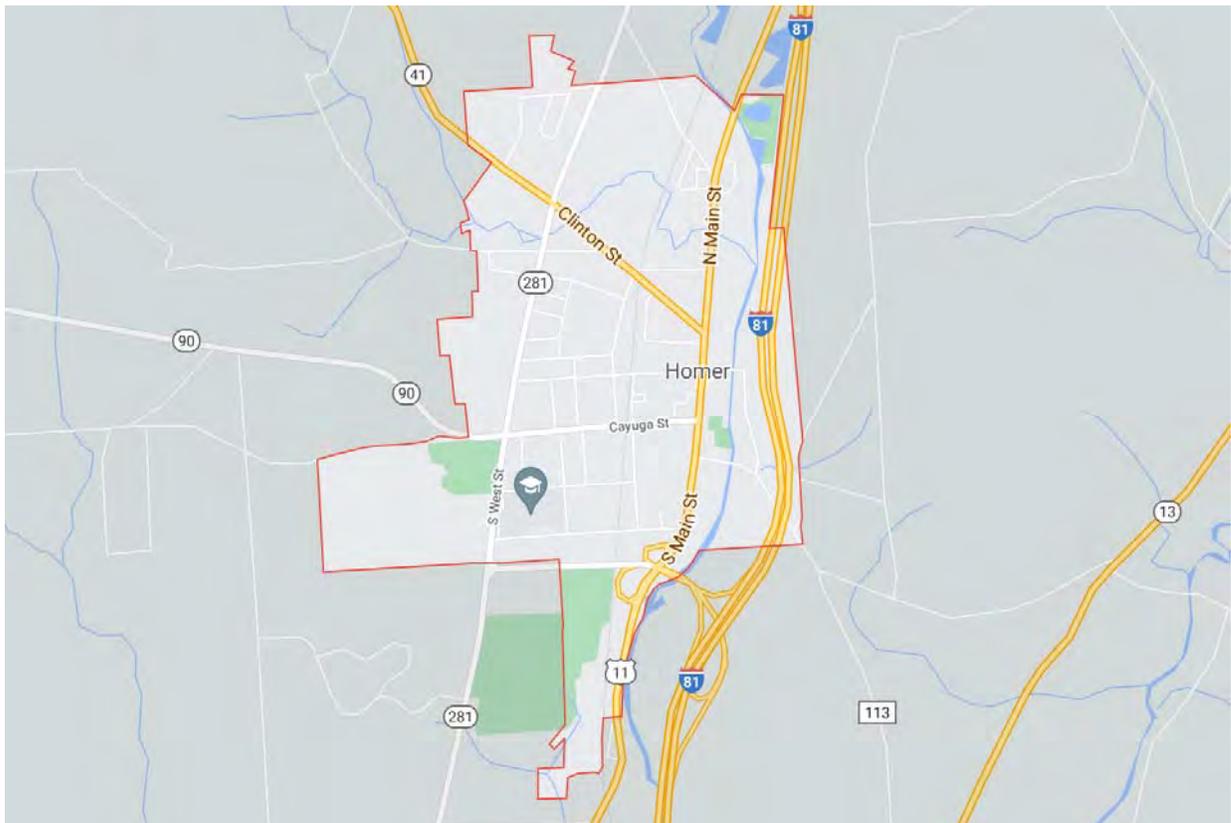
The revitalization of this section of blighted, underutilized property in the Village's core would promote additional sustainable redevelopment in the region, creating economic prosperity, jobs, housing diversity, and endless opportunities for years to come.

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Downtown Identification

I. Boundaries of the Proposed DRI Area

Homer is a Village in Cortland County, centrally located within New York State. The Village encompasses approximately 1.94 square miles along the West Branch of the Tioughnioga River, North of the City of Cortland in one of its seven valleys. The community was originally founded in 1791 by Amos Todd, his sister Rhoda Beebe, and her husband Joseph Beebe. The village was later incorporated in 1835. This historic Village has a boundary well defined by geography, transportation corridors, traditional building types and development pattern.



Village of Homer ~ Boundries Map

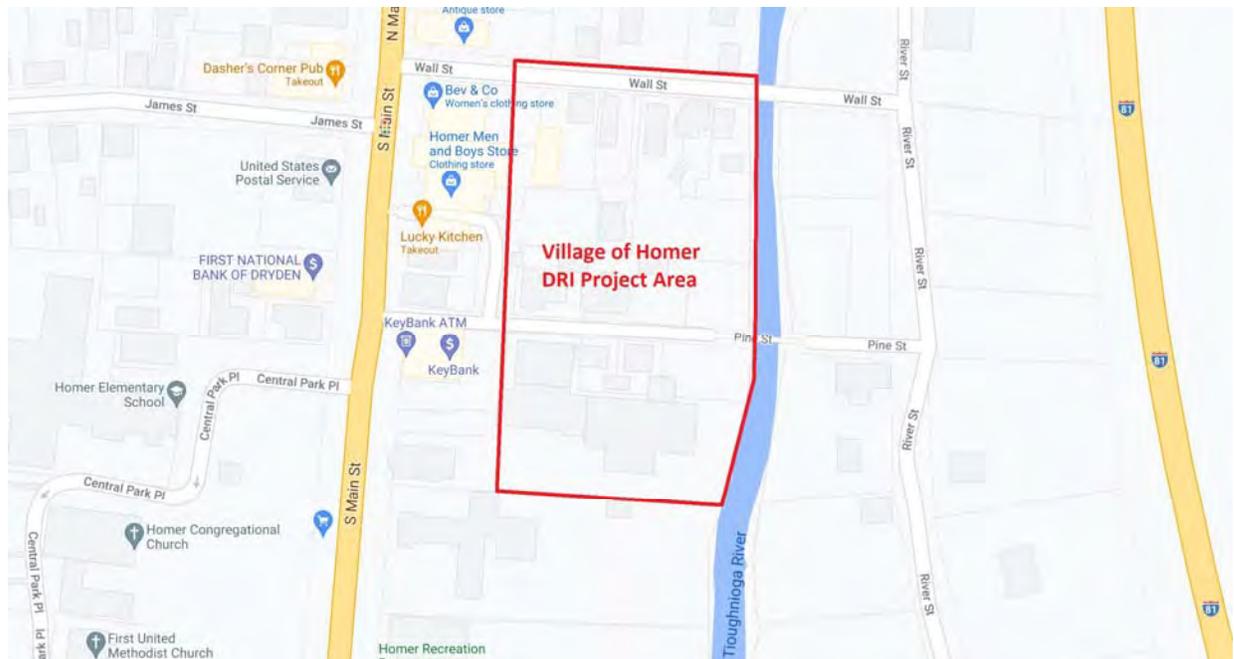
The Village of Homer has come a long way since then, with a current population of just over 3,100 people. Fortunately, much of the Village’s built heritage remains intact, and today it is a joy to walk the busy historic Main Street of multi-story Victorian-era brick commercial buildings, the historic Village Square, and tree-lined residential streets with their Victorian and Italianate homes. Homer’s Downtown consists of numerous businesses, restaurants, retail shops, cafes, a post office, banks, a Center for the Arts, a small grocer, medical offices, an Elementary School, park, and government facilities. Homer’s downtown layout is typical of a traditional central business district, which is in a National Register Historic District. Downtown Homer has been a major transportation hub for regional travel. New York State Routes 11, 41 and 90, all intersect within Downtown Homer. The Village of Homer also has 2 sets of on and off ramps for Interstate-81. Historically, the railroad also played an important role in defining and shaping the development of the Village. To this day the CSX Railroad cuts through the center of Homer. The historic local and regional travel patterns that led to the development of Downtown Homer over a century ago are still prevalent, continuing to define its

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boundary and character today.

Downtown Homer is differentiated from other neighborhoods in the Village by the prevalence of turn of the century multi-story mixed-use buildings. These buildings are typical of traditional downtowns and main streets throughout New York State. The majority of these downtown buildings were built close together and close to the street. The block lengths are short and the streets are relatively wide. These characteristics created a charming downtown that is efficient, compact and scaled for walkability.

The Village of Homer Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) project will build upon an existing high quality of life in this historic community. The Village's DRI project is concentrated on 4 acres of blighted properties directly behind the Main Street Business District. The DRI project's north boundary is Wall Street. The south boundary is the southern property line of the Pine Street properties. The east boundary is the Troughnioga River. The west boundary is the rear of the Main Street properties. The redevelopment of these properties will re-connect this historic downtown and its existing amenities to the waterfront with the addition of much needed residential, commercial, and recreational space.



Village of Homer ~ DRI Project Area

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

DRI Project Property List:

	<u>Property Address</u>		<u>Property ID #</u>		<u>Size (acres)</u>
1.	7 Wall Street	-	66.83-01-02.000	-	0.243
2.	9 Wall Street	-	66.83-01-03.000	-	0.128
3.	Wall Street	-	66.83-01-04.000	-	0.140
4.	11 Wall Street	-	66.83-01-05.000	-	0.499
5.	15 Wall Street	-	66.83-01-06.000	-	0.107
6.	17 Wall Street	-	66.83-01-07.000	-	0.174
7.	Main Street	-	66.83-01-07.000	-	0.226
8.	4 Pine Street	-	66.83-01-38.000	-	0.120
9.	6 Pine Street	-	66.83-01-36.000	-	0.203
10.	Pine Street	-	66.83-01-35.100	-	0.287
11.	Pine Street	-	66.83-01-35.200	-	0.178
12.	7 Pine Street	-	66.83-01-31.000	-	1.238
13.	9 Pine Street	-	66.83-01-32.000	-	0.083
14.	Pine Street	-	66.83-01-33.000	-	0.102
15.	Pine Street	-	66.83-01-34.000	-	0.197



Village of Homer ~ DRI Project Area ~ Aerial

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative



North Boundary ~ Wall Street



West Boundary ~ Back of Main Street Properties

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East Boundary ~ Tioughnioga River

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South Boundary ~ Pine Street

The Village of Homer DRI project will create a new vibrant downtown center, where the region's workforce and families will want to live, work and play. The redevelopment of this site will include eight newly developed 3-story mixed-use commercial and residential buildings, a Commons, Riverwalk, and parking to support all the Village's needs. The new mixed-use buildings will provide the community with commercial space on the ground floors and residential space on floors two to three. The development will include characteristics that coincide with that of Homer's historic nature, while also

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incorporating sustainable and environmentally conscience practices to ensure the Village’s success into the future.

2. Past Investment & Future Investment Potential

Homer is uniquely positioned to capitalize on prior investments and catalyze future private and public investment within its Downtown. Homer is experiencing a downtown renaissance that has been fueled by a concentration of creative individuals and thoughtful public planning. Steady, incremental changes have been implemented over the last decade. The recent development has enhanced the Village’s charm, character and existing quality of life amenities.



Downtown Homer ~ Past Investment Projects

The Keeter Opera House was recently renovated through the NYS Main Street and RestoreNY grant programs, adding some affordable housing stock to the Village. Upgrades to storefronts and development of new businesses through a Community Block Grant program has sparked interest and investments in downtown.

Recently, a sizable portion of the Downtown Business District on the North end of Main Street was purchased by DM3 of Cortland, LLC. The renovation of retail space and apartments is currently underway, bringing modern needs to the community, while keeping its historical charm. One historical building, the Sherman House, has been brought back to splendor with recent renovation to its upper-level apartments and first-floor commercial space. This portion of the Homer’s Downtown Business District sits on the northern boundary of the DRI project area. These renovations are complimentary

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to the revitalization the Village is determined to bring to fruition through their DRI project.

Another regional developer, David Yaman Development, completed a three-story mixed-use building on Main Street, in the summer of 2019. A previous fire had destroyed the historic building, leaving only the foundation. The new building includes commercial space on the first level and two upper levels of apartments. The redevelopment keeps an exterior faithful to the turn-of-the-century architecture in the Village's downtown, while bringing all of today's modern amenities. A defunct laundry facility was renovated into a vibrant storefront in past years, which brought several new businesses to downtown Homer. These renovations have brought new life to many underutilized Main Street properties. Grant funding has offered vital assistance in numerous of these successful rehabilitation projects.

Verizon has invested in high-speed fiber-optic cable for internet usage in Downtown Homer and the surrounding communities. The contracts have been awarded for the replacement of all Village streetlights, this conversion to efficient LED lighting is underway and substantially complete. The new LED streetlights will connect with 5G wireless communications in the near future, potentially allowing for free Wi-Fi in the Village.

The Village of Homer has made significant investments in downtown infrastructure in recent years. A matching grant has been awarded to the Village for the reconstruction of sidewalks, with plans to replace the downtown sidewalks this coming year. Water and sewer upgrades have been ongoing, with a major sewer upgrade being completed last year through a Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant and Municipal bonding that represents nearly a seven hundred-thousand-dollar investment. New modern signs are being procured and installed at the Village entrances. The reconstruction and replacement of the sidewalks provides great opportunity to implement green infrastructure streetscape enhancements, which could include stormwater planters. The Village has been working diligently to ensure that the public realm in Downtown is attractive and can support exciting new private developments.

The identified Village of Homer DRI project incorporates over \$30 million of public and private investment. There are so many great ideas that could come together with the completion of this DRI project, creating the next big step in the evolution of Downtown Homer. The Village has and will continue to make incremental improvements within its Downtown. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative would catalyze transformative changes that the Village could not accomplish on its own.

The Village's planning efforts have built on previous plans, all of which incorporate the revitalization and reconnection of the Downtown to the Tioughnioga River. All of the planning efforts represent continuity with the Central New York REDC's vision by focusing on arts and cultural amenities, transportation options, tourism, attraction of entrepreneurs, and enhancing overall quality of life.

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3. [Recent or Impending Job Growth](#)

The Village of Homer recognizes that its downtown is both an economic center for quality jobs and a recruitment tool for attracting and retaining jobs and investment in the community. Homer offers the perfect combination of amenities and nature that support a unique lifestyle. The lifestyle is what attracts and retains employers, investors, entrepreneurs, students, visitors and residents. Homer's DRI project would improve on the great number of existing amenities already present within its community. This DRI project will attract a diverse workforce and population to an active downtown life, support redevelopment and make economic growth sustainable for the Village of Homer's future.



Guthrie Cortland Medical Center

Guthrie has recently expanded their medical services into the City of Cortland and its surrounding communities with their new Corporate Affiliation with the Cortland Regional Medical Center. Guthrie is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to work with the communities they serve to help each person attain optimal, lifelong health and well-being. They do so by providing integrated, clinically advanced services that prevent, diagnose and treat disease, within an environment of compassion, learning and discovery. In February of 2019, Guthrie Cortland Medical Center was awarded over **\$4.6** million dollars from the State of New York. That money will go towards the hospital's renovation of its inpatient and emergency department spaces, the expansion and enhancement of its behavioral health services, and for the purchase of vehicles for their new mobile crisis stabilization unit.

The Cortland Regional Medical Center has always been one of the communities' largest employers. In 2016, the Cortland Regional Medical Center added 18 new doctors. However, due to Guthrie's corporate affiliation and takeover of the hospital, a significant number of new jobs and influx of residents to the surrounding communities has occurred. This growth is expected to continue for years to come as they further expansion of local medical services, including:

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- 1) Primary Care – Family Medicine, including Pediatrics
- 2) Primary Care – Internal Medicine
- 3) Cancer Care – Medical Oncology/Hematology
- 4) Cancer Care – Radiation Oncology
- 5) Cardiology
- 6) Gastroenterology and Hepatology
- 7) General Surgery
- 8) Hand Therapy
- 9) Medicare Wellness Visits
- 10) Occupational Medicine
- 11) Occupational Therapy
- 12) Ophthalmology
- 13) Orthopedics
- 14) Physical Therapy
- 15) Podiatry
- 16) Pulmonology
- 17) Speech-Language Pathology
- 18) Urology

The addition of these 18 specific medical services will require a great number of new medical professionals and facility staff. The Village of Homer is well suited to capitalize on this expansion with the development of its DRI project, providing superb location in its Downtown Business District for new Guthrie medical facilities, Private Practice offices and residential units needed to house the additional employees.



SUNY Cortland ~ Campus Building

SUNY Cortland puts great focus on their students' success. The faculty members not only love to teach, but they also eagerly collaborate with students on research projects and activities in the community. These outstanding professionals use technology resources to help students gain a solid base of knowledge as they improve skills in communication, critical thinking and problem solving. All program offerings allow students to carry the momentum forward through multidisciplinary course work, internships, fieldwork and experience-based learning opportunities in the surrounding communities and beyond.

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With more than 1,400 employees, SUNY Cortland is the leading employer in the County, and is also one of the most desirable places to work. Job seekers will find competitive salaries, outstanding benefits and an invigorating work environment with full access to exceptional recreation and fitness facilities, library, amongst numerous other resources.

The university offers Full and Part-Time employment in academic, administrative and staff positions, plus a wide range of employment opportunities for undergraduates and graduate students, including graduate assistantships. Additional employment opportunities are also offered on campus through two affiliated organizations, Cortland Auxiliary and the Research Foundation of SUNY. Cortland Auxiliary is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides the SUNY Cortland community with food services and the Campus Store, to name a few. The Research Foundation for SUNY is a private, nonprofit educational corporation that administers externally funded contracts and grants that support research and discovery for and on behalf of SUNY Cortland. The Research Foundation offers professional, research, day care, tutoring and clerical employment opportunities.



Tompkins Cortland Community College ~ TC3

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) is another large local employer. It has grown from a small community college housed in an old high school to an integral part of the Tompkins and Cortland County communities. It is located on a 220-acre rural campus about 12 miles from Downtown Homer. Many Homer residents are employed by the college or attend as students. TC3 has over 400 employees and enrolls approximately 3,500 students.

The College is one of 30 community colleges in the State University of New York and offers degrees and certificates in more than 40 academic programs including nursing, business administration, criminal justice, chemical dependency counseling, new media, sports management, culinary arts, sustainable farming and food systems, and liberal arts programs, including education and general studies. The College is known for constantly expanding the boundaries of what is possible for a community college.

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Recent improvements include a restaurant, organic-practices farm, and 10-acre solar array that powers the campus. Perhaps more importantly, the College is known for its commitment to academic rigor and for its equally passionate commitment to providing the community support students need to succeed. This success can be measured by the thousands of graduates in the area and throughout the country.

Tompkins Cortland Community College continues to expand into the surrounding communities. The college has already opened an Extension Center in Downtown Cortland. This facility provides additional space for off campus classes, seminars and other special events. The College just recently opened a farm-to-bistro Culinary Center in downtown Ithaca, “*Coltivare*”, which is complete with teaching kitchens, a fully functional professional restaurant and large-group serving capability. Restaurant and culinary-related jobs are expected to grow at an average rate of 10 percent per year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In the Finger Lakes and Central NY Region, hospitality and food-related employment is among the strongest sectors of the regional economy, with a large need for professional, highly trained workers. Interest in healthy eating practices have also increased greatly in recent years, which increases the need for jobs related with natural food preparation. The Village of Homer DRI project would be a prime location for further TC3 expansion. The newly developed commercial space provided by the DRI project would make a great location for a riverfront Culinary Center or TC3 Extension Center, with plenty of residential space to house both new students and faculty.

These institutions and many others rely on a vibrant community for employee retention and to provide confidence and interest in future investments. A thriving community is a recruiting tool for successful business and will likely contribute to future expansions. These businesses, Universities and Medical practices continue to grow with new staff year-over-year, bringing new residents, families and students to the local communities.

The development of Homer’s DRI project would position the municipality to take full advantage of these economic expansions, captivating new employees, families and students by building upon their great number of existing quality of life amenities. The new commercial, retail, residential and recreation spaces included in the Village of Homer DRI project would encourage economic development and create new employment opportunities within the DRI project area.

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4. [Quality of Life](#)

Perhaps the most striking feature of downtown Homer is the interplay between the tree lined streets, nearby mountains, Tioughnioga River and downtown’s mid-19th century buildings. This combination of man-made and natural beauty is truly picturesque. The Tioughnioga River winds directly through Homer’s downtown, from North to South. This River runs downstream tying into the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers, which ultimately lead to the Chesapeake Bay.



Summer Concert Series ~ Downtown Square

The happenings in downtown are perhaps the Village’s greatest strength. During the summer there are concerts and musical performances held in the Village square, which lies between the Downtown Business District and the Homer Elementary School. These events coincide with farmers markets and other Village events. The overlapping schedule of events not only attracts the residents and families, but also those of the surrounding communities. These events have been extremely popular and greatly successful in attracting consumers to the downtown business district.

The most popular Village event is the annual “Holiday in Homer”, as people from all around the region attend. This downtown event is held in mid-July, providing phenomenal Upstate New York summer weather for the countless vendors set up along the sidewalks, which are overflowing with hundreds of happy attendees. It is an event that showcases and encourages people of all ages to display their creative side. The 2-acre Village square is filled with vendor’s tents, food and entertainment.

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Holiday in Homer ~ Downtown Square

Other annual favorites are “Winterfest” and “Magic on Main”. Winterfest is a celebration in early February. It features a parade down Main Street and other festivities held in the Elementary school’s auditorium. Magic on Main is a celebration of Community, in which the entire Main Street is closed. The event is fun for the whole family with live music, food from local eateries, magicians, car clubs and so much more. A variety of other events take place at the numerous public gathering sites within the downtown, almost monthly.



Center for the Arts ~ Downtown Homer

At certain times throughout the year Historical Downtown Tours are given. Local historians provide the story of the Village of Homer while walking a scenic route looping through the Downtown and historic sites in the community. The Village has significant historical ties to US President Abraham Lincoln’s administration, the underground railroad, the Industrialist Wickwire family and the Founder

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of Cornell University. These tours provide great information on all of the important people who have helped form Homer into what it is today. With a long history like Homer's, you know that there would be claims of local hauntings, so tours are given for those seeking a ghostly experience as well.

Downtown Homer also owes much of its attractiveness and livability to its rich history as a cultural and commercial district. Most of the downtown buildings were built in the traditional multi-story mixed-use style. This is a National Register Historic District that has been nominated for downtown expansion. This concentration of 200+ historic buildings provide a rich architectural heritage and contributes to the aesthetically pleasing urban character of Downtown. These downtown buildings house numerous successful small businesses that add to the Village's quality of life amenities. The Village Food Market grocery store is essential to the community. The Homer Men and Boys Store is a family-owned clothing and footwear store that's been providing quality name brand merchandise in Homer's Downtown since 1951. This store is not just extremely popular with the Village residents, but also draws consumers from the surrounding region. A very popular restaurant, a bakery and chocolate shop, two bank branches and a post office also add to the great number of existing amenities.



Homer Men & Boys ~ Clothing Store

Homer also benefits from its academic institutions. Thompkins Cortland Community College is located 12 miles from Downtown Homer and SUNY Cortland College is a 5-minute drive from the center of downtown. Due to Homer's attractiveness and great quality of life amenities many professionals and students from both institutions make their home within downtown or the adjacent neighborhoods.

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The Homer Central School District has three distinct schools in the Village, an excellent High School, Intermediate School and an Elementary School located across the historic Village Square from the Downtown Business District. The Elementary School is built upon the same location of Homer's first Academy, which was developed around the turn-of-the-century.

The Village of Homer is a traditional community with a great mix of residential properties and successful businesses. The residential neighborhoods include both single and multi-family housing, while the downtown consists of residential units on the upper stories of the Main Street historic buildings. The variety of housing in the Downtown area supports a diverse residential population including students, low- to moderate-income families, seniors and professionals. The development and rehabilitation of market rate housing within the Downtown area has been a top priority for the Village, as they recognize the availability of new and improved housing is essential in attracting additional professionals and families to Homer. The tax revenue generated by these developments would aid in decreasing the property tax burden on existing property owners and generate revenue for future infrastructure improvements, benefiting the quality of life within the Village, Cortland County and Central New York region.

Downtown is the epicenter of Homer's transportation network. NYS Routes 11, 90 and 41 intersect in downtown where there is currently limited parking available. The Village currently has an electric vehicle level 2 charging station installed in one of their parking lots. It is used and appreciated by travelers and residents alike. Cortland County Transportation provides bus service between Homer and Cortland with additional connections to Ithaca. A bus service beginning in Syracuse travels into Cortland and then on to New York City, with numerous connections along the way. In the past, passenger train service was provided between Binghamton and Syracuse, with stations in Homer. The railway still runs through the center of the village, however, is currently only utilized for freight transportation.

Downtown Homer is very compact and walkable, allowing for most errands to be accomplished by foot. The Village's size, compact development pattern and existing infrastructure also make Homer a bikeable community. There are planned bike lanes or shared lane markings on all major roads through the Downtown.

The community's walkability and bikeable characteristics, along with the Village's Sustainability Initiatives have led to the Village of Homer being registered as both a Clean Energy Community and Climate Smart Community. These New York State programs help local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The programs offer technical assistance, grants, and recognition for municipal governments that are prioritizing climate and energy efficiency efforts. The Village is a Bronze Certified Climate Smart Community and is currently working towards Silver. The Village is proud to have been the first and only municipality in New York whose certification process was entirely led by a Task Force comprised of local High School Students. The task force originated when Homer High School students approached the Village board about helping facilitate the Climate Smart process. The board responded by asking if the students would take leadership of the Village's Climate Smart Communities Task Force, which they did and a unique partnership between the community, government, and local students resulted.

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The Village has six significant parks within walking distance of each other, offering a full range of recreational amenities which truly enhance village life. The Village of Homer Riverwalk is a planned trail that would follow the Tioughnioga riverbank. This Riverwalk would begin at Durkee Park, winding along the riverbank through downtown to the Village's southern limits. A portion of this Riverwalk is included in the Village of Homer DRI project. This Riverwalk project would improve river access by incorporating kayak and canoe docks and rental stations, as well as numerous new fishing points along the riverbank. Recreational use including fishing, kayaking and canoeing in this section of river provides great outdoor family fun.

- **Albert J. Durkee Memorial Park** - is located on Route 11, just a ½ mile north of Downtown. It runs along the Tioughnioga River waterfront and is very popular with the fishing, kayaking and outdoor loving community.



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- **Harry A. Calale Park** - is located on Route 281 within the Village. The facility is used for softball, tee-ball, football and lacrosse.



- **George Venum Memorial Park** - is located on Main Street in Downtown Homer, next to the Village of Homer Fire Department. This facility provides a lighted basketball court, large pavilion and off-street parking.



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- **Griggs Memorial Field** - is located on Hudson Street behind Newton Water Works, this facility has playing fields for baseball and softball. It is the home field for both the Homer Little League and Tee-ball teams.



- **Newton Park** - is located on the corner of Cayuga Street and Bartlett Avenue, just three blocks west of Main Street. A new neighborhood play structure was installed in 2019 that included swings, adaptive swings, slides, and benches.



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- **Newton Water Works Park** - is located on Route 281, near Route 41. This picturesque picnic area is used extensively by local organizations for group gatherings.



Additionally, Homer residents and visitors have access to a dedicated team of skilled healthcare professionals and quality services that are unique for a community of this stature. The continuum of healthcare at Guthrie Hospital in Cortland incorporates a complete range of healthcare services and is slated for community expansion, as previously discussed. A variety of other medical services are offered within the Homer community, with many of them located within the Downtown Business District. These include Upstate Medical Rheumatology practice located behind the Post Office and Main Street Acupuncture, appropriately located on North Main Street.

5. [Supportive Local Policies](#)

The Village of Homer's quality of life amenities are made possible by their abundance of supportive local policies. The Village has a long history of proactively developing plans, policies and initiatives to protect and enhance its quality of life, with a strong emphasis on their Downtown Business District. These supportive local policies have been determined by tremendous public collaboration and local support. These policies have been put in place to steer the Village's development toward a successful and sustainable future.

These policies include:

Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan (2010)

The Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of over two plus years of planning with interactive, dynamic, and sustained outreach throughout the process. The comprehensive plan sets forth needs, goals, planning initiatives and strategies for the Village. It recognizes the importance of the downtown

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

as a commercial center for the Village and region. Just this year, the Village applied for a Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning grant for updating and keeping their plan current and responsive to both residential and business communities. The proposed Village of Homer DRI project is based on the vision and goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Village of Homer Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)

The Tioughnioga River passes directly through the center of the Homer's Downtown. The City of Cortland has an LWRP planning grant, in which the Village of Homer is included in the overall plan. The goals for waterfront revitalization primarily focus on improved public access to water resources, stimulating tourism and economic development in downtown, protecting natural resources, and improving pedestrian safety to and from waterfront areas. The Village has been aggressively pursuing LWRP funding for the construction of a Riverwalk trail that would wind throughout the Village including the installation of kayak docks and fishing access points. A portion of this Riverwalk trail is included in this DRI Project Area. The goals in the LWRP will guide all subsequent riverfront planning and infrastructure projects undertaken by the Village. The LWRP funding requested along with Village resources will ensure the protection, enhancement and reconnection of the downtown to the Tioughnioga River waterfront.

Village of Homer Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Master Plan (2010)

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes inventories, programs, priority projects, design guidance, and a plan for implementation that will enhance community livability through alternative transportation options, a network of open spaces, and promotion of healthy active lifestyles. The Village has made considerable progress implementing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Improvements in downtown infrastructure include reconstruction of sidewalks, improved crosswalks, and shared lane markings for bicycles, wayfinding signage, and intersection improvements. The plan also involves linkages to the NYS Peacemaker Trail project.

Parks and Greenspace Plan

The Village of Homer has an Environmental Protection Fund Municipal Grant to develop a linear park along the Tioughnioga River on the south end of the Village. The Village has purchased three blighted properties. All properties have been demolished and the Village is waiting for NYSEG to finish their coal tar remediation from a former coal gasification plant in order to continue with the park project. This innovative greenspace and linear park along the river will add to the numerous quality of life amenities already present in the Village, while encouraging tourism and expanding opportunities for future economic development.

Downtown Plans

Plans for Downtown Homer were prepared in an effort to keep downtown competitive with other shopping centers and the increased sophistication of corporate and chain stores. Downtown improvements have been made over the last decade; however, some buildings and infrastructure are still in need of revitalization. These properties are included within the Village of Homer DRI Project Area. The Village has three historic Lenticular Truss Bridges, two of which border the DRI Project Area. The two bridges adjacent to the proposed development area are owned by the Town of Homer but the Village has been a steadfast partner with the Town in working to maintain and restore these structures.

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Zoning

The Village is currently under contract with General Codes to modernize, re-orient and digitize the Village Code Book. The Deputy Mayor, Code Enforcement Officer, Chair of the Planning Board, and Village Clerk are currently in the process of editorial analysis. Once completed, the Village Code Book will be responsive and easy to access by the community residents and future developers.

Sustainability

The Village of Homer has been designated a Clean Energy Community since 2018 and Certified Bronze Climate Smart Community since last year. The Village Board engaged a Green Team consisting of municipal leaders, students from Homer High School, residents, and SUNY ESF staff, to assist in implementing actions needed for certification. The Village is currently in the process of constructing a new Salt Storage shed in their DPW site, that has been designed to be Solar PV ready. The addition of these solar panels would offset over half of the Municipality's electric consumption. The Village has installed its first dual-port electric vehicle charging station in a public parking lot and is in the process of converting to LED Street light fixtures. LEDs or other high-efficiency lighting has been installed in all municipal buildings. Current plans include having a power plug to initiate 5G transmitters on each of the Village light fixtures. Having access to high-speed Wi-Fi can and should allow entrepreneurial activity to expand and flourish.

Downtown Organization

The Homer Business Association is highly active in the Village. The business association makes recommendations to the Homer Village Board of Trustees regarding policies and actions that would improve economic vitality by enhancing the experience, image, and lifestyle of Downtown Homer. Along with the Homer Business Association, the Village has established an Economic Development Committee comprised of the Mayor, Trustees and local business leaders, a diverse group that brings vision and expertise to all initiatives.

6. Public Support

The Village of Homer's Economic Development Committee has been involved with DRI discussions since its inception. They were tasked with identifying strategies that would provide sustainable economic development opportunities for the Village now and into the future. The public is encouraged to attend all Village meetings, with some being held specifically for the Village of Homer DRI Project. The Economic Development Committee relied on adopted Village plans, which were created with strong public input, to synthesize a vision, goals and strategies for downtown revitalization. The Village's DRI project was conceptualized directly from these plans.

The Economic Development Committee engaged the community through public meetings and will continue this engagement through project completion. Committee members have conducted meetings and made presentations to stakeholder groups, engaged individual business owners, property owners, developers, and investors in discussions of this transformative downtown revitalization project. Village residents have received questionnaires and surveys via mail, requesting their input.

During the most recent public meeting, held specifically for this DRI project, the residents presented their own conceptualization of this transformational downtown revitalization project. The residents were so captivated by the Village of Homer DRI project that a group of them prepared conceptual

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

renderings and a walk-through video. The video can be found at the following link.

<https://youtu.be/Xpr80ygz3Lo>



Resident ~ Conceptual Aerial

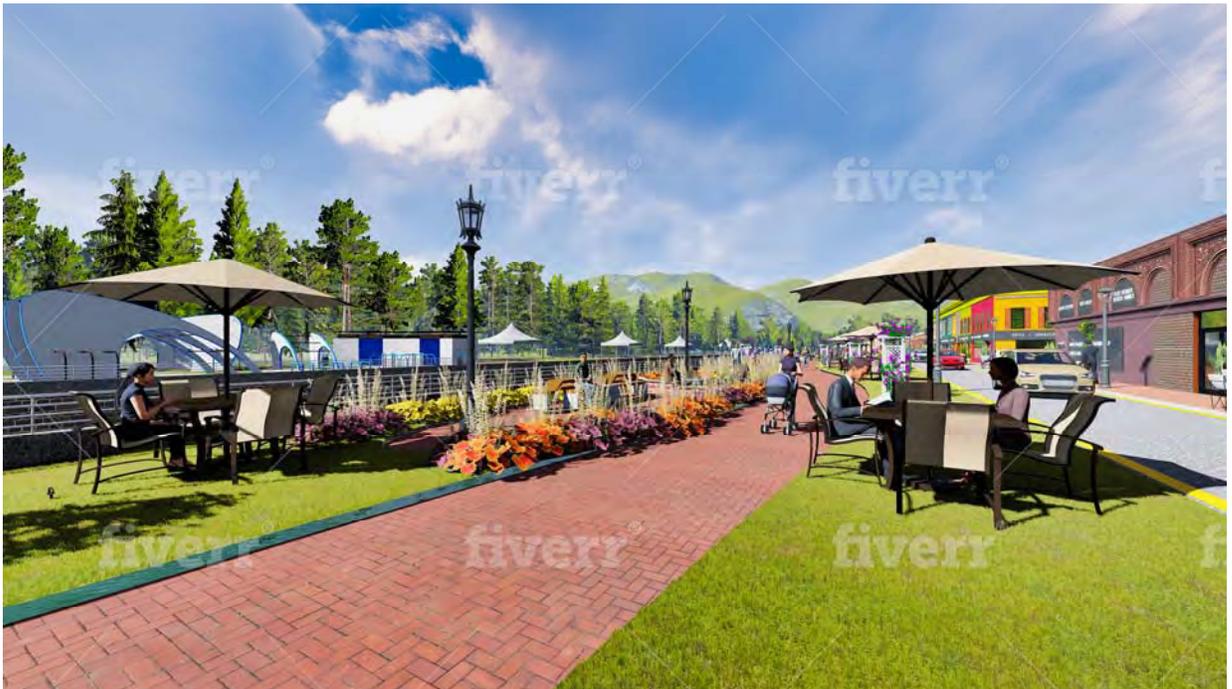


Resident ~ Conceptual New Mixed-Use Building

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative



Resident ~ Conceptual New Retail Building



Resident ~ Conceptual Riverwalk Commons

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative



Resident ~ Conceptual Retail Space & Riverwalk Commons

The public also recommended and supported the Village including a historical monument to honor three of Homer’s natives that had significant connections to the life and legacy President Abraham Lincoln. Harold Holzer, the winner of the 2015 Gilder-Lehrman Lincoln Prize and one of the country's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln, submitted a letter of support for the inclusion of the “Three Lincoln Men” monument.



“Three Lincoln Men” ~ Model Monument

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

The “Three Lincoln Men”:

- **Francis B. Carpenter** was Lincoln’s portraitist, known for completing the famous “Emancipation Proclamation” painting.
- **William O. Stoddard** was Lincoln’s personal secretary.
- Detective **Eli DeVoe** played a role in thwarting an early assassination plot against Lincoln.

The Village Board agreed to pursue additional grant funding through other sources for the inclusion of the Historic monument. The “Three Lincoln Men” monument if included in final design, is expected to be placed along the Riverwalk in the commons area of the DRI project. The Village board along with the residents believe that the inclusion of this monument would aid in making Downtown Homer a “historic tourist” attraction.

The public support for the Village’s DRI project has been tremendous. The Village has received numerous letters supporting the redevelopment of the blighted and underutilized properties within the DRI Project Area.

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

7. Transformative Opportunities and Readiness

This Village of Homer DRI project will be truly transformative for their Historic Downtown District. By eliminating blighted properties, creating new sustainable contemporary mixed-use structures, and developing the adjoining Tioughnioga Riverfront into a community recreational gathering space, this funding would make the Village's Historic Downtown Business District a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, raise their families, work and play. The Village of Homer and David Yaman Development would partner on the revitalization of this 4-acre section of property in the Village's core. This downtown development would promote additional sustainable redevelopment in the region, creating additional economic prosperity, jobs, housing diversity, and endless opportunities for years to come. The community benefits of this project will be very significant.



Village of Homer ~ DRI Project Area ~ Aerial

David Yaman Development would be responsible for all costs associated with property acquisition, demolition, environmental remediation and new vertical construction. The developer will deal directly with the DRI Project Area property owners. The property acquisition costs have been determined by using a multiple of property assessment values. Due to the age and characteristics of the blighted and underutilized properties and structures, environmental testing will be required. Environmental remediation activities will be determined by the results of these tests. The land acquisition, demolition and appropriate environmental remediation is expected to cost a total \$2 million.

The developer would then build eight three-story mixed-use buildings that coincide with the design of Homer's historic downtown. These new buildings would provide first level commercial space and upper-level residential units. There will be four buildings at 11,700 square feet and four at 17,100 square feet, for a total of 115,200 square feet of newly constructed mixed-use space. The combination of these buildings will provide 64 residential units totalling 76,000 square feet. It has been determined

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

that a mixture of market rate apartments, condos and senior housing is greatly needed in the Village and surrounding community housing market. The first level commercial space will provide a total of 38,400 square feet that could be divided and built out for specific tenant requirements. This available commercial space would be prime for a Pharmacy, Medical Offices, Private Practices, retail shops, and riverfront eateries or breweries. These new structures will create a charming and prosperous downtown center connected to the Tioughnioga Riverfront. The vertical construction portion of this DRI is estimated to cost \$27 million.



Village of Homer ~ DRI Conceptual Site Plan

The Village of Homer will be responsible for the development of the DRI project sitework. This sitework would consist of the construction of the new streets and sidewalks, installation of new utilities, Riverwalk Commons, landscaping and construction of the 150-space parking lot. The newly developed streetscape, infrastructure and Riverwalk Commons area would utilize aesthetically pleasing and sustainable green infrastructure practices. The Riverwalk Commons area would include a linear park and greenspace area along the Tioughnioga Riverfront. The Village would be responsible for all costs and income associated with this new municipal infrastructure. The Village would receive income from the new parking lot. The parking would also be available for Village shoppers, making up for the current lack of municipal parking spaces. The Village included appropriate space for Public Fast Charging EV stations within the new parking lot, with intentions on beginning with 5-10 dedicated parking spaces, with available room to grow. A new public transit bus pickup shelter will be included in this municipal infrastructure, adding a new stop on the local bus schedule. The Village will also consider replacing the overhead utilities on Main Street with aesthetically pleasing underground utilities. This process would involve the removal of telephone poles and the replacement of sidewalks and incorporation of new sustainable landscaping. The new sitework, streetscapes and utilities are estimated to cost \$1.2 million, and the 150-space parking lot is expected to cost \$750,000. The

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

combination of the Village of Homer's portion of the DRI is estimated to cost nearly \$2 million.

These newly developed contemporary mixed-use structures will utilize an assortment of sustainable and environmentally conscious design features. These buildings will be designed with energy efficient lighting, electrical systems, appliances and building systems. These include LED lighting fixtures, energy efficient HVAC systems, Solar PV, EnergyStar rated appliances and video surveillance. The buildings will also utilize Low-E rated windows and insulated wall systems to ensure the structures are thermally efficient. The inclusion of green infrastructure practices are planned for the new streetscape, sidewalks, Riverwalk Commons and parking lot. These green infrastructure practices would include stormwater planter systems and pervious paving. These aesthetically pleasing sustainable design alternatives allow for the onsite infiltration of stormwater runoff. This is a necessity as it will protect the water quality of the adjacent Tioughnioga River by preventing stormwater runoff pollutants from reaching the riverfront.

The identified Village of Homer DRI project incorporates **\$31 million** of public and private investment. The investment of \$10 million from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program would leverage over \$20 million of economic investment within the Central New York Region. The Village has and will continue to make incremental improvements within its Historic Downtown, however, a \$10 million grant through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative would catalyze transformative changes that the Village could not accomplish on its own.



Before



After



Village of Homer

***View from the corner of Pine Street and New Street A, looking East.**



Google

Before



After

****View from the corner of Pine Street and New Street A, looking North.***



Village of Homer



Before



After



Village of Homer

***View from the corner of Wall Street
and New Street A, looking East.**



Before

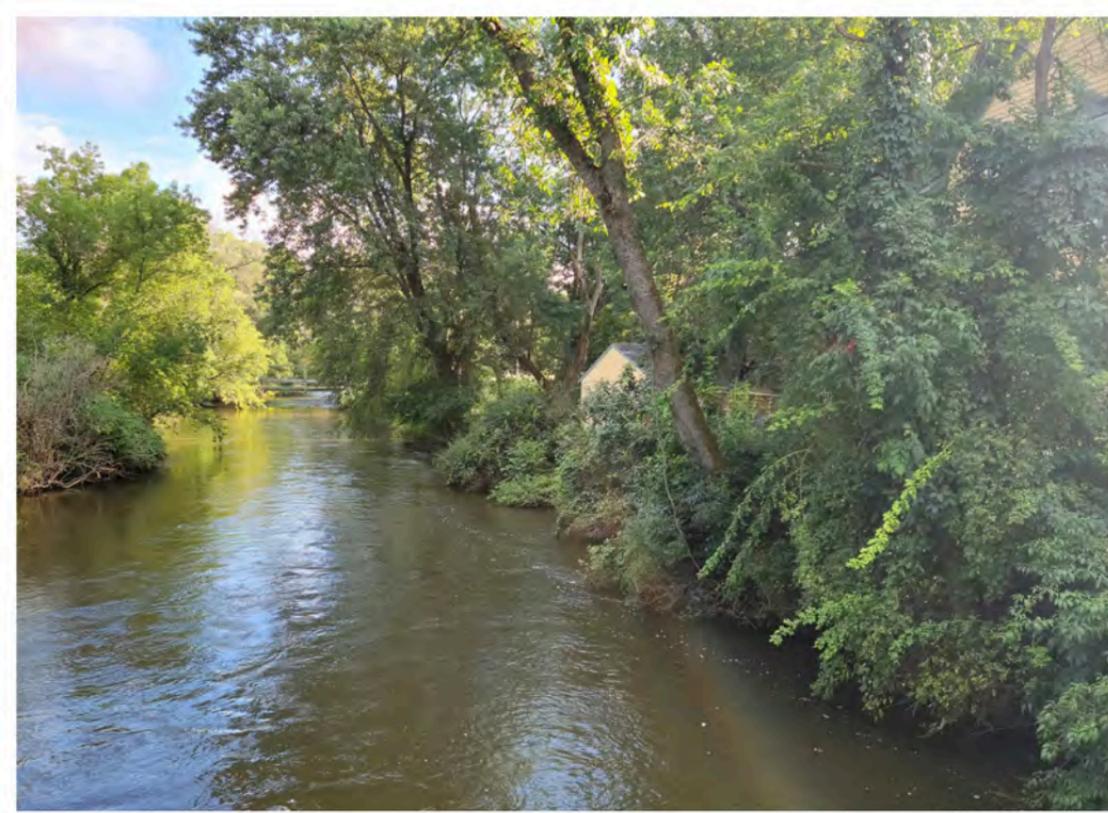


Village of Homer



After

***View from the corner of Wall Street and New Street A, looking South.**



Before



After



Village of Homer

****View from Wall Street Bridge looking South-West***

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

8. [Administrative Capacity](#)

The Village of Homer has successfully administered many grants from numerous state and federal agencies over the years, including NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Empire State Development, NYS Council on the Arts, NYS Attorney General, NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation, NYS Parks, NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal, and NY Preservation League. The Village is currently managing 4 concurrent contracts worth over \$4 million, while completing 7 grant funded projects within the last 8 years. A Community Development Fund is also managed by the Village.

The Village has a proven ability to manage concurrent contracts. These grants have been managed by the Village Clerk and Village Treasurer with support from additional staff members. This team has over 25 years of combined experience in grant management, with previous responsibility of over \$250 million in grant funded projects. The Village has demonstrated that it is capable of administering a variety of grant programs that have leveraged private investments in their community. The project developer, David Yaman Development, also has significant experience with NYS grant funded projects and their grant administration.

With the size, characteristics and the **\$31 million** total cost of the Village of Homer DRI project, the Village would contract for Grant Administration Services from an experienced provider. The Village and its residents want this shovel-ready, transformative redevelopment project to be completed on schedule with no setbacks. To ensure a successful project, Construction Administration Services would also be utilized. These services ensure that the construction of and final completed project are built to the design and specs of the Architecture and Engineering plans.

9. [Other](#)

David Yaman Realty Services specializes in real estate development and property management in Central New York. For over 75 years, the Yaman Family has been involved with a wide range of Residential, Commercial and Industrial developments. For three generations integrity and attention to aesthetics have helped transform the landscape of the Cortland Community and Central New York. The organization's long history of development is well documented through many projects presently benefiting the Cortland and Central NY region, with many projects involving New York State Grant funding. David Yaman Realty Services has a strong history of building new construction or retrofitting existing facilities to suit tenant needs.

Yaman Development project experience:

Bio 365 Manufacturing Facility:

38 Kellogg Road, Cortland, NY

This project entailed the conversion of a 30,000 s/f warehouse for Bio 365, which creates biologically active and nutrient-dense biochar soils for commercial agriculture. An additional 30,000 s/f facility was constructed adjacent to the existing facility as part of the project.

Actuant Medical Manufacturing Facility:

Lime Hollow Road, Cortland, NY

Located in Cortland, NY, this 35,000 s/f state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with a 12,000 s/f clean room was a designed/build project. It is located on Route 13 in the Town of Cortlandville. This is a

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

prime example of occupant focused specifications translated to a quality highly productive manufacturing facility.

Cortland Commerce Retail Center:

NYS Route 13, Cortland, NY

Located at the corner of NYS Route 13 and Lime Hollow Road, Cortland, this facility is the home for Aspen Dental, Verizon Wireless, Cortland ENT, Cortland Nails, and McDonald's Restaurant. It is located at the highest retail traffic location in the County.

Cortland Commerce Center:

836 NYS Route 13, Cortland, NY

The 440,000 s/f former Smith Corona facility was acquired with a few tenants occupying a small portion of the building. In a short period of time, 96% of the space was leased to 14 industrial occupants. Improvements to the facility included a \$1.2 million dollar renovation to 44,000 s/f office complex, upgrades to the exterior, new roofs, interior upgrades for industrial activities, and a four-bay loading dock.

* Received a NY State Grant for construction of the office renovations.

Crescent Commons:

165 Main St., Cortland, NY

With expertise in retrofit and repurpose, the vision to convert the former Crescent Corset Manufacturing building to 47 residential loft-style apartments and over 40,000 s/f of commercial office space came to fruition in 2018. This was a historic preservation project that has proven to be a very important addition to the landscape of the City of Cortland.

* Received Historic Preservation Grant and National Grid Grant.

DeWayne Block Building:

23 Main St., Homer, NY

Located in Historic Downtown Homer, NY, this three-story building was designed and constructed by the company with sensitivity to the aesthetics of the community. The top two floors contain upscale apartments with the first floor being completed for an upscale full-service restaurant.

* Received ESD Grand and RestoreNY Grant

Mixed-Use Apartments:

83-85 Main St, Cortland, NY

Downtown Cortland's largest building received a complete renovation of the four-story building with commercial space located on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors. Fully occupied at the completion of the building, this project represents the success for the DRI initiative for the downtown area.

* Received ESD Downtown Revitalization Grant and ESD Anchor Grant.

Photon Vision Offices:

NYS Route 281, Cortland, NY

A state-of-the-art 13,000 s.f. office building designed with a clean-room for a high-tech chip design company served as the anchor for this 11 lot office park in Homer, NY. Recognizing the limited scope of existing zoning districts, David Yaman helped write new regulations to allow for the development of high-tech and dot-com businesses.

* Received NYS Business Development Grant.

CVS Pharmacies:

As a preferred developer for CVS Pharmacies, the partnerships formed by David Yaman have produced the new free-standing prototypes with drive-up windows. These facilities are located in Binghamton, Ithaca, and Cortland with new sites in other areas in Central and Southern Tier, NY.

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Cortlandville Crossing:

831 NYS Route 13, Cortland, NY

David Yaman acquired Cortlandville Mall in the fall of 1989 with Chappell's, K-Mart and Citizens Savings Bank as anchors. As a partner in Cortlandville Associates and developer for the investment group, David Yaman Realty Services converted the 206,000 square foot interior mall to a retail power strip center and brought into the complex J.C. Penney, Radio Shack, Payless Shoes, Sally Beauty, Dollar Depot, and CT Farm & Country, and built an addition to house Fashion Bug. Now complete, Cortlandville Crossing has over 240,000 square feet of retail space. Adjacent land owned by the partnership was sold to Walmart for an in-line store.

Walden Oaks Golf Course and Residential Community:

Cortland, NY

A 270-acre parcel located in the Town of Cortlandville was purchased in January of 1990 by Cortlandville Associates. David Yaman Realty Services designed an 18-hole golf course surrounded by a 260-unit mixed residential community and obtained a planned unit development approval from the Town. A limited partnership was formed to develop and own the golf course and shares were successfully sold. After construction of the necessary infrastructure: roads, sewer, water and electric, all residential lots were sold to Barden Homes Corporation of Homer, N.Y. David Yaman received a great deal of support and praise from local environmental groups for sensitivity to the important issues surrounding the impact of this project on the environment.

Village Park Condominiums:

Tompkins St, Cortland, NY

Barden & Robeson Corporation, the eighth largest manufacturer of pre-engineered homes in the United States, and David Yaman Realty Services formalized a partnership to develop housing in the central New York area. The first project undertaken was the Village Park Condominiums, a 44-unit complex of townhouse, duplex and garden-style homes. David Yaman negotiated the purchase of the property, saw to its re-zoning as a PUD, designed the buildings and site plan, and sold the homes. The project was forecasted to sell out over a four-year period. Due to market acceptance and flexibility of the building and product mix, the turnaround time was decreased by six months.

Park Center Condominiums:

Radisson, NY

At about the same time the Village Park Condominiums were being planned, the Barden/Yaman partnership acquired land in the UDC community of Radisson, N.Y. This was a 64-unit garden style condominium project. Sales occurred at the projected three-year period.

Willow Park Drive:

Homer, NY

Recognizing the charm of the community of Homer, N.Y. (Just south of Syracuse N.Y.) the Barden/Yaman partnership acquired approximately five acres of land in the Village of Homer and designed six lots on a cul-de-sac. The land was acquired in June of 1990 and most of the lots were sold out in the spring of 1992.

Quail Ridge Subdivision:

Cortland, NY

Wherever feasible, the land-use philosophy of David Yaman is the variation of density principle, providing intelligent use of open space while maintaining sensitivity to environmental issues. Quail Ridge was developed by David Yaman Realty Services in 1989. Approximately 90 acres adjacent to the City of Cortland was acquired, and 11 lots ranging from 2 acres to 10 acres were designed on a cul-de-sac with sensitivity to open space. All lots were sold for construction of \$250,000 average homes.

Village of Homer – Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Sunnyfield Drive Affordable Housing Project:

Cortland, NY

Recognizing the demand for affordable housing in the Cortland County market, and the need for a greater variety of investments in the Barden/Yaman partnership, David Yaman Realty Services developed a two-phase subdivision under the New York State Housing Finance Agency's program. Phase I, started in the spring of 1990 and sold out by the fall of 1991, entailed the construction and sale of 17 homes; phase II, started in the spring of 1993, included 31 homes. Working with the City of Cortland, The Affordable Housing Corporation of the State of New York, and SONYMA, David Yaman Realty Services put together the program that provided \$20,000 grants for each home with competitive financing in place for each qualified purchaser.

Village Park Office Complex:

Tompkins St, Cortland, NY

In a limited office market, flexibility was the key to the success of this six-unit office complex designed to be leased or sold as the market dictated. All six units were built within a two-year period with two units owned by the occupants and four units retained by David Yaman Realty Services as a long-term investment.

Addendum: Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The Village of Homer currently has one EV Charging station with two dedicated parking spaces within its downtown, located at their George Vernum Memorial Park. The appropriate space is being provided for the inclusion of Fast-Charging EV Stations, with 5 -10 dedicated parking spaces within the 150-space parking lot development in the DRI project, with room to grow. There is ample space within the new parking lot and the DRI project to include multiple EV Fast Charging Stations. The inclusion of Fast Charging EV infrastructure will provide numerous community benefits, including becoming a destination for travelers to the Downtown, additional spending and economic activity for local businesses, and provide charging opportunities for residents without access to home charging.

Letters of Support

ALBANY OFFICE
506 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG
ALBANY NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-3131

E-MAIL
OBERACKER@NYSenate.GOV

**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



DISTRICT OFFICE
41 S. MAIN STREET
ONEONTA, NEW YORK 13820
(607) 432-5524

PETER OBERACKER
SENATOR, 51ST DISTRICT

September 7, 2021

Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
Central NY Regional Economic Development Council
620 Erie Blvd. W, Suite 112
Syracuse, NY 13204

RE: Village of Homer - Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Fayle,

I am writing in support of the Village of Homer and the application for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding to bolster ongoing economic and community development efforts. This project will be truly transformative for the village's historic downtown district. By eliminating blighted properties, creating new sustainable contemporary mixed-use structures, and developing the adjoining Tioughnioga Riverfront into a community recreational gathering space, this funding would make the Village's Historic Downtown Business District a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, raise their families, work and play.

The Village of Homer is situated in a prime location adjacent to many rivers and lakes, the interstate highway system, SUNY Cortland and many other surrounding colleges and universities, ski resorts, numerous local and regional medical facilities. Existing amenities already make Homer desirable and the additional projects proposed under the DRI blueprint would make the village a major attraction in this developing network of the state's surrounding regions.

The revitalization of this four-acre section of blighted, underutilized property in the village's core would also promote additional sustainable redevelopment in the region, creating additional economic prosperity, jobs, housing diversity, and endless opportunities for years to come.

I have great confidence in the village's plans for the future of downtown Homer. I am pleased to offer my support for the city's DRI application and I hope it is given every consideration. If you need any additional information, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Oberacker", written in a cursive style.

PETER OBERACKER
State Senator

PO:jb:jt



September 12, 2021

Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
Central NY Regional Development Council
620 Erie Blvd. W, Suite 112
Syracuse, NY 13204

Mr Fayle,

As a Cortland County Legislator representing Homer, I am writing to you to show my support for the Village of Homer in their endeavor to receive funding from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative project. The village has long been referred to as a Norman Rockwell place and if one walks down the street, they would instantly know why. Historic main street is home town friendly and lined with thriving small independently owned businesses. Venture further and the village is adorned with century old homes and many Victorian masterpieces. We have a beautiful and well used village green lined with churches and a school. Everything that you need is within walking distance, banks, post office, grocery store, restaurants, churches, entertainment, senior living, town hall, police and so much more. Residents take great pride in this well kept rural community.

But... There is an area between main street and the beautiful Tioughnioga river which is a 4 acre section of blighted properties. This area, right at the core of our village, is underused and unsightly. A Historic Downtown Revitalization initiative grant would be used to turn this area into mixed use structures and develop the river area into a recreational area and walking path that would be a benefit to all.

The revitalization of this area would bring employment opportunities, housing diversity and economic enhancement. It would allow residents and visitors to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the river that flows through the village. We are just off Rt 81 with a beautiful county park just up the road, ski resorts, a college and a hospital. We offer hiking trails, fishing (right in the village), safe biking, kayaking and canoeing.

Out of town people already come to our village to visit, shop, eat and to step back and enjoy the slower pace of this friendly little village. With this revitalization project, it would be an even larger attraction and would benefit not only this village but the entire Central New York region. .

I urge you to support this well thought out project . Small town villages are still the heart and soul of our country.

Respectfully,

Linda Jones
Cortland County Legislator LD9

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
CNY Regional Economic Development Council

FROM: Kelly Fairchild-Preston
Cortland County Legislator, District 10, Homer

DATE: September 13, 2021

Re: **Village of Homer Downtown Revitalization Initiative Project**

Dear Mr. Fayle,

I am excited to support the Village of Homer in their continued effort of a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Project.

I grew up in this village and was elected to represent this community at the county level in 2017. There is not a street that I have not walked on, as a child or as an adult. It is a charming, historical village but in 60 years not much has changed. It is exciting that the current leadership in the village want to expand on the many economic opportunities that this revitalization project presents.

This community will significantly benefit from revamping the existing 4-acre section of the village that is blighted and underused. Revitalizing said property will create a realistic plan that takes advantage of what this area offers - Interstate Rt 81, nearby colleges, a sought-after school system, lakes and rivers, ski resorts, wildlife hunting, and many other sporting and recreational opportunities.

For all of these reasons, I support the Village's enthusiasm for seizing on economic opportunities for future generations. I applaud the leadership for being actively engaged in the future of the Village of Homer, the County of Cortland, and the State of New York.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Fairchild-Preston
Cortland County Legislator, LD10



September 8, 2021

Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
Central NY Regional Economic Development Council
620 Erie Blvd. W, Suite 112
Syracuse, NY 13204

Mr. Fayle,

I am writing in support of the Village of Homer Downtown Revitalization Initiative project. This project will be truly transformative for the Village's Historic Downtown District. By eliminating blighted properties, creating new sustainable contemporary mixed-use structures, and developing the adjoining Tioughnioga Riverfront into a community recreational gathering space, this funding would make the Village's Historic Downtown Business District a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, raise their families, work and play.

The Village of Homer's location in New York State and its proximity to many rivers and lakes, the interstate highway system, SUNY Cortland and many other surrounding colleges and universities, ski resorts, numerous local and regional medical facilities, and many other existing amenities will make it an obvious attraction to anyone. The Village of Homer DRI project would make the Village a major attraction in this developing network of the State's surrounding regions.

The revitalization of this 4-acre section of blighted, underutilized property in the Village's core would also promote additional sustainable redevelopment in the region, creating additional economic prosperity, jobs, housing diversity, and endless opportunities for years to come. The community benefits of this project will be very significant.

For these reasons, I want to emphasize my support for this project and highly recommend approval of the Village of Homer's Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Yaman", written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

President/CEO

**DM3 OF CORTLAND, LLC
PO BOX 328
CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045**

August 31, 2021

Mr. James Fayle, Regional Director
Central NY Regional Economic Development Council
620 Erie Blvd. W, Suite 112
Syracuse, NY 13204

Dear Mr. Fayle:

I am writing in support of the Village of Homer Downtown Revitalization Initiative project. This project will be truly transformative for the Village's Historic Downtown District. By eliminating blighted properties, creating new sustainable contemporary mixed-use structures, and developing the adjoining Tioughnioga Riverfront into a community recreational gathering space, this funding would make the Village's Historic Downtown Business District a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, raise their families, work and play.

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The revitalization of this 4-acre section of blighted, underutilized property in the Village's core would also promote additional sustainable redevelopment in the region, creating additional economic prosperity, jobs, housing diversity, and endless opportunities for years to come. The community benefits of this project will be very significant.

For these reasons, I want to emphasize my support for this project and highly recommend approval of the Village of Homer's Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding.

Sincerely,

DM3 of Cortland, LLC

By: 
Daniel F. McNeil, III

HAROLD HOLZER
31 Fulton Avenue
Rye, New York 10580-2515

August 12, 2021

Mayor “Hal” McCabe and the Homer Village Board
31 North Main Street
Homer, NY 13077

Dear Mayor and Board Members:

I write in my capacity as Chairman of the Lincoln Forum, and as a historian of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, to offer my enthusiastic support for the proposed statue of Homer’s “Three Lincoln Men” as part of the Homer revitalization project.

As someone who has written extensively about two of those men—Francis B. Carpenter (in a 2008 annotated version of his memoir *Six Months at the White House*) and William O. Stoddard (in an edited 2007 version of his autobiography)—I have long been aware of, and impressed by, the critical role the Homer environment played in the intellectual and artistic development of both of these two crucial citizens. No one had more impact on creating the Lincoln image, as both a family man and a public man, than artist Carpenter; none left such extraordinarily useful recollections of office life at the Lincoln White House than William Stoddard. I firmly believe that by celebrating their legacies in their home town, you would attract many Lincoln enthusiasts and history tourists.

I have had the great pleasure of visiting Homer, seeing the sights, and lecturing there, and I was deeply impressed by the efforts that citizens like Martin Sweeney and David Quinlan have made to build the Lincoln connection to the village. I said during my visit that I thought Homer had the potential to become another Lincoln mecca: destination for heritage tourism and Lincoln pilgrimages. For a few years during Governor Andrew Cuomo’s first term, I served as co-chair of New York State historic tourism, and this is just the kind of project we looked to encourage and embrace.

I have also had the pleasure of working extensively with sculptor Frank Porcu, who I understand is being considered for the Homer statue commission. Frank produced a magnificent bronze bust of Lincoln that stands now in the town of Lincoln, Argentina—the first city outside the U. S. named for the Great Emancipator. He regularly exhibits at the Lincoln Forum, and is currently working on the model for a statue for Hunter College depicting activist-poet Audre Lorde. He is a gifted public artist and I think his preliminary models for the Homer piece are magnificent.

If you do decide to proceed with the project, I can assure you that the Lincoln Forum would consider promoting it, and perhaps even considering a modest grant toward its consummation.

If there is anything else I can add—either in writing or, perhaps, in a Zoom conversation or even a public hearing, I'd be honored to contribute further to the discussion.

But I am convinced that it is time for Homer to put its unique connection to Abraham Lincoln on the New York State tourist map, and become a full-fledged Lincoln site.

I hope to come back one day soon for the dedication!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Holzer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H".

HAROLD HOLZER

*A biography-in-brief is attached. For further information on my work, pls see my website:
www.haroldholzer.com.

August 18, 2021

Mayor “Hal” McCabe and the Homer Village Board
31 North Main Street
Homer, NY 13077

Dear Mayor and Board Members:

I write in support of the “Three Lincoln Men” monument proposal as part of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative for Homer, New York. I believe that funding and building this monument would be of vital importance to the Village and the entire county.

I teach public history at SUNY Cortland. Public history is the all-inclusive term for history that exists in the public—museums, historic sites, documentary films, podcasts, walking tours, roadside markers, artwork, exhibits, and, yes, monuments. All history majors at SUNY Cortland are required to take my “Introduction to Public History” course where they learn not just the stuff of history, but why it matters in our everyday lives. I often teach about monuments and why they are important to society. One semester, we did a class project about the Cortland County Civil War Monument in Courthouse Park. Since 1877, the monument has stood tall and provides important historical lessons for us today.

I believe that the “Three Lincoln Men” monument in Homer would be crucial to our local history, sense of pride, and tourist capability. With a monument in place, my students and classes could even help by promoting it, designing walking tours, or creating virtual exhibits that further tell the story. It would be a useful teaching tool for my students, but more importantly, it would be a tremendous feature to the village of Homer. It would last for generations.

If I can be of any further help, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Evan Faulkenbury, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History, SUNY Cortland
evan.faulkenbury@cortland.edu / 980-395-6352

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Faulkenbury', written in a cursive style.

24 August 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the Lincoln Project sculpture proposal, part of Homer's "Downtown Revitalization Initiative," depicting Francis B. Carpenter and William O. Stoddard. Historians are deeply indebted to those two men for their invaluable memoirs about President Lincoln, whom they observed closely for long stretches, the former as a White House artist-in-residence, the latter as one of Lincoln's three main personal secretaries.

Having edited an expanded version of William O. Stoddard's reminiscences (*Inside the White House in War Times: Memoirs and Reports of Lincoln's Secretary*) as well as his many hitherto-unknown newspaper dispatches written while he was on the president's staff (*Dispatches from Lincoln's White House: The Anonymous Civil War Journalism of Presidential Secretary William O. Stoddard*), I have come to appreciate just how important he was as an eyewitness to history. A gifted and prolific writer, he left us priceless accounts not only of the president but also of Mary Lincoln. His regular anonymous journalism, like that of his two fellow secretaries, described, explained, and defended administration policies and appointments. He was probably inspired to write those dispatches by the president, who was keenly aware of the power of the press.

For six months in 1864, Francis B. Carpenter lived at the White House while painting the huge, iconic canvas depicting "President Lincoln Reading the Emancipation Proclamation to His Cabinet." During that time he often spoke with the president and later published a revealing memoir, *Six Months at the White House with Abraham Lincoln: The Story of a Picture* (1866). The painting now hangs in the Capitol in Washington.

Homer can well be proud of being home town to two such important intimates of Abraham Lincoln, men whose names will live long thanks to their important work for, and writings about, our sixteenth president.

Sincerely,

Michael Burlingame
Chancellor Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies
University of Illinois Springfield



Supreme Court of Rhode Island
Frank Licht Judicial Complex
250 Benefit Street
Providence, RI 02903

FRANK J. WILLIAMS
CHIEF JUSTICE (RETIRED)

August 30, 2021

Mr. Martin A. Sweeney
Town Historian
Chair, Historic Advisory Committee
For the Lincoln Monument Project
31 North Main Street
Homer, NY 13077

Dear Martin:

I was pleased to receive your package describing your efforts and that of Homer's Lincoln Monument Project designed to recognize the significance of three residents whose lives have interwoven with Abraham Lincoln. I fully endorse and support such a necessary and noble project by you and the committee you lead.

In an age in which our history is being rewritten and statuary acknowledging this history – the good, the bad, and the ugly notwithstanding – have become commonplace, out of context and inaccurate.

So, your efforts to remember the artist who painted President Abraham Lincoln's draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, William Stoddard, Assistant Secretary to Mr. Lincoln and the person who saved Robert Lincoln are ennobling.

Each have contributed to Homer's legacy through their significant contributions and deserve to be recognized.

You have selected a distinguished sculptor, Frank Porcu. His gallery and workshop contain many busts of Abraham Lincoln, some of which are in The Frank & Virginia Williams Collection at Mississippi State University.

The memory of these three important individuals that join in the history of Abraham Lincoln are important landmarks - not only for Homer but our American culture as well.

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As a result, I wholeheartedly endorse and support what you are doing. Virginia and I will be pleased to contribute to this great endeavor.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank J. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "F".

Frank J. Williams
Founding Chair
The Lincoln Forum

FJW/dmp