BASIC INFORMATION
Regional Economic Development Council: Mid-Hudson REDC
Municipality Name: Village of New Paltz & Town of New Paltz
Downtown Name: Downtown New Paltz
County Name: Ulster County
Applicant Contact: Tim Rogers, Mayor of the Village of New Paltz
Applicant Email Addresses: mayor@villageofnewpaltz.org; ter208@gmail.com

Q: HOW TO ENERGIZE NEW PALTZ?
A: CHILDCARE, SIDEWALKS, & STORMWATER MITIGATION

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN
We can energize New Paltz’s position as one of New York State’s most dynamic villages using prudent and impactful investment in our downtown core. The Village of New Paltz is poised to become the Mid-Hudson REDC’s Round 5 and first-ever village to receive the $10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award. Compared to cities, villages are asked to do a great deal with less financial support. This is especially true in New Paltz, as we are a destination for a multitude of reasons and take on significant hosting responsibilities.

We enjoy being a “college town” and an attraction for visitors from across the region, particularly the greater New York metropolitan area, as both contribute significantly to New York State and Ulster County sales tax. But we need support fulfilling our position as host while making sure New Paltz remains livable for our community’s families, seniors, students, and young professionals.

Having thus identified CHILDCARE, SIDEWALKS, and STORMWATER MITIGATION as foundational needs we could improve upon in the near term, we are excited to make them the focus of New Paltz’s 2021 DRI application.

New Paltz has reached an exciting crossroad. For decades, we have been a fairly typical upstate New York college town. However, there is increased interest in our community from people moving here for second homes or visiting for the weekend because of our proximity to the NYC metro area. These trends were well underway even before the tailwind created by COVID which has generated even more interest in our region and New Paltz in particular. Appreciation of our uniquely beautiful outdoor recreation assets is not new; but the magnitude of the attention is. Folks used to visit just a couple weekends per year in the fall for pumpkins and apple cider donuts, but we’ve seen a noted increase in short-term visitors, new full-time residents, and people who now call New Paltz their second home. It feels special living in a place where so many want to visit, but we need to figure out how to manage the demands as a destination while maintaining quality of life and governmental responsiveness for all residents.

It’s challenging to responsibly oversee this intense interest in our community, particularly since appreciation of our region has amplified with the COVID crisis. As a village, rather than a city, we receive almost none of the sales tax revenue that our enterprising local economy generates. This leaves us with a limited budget to put toward fulfilling our role as host to accommodate visitors, while keeping New Paltz affordable for residents of all ages and varied lifestyles. Our uniqueness — epitomized by a walkable Main Street with locally-owned businesses topped off with a quirky college town sensibility — is largely responsible for generating interest in New Paltz. We have already demonstrated and are committed to mindful planning and careful management, because without it we could forfeit an opportunity to both preserve, and grow our unique community.

We are excited about future opportunities, and we are also mindful of the impact of new projects on our community character. New Paltz is blessed with many unique and valuable attributes. Blending these attributes does not happen automatically. As local
leaders, we are tasked with balancing and integrating the different needs and rhythms of stakeholders who live or visit because New Paltz:

1) is an animated college town with a walkable Main Street and locally-owned businesses
2) offers world-class outdoor recreation and trails that attract regional and international visitors
3) hosts one of New York State’s top public colleges
4) enjoys a vibrant and engaged local full-time community

Though our vibrant community is grateful for the public and private investments we have already benefited from, we are at an inflection point. We need to continue to balance supporting all community members while making New Paltz feel welcoming and simultaneously manage change and growth.

New Paltz is already known for being an amazing place to live, work, and play. Throughout New Paltz’s rich history we have been ahead of the curve, as innovative pioneers culturally, educationally, politically, socially, and more recently, technologically. We want to be a cutting-edge model for 21st-century New York State living; socially responsible, with a focus on equity, while responding to climate change through green-minded development. We have protected and enhanced open spaces. We seek a desirable quality of life for residents with access to affordable housing and a local job market offering wide-ranging livelihoods that align and benefit from our college town setting. Our goal is for New Paltz to maximize its potential while remaining a cherished, beloved, and attractive destination for residents and visitors alike.

**JUSTIFICATION**

New offerings like the Empire State Trail, River-to-Ridge Trail, and the Town and Village of New Paltz co-owned Mill Brook Preserve combined with investments in our community’s existing world-class assets like Minnewaska State Park, the Mohonk Preserve, the Mohonk Mountain House, Historic Huguenot Street, and the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail make New Paltz a powerful magnet.

We have applied to the DRI annually since 2016, and learned from past DRI awardees in our region (Middletown, Kingston, New Rochelle, and Peekskill) as well as other villages and cities across New York State. Improving upon our application’s theme from 2019, we believe 2021’s proposal, our 5th DRI application, is even stronger. This application presents a unique opportunity for the MH-REDC to have a transformative impact on our dynamic village that embodies the State’s core strengths: education, local business, and tourism.

Our region cannot afford to pass up this opportunity. New Paltz’s unique character and ability to generate sales tax for New York State and Ulster County could be compromised. We need to improve stressed-out infrastructure and mitigate congestion so locals and visitors do not become frustrated, or feel unsafe, whether they are walking, on bikes, or in vehicles. We need more tools and resources to protect our community’s unique character and balance growth and change so young professionals, new families, visitors, longtime residents, and SUNY New Paltz students all feel welcome.

Affordability and downtown congestion on Main Street have become our new headwinds. Local officials regularly hear from concerned residents and businesses about the cost of living, traffic, bike-ped safety, and parking. Even though many in our region have only recently learned about how truly stunning it is to be out on the new River-to-Ridge Trail or trek the 750-mile Empire State Trail, we are starting to see what long-term changes to New Paltz could look like. And we may not have even scratched the surface of affordability or congestion issues that could lead to new unintended consequences.

This transformative application for DRI funds will allow the Village of New Paltz to realize its full potential. In fact, we believe so strongly in New Paltz and the strength of our potential — in the form of this proposal — that we assert that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any other village or city in the Mid-Hudson region as DRI recipients to add more sales and income tax and job growth than via New Paltz’s proposal.
DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.
New Paltz DRI Area: roughly bound by Wallkill Valley Rail Trail to the west, Henry W. Dubois Drive to the north, Southside Avenue, and the New Paltz Middle School to the east.

2) Past investment, future investment potential.
To bolster our downtown, this 2021 DRI application focuses on leveraging public investment to 1) rebuild the New Paltz Childcare Center, 2) improve the downtown experience for pedestrians, and 3) address stormwater and inflow & infiltration challenges impacting public health and capacity in our sanitary sewer system.

CHILDcare There is a critical lack of childcare in the Town and Village of New Paltz. New Paltz is not unique. Over 60% of New Yorkers live in “childcare deserts.” In a recent survey conducted by the Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz, 89% of Mid-Hudson residents said that safe, reliable, and affordable childcare was important for community well-being, but a majority (53%) said that their communities were doing only fair or poor in providing it.

Until recently New Paltz was trying to address this need with the New Paltz Childcare Center (NPCCC), which was located on the Duzine Elementary School property that the New Paltz Central School District leased to the Town of New Paltz. The Town then leased modular buildings to the non-profit NPCCC at no cost which provided affordable daycare to many working families. NPCCC was a highly-valuable community asset.

The NPCCC, the New Paltz Central School District, and Town government invested a great deal of time, consideration, and care working collaboratively per the provisions of §95 of General Municipal Law, which expressly permits towns to establish programs for the purpose of coordinating and supplementing the activities of public and private agencies devoted to the welfare of the local government’s youth.

New Paltz’s poverty rate is 16% about 1,800 households. The center was created to meet an urgent need of the community, serving children as young as six weeks old, at a low cost to families, as well as accepting Department of Social Security payments.
The NPCCC worked closely with families under financial stress and allowed for flexibility by creating payment plans when necessary. NPCCC was also able to keep caregiver ratios lower than NYS requirements which allowed enrollment of children with special needs.

Unfortunately, after 20 years, the New Paltz ChildCare Center (NPCCC) had to close in July 2020 because the modular structures required significant work. The Town Board worked with a local contractor who provided prevailing wage estimates totaling nearly $100,000 to repair the modular structures.

After fending off detractors for years who argued that town government should have never been in the childcare business, town leaders were forced to make the tough financial decision, even before COVID, to suspend maintenance expenses. The school district had asserted that it could not “enter into a lease with any entity other than the owner of the building, the Town of New Paltz,” limiting the center from undertaking major repairs on a building they did not own. The Center was able to remain afloat until July 2020, until the continued substantial damage to the building determined it to be unsafe, and the Center closed permanently. The building was demolished in August of 2021.

The current shortage of daycare for children is creating significant challenges for New Paltz residents and is directly limiting the potential expansion of economic opportunities in the region. The NPCCC employed six full-time employees. Some staff members had been employed by the center for more than five years and were also working parents who relied on the center as their main source of income. The NPCCC was a learning center, not just for the children, but also for those employees who were young adults just entering their collegiate journey towards becoming educators. The NPCCC also provided interactive student participation and observation to education students from local colleges, including SUNY New Paltz.

The NPCCC provided services for twenty children, fourteen of whom were infants and toddlers, which is a particularly difficult age to find childcare. Since our school district does not provide a Universal Pre-K program, the NPCCC filled the need for a high-quality preschool education that was otherwise unavailable. Graduates of the program went to kindergarten with a rich educational foundation, prepared to make a smooth transition.

Our community would benefit enormously with a new center in our proposed DRI core. Its central location would not only provide convenient and accessible daycare, but is ideally located to continue to build on the relationship with SUNY New Paltz’s upcoming educators. Additionally, eliminating the school district from the equation would result in a more streamlined process for regular maintenance of a new facility. The Town worked diligently to preserve this non-profit for many years and an updated center will greatly benefit from a new ownership arrangement as well as updated and expanded facilities. There could be an opportunity to site a new center on the Village Hall property with the Fire Department and Town Court relocating to N. Putt Corners in their updated buildings.

SIDEWALKS In the spirit of realizing New York State Department of Transportation’s (NYSDOT) commitment “to provide safe and accessible facilities and services to all citizens, consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations” we propose using DRI assistance to make a monumental leap towards improving the pedestrian experience throughout New Paltz’s downtown. When we discuss “sidewalks” we would like to be clear that we are including sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks, etc. Making sure our passageways are as safe and enjoyable as possible is ethical and supportive of our local residents and visitors, while beneficial for local businesses.
We need to make real investments so public corridors are truly accessible. It would be not only compassionate, but also appropriate, to have the ability to ensure people with disabilities felt empowered and welcomed in New Paltz and were able to enjoy the community’s natural beauty alongside various climbers, cyclists, hikers, or any outdoor recreational enthusiasts.

Past DRI awardees Mayors DeStefano of Middletown, Noble of Kingston, and Bramson of New Rochelle have each described unique benefits provided by the DRI program. They have appreciated the opportunity to contemplate improvements they would not have ordinarily had the chance to consider. As mayors, if we are given the chance to use extra funds, we ordinarily do perfunctory things like replace plow trucks or cracked stormwater catch basins. But the intent of the DRI is to propel communities to pursue additional capital projects. Unfortunately, valuable work like safe sidewalks often gets overlooked when we are reviewing lists of near-term priorities.

As counterintuitive as it may initially sound, improved sidewalks would be truly transformative for New Paltz’s downtown. We have the bones to reimagine our pedestrian experience and make it a model for downtown accessibility. Additionally, this investment via a NYS DRI award would augment, fortify, and leverage the State’s recent creation of the 750-mile Empire State Trail. New Paltz’s active and interesting Main Street is actually a section along the Empire State Trail’s pedestrian path.

**STORMWATER MITIGATION** For many years the New Paltz Village Board has pursued grants via the Community Development Block Grant program and invested in solutions to fix our stormwater “inflow and infiltration” (I&I) problems that are a function of old sewer pipes, including many from the late 1800s. When too much stormwater enters and stresses the conveyance system, I&I makes our sewer treatment plant work harder, wasting electricity and increasing wear on our Wastewater Treatment Plant’s (WWTP) multi-million dollar mechanicals.

Our WWTP’s month-to-date daily average through September 14, 2021 has been around 825,000 gallons with SUNY New Paltz in session on days without rain. However, when it has rained this summer, the WWTP has been called upon to treat over 3x its dry day average. Our WWTP is regulated by the DEC and required to maintain daily flows averaged monthly where the average does not surpass 1.5 million gallons per day.

Stormwater from significant rain events have periodically overwhelmed maintenance hole covers at lower-elevation areas in our downtown on Water Street, Prospect Street, Mulberry Street, Broadhead Avenue, and Huguenot Street. Raw sewage has been discharged onto our streets from these maintenance hole covers. As a result of overflows caused by stormwater, New Paltz has been party to a consent order from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation since 2003 that was reissued in 2014.

Effluent from our WWTP gets treated and disinfected at the Huguenot Street plant. In contrast, our stormwater conveyance system, by design, discharges untreated stormwater directly into the Wallkill River. The Wallkill has experienced harmful algal blooms resulting from increased nutrient levels of untreated stormwater runoff. The NYS DEC identified the Wallkill and several of its tributaries as “impaired” under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act in 2018. Impairment relates to pollutants like phosphorus or fecal bacteria.

Our downtown includes numerous shops and essential services patronized by local residents, visitors, and SUNY New Paltz students. Since ours is a walkable downtown the occurrence of overflowing sewers is a particularly troubling health threat. Improved downtown stormwater mitigation will protect residents’ health and downtown commerce. We must responsibly manage stormwater and employ green infrastructure practices to protect the Wallkill River, Tributary 13 which runs near NYS Route 32 North, and our recently drilled municipal drinking water wells in Moriello Pool Park. Public health and safety are paramount. We need to protect these waterways, our watershed, and area public and private drinking water sources.

New Paltz’s sewer infrastructure challenges are known and being managed. The Village Board, staff, and Village Environmental Policy Board have worked together studying sewer capacity and are well aware of looming capacity constraints. The ongoing health and vibrancy of New Paltz’s downtown relies on responsible planning around stormwater.
One opportunity includes balancing plans for new development in the vacant parcel endearingly known by locals as the Pit with updated stormwater mitigation practices. The Pit is the undeveloped 2.4 acre parcel west of Village Hall between downtown and the SUNY New Paltz campus. Developers have floated plans to construct affordable housing, commercial space, or a hotel in the Pit for decades but to date no project has found enough momentum. A right-sized plan with uses that complement the rest of the downtown could work well and be welcomed by our community.

Fortunately, the Village Board in 1988 had the foresight to include deed restrictions during the Village's transfer of Vanderlyn Avenue, that runs between the Village Hall property and the Pit. After Vanderlyn was added to the Pit, it became a 2.4 acre parcel. The 1988 deed for the Vanderlyn Ave portion states that the Village reserves the right to discharge stormwater using Vanderlyn into the Pit from nearby Village properties including Hasbrouck Park where the owner of the Pit pays for all costs.

There is a unique opportunity to look holistically at several contiguous properties representing 9.7 acres that includes Village Hall, the Town-owned portion of Village Hall, Hasbrouck Park, the Village’s municipal lot at Plattekill Avenue, and the Pit. Development within this large tract of downtown should be improved in a coordinated way with an emphasis on responsible stormwater management. With DRI funding, projects could be developed with green infrastructure features. Addressing stormwater and inflow & infiltration challenges will protect public health and capacity in our sanitary sewer system, and therefore, downtown commerce.

3) Recent or impending job growth.

The broader New Paltz community is well positioned to parlay investments in the SUNY system from the NYS government. For example, SUNY New Paltz’s multi-decade engineering history is particularly fascinating. SUNY New Paltz’s School of Engineering was seeded during the early 1980’s and more recently SUNY New Paltz President Don Christian has taken the engineering program to the next level during his tenure.

Seed SUNY New Paltz’s school of engineering and its controversial inception

SUNY New Paltz’s VP for Enrollment Management, David Eaton, has documented the engineering program’s controversial start and then Governor Mario Cuomo’s role in its eventual inception. Eaton’s research identified numerous instances over decades dating back to the 1960’s showing that there was private and educational sector demand and support for establishment of an undergraduate electrical engineering program at New Paltz. The region had the industrial base and SUNY New Paltz had excellent physics, math, and computer science departments. Eaton provided various details citing original studies and discussions including:

- In 1982, the SUNY Trustees adopted a report which reflected that even though approximately 11.5% of the State's engineers were employed in the Mid-Hudson Region, "no college, public or private, within a seventy-mile radius...has an engineering program."
- A 1982 State Education Department (SED) study predicted a shortage of graduates in electrical engineering. Its findings indicated that only 70,000 new graduates would be available through 1985 but "the electronics industry itself could hire nearly 200,000, not taking into account public utilities or defense industries."

But there was very little support from the association representing accredited engineering programs in the State who was “opposed to the establishment of any additional engineering programs.” Additionally, the private colleges from across the state — potential competitors, — all expressed opposition.

Even the State Department of Education (SED) responded by encouraging the SUNY Chancellor to withdraw the proposal to create a four-year engineering program at SUNY New Paltz and then subsequently rejected the New Paltz proposal, which was reported on in The New York Times in November 1983. The negative response prompted many area businesses (e.g., IBM, Key Bank, Central Hudson) and the Mid-Hudson region’s legislative leaders to actively lobby in support of the proposal to add engineering at New Paltz.

Governor Mario Cuomo was an outspoken supporter of adding engineering at New Paltz but was unsuccessful at getting the SED to reconsider. So in response, the Governor’s January 1984 Executive Budget allocated $400,000 for start-up costs for “the unauthorized New Paltz engineering program” which was also subsequently passed by the State Legislature in March 1984. This promoted a great deal of debate but fortunately the SED’s Board of Regents passed the plan for engineering at New Paltz -- even though the margin was close -- with 8 yes, 6 no, and 1 abstention in May 1984. SUNY New Paltz's trajectory, where engineering has now become one of the school's top programs, could have been entirely different.
Recent growth at SUNY New Paltz

There were 357 undergraduate students majoring in engineering in the fall 2020 semester, more than double the 194 just six years ago in the fall of 2013. Dean of the School of Science & Engineering, Dan Freedman feels it is also worth highlighting the growth across the sciences at New Paltz, particularly, in fields related to environmental contamination or testing via programs in geology, chemistry, and environmental geochemical. The Dean is especially proud of the biology and renewable energy project involving faculty and students that was featured in the Times Union on August 20, 2021 which discussed whether positioning and building solar arrays harms bees or animals.

SUNY New Paltz President Don Christian’s leadership and support of the engineering program during his tenure

In September 2014, President Don Christian’s administration sought and was awarded $10 million to build the Engineering Innovation Hub at SUNY New Paltz as part of the NYSUNY 2020 Challenge Grant Program. Construction of the two-story 19,500 square foot engineering building was completed in September 2019 and is expected to “generate $75 million in new economic impact, create more than 195 full time jobs, and graduate 300 much needed engineers over a ten year period in the Mid-Hudson region alone.” The Division of Engineering Programs offers programs in Electrical, Computer and Mechanical Engineering as well as a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering.

Opportunities for job creation leveraging programing at SUNY New Paltz

Three primary reasons highlight New Paltz as an attractive opportunity for businesses: 1) SUNY New Paltz, 2) quality of life and proximity to outdoor recreation, and 3) access to NYC. Established businesses or startups can source internships from SUNY New Paltz students and more easily hire recent graduates seeking full-time employment.

Additionally, we are facing a new paradigm and potential opportunity -- employers must be mindful of staffing where employees have flexibility to work remotely and onsite. Expansion will allow even more residents to live where they work. Offices located in high quality of life environments like the Village of New Paltz, with its adjoining bike paths and parks, village-life local amenities from independent coffee shops to bike stores and organic groceries are now a premium for a workforce that will increasingly be a hybrid of home and group office bases. New Paltz has all of these attributes to accommodate the influx of companies looking to move away from anonymous, remote office parks accessible only by car.
SAMsix's launch and growth in New Paltz

For example, software engineering firm SAMsix was founded in 2000. With a handful of satellite locations across the US, Steve McMaster was eager to expand and consolidate his business and he found an ideal community for it in downtown New Paltz in 2014. McMaster has explained that he would have never chosen to relocate and grow SAMsix's business here without SUNY New Paltz and this community's offerings.

SAMsix grew to approximately 35 full- and part- time individuals after having started as three on New Paltz's North Front Street in 2014. ARCOs, the name on the office building that Steve McMaster owns at 15 Plattekill Ave, acquired SAMsix in August 2016. SAMsix grew to become a national leader in emergency management mobile software, specializing in technology enabling rapid utility assessment and repair during emergency events, and providing service to the largest utilities in the US. SAMsix has provided internships for many SUNY New Paltz students and several of its staff graduated from SUNY New Paltz. Remarkably, McMaster never had a formal relationship to provide internships or employment opportunities with SUNY New Paltz.

McMaster is well positioned to parlay his track record in New Paltz using both the building he owns at 15 Plattekill Avenue as well as by constructing a new 5,000 square foot office building he has designed that would be next to his existing building. The new building is permitted as-of-right, and its total development cost is estimated to cost approximately $1 million. In 2018, the Village sold 1,800 square feet of its adjoining municipal parking lot to McMaster to expand the parcel and accommodate the new building's construction.

Background growth

Downtown New Paltz is attracting employers locally and nationally. In addition to SAMsix's creation of new jobs and hiring of SUNY NP graduates, Alfandre Architecture, a regional firm, constructed its new headquarters on Main Street with a LEED Platinum, net-zero energy office building that is also home to engineering and energy-related professional services firms.

Another example includes the approximately $750,000 that was invested in the New Paltz's new downtown black box theater called the Denizen. It was estimated that $450,000 to $500,000 was dedicated to labor costs. Correspondingly, the new theater has created a wide array of new jobs: sound and lighting staff, scenery and set designers and builders, costume design, stage management, direction, actors, support staff, and interns from both the college and high school.

SUNY New Paltz & tech growth

Induced growth driven by SUNY New Paltz is expected to be significant. A thriving 3D-printing/digital design and fabrication/additive technology initiative is being successfully advanced by SUNY New Paltz in collaboration with faculty and students majoring in Fine and Performing Arts, Science, and Engineering. Through private grants, funding from NYS and the MH-REDC, the college established the first-in-the-nation “MakerBot Innovation Center.” SUNY New Paltz has offered Digital Design and Fabrication curriculum, formed partnerships with leading manufacturers of industry-grade 3D printing equipment, established high-end equipment at the campus' Hudson Valley Advanced Manufacturing Center, and collaborated with 150 businesses and entrepreneurs involved in 3D design, prototyping, and fabrication. A DRI award will continue to propel the growth we have witnessed by establishing new spaces for more public-private innovation and job creation.
4) Quality of life.
New Paltz’s downtown is a vibrant corridor that supports and promotes eco-tourism, SUNY New Paltz, and local commerce. Due to popular local amenities and the confluence of major transportation thoroughfares (Interstate 87 and NYS Route 299, “Main Street”) our downtown regularly experiences traffic and parking congestion. These two conditions are compounded as vehicles are at times required to circle the downtown area looking for parking. An easier-to-find parking structure could help by directing locals and visitors alike to a central location to leave their vehicles. This could encourage more walking which may further support our locally-owned Main Street and downtown businesses.

For some time we have discussed whether a 2-story, 170-car parking garage via a public-private partnership using a portion of privately-held land that is contiguous with the Village’s municipal lot on Plattekill Avenue might help. Would this be the centralized parking solution and could it allow the Village to consider removing some of the metered spaces from Main Street, allowing for an even more walkable and ADA compliant, pedestrian-friendly experience?

The Village Board has been considering simplifying our commercial zoning districts. We have had a public hearing open for several months to update the Village’s downtown B2 and B1 districts (Main Street and North & South Chestnut Streets) to be more like the mixed use, multi-story zoning in both the NBR district on North Chestnut and the Town’s Main Street Mixed Use district that is east of the Village along Main Street.

New Paltz sees our downtown as a dominant regional feature where commercial, educational, governmental, and cultural activities all meet. We believe our community’s sensibility dovetails perfectly with an effective DRI program. A DRI program could further our goals where we seek balancing a residential population of young professionals, families, college students, and retirees who would like to be less auto-dependent while advancing community sustainability and resiliency as been has been articulated in the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan supported by NYSERDA’s Cleaner Greener Communities Program.

Our community also places a premium on supporting greener building design so we may more effectively address climate change risks. One tangible example includes our ongoing review with our Town and Village Building Department officials about whether to adopt the latest NYStretch Energy Code – 2020 Version 1.0. We have received significant encouragement and guidance from our good friend and former State Senator Jen Metzger to consider adoption.

5) Supportive local policies.
Legislation, policy, and projects in New Paltz have consistently followed themes that highlight our community’s values and sensibilities.

**Housing**
As a SUNY host community, it is not surprising that seven in ten Village residents are tenants and as such there is considerable focus on keeping homes safe, as well as efforts to keep housing costs low given the pressures on the local housing market. Village law requires rental registration that triggers annual safety and fire inspections. The Village has a strong record of exploring ways to improve tenant protections. The Village of New Paltz Landlord-Tenant Relations Council meets bimonthly. The Council consists of seven members, who are appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees for two year terms.
New Paltz’s local governments have asked Albany leadership to expand the option of rent stabilization to Hudson Valley counties. The Village’s affordable housing law requires developments of 10 units or more to provide 10% as affordable units. The Town Board is actively working to expand this type of inclusionary zoning beyond the Village.

**Land use and zoning**
Over the past several years, the Village has rezoned the Route 32 North corridor to be mixed use: a neighborhood defined by a mix of residential, retail, service, professional, civic and cultural uses and which encourages travel by walking, bicycle while encouraging public transit and reducing vehicle trips. The Pace Land Use Center identified this zoning as a best practice example. The first project in the zone, Zero Place, an energy-efficient, four-story structure that will include 10% affordable units, is completing construction and set to open by the end of 2022. The Village Board is currently considering expanding commercial zoning districts to add more multi story mixed use and, therefore, more affordable housing in its B1 and B2 districts.

New Paltz Town and Village have considerable capacity when it comes to land use decision making. Each municipality has a planning board, a historic preservation commission, and an environmental board, and the Village also has a shade tree commission. We also have several joint committees: bicycle-pedestrian, transportation implementation, public access, and community improvement. These all-volunteer bodies are equipped to help support and guide the type of growth our community favors and needs.

**Multi-modal transportation**
Safe walkability is a priority for New Paltz leaders and residents: over the past several years the Village has garnered grants for sidewalk improvements. The Village Board has made it a priority to get sidewalks shoveled quickly after snowstorms so that residents can live, work, and play safely despite the weather.

A county-led replacement of the Carmine Liberta Bridge over the Wallkill River — that also included a new overlook — improved the connection between Main Street and the Shawangunk Ridge’s adjacent open space and outdoor recreation environments.

**Recreation**
The River to Ridge Trail connects the Village core to the beautiful Shawangunk Ridge. The Village leased 15 acres to Open Space Institute at no cost for parking, the trail’s trailhead, and the first mile.

The 750-mile Empire State Trail that winds its way through New Paltz.

The Village upgraded the very popular Hasbrouck Park playground in 2019 which cost nearly $250,000 and was community built with the help of approximately 800 individuals. The playground is a central meeting place and resource for parents from across the region.

**Public safety and emergency preparedness**
New Paltz has a current emergency preparedness plan and an emergency management team that includes Village and Town leadership as well as: Town Highway Department, Village Department of Public Works, Fire Department, Town Police Department, University Police Department, Rescue Squad, SUNY New Paltz Residence Life Staff, New Paltz Central School District, and the New York State Police. The committee meets quarterly and regularly has simulations to prepare for emergency events.

**Intergovernmental collaboration**
The Town has for several years needed to have their offices in temporary structures and our local governments have committed to finding a new space that could be central and home to both Town and Village offices. This will improve our efficiency and effectiveness, as well as be more accessible to residents who are often confused about where they need to go when it comes to their local governments.
Another recent intergovernmental success story is our move to a single hauler waste management contract. A multi-year project that culminated in 2018 transitioned our community from one that had many trash haulers criss-crossing our streets every day to a system whereby one company now provides this service. The improvements are plenty: less noise and pollution and impacts on our roads from too many trucks, less negative environmental impacts (including a better recycling system), and reduced costs whereby the average savings was about $150 per year per household (the equivalent of a 10% village tax reduction).

**College collaboration**

With sustaining and improving our vibrant downtown in mind, the Town and Village actively collaborate with our anchor institution, SUNY New Paltz. A Town-Gown Committee meets monthly with representatives of the college, the school district, the local governments, the Chamber of Commerce, and emergency services.

6) Public support.

New Paltz’s DRI program will be jointly led by Village Mayor Tim Rogers and Town Supervisor Neil Bettez; and in cooperation with SUNY New Paltz. Local leaders and our community have repeatedly articulated the need for smart density in our core so we can afford to protect open space. Recent planning examples include the Village Board’s rezoning of our Neighborhood Business Residential (NBR) district and the Town’s work on rezoning its Main Street Mixed Use district.

We anticipate wholehearted and enthusiastic support from our community, since the projects in this proposal work toward improvements taxpayers and businesses have been discussing that they need for many years. As we selected projects for this proposal, we wanted to ensure each will be championed and valued by as many residents and stakeholders as possible. This type of broad support should help streamline the review and construction processes. This truly matters when one considers what “shovel ready” really means for municipal projects.

There is a positive public perception about New Paltz local government and its recent track record. The Town and Village have worked collaboratively on many large capital projects including new drinking water groundwells on municipal property and at the Mohonk Preserve, Moricello Pool’s liner, a new fire station that serves the Town and Village, a state of the art +$5 million water filtration plant upgrade, updated SUNY New Paltz and Town District water meters, a pedestrian and bike path for Henry W. DuBois on the Empire State Trail, and LED streetlights in both the Town and Village. Citizens and property owners appreciate the inclusiveness and spirit of partnership our Town and Village Boards have emphasized during the last 7 years.

Both the Village and Town Boards engaged their constituents and sought feedback as we developed this application at our public board meetings, respectively on August 25th and September 2nd. Moreover, during both of those meetings each board passed resolutions supporting this 2021 DRI application. Numerous regional groups who have worked closely with New Paltz on various initiatives during the last several years have also been openly appreciative and supportive of our Town and Village administrations. These include the Butler Conservation Fund, Open Space Institute, Wallkill Valley Land Trust, Mohonk Preserve, Mohonk Mountain House, Historic Huguenot Street, as well as Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan.

7) Transformative opportunities and readiness.

The primary transformative projects we would like considered in our proposal have been described above.

- **CHILD CARE**: New Paltz Childcare Center relocation and expansion
- **SIDEWALKS**: ADA compliance and improvements to the pedestrian experience throughout New Paltz’s downtown
- **STORMWATER MITIGATION**: Green infrastructure features to protect area water sources’ health and help lift our NYSDEC Order on Consent for New Paltz’s sanitary sewer system

Another project that would be transformative for our community and one where we have already generated momentum but would benefit from additional assistance involves relocating and sharing municipal offices.

**Shared Town and Village office**

Local governments have been encouraged to work together to increase efficiency and effectiveness while decreasing bureaucracy in order to lower costs and keep property tax increases to a minimum.

We have leveraged ~$5,000,000 in assistance from the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) to construct our new state of the art, energy efficient, and shared Town and Village fire station and Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This will free up
space at 25 Plattekill, currently housing the Fire Department, to be repurposed as a Town and Village government municipal center, and possibly a new location for the New Paltz Childcare Center.

**Phase 1: New fire station building**

New Paltz is in the midst of constructing its new shared Town and Village fire station. The new station is being constructed on N. Putt Corners Road & Henry W. DuBois Drive and largely funded with assistance from the GOSR. This new +16,000 square foot fire station and EOC will include five double bays to house all of our fire trucks and equipment in a single location. Currently, four fire trucks are squeezed into the three-bay fire station at 25 Plattekill Avenue and other trucks and equipment are in a satellite garage and the Village's DPW garage. Our shared Town and Village fire department is all-volunteer. Call volume averaging approximately 2 per day, highlights the need to adequately provide requisite facilities.

**Phase 2: Relocated & renovated municipal offices**

Once the fire department is moved from the current station at 25 Plattekill that space can be incorporated into the plan to consolidate Town and Village municipal offices at a single location in the core of the Village on Plattekill Avenue.

Both the Town and Village of New Paltz offices are in critical need of renovation and co-location. This will improve service to the community and help with staff productivity. Currently, the offices are in two separate locations across town. The Village offices are currently based in an aging building, while Town offices are operating adjacent to the transfer station in temporary rented trailers. Both municipal entities have immediate needs for change to better serve our community.

Several Town departments are located in temporary rented trailers on Clearwater Road. The Town and Village have a shared vision focused on creating a centrally located municipal center at Plattekill Avenue that would serve as anchor for municipal services and increased coordination between the different government departments. The proposed plan also includes sharing resources, meeting rooms, and community spaces.

The Town government evacuated the former Town Hall on Veterans Drive after it was condemned due to public health concerns. The rented trailers are three miles from downtown. The anchor site on Plattekill Avenue is an ideal, central location for shared facilities. A newly renovated municipal building would be able to adequately provide for the approximately 25 employees currently serving the residents of both the Town and Village of New Paltz.

**8) Administrative capacity.**

Town and Village of New Paltz staff have decades of combined experience in municipal government, finance, operations, procurement, grant administration, and auditing. The Village’s administrative team is led by Treasurer Nancy Branco who has +35 years of public and private sector financial experience and Jean Gallucci, who has worked in municipal government for +20 years, is the Town Comptroller.

Recently, the Town and Village governments have each functioned as “subrecipients” on NY Rising projects involving the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR). Other complicated grant administration that our staff has successfully and repeatedly navigated includes Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) as well as State and Municipal Facilities Program
grants (SAM). The SAM grants require special attention to detail as they involve working with the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY). Even with our small local government team, time and again our staff and elected officials have followed through with meeting grant requirements, providing necessary reporting and documentation, as well as, completing projects and spending within allotted timeframes.

Additionally, our local governments and SUNY New Paltz staff are well-equipped to coordinate on multiple complementary projects. Cooperation among these groups is long-standing. Considering the highly-trained, experienced, and diverse workforces available within our partnering groups, there is great capacity to realize projects. Organizational and elected leaders are fully knowledgeable about New Paltz and its regional position. We understand the importance that natural and cultural heritage and equity plays in our economic base.

Finally, staff and elected leaders are motivated to provide better and more efficient services so costs are managed and benefits realized without fiscal stress transferring to residents and businesses. Our proven track record demonstrates our ability to oversee contracts using our existing staff and resources.

9) Other.
A DRI award for New Paltz will retain and attract employers and allow us to make improvements to our downtown infrastructure that will generate valuable new sales and income taxes. When the MH-REDC choses to award New Paltz this year’s DRI it will be making an investment in New Paltz that will be defensible and rewarding.

We anticipate wholehearted and enthusiastic support from our community since the projects in this proposal work toward improvements that taxpayers and businesses have been advocating for over many years. We are no strangers to controversial land-use decision-making, which has informed our selected projects for this proposal, and our goal is to ensure that each will be championed and valued by as many residents and stakeholders as possible. This type of broad support will help streamline the review and construction processes. This truly matters when one considers what “shovel ready” actually means in terms of municipal projects.

This plan is unique because the projects will be wholeheartedly supported by our community and we are shovel ready, meaning impactful, concrete, and positive change will be realized in a relatively short amount of time and will benefit many residents and visitors of our community.

Cities enjoy benefits and financial support that villages do not qualify to receive. A DRI award for New Paltz is greatly needed, will be immensely valued, and will increase our ability to continue to be a gracious host for our visitors, while supporting and caring for all of our residents.