

2021 Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application

City of Rochester, Downtown Rochester

BASIC INFORMATION

| Information Requested: | Response: |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| REDC Region | Finger Lakes |
| Municipality Name | City of Rochester |
| Downtown Name | Downtown Rochester (Center City) |
| County Name | Monroe County |
| Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title | Jeff Mroczek, Sr. Landscape Architect, DES Anne DaSilva Tella, Assistant Commissioner, NBD |
| Applicant Contact(s) Email Address | Jeff.Mroczek@CityofRochester.gov Anne.DaSilvaTella@CityofRochester.gov |

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

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

Rochester's Downtown is the hub and urban core for the 1.2 million people living in the nine-county Genesee-Finger Lakes region. The City's vision is for our Downtown to be the *vibrant* heart of our region; a place that will continue to attract a diverse population of new residents, while developers continue to report low vacancy rates; a place where investments will boom, while making it the fastest growing area in the region; and, finally, a place that will continue to attract more innovation, arts, culture, and entertainment so as to boost yearly visitors and overall economic development.

Downtown Rochester has experienced an increase in investment and redevelopment over the last 15 years, notably, in transformative projects like Midtown Rising, Inner Loop East and ROC the Riverway, that have and continue to reshape the Downtown landscape. Private investment has followed and vacant buildings have steadily been acquired and renovated, many adding new mixed-income housing units and increasing the number of residents living Downtown. All this has brought a new sense of vibrancy and excitement to the area that includes a 17% population growth since 2010. Despite these gains, Downtown remains at a tipping point, with lagging pockets of disinvestment that continue to detract from the recent accomplishments. Adding to this, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have created new uncertainty on the part of investors and businesses. The infusion of additional investments triggered by a DRI grant will put the finishing touches on our Downtown revitalization and cement it as the centerpiece of the Finger Lakes region.

JUSTIFICATION

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

Downtown Rochester by the Numbers:

- Population: 7,642
- Employees: 41,247
- Businesses: 1,775

Downtown Rochester has historically been the nexus of economic activity in the Finger Lakes region. Originally anchored by flour mills powered by the mighty Genesee River, the fledgling central business district grew to become the world headquarters for Fortune 500 businesses, and the home of renowned cultural amenities.

Although Rochester experienced a period of decline and disinvestment from 1990 to 2010, Downtown Rochester has reinvented itself in the years since. With major support from state and federal funding, the City of Rochester laid the groundwork for revitalization by leading transformative projects through the Midtown Rising, Inner Loop East, and ROC the Riverway initiatives. These have spurred a major wave of over \$800 million in private investment centered around converting former vacant office and commercial buildings into housing, and attracting emerging technology and creative class businesses that employ talented young professionals. Young people have also been a key demographic for new housing development, with nearly 50% of the Downtown population now ages 20 to 34 years old. All the while, Downtown has remained the premier regional cultural destination with over 1.7 million annual visitors patronizing conventions, festivals, performance arts, local businesses, and other amenities. As the cost of living continues to skyrocket in larger US cities, Downtown Rochester provides residents all the excitement of big city living at a more affordable price point.

All throughout this period of new investment, the City of Rochester has undertaken diligent public engagement and planning efforts to guide revitalization. Elements of the goals and vision for Downtown were laid out as early as 1999 through an extensive community-based planning process that informed the City's then 2010 Comprehensive Plan: "*The Renaissance Plan*". More recently, the 2015 *Center City Master Plan*, *ROC the Riverway Vision Plan*, and the award-winning *Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan* updated the community's vision and identified concrete action steps to reposition Downtown as a vibrant live/work/play environment. The plans each call for capitalizing on underutilized existing assets like the Genesee River and reinvigorating public spaces. *Rochester 2034* lays out a framework for intentional placemaking and redesigning the urban environment to be more transit and pedestrian oriented. When provided the funding resources, the City's diligent planning efforts have always resulted in transformative projects, thanks to deep expertise and capacity in key departments that have overseen the projects completed to-date.

While Downtown Rochester has strong planning and redevelopment momentum, more investment is needed to protect the recent investments and ensure Downtown's momentum doesn't stall. The area targeted for the DRI grant contains some of the last remaining buildings

in need of major renovation. These ten buildings have a vacancy rate of over 98% as compared to the rest of Downtown that experiences a low vacancy rate overall. These deteriorating buildings stand in stark contrast to impressive recent investments immediately adjacent at the Sibley Building, the Midtown site, the Metropolitan, and other projects. These buildings also happen to be on a highly visible corridor for visitors, just off one of the primary highway exits, and in plain view of major hotels and the Convention Center. As this may be the first and last impression visitors get of Rochester and the Finger Lakes Region, Downtown can't wait any longer to address these issues. Adding to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a new threat to continued revitalization, with future demand for office uses thrown into question. Downtown is at a crossroads and in need of a spark to reignite progress.

For all of these reasons, the DRI presents an immense and timely opportunity for Downtown Rochester to kick-start the next wave of investment. When the proposed DRI projects are complete, Rochester will have rejuvenated every building along Main Street for three prominent blocks. This level of sustained and visible progress will continue to catalyze follow-on investments and inspire the confidence that residents and businesses need to choose Downtown as their home. In concert with the ROC the Riverway initiative, the DRI investment will ensure Downtown Rochester is thriving for decades to come.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1. Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.

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

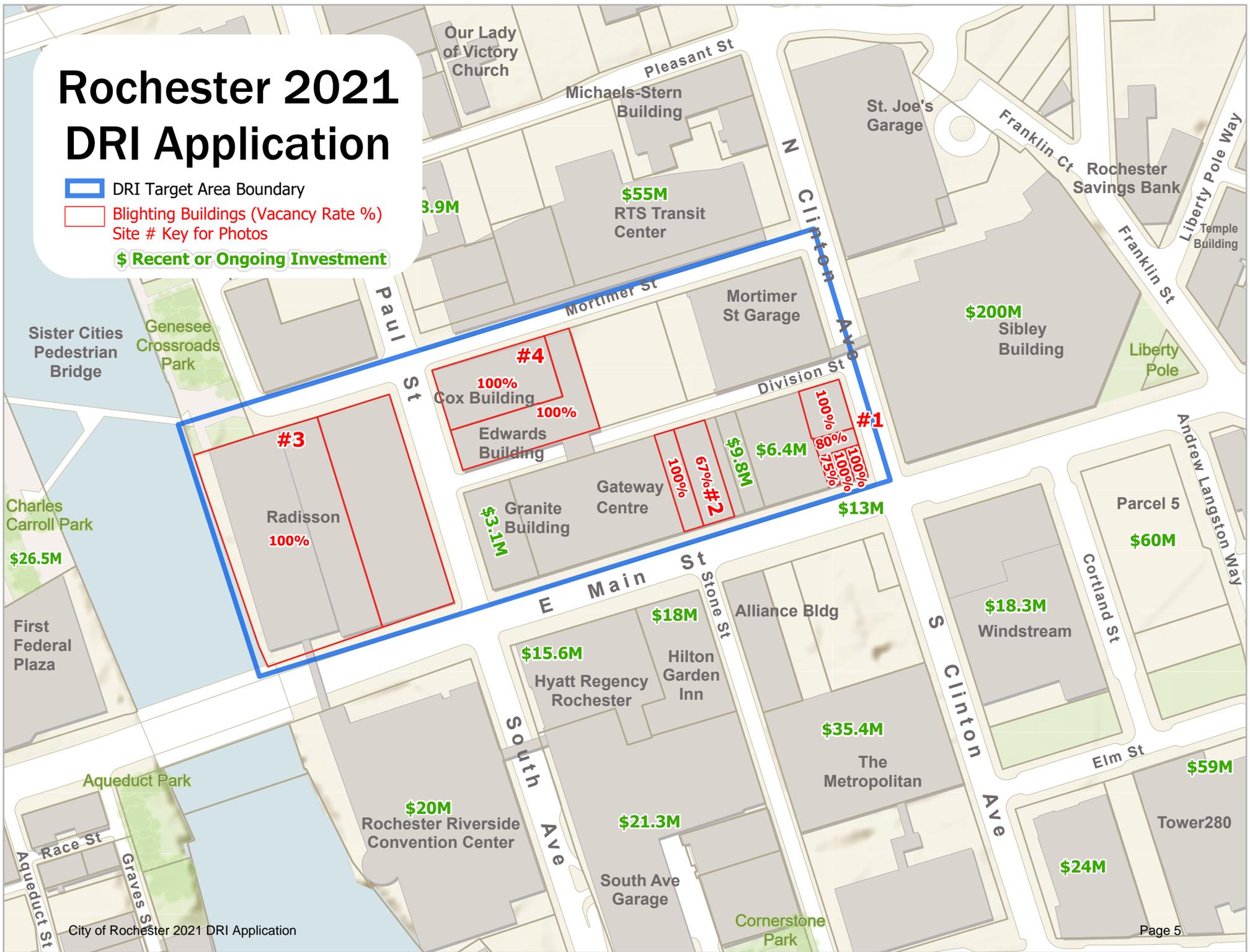
The DRI area is bounded by East Main Street, the Genesee River, Mortimer Street, and North Clinton Avenue. This area contains some of the last remaining significant redevelopment opportunities on the east side of Downtown, and is adjacent to recent major investments including the Midtown Rising site, the Sibley Building, the Metropolitan, some ROC the Riverway Initiatives projects, and many other significant public investments.

The DRI area as presently defined, has ten (10) buildings within its boundaries that have a total of approximately 633,000 square feet of space and 623,000 square feet are vacant. When taken as a whole, this vacancy rate of 98.3% of the square footage present an immense opportunity for redevelopment.

Please see the maps below. The first one depicts the DRI area in context, and the second map depicts recent investments around the DRI area and the vacancy rate of buildings within the DRI area:

Rochester 2021 DRI Application

- DRI Target Area Boundary
- Blighting Buildings (Vacancy Rate %)
- Site # Key for Photos
- \$ Recent or Ongoing Investment



2. Past investment, future investment potential.

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

Recent Planning Efforts

Downtown Rochester has been the subject of numerous recent planning efforts that involved substantial community involvement, beginning with the 2014 Center City Master Plan. The overarching theme of that plan was “lively streets”, as it laid out various principles and strategies for nurturing activity at the sidewalk level throughout Downtown. This was followed by the City’s participation in the Rose Fellowship, a collaborative program between the National League of Cities and the Urban Land Institute. During 2015 and 2016, a panel of experts in economic development, urban design, and city planning from numerous cities explored Rochester’s challenge of activating key Downtown assets: Main Street, the Genesee River Corridor, and the Broad Street Aqueduct, creating dynamic connections between the three. Working in depth with various Downtown stakeholders, the Rose Fellowship panel presented recommendations that led immediately to specific investments in our riverfront, Main Street, and some key Downtown buildings.

Continuing that momentum, 2018 marked the start of the ROC the Riverway initiative, which the director of one local institution characterized as our city’s “biggest leap forward in a generation”. Extensive community engagement around the future of the Genesee Riverfront, particularly Downtown and the river corridor immediately to the north and south, explored numerous potential projects and how they might transform this underutilized natural asset. An Advisory Committee, made up of a diverse collection of community members and institutional representatives, assisted by a multi-disciplinary team from City Hall and Empire State Development, guided the process that led to a Phase I investment of \$50M from New York State. The 13 projects of the *ROC the Riverway Vision Plan* include eight transformative projects within two blocks of the DRI project area, totaling over \$40M in public improvements. These were complemented by significant investments in the Main Street Streetscape that were already underway, in addition to over \$800 million in private sector investments throughout Downtown since 2010.

Lastly, the community rallied around a broader, city-wide planning initiative in 2018 and 2019: the award-winning *Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan*. This document provides a blueprint for development and growth for the 15 years leading to the City’s 200th birthday. It addresses a myriad of topics from transportation to housing to economic growth, all centered around the Placemaking Plan, a section dedicated to investments in the built environment. Rochester 2034 reinforces and builds upon all of the aforementioned planning initiatives within a broader context, positioning Rochester for growth while seeking to improve the quality of life and daily experiences of all residents, businesses, and visitors. Within the Rochester 2034 process, there were multiple meetings with Downtown residents and stakeholders to further explore their goals for an even more vibrant center city. This influenced the Placemaking Plan’s recommendations and solidified the importance of continued public and private investment in Downtown’s future.

More specifically, it was evident during this process that the condition of the north side of East Main Street, between the river and North Clinton Avenue, was the most highly-visible collection of blight and stunted growth in all of Downtown. Collectively, ten major buildings in the DRI area are over 98% vacant. The panel of outside experts from the Rose Fellowship noted this significant obstacle in their report back in 2016. Consequently, the City accelerated its efforts to find creative investment solutions, working with building owners and developers to transform the area. While some progress has been made, there remain obstacles to finally addressing this longstanding eyesore in the city center.

Recent Public & Private Investments

In part due to these planning efforts, Downtown Rochester has experienced a redevelopment boom over the last 15 years that resulted in significant investments in the area immediately surrounding the DRI Target Area. As a result, Downtown has seen an increase in the number of residents and employers bringing in new jobs. Unfortunately, however, the DRI Target Area still has a disproportionate number of buildings that have not been renovated and continue to have a negative impact upon the immediately surrounding investments. Further investment in the DRI Target Area will capitalize on all the recent investments in the surrounding area and contribute greatly to the completion of the revitalization of this core section of Downtown. While not all the blighting properties can be addressed by the DRI grant, a direct infusion of DRI investment could have the catalyzing effect of encouraging the remaining buildings to be renovated.

As highlighted on the map above, the following properties are among those that have benefited from, or are currently experiencing, significant recent private investment: Sibley Building, including the Commissary (\$200 million); 200 E. Main Street (\$6.4 million); Hyatt Regency Hotel (\$15.6 million); Hilton Garden Inn (\$18 million); Alliance Building (\$18 million); The Metropolitan (\$35.4 million); Midtown Tower 280 (\$59 million), Midtown Parcel 2 / Butler Till (\$24 million); the First Federal Building (Panasonic); Windstream Building (\$18.3 million); the Granite Building (\$3.1 million); the H. H. Warner Building (\$8.9 million); the Glenny Building (underway, \$9.8 million); Innovation Square (underway, \$35 million).

The City has also invested in many public projects in the area to improve the public realm and public buildings to support and leverage private sector investments. These include: Midtown Rising (\$56 million); Riverside Convention Center modernization (\$20 million); Main Street Streetscape & Pedestrian Wayfinding (\$13 million); Rundel Library North Terrace (\$10 million); and Charles Carroll Plaza & Sister Cities Bridge (\$26.5 million), among others. In addition, the Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) invested \$50 million in the construction of the RTS Transit Center for passengers to enjoy safe and sustainable mobility, better access, frequency, and reliability.

Potential to Catalyze Additional Investment

When the Rochester DRI project is successfully implemented, there will be immense potential for additional follow-on investment nearby.

The City acknowledges that there are more redevelopment needs within the DRI Target Area than the maximum DRI award can support. However, these projects will be well positioned to

attract interest and investment having benefited from exposure and vetting through the Local Planning Committee public process.

Adjacent to the DRI Target Area there are additional investment and redevelopment opportunities that will garner heightened interest. To the north, the St. Paul Quarter presents extensive potential with several historic structures well positioned for mixed-use redevelopment. To the east, the Parcel 5 redevelopment site is positioned for another transformative project. The properties further east along East Main Street also stand to benefit from increased investment and further strengthen the district surrounding the Eastman Theater. This could complete a comprehensive redevelopment of Main Street from the Genesee River through the Midtown Rising site, to the recent development at the Inner Loop East parcels. With the DRI Target Area planning and investment these adjacent development opportunities will be more attractive and likely to occur.

Lastly, the additional Downtown visitors and population density brought on by the DRI investment will help improve market conditions to attract first floor commercial and retail business investment. Many of the recent redevelopment projects include spaces primed for these uses. This is perhaps the lynchpin of a truly revitalized Downtown, as these businesses reinforce the sense of vibrancy and livability that new Downtown residents and workers are yearning for. When complete, this will contribute to further organic investment and redevelopment in Downtown Rochester.

3. Recent or impending job growth.

Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract a diverse workforce and population to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

The E. Main Street corridor in Downtown Rochester is experiencing significant transformation with revitalization efforts focused on a dynamic mix of land uses and a renewed 24-hour population. Job growth continues to be a priority objective for the corridor as well as the surrounding area. New mixed-use development in and around the corridor has set the stage for both increased numbers and diversity of Downtown residents as well as employees and visitors. A \$230 million 10+ acre multi-phased mixed-use redevelopment of the former Midtown Plaza site and surrounding properties has brought over 650 jobs and 460 residential units across the street from the DRI area. Similarly, the \$200 million multi-phased mixed-use redevelopment of the 1 million square foot historic Sibley Square building immediately east of the DRI area, has brought over 200 new jobs and 280 mixed-rate residential units ranging from market rate to 50% AMI. In both of these redevelopment projects, new jobs range from office and technology professionals to administrative and support services including retail, entertainment and institutional entities.

Also underway is the ROC the Riverway initiative, which includes eight transformative riverfront projects within two blocks of the DRI area, totaling over \$40 million in public sector dollars. Redevelopment within the DRI area seeks not only to complement and complete the transformation of this section of the E. Main Street corridor, but to enhance its trajectory as a regional destination for arts and entertainment. New business enterprises envisioned for the

DRI area include restaurant and entertainment establishments highlighting regionally produced food and beverage. The influx of these new businesses is anticipated to create over 80 jobs, many attainable for individuals without college education. In addition, the project will further add to the growing diversity of Downtown residents with a range of residential units to come online. The aggregate of these major redevelopment projects along the E. Main Street corridor will prioritize public and private investment and infrastructure, thereby galvanizing the corridor's, and Downtown's, future growth and increased vitality.

4. Quality of life.

Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

Existing residents, businesses and workers in and around the DRI area already enjoy a high quality of life due to the many renovations, developments, and public improvements that have occurred Downtown within the last 15 years. These developments have led to an increase in the resident and worker population Downtown, greater mobility options, as well as more shops and restaurants. Once renovated, the buildings, public spaces, and amenities within the DRI Target Area will further enhance quality of life, making the area more attractive to live, work, and play for residents of all backgrounds.

The DRI area encompasses two city blocks along E. Main Street and includes property along the Genesee River. Downtown Rochester experienced a boom in redevelopment in the last 15 years. Unfortunately, the surge in development left the DRI Target Area blocks largely untouched, with the result that significantly renovated adjacent properties and many of their tenants now look out onto these blocks of blighted buildings. Some prominent property owners are experiencing challenges in attracting tenants because of this remaining blight. The blighted buildings are largely contained within the DRI area and represent the most pressing opportunities for development. The DRI area presents an opportunity to substantially complete the redevelopment of the core of Rochester's Downtown area, support recent adjacent investments, attract an even more diverse pool of residents and businesses, support the ROC the Riverway initiative currently underway, and support the Riverside Convention Center across the street.

The DRI area includes ten multi-story historic buildings that are 98% vacant, most of which are in a state of disrepair, and are currently imposing a blighting effect on nearby renovated buildings. While some may be best suited for demolition, many others will be preserved to maintain the impressive façade of Downtown. These buildings, once renovated, will attract a sizable number of additional Downtown residents of mixed income and diversity, as well as provide more leasable mixed-use spaces attractive to businesses creating jobs and positive economic impact. Also within the DRI area is property fronting the Genesee River, a critical natural asset offering attractive views and recreational opportunities. The ROC the Riverway initiative includes projects within and adjacent to the DRI area that will enhance public access to the river and trails and increase its recreational value to all residents and visitors.

Immediately adjacent to, and surrounding the DRI area is the Convention Center, two prominent hotels, former commercial buildings converted into market-rate and affordable residential units, the former Midtown Plaza, and the Sibley Building. The Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center is presently undergoing modernization projects that will attract larger national conventions once completed. Larger conventions will enhance the vibrancy of Rochester's Downtown and spur further economic development for area hotels, food businesses and entertainment venues. DGX, a new grocery store in the Sibley Building will benefit from more residents and workers in the area. The renovated buildings within the DRI area will present opportunities for more food and entertainment venues to keep workers Downtown beyond the 8 AM to 5 PM workday hours. This sense of vibrancy is critical, and these same amenities will attract workers back to the offices and reverse the trend toward increased remote working that we've seen since the pandemic began.

New businesses and residents to the DRI area will enjoy the benefits of the recently renovated complete street along E. Main Street that now offers multi-modal amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, buses, and taxis. There is also the new RTS Transit Center offering easy public transportation access/alternatives for residents and workers. Existing and future HOPR stations for shared bikes and scooters, as well as a planned FloShare EV carshare pod, provide additional mobility options. This makes Downtown Rochester the premier location in the Finger Lakes Region for residents and employees to live a car-free / car-light and climate friendly lifestyle.

5. Supportive local policies.

Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes or New York State Stretch Code, comprehensive plans, Clean Energy Communities or Climate Smart Communities designation, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age- friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The City of Rochester has a number of policies in place that address livability and quality of life for the Downtown area. The City is also actively pursuing additional policies and initiatives to address these issues.

Rochester has had a largely form-based code in place for Center City since 2003, focusing more on the design of buildings than allowable uses. One of the earliest American cities to adopt this approach, the regulations of the Center City District have helped streamline development and lead to higher quality designs. This has facilitated significant private sector investment in Downtown, creating more of a critical mass to support the vibrancy desired by residents and visitors.

Since the completion of the Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan in 2019, the City has embarked on a full revision of its Zoning Code and Map to reflect the Plan's vision for Downtown and other areas of the city. Expected to be completed in 2022, the Zoning Alignment Project (ZAP) is examining elements of the Center City District's design regulations, identifying what

has worked well and what has not as we continue to nurture lively streets and mixed-used development.

The Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan goes well beyond progressive land use policies to address vibrancy Downtown. It articulates a series of Guiding Principles (pages 9-12) that should influence all of our investments and decisions, including the prioritization of healthy living, equity, partnerships, designing at the pedestrian scale, celebrating assets, and focusing growth. Rochester 2034 also lays out a series of Goals and Strategies for various topics that influence the quality of life in Downtown and beyond. Examples include:

- Goal HSG-4, “Pursue new housing development that grows the city’s population and fosters the creation of vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.”
- Goal PMP-6, “Improve public parks, open spaces, public facilities, and waterfront access.”
- Goal TRN-1, “Expand and strengthen Rochester’s multi-modal planning, policy, programming, and infrastructure maintenance.”

In addition, Rochester 2034’s land use plan, called The Placemaking Plan, articulates a variety of investments to complement sound land use and transportation planning in the city. One of these goals is transit-supportive development, whereby all of our transit corridors are designated for higher-density zoning districts. This policy focuses growth in areas where residents, workers, and visitors can utilize transit as an alternative to driving. It also seeks to increase ridership on our transit network, with the hope of increasing revenues that can be used to expand service in the future.

The City’s Complete Streets Policy, adopted in 2011, mandates that the City take the interests of all users (e.g., bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, etc.) into account when it plans, designs, builds, and maintains its public rights of way. The City has been making steady investment with these new priorities in mind and now boasts more than 100 lane miles of on-street bicycle infrastructure.

As a Bronze-certified Climate Smart Community, Rochester is committed to a smart, sustainable future. The City’s Climate Action Plan, completed in 2017, commits the City to a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2010 levels by 2030. These goals guide City investment decisions and climate goals imposed upon development partners.

The ROC the Riverway Vision Plan calls for establishment of a Downtown/Riverfront Management Entity to oversee the promotion, programming, and maintenance of new and upgraded public spaces along the Riverway and throughout the Downtown area. It is anticipated that this public-private Downtown partnership organization will be established in 2021-22 and would be a strong complement to the DRI project.

6. Public support.

Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.

The public participation and engagement process that informed this DRI application has been ongoing and building for several years. Beginning with the Center City Master Plan in 2015, a vast amount of input centered on a recurring theme of lively streets. This fundamental goal has driven much of the City's work since then, complemented by substantial private investment that has contributed to street-level activity. During the Rose Fellowship process in 2015-2016 and the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan development in 2018, the community weighed in on their hopes for Downtown's character and vibrancy. Much attention was given to the opportunities along Main Street and the river, and how concentrations of disinvestment – like between St. Paul and North Clinton – contribute to the widespread perception that Downtown continues to struggle. This concern was reinforced during the *Rochester 2034* Comprehensive Plan process in 2018-2019. During Downtown resident and stakeholder meetings, many people celebrated the progress that had been made in recent years. However, concerns continued to be raised about the last remaining buildings that have not received any renovation, and how the intersection of Main and North Clinton continues to hinder the potential of Downtown's revitalization. More specifically, some pointed out that the block is not just dilapidated, but is a long block that limits pedestrian connections to the Transit Center. The City, the development community, and Downtown stakeholders are poised to finally tackle this lingering challenge.

Alongside the public and private sector investments that have gained momentum in the last decade, there is increasing collaboration between those sectors, as well as among local institutions and non-profits. Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, Empire State Development, Rochester- Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, Rochester Downtown Development Corporation, Center City Community Coalition, and ROC2025 are increasingly collaborating with each other and with the City of Rochester to tackle the key next steps for a resurgent Downtown. With investments in mixed-use buildings, start-up companies, incubator and collaborative spaces, organizational capacity, and key infrastructure, these partners have never been more poised or coordinated to facilitate even more positive change in the community. One of the most important opportunities is finding creative solutions to redevelop this critical block in the center of Rochester.

7. Transformative opportunities and readiness.

Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project).

The City understands that additional project opportunities will arise as part of the public planning process with the Local Planning Committee that will create the definitive and confirmed list of projects to be undertaken in the DRI area. However, please see below a list of project opportunities in the DRI target area that are in the planning stages and can be ready to

begin implementation within 1-2 years. This represents a portfolio of transformative and smaller scale projects totaling \$68.9 million in development cost. With support from New York State, DRI funding can initiate a subset of these projects and catalyze significant follow-on investment.

| Project Name | Developer | Total Devt. Cost | Description | Uses for DRI Funds |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------|--|---|
| NW Corner of Main and Clinton | City of Rochester, private & other public partners | \$5.9M | This area has substantially vacant and blighted buildings that present an opportunity to reimagine this prominent corner as an asset to the surrounding area and investments. | Public realm improvements and enhancement, multi-modal transportation opportunities, electric vehicle charging stations, etc. |
| Division Street Improvements | City of Rochester | \$1.7M | Rehabilitation of Division Street to transform the pedestrian and public realm to support adjacent new residential and commercial uses. | Streetscape and public right of way improvements. |
| Mortimer Street Improvements | City of Rochester | \$100k | Minor improvements in the vicinity of the RTS Transit Center to support enhanced bus and multi-modal access and improve the public realm. | Streetscape improvements |
| Main Street Commons | City of Rochester, private partners | \$1.3M | Creation of new outdoor public space adjacent to a proposed regional food/beverage destination and entertainment space. Investigate a pedestrian reconnection between E. Main Street and Division Street. | Pedestrian access connection and public space improvements to support food and beverage attractions. |
| Several privately-owned structures | Private owners | \$40M | Renovation of existing largely vacant buildings for mixed use to include first floor commercial spaces. Some would include uses with regional draw for food and beverage uses. | Building renovations |
| DRI Building Renovation Grant Fund | Private owners | \$600k | Grant fund that will support a portion of the costs of smaller scale renovation, redevelopment, façade improvement or signage projects. Fund will be managed by the City of Rochester Department of Neighborhood and Business Development. | Building renovations, façade improvements, signage. |
| Convention Center Expansion | City of Rochester | \$18M | Expansion and development of additional exhibition space to promote more vibrancy and draw in larger conventions and support the gains made through the ROC the Riverway projects. | Building renovation |
| TOTAL | | \$68.9M | | |

8. Administrative Capacity.

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

The City of Rochester has extensive administrative capacity and a strong track record of implementing large-scale state and federally funded projects. If selected, several key Departments will collaborate to support implementation of the DRI.

The Department of Environmental Services Bureau of Architecture and Engineering (A&E) will lead the implementation of the public projects. Led by Commissioner Norman H. Jones and City Engineer Holly E. Barrett, A&E has a proven track record of delivering complex projects on-time and on-budget utilizing local, state and federal resources. A&E has a staff of nearly 60 full time architects, engineers, landscape architects, surveyors and financial and administrative personnel working every day to implement public improvement projects that enhance quality of life and economic development opportunities in our city. Most notably, the team led implementation of the Inner Loop East project and the associated transformative infrastructure redevelopments and continues to implement the \$50M ROC the Riverway Phase I investment projects

The Planning Office will support the public engagement and planning process in partnership with the NYS assigned consultant team. The Planning Office staff have recently coordinated the Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan and ROC the Riverway engagement process, which also included stakeholder committees similar to what will be convened for the DRI Local Planning Committee. Staff will be able to help suggest key groups to engage, as well as help provide important context from the recent planning efforts.

The Department of Neighborhood and Business Development, Bureau of Business and Housing Development (BHD), will oversee implementation of for-profit private development projects and would administer the DRI Building Renovation Grant Fund. Led by Commissioner Gary Kirkmire and Deputy Commissioner Dana Miller, BHD has a staff of nearly 30 with expertise in managing complex real estate, housing, and commercial development projects. With a long history of managing City, NYS, and Federal grants and loans to private developers, this team will be well equipped to help oversee the implementation of similar DRI projects.

9. Other.

Provide any other information that informs the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

The following items are included as attachments and can be found at the end of the document:

- 1) Photographs of the vacant and blighted buildings
- 2) Letters of Support from:
 - i) Rochester Downtown Development Corporation
 - ii) Genesee Transportation Council
 - iii) Chris Hill, Downtown property owner

10. \$20 Million Request.

For applicants wishing to be considered for \$20 million in DRI funding, provide a clear but concise justification of why your community should be awarded \$20 million. Justification should include identification of at least 1-2 large, transformational projects that will have a significant impact on the downtown and could be realized with a larger grant award. Project descriptions should include status of the following: site control, commitments from project partners, other funding sources, and zoning/regulatory requirements. Since a larger award amount will require heightened capacity on the part of your municipality, please identify the individual or entity that will coordinate DRI implementation. Also describe the capacity of any project partners to undertake the additional large-scale projects.

Downtown Rochester is the Finger Lakes Region's core. It is the civic, cultural, and economic heart of the entire region. Major transformational investments in Downtown Rochester have an impact across all nine counties of the Finger Lakes Region. Downtown Rochester continues to experience revitalization through major investments, such as at Midtown or along the former Inner Loop East; however, one of the most visible sections of Downtown, the section of Main Street between the Genesee River and North Clinton Avenue, is in a state of deterioration that conveys a negative impression of Downtown Rochester and the entire region to visitors.

This highly-visible section of Downtown Rochester is ideal for a \$20 million DRI award because with a large, targeted financial investment, this blighted area can turn the corner and become an asset for the entire region. Rather than vacant and/or dilapidated buildings, residents and visitors will encounter vibrant mixed-use buildings with active first floor uses, dynamic new public spaces, seamless multi-modal transportation connections, and a renewed sense of optimism in the region's future.

Expansion and development of additional exhibition space for the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center (RRCC) will address a critical space need in order to attract larger, national conventions and events, leading to increased tourism and visitor spending. In coordination with already-programmed ROC the Riverway investments, RRCC will assume an even more prominent place on our waterfront for residents and visitors alike, including a more open, accessible public promenade and terrace along the river both north and south of Main Street.

Revitalization of long-vacant buildings and creation of new public plazas will breathe new life into the heart of Downtown Rochester, resulting in more residents in upper floor living spaces, street-level commercial spaces targeted to Finger Lakes Region food and beverage makers and local entrepreneurs, and vibrant new open spaces that are well-maintained and programmed with activity. Building on recent and ongoing multi-modal transportation investments, the area will become even more accessible through new mobility options including EV carshare and bike/scooter share.

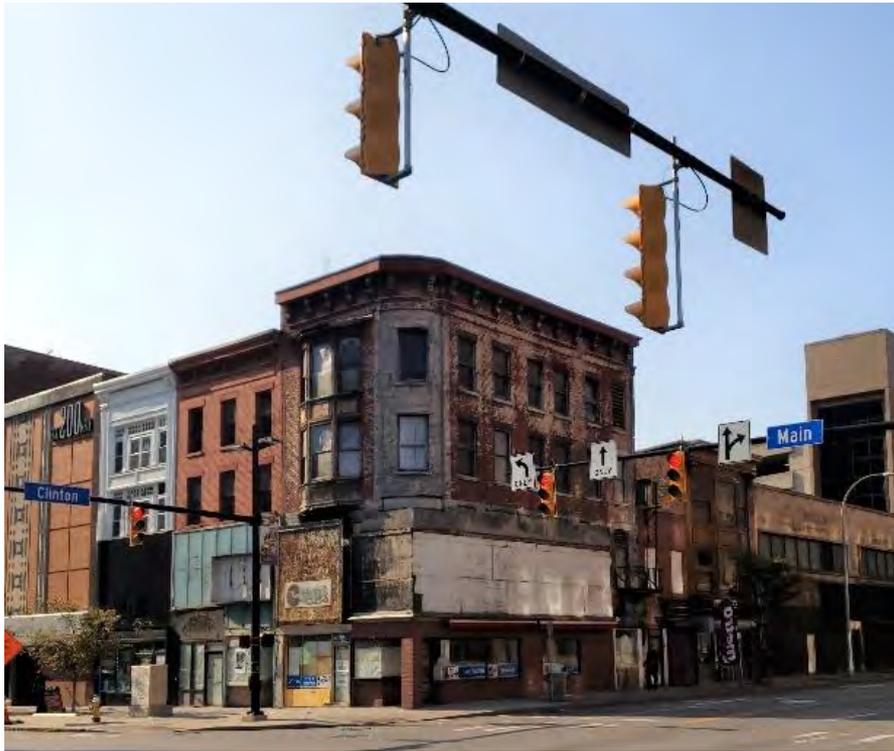
As detailed in 8. Administrative Capacity, above, implementation of the DRI award will be coordinated by various City departments. The Planning Office will support the public engagement and planning process in partnership with the NYS assigned consultant team. The City of Rochester Department of Environmental Services / Bureau of Architecture & Engineering (A&E) will lead the design and construction of public investment projects. And, the Department

of Neighborhood and Business Development, Bureau of Business and Housing Development (BHD), will oversee implementation of for-profit private development projects and would administer the DRI Building Renovation Grant Fund. The DRI presents another immense opportunity for Downtown Rochester's revitalization, and the City of Rochester team has the track record and expertise to deliver.

City of Rochester DRI Application
Attachment 1
Photographs of the Vacant and Blighted Buildings

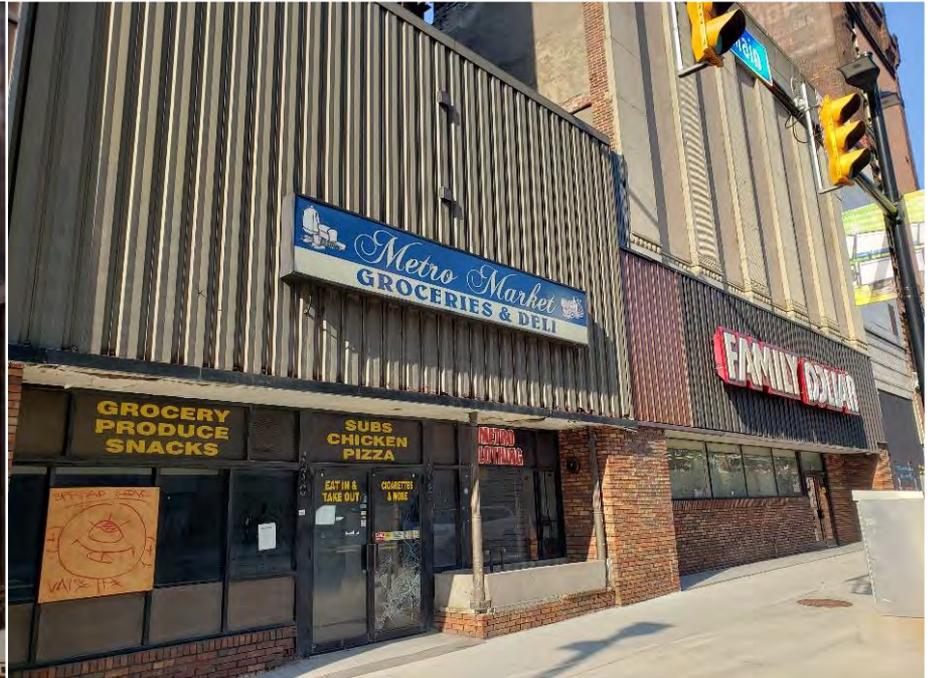
1. Corner of Main Clinton

- 216-226 E. Main St, 5-17 N. Clinton Ave
- 93% vacant, 27,000 sqft, 5 structures



2. 170-182 E. Main Street

- 72% vacant, 31,000 sft, two structures



3. Riverside Hotel

- 120-124 E. Main St
- 100% vacant, 338,000 sqft, two structures



4. Cox and Edwards Buildings

- 34-36 St. Paul St
- 100% vacant, 233,000 sqft, two structures



Division Street



Mortimer Street



City of Rochester DRI Application Attachment 2 Letters of Support



www.rochesterdowntown.com

August 27, 2021

Mr. Vincent Esposito
Regional Director
Empire State Development
400 Andrews Street, Suite 300
Rochester, NY 14604

[RE: 2021 Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of Rochester Application]

Dear Vinnie,

RDDC strongly supports the City of Rochester’s application for a \$20 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant for downtown Rochester. This application targets a very vexing and blighted area in the core of downtown, bounded by North Clinton Avenue, East Main Street, Mortimer Street, and the Genesee River.

This project addresses the revitalization of two highly visible, undeveloped parts of downtown – the languishing properties on the north side of Main Street between Clinton and St. Paul, and the riverfront hotel property (former Rochester Riverside and Radisson). This DRI award would also protect the substantial investments made in a number of major nearby projects over the past decade, totaling more than \$434 million. These include the following: Sibley Square; Regional Transit Center; The Metropolitan; 200 East Main; Tower280; Hilton Garden Inn; Granite Building; Hyatt Regency Rochester; Alliance Building (The Linc); 49 Stone Street; Parcel 2 on the Midtown Block; Riverway improvements, (Main to Andrews); and upgrades to the Floreano Convention Center.

A proposal this complex is requiring new and exciting partnerships between state and local government, not-for-profit entities, and key private investors to move forward. All have the shared goal of creating a far more vibrant downtown with new amenities and entertainment venues. We believe that this high impact investment by the State will ultimately grow downtown’s commercial and residential tenancy, and attract new visitors and convention bookings.

For these reasons and for the monumental impact this funding would have, we strongly urge the approval of the City of Rochester’s 2021 DRI application. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Heidi N. Zimmer-Meyer
President

ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

September 1, 2021

Vinnie Esposito, Regional Director
Empire State Development
Finger Lakes Region
400 Andrews Street
Rochester, NY 14604

Dear Vinnie:

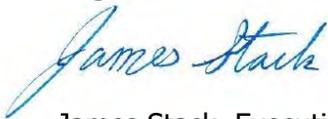
On behalf of the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region, I would like to express support for the City of Rochester's application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). A successful application will build on the City's Roc the Riverway initiative as well as other public and private investments in the City center.

Of particular relevance, GTC has provided support for transportation studies and capital projects in the immediate vicinity of the target area include the Downtown Transit Center, the conversion of North Clinton and Saint Paul Streets from one-way to two-way traffic flow, and the East Main Street Streetscape and Wayfinding project.

This proposal advances the *Long Range Transportation Plan for the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region 2045 (LRTP 2045)*, which was adopted on June 10, 2021. LRTP 2045 includes the near-term Recommendation: SR-7, Local Implementation of Infill Development. SR-7 encourages infill development to maximize existing transportation system capacity, promote efficient land use, encourage reinvestment, and improve energy efficiency.

GTC has a history of working with the City of Rochester on transportation planning efforts and implementation of large projects. We are confident that the City can successfully implement this project. GTC stands ready to provide staff technical assistance to support the project as appropriate.

Regards,



James Stack, Executive Director

Chris Hill, Board Chair
Rochester Downtown Development Corporation
28 East Main Street, Suite 700
Rochester, NY 14614

September 13, 2021

Finger Lakes Regional Economic
Development Council
Via email: NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov

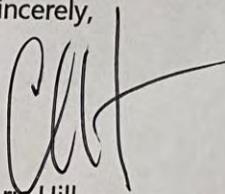
Support Letter - City of Rochester's Application for Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant

Dear Mr. Esposito,

I write this letter in full support of the City of Rochester's application for a \$20 million DRI grant for our downtown area. I am excited about the City's intention to target the section of downtown bounded by N. Clinton Avenue, E. Main Street, the Genesee River, and Mortimer Street. This focus will largely complete the revitalization of this section of downtown and complement the millions of dollars in investments that have been made in adjacent areas such as Midtown, the Sibley Building, the transit center, The Metropolitan, my building at 200 E. Main Street, and other immediately adjacent investments.

This is a much needed investment that will highlight several public-private partnerships working together to achieve the shared goal of a vibrant downtown with numerous amenities, entertainment venues, and other opportunities for visitors, residents, and businesses.

Sincerely,



Chris Hill
Chairman of the Board
Rochester Downtown Development Corporation