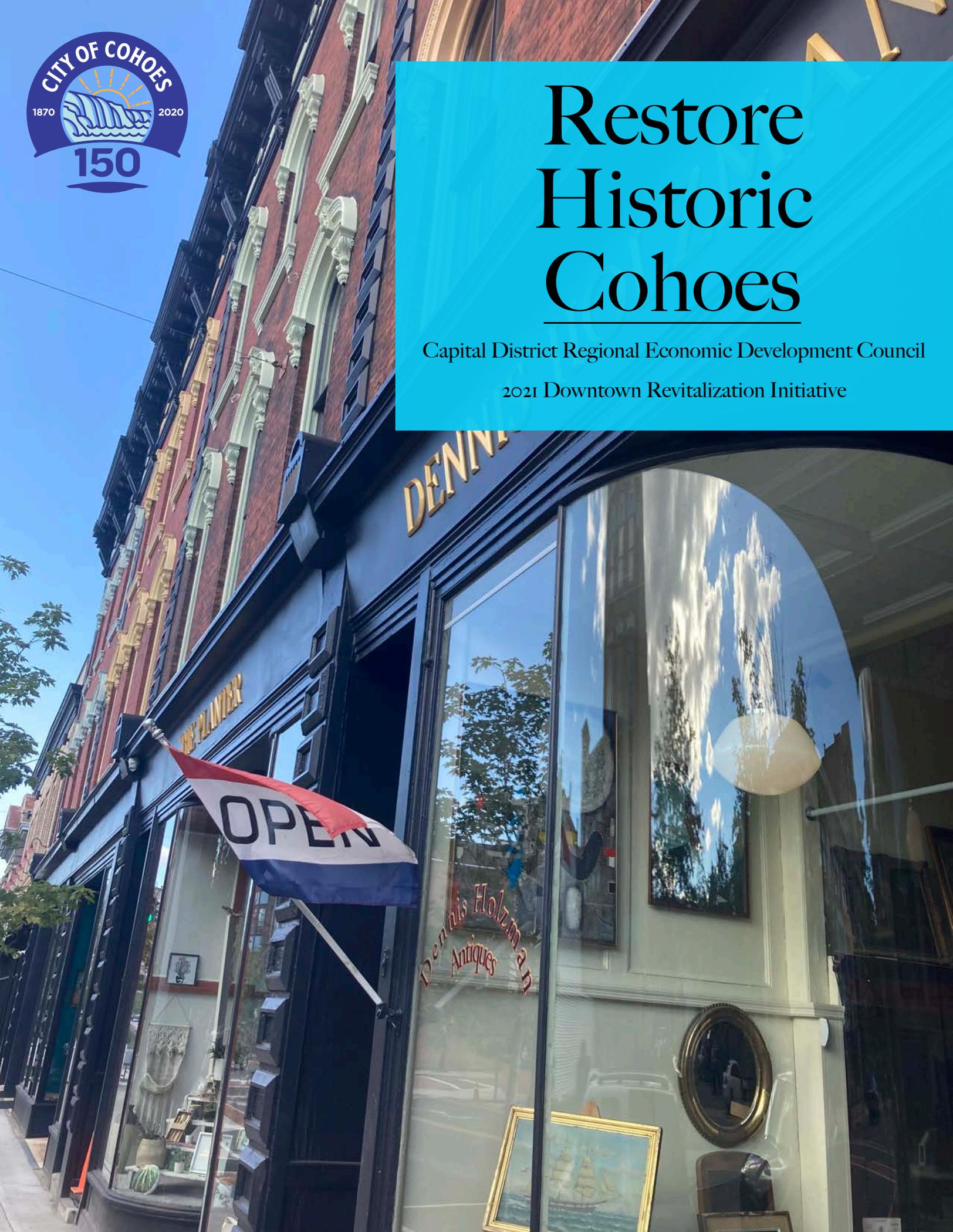




# Restore Historic Cohoes

Capital District Regional Economic Development Council

2021 Downtown Revitalization Initiative



Cohoes is a city built on water. The water-powered Harmony Mills attracted a melting pot of workers from all over the world and made Cohoes a leading global manufacturing center. The water of the Erie Canal carried goods to market. Today, two rivers and the majestic Cohoes Falls attract new residents and draw thousands of visitors every year, filling downtown shops and restaurants.



**CITY OF COHOES  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

WILLIAM T. KEELER  
Mayor

97 Mohawk Street  
Cohoes, New York 12047



Telephone: (518) 233-2119  
Facsimile: (518) 233-2159

[mayor@ci.cohoes.ny.us](mailto:mayor@ci.cohoes.ny.us)  
[www.cohoes.com](http://www.cohoes.com)

August 10, 2021

Mr. Michael Yevoli, Regional Director  
Ms. Ruth H. Mahoney, Co-Chair  
Mr. Havidán Rodríguez, Co-Chair  
Capital District Regional Economic Development Council  
433 River Street  
Troy, NY 12180

Dear Council Representatives,

As Mayor, one of my top priorities is the Restore Historic Cohoes initiative. That means breathing new life into historic spaces and attracting new development that folds in with the historic nature of our city, to create a vibrant downtown of the future.

Even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen the resiliency of our business community, with more than a dozen new businesses opening their doors or expanding. New development that respects Cohoes' historic past is on the horizon. Cohoes is a city on the precipice of a full scale revival.

A \$10 Million investment from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will get the transformational projects in this application over the finish line and propel our region forward. Supporting these projects in new construction, historic renovation, green infrastructure, streetscape improvements, public art, and business development, will once again make a focal point for the region.

I am proud to submit this application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative to Restore Historic Cohoes, and I look forward to working to make these visions a reality in the years to come.

Sincerely,

William T. Keeler  
Mayor of Cohoes



## Table of Contents

<b>1. Basic Information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Vision for Downtown</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Justification</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Downtown Identification</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>a. Boundaries of the Proposed DRI Area</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>b. Past Investment, Future Investment Potential</b> Case Study: Floating Solar	<b>12</b>
<b>c. Recent or Impending Job Growth</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>d. Quality of Life</b> Case Study: Canal Square Park Case Study: Cohoes Music Hall	<b>22</b>
<b>e. Supportive Local Policies</b> Case Study: LED Streetlight Conversion	<b>33</b>
<b>f. Public Support</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>g. Transformative Opportunities and Readiness</b> Case Study: A Tales of Two Fires	<b>45</b>
<b>h. Administrative Capacity</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>i. Other - Letters of Support and Press</b>	<b>72</b>



# 1. Basic Information

## REDC Region

Capital Region

## Municipality Name

City of Cohoes

## Downtown Name

Historic Downtown District

## County

Albany

## Applicant Contacts

William T. Keeler

Mayor

City of Cohoes

mayor@ci.cohoes.ny.us

Stephen Napier

Director of Community and Economic  
Development

City of Cohoes

snapier@ci.cohoes.ny.us



## 2. A Vision For The Future Of A Historic Downtown

During outreach activities for this application, we asked the public to describe their vision for Downtown Cohoes. Seventy-five community members responded, one of whom captured the overall sentiment in just five words: "Downtown Cohoes will be the heart of the city." This simple phrase captures the complex ways in which our community views and engages with our downtown, as not only a physical place, but as a central, beating, hub of commerce and community life. Our vision for the downtown centers on this concept and draws directly from the words and ideas of the community.

Downtown Cohoes offers a uniquely historic, welcoming, and walkable atmosphere - a beautifully modern, yet nostalgic place to go for food, entertainment, and fun. The heart of our city, downtown has a small-town feel with big city amenities. It is an easily accessible mixed-use district with a thriving arts community where sustainable urban living and a variety of local food choices draw in workers, residents, and visitors. As a vital regional hub for small businesses, it is a place where creative entrepreneurs plant their roots and thrive.

### Restore Historic Cohoes

The essence of the City of Cohoes can be seen in its historic buildings. They stand as monuments to the century of labor and innovation that made Cohoes a leading global textile manufacturer. Those robust, ornate buildings, often the victims of decades of neglect, are experiencing a second act as the location of the resurgence of this once bustling community. Long empty mill buildings have become luxury loft apartments, bringing new vitality to old spaces. Former bank buildings are becoming new centers of arts, entertainment and clean energy. The Cohoes Music Hall, once boarded up for nearly 70 years, has re-emerged as a premiere theater venue for the region. The downtown storefronts and apartments, some sealed off for generations, are filling back up with entrepreneurs and residents eager to contribute to the second act of a city once written off.

Mayor Keeler's "Restore Historic Cohoes" initiative seeks to capitalize on the energy that the city has reclaimed over the course of the past decade and add fuel to that movement. Since taking office, through strategic investments made in conjunction with the Local Development Corporation, Cohoes has continued to see small businesses open their doors, even in the face of a global pandemic. Developers continue to invest in historic building renovations. People continue to flock to the Historic Downtown District as an ideal place to live, work, and play. Through the rest of this document you will see the projects that mark the next step in the revitalization of Cohoes; a post-industrial city that is well poised for a second act. With the help of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, that second act will come to fruition sooner than anyone might have guessed.

### 3. Justification

Cohoes' past, present, and future converge in the Historic Downtown District district, where charming stretches of historic facades form an inviting neighborhood that anchors community life and inspires new beginnings. It contains the compact and wonderfully preserved Downtown Cohoes Historic District which boasts 165 (out of 175) historic structures built between 1820 and 1930. These striking homes, businesses, and civic institutions tell the story of the Cohoes' contributions to the Erie Canal, the textile industry, and the City's evolution to the modern day. It also includes the Central Business District which stretches along Remsen Street. The CBD hosts a range of small businesses and has experienced a renaissance in recent years with the addition of increased downtown housing, and several new and reimagined food and entertainment establishments. Most beloved among these is the landmark Cohoes Music Hall which reopened five years ago with new programs and partnerships following a comprehensive renovation. The Music Hall is the cornerstone of a flourishing creative economy that has repurposed historic downtown spaces to create an emerging Arts & Culture District with workshops, studios, artist markets, performance spaces, and event venues. For those who draw inspiration from movement and nature, the downtown district is also a Recreational District. Set along the Mohawk River with views of the famous Cohoes Falls, downtown has a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces connected to a regional network of parks and trails for hiking, cycling, boating, sports, and other activities. Finally, downtown is a Sustainable Development District. Remsen Street and its environs are the focus of Cohoes' efforts to advance mixed-use development and accessible multi-modal transportation options that support sustainable lifestyles.



The Historic Downtown District was chosen because it:

- Is compact, walkable, bikeable, inviting, and livable year-round;
- Links and features the City's renowned arts and cultural anchors;
- Builds upon past investments and leverages existing assets;
- Exemplifies city living with a small-town atmosphere and relatively low cost of living;
- Integrates major employers with an extensive community of locally-owned small businesses;
- Promotes a "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" through green urbanism and sustainable development;
- Offers a range of housing options and affordability levels;
- Approaches transportation for all through an extensive network of multimodal streets and trails;
- Prioritizes affordable local food options;
- Connects urban dwellers to a variety of unique recreational opportunities;
- Represents a young and growing population; and
- Is a destination sought out by millennial job seekers and entrepreneurs.

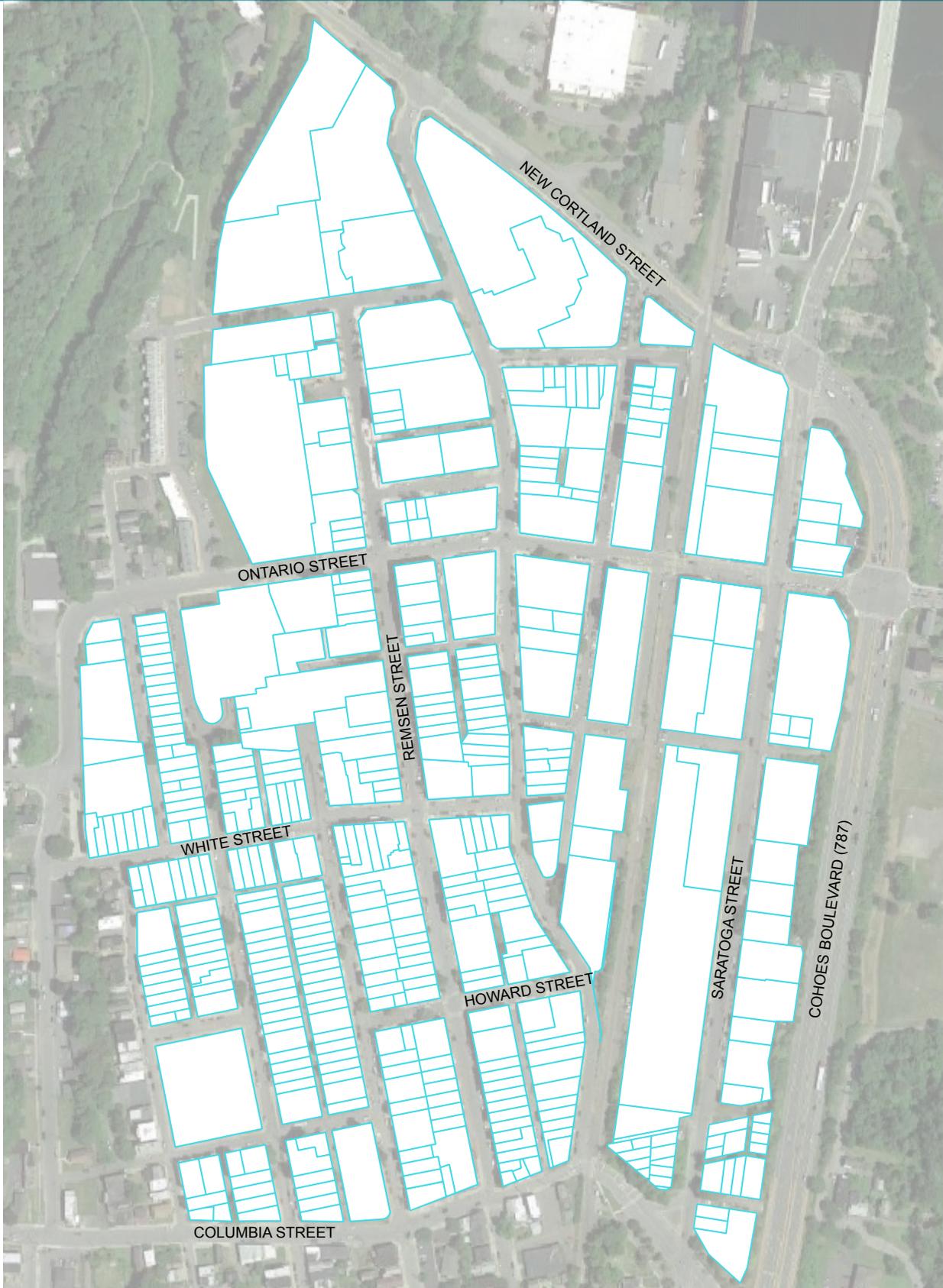
Cohoes is poised to create highly impactful results by using DRI funds to catalyze continued investment that will advance our holistic approach to community development. Since our last application, we have experienced continued new investment with more on the horizon. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are growing into a community of choice within the Capital Region that is being sought out by young entrepreneurs and corporate investors alike. The DRI Program will enable us to build on existing planning and development efforts to create a sustainable urban center where people of all ages and income levels can live, work, and play year-round.

Over the past four years, the City has begun implementing the 2017 Cohoes Proud comprehensive plan and the 2020 "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" initiative modeled after the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program. These plans map a future for our historic downtown that will embrace regional and state-wide sustainability goals, attract strategic investment, leverage existing assets, and foster an ecosystem of collaboration and change. Among other things, they promote the enhancement of a dynamic local economy with mixed-use transit-oriented development centers, multimodal transportation options, a revitalized waterfront and a strengthened sense of place.

As part of this, the City has partnered with the private sector to capitalize on \$45 million of new investment downtown through 20 projects that created 1,930 temporary jobs, more than 60 permanent positions, 13 commercial units, and over 300 new homes and apartments. The Historic Downtown Business District has also benefited from 7 public grants worth nearly \$40 million for regional connectivity initiatives, renovations to historic arts and cultural anchors, upgrades to recreational hubs, and funding that leveraged private dollars to facilitate the growth of locally-owned small businesses.

Most importantly, Cohoes has passionate local support. Under new leadership and expert guidance, the City is tapping into the time, talent, and expertise of people across our community including business owners, homeowners, landlords, tenants, students, residents who have shaped the story of Cohoes, and newcomers who are writing the next chapter. In short, Cohoes has the foundation, the momentum, and the heart to turn its vision for downtown revitalization into a reality.

# 4. Downtown Identification



## 4a. Boundaries of the DRI area

The boundary for the DRI District encompasses a high density, compact area of Cohoes' Central Business District and adjacent neighborhoods that evolved organically to meet the needs of an early industrial, pre-automobile society. Communities around the nation are trying to recreate New Urbanist meets Green Urbanism planning models characterized by mixed-use and form-based zoning; accessibility; walkability; and aesthetically charming, distinctive, comfortably scaled downtowns that are rich with green community spaces, cultural offerings, food and services. These qualities collectively create an attractive city that is inviting to families with children, millennials, empty-nesters and retirees; and that draws entrepreneurs and investors excited by the energy and potency of such a community. These are the qualities that Cohoes already has and is actively building upon.



Given the grid layout of the streets, prominent corners are established throughout the DRI District, providing opportunities to create a sense of place and commercial activity at these intersections. With its architectural character largely intact, pedestrians and bicyclists on just about any corner of the Historic Downtown District can clearly see their destination. This simple ability to see where you want to go creates an appealing atmosphere where people are more likely to spend time (and money) getting to know each other and enjoying local businesses. It offers a truly metropolitan experience at a comfortable scale for people of all ages and abilities with a beautiful, natural backdrop.

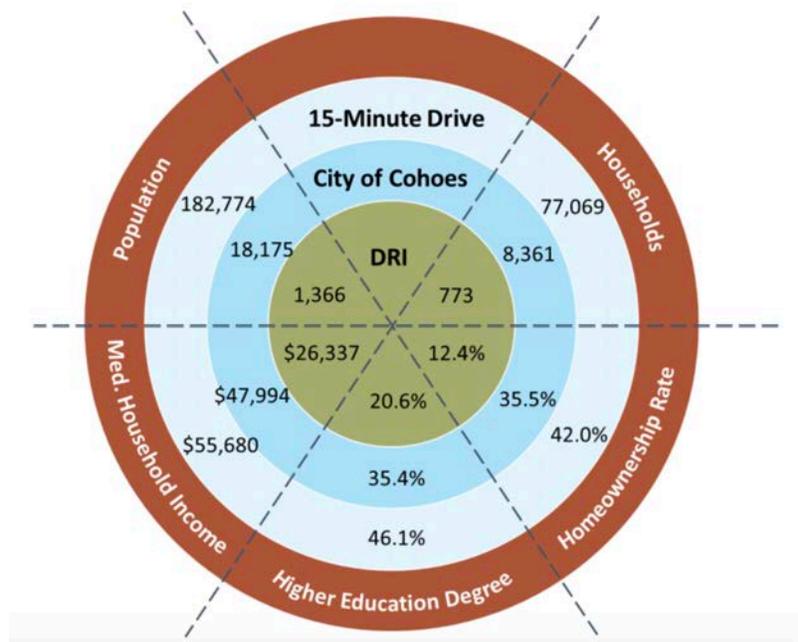
The DRI District is roughly ¼ mile (5- to 10-minute walk) in all directions from the cultural and commercial heart of our downtown located at the intersection of Remsen and Ontario Streets. Ontario Street (NYS Route 470), which carries vehicular traffic across Van Schaick Island from Troy and up to Colonie, is a focus of development and has seen a significant amount of investment over the past three years. In addition, there are several other ancillary avenues that run parallel to Remsen Street within the Cohoes DRI District including Main Street to the west, and Mohawk Street, Saratoga Street (NYS Route 32), and NYS Route 787 to the east.

The northern boundary of the Cohoes DRI District is New Cortland Street. This was chosen for its high daily vehicle count, making it a clear physical barrier of the downtown. Just past the downtown on New Cortland Street are the Harmony Mills Loft Apartments, which have established 340 upscale apartment units with residents who drive much of the economic growth in the DRI District.

The western boundary was chosen to include several key areas off of Remsen Street including the gateway to the Cohoes Heritage Trail on Cayuga Street, Mosaic Village which is a recently completed \$17 million mixed-use project, the historic Odgen Mills , and the mixed-use parcels fronting the west side of Main Street.

The southern boundary was chosen at Columbia Street due to the terminus of the Cohoes' Central Business District, and its alignment to include Bridge Avenue, which is a key connection from Van Schaick Island to the Cohoes hill neighborhood located west of Downtown. The southern boundary also encompasses the properties affected by the 2017 Remsen Street fire.

The eastern boundary of the Cohoes DRI District is Cohoes Boulevard, a section of Interstate 787. This boundary encompasses key waterfront parcels that have immense development potential including the Cohoes City Lofts phase II. Cohoes Boulevard and the parallel running Saratoga Street have the potential to be major commercial corridors as well as being gateways to the heart of the DRI district.



Running through the DRI District are major east-west and north-south thoroughfares that make downtown Cohoes ideally situated to serve the greater region. With over 180,000 people living within a 15 minute drive, the population and income of the surrounding area combined with that of the City of Cohoes are more than sufficient to support further development of the DRI district.



## 4b. Past investment and future investment potential

Cohoes is experiencing a renaissance, due in part to the leadership of the City and the capacity of groups like the Cohoes Local Development Corporation and the Cohoes Industrial Development Authority who have created an ecosystem where small and large businesses alike are able to plant their roots and grow with the community.

"Cohoes set a great example in 2020 by bringing together interested parties at all levels to support business ventures that somehow managed to get off to a good start this past year despite all the challenges, and the impact on economics, community, and morale was very tangible"

-Pete Bardunias, Capital Region Chamber

## Recent Investment Summary, DRI District

Property/Title	Amount
Historic	\$11,696,000.00
Enterprise	\$2,880,000.00
Arts	\$1,417,000.00
Recreation	\$3,050,000.00
Transportation	\$38,328,250.00
Other	\$25,550,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$82,921,250.00</b>

The City of Cohoes is well practiced at facilitating partnerships between government agencies and the private sector to further advance the development of the City. Over the past three years Cohoes has helped to secure and direct a series of private and public investments resulting in new housing and commercial development along with enhanced streetscapes and other infrastructure improvements. Partnerships with New York State’s Department of State (NYS DOS), NYSERDA, local businesses, and a variety of other stakeholders have fostered a welcoming environment for investment and revitalization efforts in Cohoes. Since 2017, the City of Cohoes has benefited from a total of \$86 million in private investments in both housing and commercial development, while leveraging over \$84 million in grants and direct city investments. A large portion of these investments were directed toward the Downtown Historic District.

## Recent Private Investments In The DRI District

Property/Title	Project Site/Location	Amount	Status	Project Description
<b>Historic</b>				
122-130 Remsen Street	122-130 Remsen Street	\$2,620,000.00	Complete	Mixed-Use Market Rate Housing
Warehouse 71	71 Canvass Street	\$2,500,000.00	Complete	Market Rate Housing
Cohoes Hotel	134 Remsen Street	\$945,000.00	Complete	Historic Rehabilitation
182-190 Remsen Street	182-190 Remsen Street	\$910,000.00	Complete	Mixed-Use Historic Rehabilitation
Adams Block	109-113 Remsen Street, 103 Remsen Street, 95 Remsen Street	\$1,346,000.00	Complete	Mixed-Use Market Rate Housing
		\$8,321,000.00		
<b>Enterprise</b>				
Tech Valley Office Interiors	50 Mohawk Street	\$600,000.00	Complete	Commercial rehabilitation
Cohoes Commons	55 Mohawk Street	\$550,000.00	Complete	Interior Renovations
Pioneer Bank	100 Mohawk Street	\$500,000.00	Complete	Bank Renovations
Donnie Magoo’s	165 Remsen Street	\$200,000.00	Complete	Dining
Anthony’s Italian Restaurant	220 Remsen Street	\$189,000.00	Complete	Dining
The Daisy	182 Remsen Street	\$110,000.00	Complete	Dining
		\$2,149,000.00		
<b>Arts</b>				
The Venue	65 Congress Street	\$265,000.00	Complete	Adaptive reuse of historic church to venue
		\$265,000.00		
<b>Recreation</b>				
Gateway Sports	50 Mohawk Street	\$1,500,000.00	Complete	Rehab of former Cohoes Community Center
Cayuga Street Urban Garden	50 Mohawk Street	\$50,000.00	Complete	Urban Garden
		\$1,550,000.00		
<b>Other</b>				
Mosaic Village	55 Sargent Street	\$17,500,000.00	Complete	68 Units of Mixed-Use Affordable Housing
Remsen Place	12 White Street	\$3,600,000.00	Complete	24 Units of Mixed-Use Market Rate Housing
Cohoes Hotel Phase II	10 Main Street	\$2,530,000.00	In Progress	22 Units of Market Rate Housing
		\$23,600,000.00		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$35,945,000.00</b>		

The DRI District alone has realized significant levels of public and private investment, totaling roughly \$83 million. The tables below identify specific recent investments within the DRI district, over the last three years, demonstrative of the City’s ability to attract small businesses, create jobs, and ultimately develop an inviting downtown with unique amenities that will continue to attract new visitors and residents alike.

In total, the City has seen \$11.7 million invested into Historic rehabilitation, \$2.9 million in small Enterprise, \$1.4 million in the Arts, \$3.1 million in Recreation, and an astounding \$38.3 million in creating inclusive Transportation options for all. The considerable investment in transportation show the City’s commitment to transforming the current infrastructure and improving connectivity to larger metros. For example, in partnership with NYS DOS and DOT, a sizable transportation investment has been secured to develop a stretch of State Route 787 into Cohoes Boulevard. This project promotes a safe and walkable downtown, vital to the City’s revitalization efforts. In addition to ongoing investment in the city, recent housing developments have brought over \$25 million in new affordable and market rate housing developments – and it doesn’t stop there.

The City has identified an additional \$9 million of anticipated private investments within the DRI District that are slated to take place over the next 18 months. The City’s primary goal is to carefully leverage past investments and build upon them to create areas of opportunity within the Downtown Historic District. The DRI planning process will provide the City with the tools it needs complete planning, develop concepts, drive the dialogue and reach decisions necessary to push an additional \$36 million of projects forward quickly and successfully.

## Recent Public Investments In The DRI District

Property/Title	Project Site/Location	Amount	Status	Project Description
<b>Historic</b>				
Cohoes Historic Center	58 Remsen Street	\$125,000.00	Complete	Visitor Center Enhancements
City Hall Roof Repairs	City of Cohoes	\$250,000.00	Ongoing	Roof Repairs on City Hall
City Operated Facilities	City of Cohoes	\$3,000,000.00	Underway	Energy Upgrades; Windows and Roof
		\$3,375,000.00		
<b>Enterprise</b>				
Adams Block	95 Remsen Street	\$731,000.00	Complete	Mixed Use Market Rate Housing
		\$731,000.00		
<b>Arts</b>				
Silliman Park Mural	98 Mohawk Street	\$52,000.00	Underway	Mural
Cohoes Music Hall	58 Remsen Street	\$1,100,000.00	Ongoing	Facility Improvements
		\$1,152,000.00		
<b>Recreation</b>				
Canal Square Park	72 Remsen Street	\$1,500,000.00	Complete	Park enhancements
<b>Transportation</b>				
Cohoes Boulevard	State Route 787	\$15,000,000.00	Complete	Redesign of State Route 787
Remsen Street Streetscape Phases I & II	Remsen Street	\$1,100,000.00	Complete	Complete Streets Enhancements
Cohoes Waterford Bridge	City of Cohoes	\$22,000,000.00	Complete	Cohoes/Waterford Bridge
Remsen Street EV Charging Station	Remsen Street	\$43,000.00	Complete	Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
Downtown Cohoes	City of Cohoes	\$155,250.00	Ongoing	Multi-Modal Streetscape Plan
		\$38,298,250.00		
<b>Other</b>				
HOME Program	City of Cohoes	\$450,000.00	Complete	Housing Rehabilitation Program
Comprehensive Plan Update	City of Cohoes	\$70,000.00	Complete	New Comprehensive Plan
Street Light Conversion	City of Cohoes	\$1,300,000.00	Underway	Converting Street Lights to LED
Municipal Lighting Improvements	City of Cohoes	\$100,000.00	Complete	Upgrading Interior Municipal Lighting
		\$1,920,000.00		

**Total** **\$46,976,250.00**

# CLEANER GREENER COHOES

The City of Cohoes is proposing a first in the nation municipally owned and operated 3.2 MWdc Floating Solar demonstration project to be installed on its water reservoir, at a cost of \$5.9 million. This project will demonstrate that leveling the playing field by providing grants to municipalities — as an alternative option to current tax credits for private investments — for Floating Solar installations would incentivize municipalities to invest in their own energy infrastructure in a sustainable way, while realizing the full economic benefits of doing so.

Located on a 10 acre untreated water reservoir, the floating solar array is estimated to produce 4,153,000 KWHrs in year one. That capacity will fulfill all municipal facilities energy needs, with 40% capacity to spare. The City of Cohoes **currently pays \$660,000.00 annually** for electricity. The additional 40% capacity will address economic and environmental justice issues within our community, including a potential collaboration with the School District and housing authority.

The project has drawn support from Congressman Paul Tonko, as he seeks to secure federal funding for it as a project that could become a national model. The Cohoes reservoir array "is a groundbreaking idea that solves several problems at once, localizing power generation, increasing grid stability and driving down utility costs for consumers all while putting the City's property to maximum use," said Congressman Tonko. Funding for the project in the amount of \$3 Million was recently included in the House of Representatives appropriation bill.

Research, education, and workforce development will be essential components of this project. They will include both a virtual and physical information platform, providing opportunities for exploration, collaboration, and innovation.

## Municipal Floating Solar



## 4c. Recent or Impending Job Growth

### **Downtown Cohoes is having more than a moment.**

As people relocate to the region for its jobs in high-tech industry and higher education, and as recent graduates join the teams of start-ups in the area, many are choosing Cohoes as an affordable small city with a growing cool factor. The City's small businesses are an important source of innovation, stability, and job growth. Cohoes' unique composition of legacy businesses and downtown destinations also gives it a small town feel with the amenities of a larger metropolitan areas. Finally, the advantageous location of the City in relation to larger metropolitan areas and natural amenities of the Hudson and Mohawk River waterfronts, has become increasingly appealing for young professionals and innovative businesses alike.

### **Main Street: Business. Community.**

Small businesses are the economic makeup of the DRI District, and for years there has been a demonstrable commitment among local companies to Downtown Cohoes. Businesses and organizations in the DRI District currently employ an estimated 1,255 people, with only one private company employing more than 50 people. Several key private sector employers are multi-generation Cohoes businesses such as Macaran Printing Products and Marra's Pharmacy, both run by 3<sup>rd</sup> generation owners. Cohoes' small businesses continue to grow and innovate, with events like Eat in the Street, providing steady job growth for the DRI district and beyond. As illustrated in the Job Creation Table, 28 new small businesses have opened since 2018, all but two of them within the DRI District. Of these, 22 launched in 2020 or 2021, *during the COVID-19 pandemic* - illustrating that even in the worst of times, Cohoes' small businesses continue to support each other and the community. These new businesses created 138 new full and part time jobs. Over the past five years, construction and contracting businesses have also been an important source of job growth.

Cohoes-based firms outside of the DRI District are also an important source of stability, innovation, and exposure for the City. Precision Valve & Automation continues to make headlines for its modern manufacturing methods and on-site health care and fitness amenities, as well as its diversification and growth into the medical industry through its recent acquisition of a 3D-printed prosthetics startup. Bilinski's, a manufacturer of natural and organic chicken sausages headquartered near downtown since 1929, expects to add 20 new jobs as the company expands a novel line of plant-based sausages. Cohoes' legacy as a key player in the paper industry is visible in a current generation of modern paper product manufacturers both within the DRI District (Macaran Printed Products) and just outside it (Mohawk Fine Paper). Businesses like these provide attractive employment opportunities for current and potential downtown residents from the local region and beyond.

## Job Creation in the DRI Area Since 2018

Business Name	Business Type	New Jobs Added		Year Opened
		Full-Time	Part-Time	
Nelly's Treats	Bakery	1	-	2021
Café Con Mel	Restaurant/Coffee Shop	3	4	2021
Sweet Happy Days	Ice Cream Shop	2	4	2021
Paint Cohoes	Studio	1	-	2021
Columbia Food Mart*	Convenient Store	2	3	2021
Tabacco Island	Smoke shop	1	4	2021
The Planter LLLC	Plant shop	1	-	2021
Tiny Diney	Restaurant	1	1	2021
Anthony's	Restaurant	2	8	2020
Bye I Brewing	Brewery	2	2	2020
Teta Marie's	Restaurant	4	3	2020
Signal 30*	Restaurant	3	13	2020
Pizza Stop	Pizza Place	3	4	2020
Gepetto's	Pizza Place	3	4	2020
Cult Salon	Beauty Shop	3	-	2020
Vanity Salon	Beauty Shop	1	-	2020
Fur ever friends	Doggy day care	1	5	2020
Fritz Appliance	Repair service	1	-	2020
The Local	Fresh grocer	2	3	2020
The Haven Home Décor	Home goods store	1	3	2020
Tech Valley Office Furniture	Office Furniture Store	10	-	2020
Gateway Sports	Gym	-	4	2020
Table 4 1	Restaurant/Brewery	1	1	2019
Café Monocle	Restaurant	3	2	2019
Caprice Beauty Bar	Salon	1	-	2019
Yuan Nails	Nail salon	5	1	2019
Cascade/Daisy	Restaurant	2	6	2018
Cake Street Sweets	Bakery	3	-	2018
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>63</b>	<b>75</b>	

*\*indicates business outside the DRI District*

The tables that follow summarize the business environment of Cohoes and the DRI district. In the DRI District there are an estimated 1,255 jobs across 127 businesses. Citywide, there are an estimated 4,548 jobs spread over 351 employers. These jobs are categorized as 63% white collar, 18% blue collar, and 19% services. Critical industries include health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and retail. The number of jobs in healthcare reflects the ongoing national growth of this sector while the number of jobs in manufacturing reflects Cohoes' legacy as a key contributor in the U.S. industrial revolution. The mix of small and medium businesses across a variety of sectors provides Cohoes with a major advantage over other cities. This economic diversity ensures Cohoes is more resilient to economic shocks and stresses and less likely to experience major, simultaneous job losses than a City with fewer, larger companies.

### Summary of Local Employment

		DRI District (walkable)		City	
		Jobs	Businesses	Jobs	Businesses
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1,255</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Key Industries</b>	Healthcare & Social Assistance	320	15	1,546	30
	Manufacturing	198	3	542	11
	Public Administration	198	13	424	19
	Retail Trade	97	20	301	47
	Accommodation & Food Services	93	12	177	27
	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	75	18	212	57
	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	55	3	271	10
	Transportation & Warehousing	42	3	80	7
	Construction	38	7	141	27
	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	38	8	126	25
	Finance & Insurance	32	3	52	6
	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	26	7	144	33
	Wholesale Trade	25	3	79	9
	Educational Services	1	1	374	9

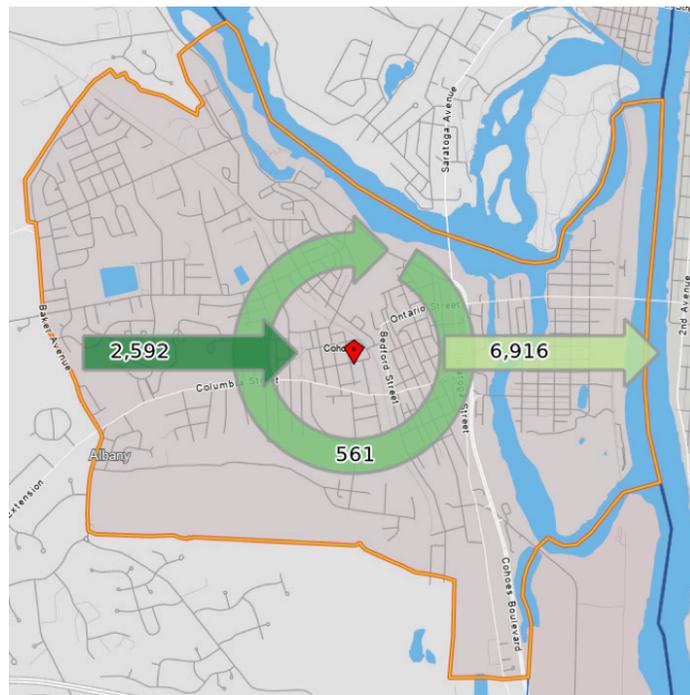
## Significant Employers in and near DRI Area

DRI District (Walkable)		City	
Company	Current Workforce	Company	Current Workforce
Macaran Printed Products	75	Northeast Health Rehabilitation Services	500
Shelter Enterprises Inc.	50	Eddy Village Green Nursing Home	450
Cohoes Public Works Inc.	40	Eddy Village Green Physicians	350
Cohoes Police Dept.	40	Mohawk Fine Paper	340
Cohoes Fire Dept.	35	Aquatic Development Group	250
Cohoes City Office	35	Cohoes Senior High School	100
Burger King	34	Abram Lansing School	80
Marra's Pharmacy	30	Norlite	70
U.S. Postal Office	27	Harmony Mill School	70
Dunkin Donuts	20	NH Kelman Scrap Recycling	65
Smith's of Cohoes Restaurant	20	Bilinski's Sausage Company	50
T&T Towing	16	Precision Value and Automotive	50
Cohoes Family Care	15	Price Chopper	50
St. Peter's Hosp Addiction	15	Cohoes City Board of Education	23
Pioneer Bank	14	Next Financial	17
Awards by Walsh's	14	Edgeco Environmental	15
Titan Roofing Inc.	12	Little Steps Learning Center Daycare	15
Albany County Opportunity	12	Holy Trinity Parish	12
Cohoes Multi-Svc Senior	11	United Cerebral Palsy	11
Cohoes A Plus	10	Cohoes Bowling Arena	10
Harmony Mills Pediatrics	10	Spendwood School of Dance	10
St. Peter's OB/GYN	10	Ride Clean New York	10
Cohoes Family Health Center	10	Upstate Medical Supply	10
Dollar Tree	10	Jay Moulding Corp.	10
		Matrix Communications Group	10
		Van Schaick Country Club	10

## Location, location, location

"It is a small beautiful city and has the best location in the Capital District"

The City's central location, relative to the larger Capital Region metros of Albany, Troy, Schenectady, and Southern Saratoga County, form a sizeable commuter base. According to the Census Bureau's *OnTheMap*, nearly 93 percent of employed City residents travel to other municipalities for their jobs. Cohoes' residents are already capitalizing on the best the City has to offer in terms of affordable housing options, extensive downtown amenities, and exceptional connectivity to larger metros. Therefore, an extremely talented workforce residing in Cohoes, is well-established and ready to support downtown development. As businesses continue to expand in downtown Cohoes, a significant portion of commuters can be recaptured and retained. Relatedly, about 82 percent of jobs in the City of Cohoes are performed by people who live outside the City, representing an important source of potential downtown spending. About 561 people both reside and work in the City.

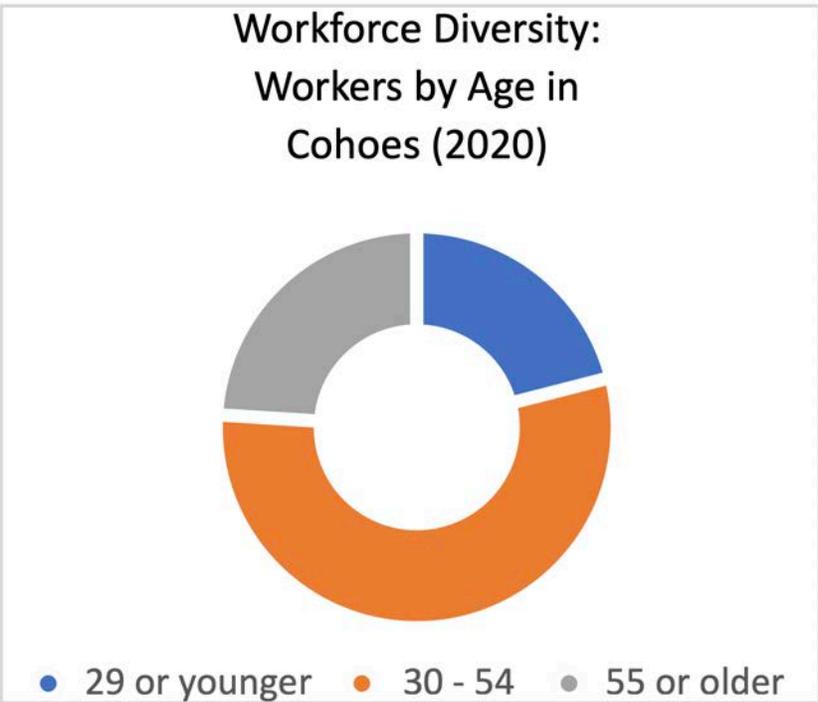


*An exceptionally large population of net out-commuters is indicative of the City's large array of local talent among residents.*

"We bought our house in Cohoes because it was halfway between where my husband and I worked. We stay because we enjoy the city and where we live."

## What Millennials want

Cohoes' appeal extends beyond current regional residents and commuters. In a 2015 Nerdwallet study, Cohoes ranked 16<sup>th</sup> among the best places for millennial job seekers (aged 25-40) in New York State out of 153 cities. This ranking was the highest among cities in the Capital Region. Factors such as the availability of jobs, nearby affordable housing options, employment rates, average salaries, and the number and growth of millennials living in the area were involved in the calculation. These metrics were weighted and combined into an index value that was compared against trends in millennial preferences. Findings indicated that millennials prefer living in smaller cities that are accessible to larger metropolitan areas and college towns. Downtown Cohoes is within a 15-minute drive of major employment centers including Empire State Plaza, colleges in Troy, Latham, and Albany, businesses in southern Saratoga County, and multiple area hospitals.



A key factor that makes Cohoes attractive for workers of all ages is higher salaries relative to cost of living. The median salary for occupations in the Cohoes zip code is \$48,052, about 25% higher than the national median. Meanwhile, Cohoes' cost of living is only 10% higher than the national cost of living. This means employees' purchasing power will be greater than the national median, making it easier for businesses in Cohoes to attract quality talent (source: Esri).

Cohoes' ability to attract young to mid-range professionals looking to buy homes, and start businesses and families will help the City maintain its current growth in the long-term.

## 4d. Quality of Life

### Tangible Potential

Ask a Cohosier what makes the Downtown attractive, and they will tell you that it is more than a place, it's a feeling. *"No other town nearby has that downtown feel that so many crave now,"* explained one resident [who moved to Cohoes in 2007], *"people want a small town experience again . . . they want to patronize the local businesses, they want to feel like part of a community."*

On top of a sense of history and community, residents can also feel a growing sense of potential in the downtown neighborhood. Bolstered by the \$75 million of investment and counting, they have seen the Downtown "come alive" with new restaurants, businesses, housing, arts and music programs, revitalized parks, and walkable streetscapes. Both new and established members of the community are excited to see downtown's potential being realized.

### Small town feel with city amenities

People choose Cohoes for its strong community, its unbeatable central location on a river, and its range of neighborhood amenities. As one resident who relocated to Cohoes during its recent renaissance put it, the community has a "small town feel, with city amenities." A young parent and teacher, she enjoys the creative businesses and diverse nightlife downtown.

A retired veteran living downtown was attracted by the many shops and services available in the mixed-use neighborhood. "It's relatively walkable...has beautiful architecture and a real sense of history," she explained. "The recent opening of so many bars and restaurants is great. The infill of new housing on empty/underused lots is brilliant...and there are still residents from different economic levels."

Another recent transplant followed a job to Cohoes. As a young professional working downtown, she likes the historic architecture, walkable streets and parks, multi-modal transportation options, and most of the all, the Library.

Lifelong residents have also felt the change. One Cohoes resident expressed his admiration for the "huge efforts" the City has made to revitalize its downtown. A mid-career businessman, he enjoys the upgrades to Remsen Street and Canal Square Park, the Rock the Block concert series, and the growing number of small businesses downtown.

Visitors from the broader Capital Region have also taken notice. They are making more trips to Cohoes' downtown historic district, attracted by its niche and specialty retailers, waterfronts and bike paths, new eateries offering everything from small plates to ethnic cuisine to traditional fare, festivals, and the programming at the Cohoes Music Hall.





# CANAL SQUARE PARK

Attracting thousands of people to downtown Cohoes every summer, the Canal Square Park concert series is a major driver of economic activity on and around Remsen Street. More than just a concert venue though, the park provides green space for the surrounding downtown apartment buildings, and a gathering space for community events. The \$1.15 Million park renovation completed in 2020-21 also includes green infrastructure including porous pavers, and an underground rainwater harvesting system.

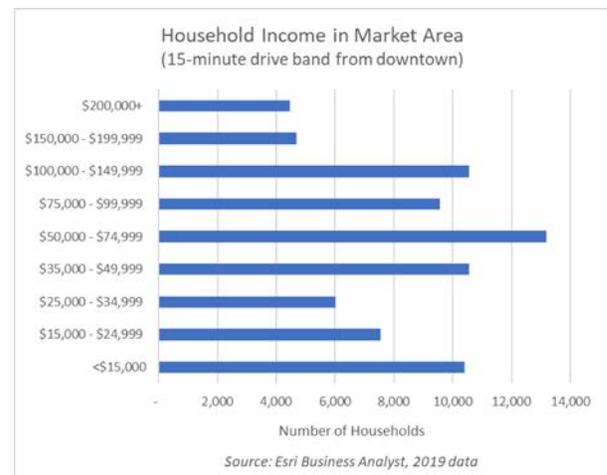
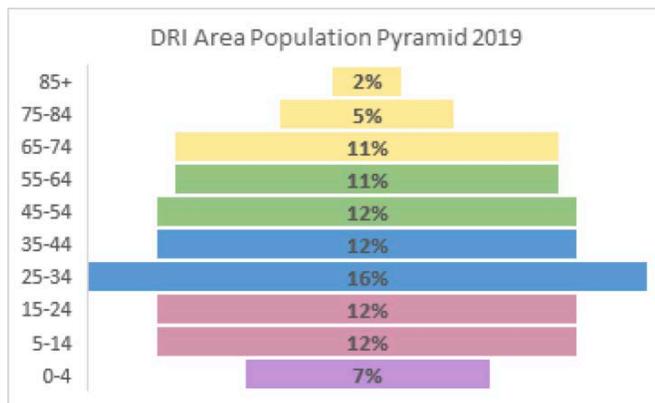
The effect on the downtown is immediately apparent on days when the park is in use. The streets are lined with residents and visitors. The stores are full, restaurants are standing room only, and food vendors line the park. Not only is Canal Square Park providing entertainment to the people of Cohoes and the region, it is a driving force in the local economy.

## More than a feeling

Cohoes' positive momentum is reflected in its socioeconomic indicators. Between 2010 and 2018, Cohoes has grown larger, younger, and more prosperous, significantly outpacing the Capital Region. Median household income grew by 26 percent, increasing from \$41,443 to \$52,042, while the poverty rate meaningfully decreased. Over the same period, population growth was three times faster in Cohoes than the Capital Region.

Cohoes has also gotten significantly younger, a trend not often seen in Upstate New York communities. Between 2010 and 2018, the median age in Cohoes decreased by 4.5 years while the median age in the Capital Region increased by two years. As a result, Cohoes' median age is now nearly 4 years younger than the surrounding area. These trends are thanks in part to the estimated 4,593 millennials living in the City who now comprise the largest age cohort in Cohoes. The DRI District also has a larger share of children aged 0-14 than the City or region, suggesting that people are choosing downtown Cohoes as a place to start and raise their families.

*Cohoes has a well-balanced mix of ages. Millennials comprise the largest group.*



Compared to the rest of the Capital Region, Cohoes' population is growing faster and younger, and poverty is declining at a faster rate.

With millennials and other working professionals relocating to the community, the City and its DRI District have a greater share of prime-age population (ages 25-54) than the region. This represents a strong local base for consumer spending to support the wave of proposed transformative projects downtown.

On the other hand, the population within the DRI District has a notably lower median household income (\$26,337) typical of the downtown cores of small Upstate New York industrial cities. Some of our most vulnerable and impoverished residents live downtown and stand to benefit from the planned investments in the DRI District. However, nearly 183,000 people live within a 15-minute drive of Downtown Cohoes, and this population has significantly greater spending power (median household income of \$55,680) that could be harnessed as well.

Lastly, Cohoes is becoming more diverse. The city's non-white population increased three percentage points to 13 percent from 2010-2019. In a strong indicator of future diversity, 28 percent of elementary school students are people of color or biracial.

## **What makes the Historic Downtown District work**

As the data and community interviews testify, Cohoes is developing into a true example of an experiential downtown that is a quality place to live, work, and visit for a diverse population of all ages and backgrounds. Understanding why requires a deeper look at the individual attributes that make the downtown an attractive and livable destination.

### Developable mixed-use spaces

Downtown Cohoes features a strong mix of land uses with room for strategic growth. Almost a third of the acreage in the DRI District is currently commercial, another quarter is residential (including multi-family housing), 14 percent is reserved for parking, 13 percent is used for public and community purposes, and 11 percent is industrial. Vacant land constitutes six percent of the DRI District. The City will approach this remaining developable land with careful purpose and planning.

### Housing at different levels of affordability and type

An influx of new market-rate and mixed-income housing downtown has contributed to a virtuous cycle of increased interest in downtown Cohoes, including micro-apartments that target people looking for efficient city living above downtown businesses. "I found an interesting apartment here," wrote one retired senior of her reason for moving to downtown Cohoes. "I like the views of the river and the walking paths . . . the library, canal park and the music hall."

**"[Downtown] has the best central location and has amazing places on Remsen Street. It's a very convenient place to live"**

**-Downtown Cohoes Resident**

Private investors have recently completed over 200 new apartment units in the DRI area for a total of 123,400 square feet of new housing. The apartments range in size from one to three bedrooms and are set in both new infill buildings and historic redevelopments, serving a variety of markets.



## Commercial and retail businesses

The downtown is fueled by small business. The district is home to more than 200 commercial and retail businesses, most of which have fewer than 10 employees. When traditional office space isn't the right fit, many businesses and workers have found their home at the new Harmony Co-Works.

These establishments provide a range of goods and services within a walkable downtown core for residents and visitors alike. On a visit downtown, you might stop by Tony Horan's Barber Shop for the latest news and hairstyle, deposit a check at Pioneer Bank's downtown branch, or pick up a prescription at Marra's family Pharmacy. For lunch, you could enjoy a locally-sourced meal at Café Con Mel before heading to Cake Street Sweets to sample pastry-chef Kayla Renfroe's latest creation. To work off dessert, you might catch a class at Cohoes Judo Club or peruse the wares displayed at Haven Home Decor. If you're lucky you might even catch a glimpse of a bride arriving at The Venue, an adaptive reuse events center in the former St Joseph's Church. For dinner, the world is your oyster – or California roll or burger or microbrew. Choose from over a dozen restaurants including storied institutions like Smith's, an old-fashioned American bar & restaurant first opened in 1937, and newcomers like Yuan Japanese Asian Restaurant opened by the Ni family in 2016. As this tour shows, Downtown Cohoes serves a variety of needs and interests.



## Varied dining choices



Downtown is quickly transforming into a culinary destination. Downtown diners can find sushi, ice cream, Lebanese cuisine, tapas, tacos, Philippine cuisine, wine bars, traditional Italian, steaks, seafood, burgers, cafes, gastropub small plates, craft breweries, comfort food, brunch buffets, barbecue, gourmet cocktails, and more. Restaurant menus are crafted with local and specialty imported ingredients, including Bilinski sausages (traditional or plant-based!), and custom confections from Chaos and Buttercream, Nelly's Treats or Cake Street Sweets for dessert.

At the height of the pandemic, recognizing that the downtown restaurants could not survive on takeout alone, the city created "Eat in the Street" where Remsen Street is closed so that the restaurants could expand their dining rooms into the street creating a safer, outdoor, socially distanced dining experience. It was a runaway success with some restaurants reporting that 80% of their weekly sales came during the event. Not a single Remsen Street Restaurant closed permanently during the pandemic, and a few new businesses opened on Remsen Street, inspired by the activity.



For those wishing to eat in, the City is working with local businesses and organizations to bring more fresh food and grocery options downtown. For example, The Local is a locally sourced grocery store located on Remsen Street, another specialty grocery store is planning to open in 2022, and in 2018 the city partnered with Capital Roots to develop a community “Learning Garden” near Gateway Sports Complex. The garden provides the Cohoes Housing Authority and Senior Apartments with access to freshly grown produce, educate residents about growing healthy foods, and provide the unique quality of life experiences that attract and retain residents.



## Cultural and entertainment amenities

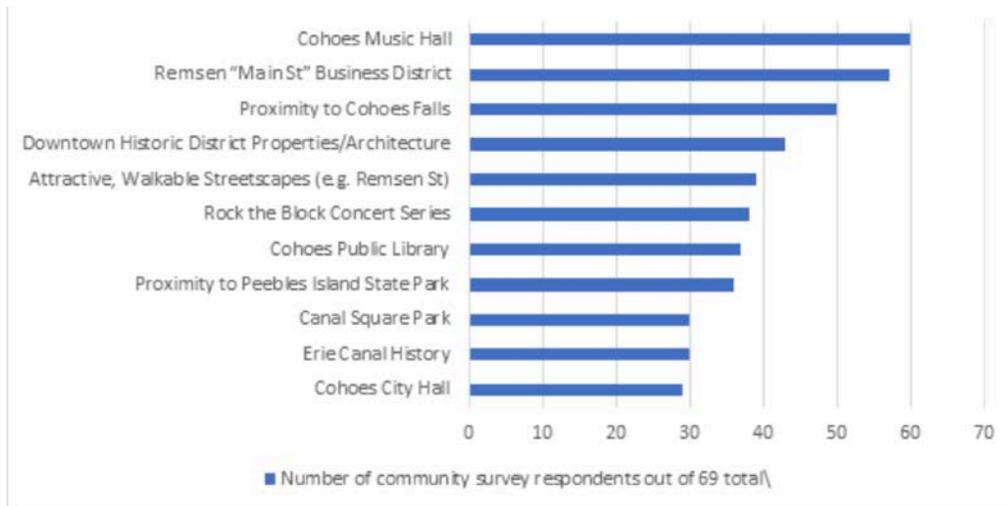
Arts and culture define Cohoes. When asked to identify the anchors and assets that define Downtown, the Cohoes Music Hall was the number one answer. The district's historic architecture, Rock the Block concert series, and library ranked in the top 7.

The landmark Cohoes Music Hall established in 1874 is the 4th oldest operating music hall in the country. It hosts the well-known Park Playhouse theatre company as well as dozens of national touring acts ranging from musicians and comedians to variety shows. The Music Hall hosted 130 events in 2019, and as such was the driving force behind thousands of visitors to our downtown.

The City has also just completed an Energy Audit of the Music hall to identify cost-saving upgrades that would help to ensure the Music Hall is able to operate within the fiscal realities of a post-Covid world.

Since 2016 the City has hosted the popular Rock the Block Concert series in Canal Square Park, and just invested \$1.5 Million on renovations in order to maximize capacity for the concert series and vendors. The free 9-week concert series brings in excess of 1,000 people of all ages downtown every Thursday night in the summer. The event features local and national bands and will begin to host a seasonal farmers' market and craft fair (once we are able to have large gatherings again). At other times throughout the year, visitors can find live entertainment at the Venue, or at many of the bars and restaurants that line the downtown streets.

Community Survey Responses: What are the top assets that define downtown?



Arts and cultural opportunities continue to expand downtown. The city is currently partnering with Albany Center Gallery to curate the Silliman Park Mural as well as a larger mural project which is highlighted within the transformative projects section. An art gallery and studio recently opened on Remsen Street, hosting art shows for local artists and art classes. A second studio is slated to open in Remsen Street by the end of 2021.

Multi-modal transit - Walkable, Bikeable, and Regionally connected

The City has made consistent progress in becoming ever more walkable and bikeable, connecting residents of the outer portions of the City to jobs, shopping, and recreational assets downtown. Recent improvements to the I-787 corridor have also enhanced safety, aesthetics, and pedestrian access. In addition, the City has invested \$1.1 million into a complete streets redesign of Remsen Street with the final phase of the Remsen Street Streetscape improvements slated to be finished in 2022. Cohoes is also developing a connectivity master plan that links key developments like Mosaic Village the Cohoes Hotel Phases I and II, and Remsen Place to main thoroughfares. Connecting downtown with specific venues through new parking and improved Complete Streets, creates an attractive pedestrian and biking environment with connections to established regional trails like the Feeder Canal.

In addition, efforts will be undertaken to create better coordination between Transit providers. Other plans include:

- Developing a bike/pedestrian master plan that creates a guide to help link existing bike paths in the City with regional connectors.
- Creating a pedestrian path around the Eastern portion of Van Schaick Island. The City of Cohoes has many of the easements in place, and is currently working with a few key property owners.
- The CDTA BRT Line serves Cohoes, making stops on Remsen Street.
- The City has been working with CDTA and CDPHP Cycle! to host a series of bike events for the 2022 season to encourage ridership within the city.



### Public parks, gathering spaces, waterfronts, and recreational amenities

Downtown Cohoes has a variety of parks and recreational amenities within walking distance. These include:

- Canal Square Park, featuring a summer concert series and community gathering space
- Peebles Island State Park, which boasts an average annual attendance of 96,645
- Primeau Park featuring sports fields, a pastoral park setting and access to the historic Erie Canal locks
- Gateway Sports Complex which has state of the art workout equipment, an indoor swimming pool, and hosts classes, meeting spaces, and educational opportunities
- Green Space and Pocket Park in the White Street Improvement Project, part of the downtown streetscape improvements included in the proposed projects
- The Mohawk River, which can be accessed just outside the DRI District for boating, fishing, and views of the Cohoes Falls.



Located on historic Remsen Street in the heart of Cohoes' downtown renaissance, the Cohoes Music Hall stands as both a testament to past glory and as a catalyst for 21st century urban revitalization.

Built in 1874, the Cohoes Music Hall is the fourth oldest operating music hall in the United States. Home today to regional and national theater, comedy, and music acts, the Cohoes Music Hall was a prized venue during the golden age of Vaudeville. In its heyday the hall played host to Buffalo Bill Cody, George Cohan, John Philip Sousa, and Cohoes' own born and bred Vaudeville star; Eva Tanguay, whose spirit is said to linger in the hall today. In recent years the hall has hosted the talents of Gilbert Gottfried, 10,000 Maniacs, Wynona Judd, and hundreds of shows by the Capital Region's premiere stage company; Park Playhouse.



While the romance and charm of the Cohoes Music Hall are undeniable, the music hall plays a tangible role in the revitalization of downtown Cohoes. Its packed shows bring crowds of people to Remsen Street unlike anything Cohoes has seen since it was the textile capital of the world in the 19th Century. Those crowds patronize local shops and restaurants, stimulating the city's economy and breathing new life into a recovering post-industrial mill city.



## 4e. Supportive Local Policies

The City of Cohoes has a number of policies in place designed to increase livability and quality of life within the Cohoes DRI District, including a Cleaner Greener Cohoes initiative, a successful land bank program, a new Comprehensive Plan, and the adoption of a Complete Streets policy. Cohoes seeks to use the DRI planning process to identify additional policies and projects that will ensure that the Cohoes DRI District is an attractive and desirable destination for residents, businesses, and visitors of all ages, income levels, and backgrounds.

**Cleaner Greener Cohoes.** In February of 2020, newly elected Mayor Bill Keeler launched a “Cleaner Greener Cohoes” initiative, taking a comprehensive approach to creating a more environmentally sustainable city. The framework for the “Cleaner Greener Cohoes” initiative is the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program which is designed to expedite progress in mitigating and adapting to climate change at the local level. Cohoes has begun the process of identifying and implementing CSC action items in our downtown, including but not limited to:

- **Installation of floating solar on the City Reservoir;**
- **Converting city streetlights to LED;**
- **Installing two public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations;**
- **Coordinating a comprehensive energy audit of City owned buildings;**
- **Appointing a task force to develop a green space master plan;**
- **Appointing a task force to identify city-wide opportunities in improve recycling efforts;**
- **Adopting local laws regulating community gardens, farmers markets, chickens, and bees;**
- **Applying for a technical assistance grant to help optimize traffic signal timing in our downtown.**

**Stabilizing Neighborhoods.** Cohoes is taking a block-by-block, parcel-by-parcel approach to rehabilitating neighborhoods and preventing blight. The Office of Planning has developed a snapshot of each neighborhood by mapping vacant structures and lots, tax delinquent properties, City/IDA/LDC owned properties, Albany County Land Bank properties, recent investments, and anticipated investments. With this snapshot we have been able to:

- **Identify clusters of properties where land banking would be appropriate for future development;**
- **Target grant writing efforts to complement private and public investments;**
- **Create a sidewalk rehabilitation program through the Office of Community and Economic Development;**
- **Strategically coordinate Homes and Community Renewal Homeowner Rehabilitation grant funding.**

**Modern Zoning Codes.** Future economic growth, neighborhood stability and natural resource preservation are directly impacted by zoning and development requirements. The city currently has a progressive zoning code in place that includes incentive zoning to allow for public improvements in exchange for higher density projects. As documented in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, the city's goal is to encourage a mix of uses and to build densities that will increase the vitality of neighborhoods and bolster the success and increased revenues for both start-up and established businesses.

Cohoes has recently updated its zoning regulations to include innovative **form-based code** for the Civic Core, Downtown Core, Neighborhood, and Transit Corridor districts. These standards will maintain the integrity of the public realm while allowing changes to the urban fabric that may occur as new mixed-use development and green urbanism projects are developed. Cohoes' new form-based code provides standards for building requirements, sites, parking, signage and lighting. Form-based zoning places special emphasis on the physical configuration of the built environment and utilizes images to explain what the desired form and appearance of development should be—with an eye toward creating beautiful, highly livable places.

**Complete Streets.** In 2017, the City of Cohoes received a grant to prepare and adopt Complete Streets Policy Legislation. Complete Streets improve quality of life by ensuring that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people of all ages and abilities, motorists, emergency responders, freight providers, and adjacent land users.

In addition to adopting a Complete Streets Policy, the city has successfully demonstrated its commitment to healthy living, green urbanism, and walkability through implementation of a 2016 CDBG funded streetscape improvement project. Monies were used to reconstruct substandard sidewalks along both sides of Remsen Street, from Cayuga to Ontario Streets. These new sidewalks have increased pedestrian safety and accessibility for visitors to the popular Cohoes Music Hall, and residents/users of the nearby senior housing and low-income housing.

**Comprehensive Plan.** In 2017, the City adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The Plan includes a vision to grow in a more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable way and revitalization principles and objectives for growth that build on the city's many assets and the desire to bring housing and other development projects downtown and other targeted areas of the City that are poised for revitalization.

Implementation of these downtown projects will create the critical mass needed to support the commercial, cultural and recreational amenities today's workforce desires and will spur additional development across the city.

**Land Bank.** In recent years the City of Cohoes has seen tremendous results with its strategy to buy, rehab and sell abandoned and disinvested properties to local developers, bringing new life to Cohoes. One success story that has come to fruition, in partnership with the Albany County Land Bank and the State Attorney General, is **Mosaic Village**, a 68-unit downtown mixed-income housing project that is located at the corner of Ontario and Sargent Streets. The site was formerly occupied by a building that sat vacant for over a decade. This unique project, which dedicates 25% of the units to housing autistic adults capable of independent living with some support, is the first of its kind in the nation.

In recent years, the Office of Planning has been working closely with the Albany County Land Bank to identify disposition strategies for "undevelopable" vacant lots which are located in Downtown Cohoes and owned by the Land Bank. These properties tend to be too small to develop, leaving them to become eyesores and attract blight and disinvestment. The city has been sharing neighborhood snapshot maps with the Land Bank in order to identify opportunities to bundle these properties with anticipated developments. Additionally, Cohoes has adopted an official policy on community gardens which was specifically designed to address these "undevelopable" Land Bank properties in our downtown.

**Transit-Oriented Development.** Cohoes envisions itself as a multi-modal hub situated at the crossroads of three counties and two active class waterways, the Hudson and the Mohawk Rivers. The city is uniquely poised to build on existing assets such as proximity to regional bike paths, a dedicated bus stop on the CDTA BRT system, and incorporation of Smart Growth policies designed to increase mobility options for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The city is located within 1.5 miles of three existing regional bike paths: the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail, the Delaware Avenue Bikeway on Van Schaick Island, and the Uncle Sam Bikeway in Troy. Through the DRI planning process, the city seeks to explore options to increase access to existing multi-modal assets that will increase quality of life for residents and make downtown Cohoes a destination for recreation enthusiasts.

In 2018, Cohoes was added to the CDTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service route, known as BusPlus, that covers Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties. Cohoes is located on the River Corridor Purple Line, which is the third busiest transit corridor in the Capital Region, and serves the high-volume transportation corridor along the Hudson River between the Village of Waterford and the South End of Albany and opens up transportation options to employment for Cohoes' residents.

Transit-Oriented Development is part of Cohoes' Smart Growth Strategy and is closely tied to the city's newly adopted Complete Streets policy designed to increase multiple mobility options. The city's identified transit-oriented development goals include:

- **Make Cohoes more multimodal**
- **Improve pedestrian safety on major roadways**
- **Integrate land use with transportation**
- **Efficiently manage parking in mixed-use centers**

Through the DRI process, the city seeks to increase connectivity to existing assets and implement strategies tied to these goals including installing bicycle racks near activity centers, making stronger and safer pedestrian connections between the Harmony Mills complex, downtown, neighborhoods, the waterfront, and other activity centers.

**Age-Friendly Policies.** Cohoes has a number of policies and initiatives in place to support the safety and well-being of the city's elder population, including Smart Growth and Complete Streets Policies, Transit-Oriented Development, and Progressive Zoning. These policies encourage projects designed to provide people of all ages and abilities with safe pedestrian access to a variety of housing options, services, and recreation and cultural amenities.

In 2016, the City utilized CDBG grant monies to increase the safety of Cohoes' elder population through the implementation of streetscape enhancements. Improvements include the reconstruction of sidewalks along the northernmost segment of Remsen Street, the central path connecting public senior housing and the senior center to local restaurants, public services, and green spaces located in the downtown.

Isolation is a growing concern when it comes to an aging population. The city's incorporation of mixed-use and mixed-income housing in the downtown core gives empty nesters, retirees and seniors more options for living and easy access to services, culture, shopping, and restaurants, which encourages social interaction and an improved quality of life.

As part of the adopted Complete Streets policy, the city is making it safer for people of all ages and abilities to access the city's many downtown assets and amenities by incorporating ADA accessible design into all sidewalk replacement projects.

**Downtown Management Structure.** In 2017, local business owners organized to form the Downtown Business Advisory Council. This leadership group has been tasked with creating a new environment to attract, retain, and expand business opportunities throughout the city.

In addition to the newly created Advisory Council, the city works closely with two long-standing key development partners -- the Cohoes Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the Cohoes Local Development Corporation (LDC). The IDA's mission is to,

“promote, develop, encourage and assist in acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining or equipping certain facilities thereby advancing the job opportunities, health, public safety, recreational opportunities, general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of the City of Cohoes.”

The Cohoes LDC was established to focus on job creation and retention, economic development and housing opportunities within the City of Cohoes. The Cohoes LDC administers Cohoes' Business Loan Program, which provides low interest loans to businesses to foster economic development in the city and help local businesses expand.

The effectiveness of these agencies is due to the city's expert ability to partner. Each agency operates in concert with the other, effectively blending missions and resources with opportunities to assist the city in achieving the envisioned outcome. Most recently the Cohoes LDC and IDA partnered to bring four new businesses to Remsen Street, demolished an antiquated building that was a safety hazard to make way for future opportunities, and in coordination with Pioneer Bank they have acquired a line of credit which will allow the city to continue strategically acquiring properties integral to the city's vision before they go to market.

# CLEANER GREENER COHOES

As part of Mayor Keeler's "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" initiative, Cohoes is in the process of acquiring and changing the city's 1,598 High-Intensity Discharge bulbs to LED bulbs. The initiative requires an initial investment of around \$2.5 Million, but will net a savings of around \$9 Million over the course of a twenty year period.

The energy savings is among the first steps toward realizing the goal to make Cohoes an environmentally sustainable municipality. Future steps, some of which can be partially funded by cost savings from the LED conversion, include window and HVAC updates to municipal buildings. By reinvesting the savings from one "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" project into the next phase, Cohoes will lead the way into the future with sustainable policies and infrastructure.

The new fixtures will also create "smart lighting" infrastructure. In addition to allowing variable lighting modes, the smart lighting will allow for future expansion of smart infrastructure including security cameras, municipal WiFi and weather sensing technology, to name only a few.

## LED STREETLIGHT CONVERSION



<u>New LED Streetlights</u>	<u>Existing Lights</u>
-70% less energy consumed	-High pressure sodium
-Savings of \$9 Million over 20 years	-Energy intensive
-Reduce light pollution	-Shine into sky and residents' windows
-Better visibility	-Poor color rendering, hard to see
-Longer lifespan	-Frequent maintenance required

## 4f. Public Support

Cohoes drew on its robust history of public involvement to engage the community in the development of the DRI application. The enthusiasm and thoughtful responses received – many of which are quoted throughout this document - are further evidence of the community's strong commitment to revitalizing downtown.

### Stakeholder outreach

Engagement efforts began in early 2020 with direct stakeholder outreach and a survey of local businesses. Through visits and phone calls, the City explained the goals of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, gathered information on the business environment, including needs and opportunities, and garnered interest in the initiative. Follow-up letters were sent introducing the application process and requesting information on jobs and recent investments. At the same time, City staff distributed a "Cohoes DRI Application Project Ideas" questionnaire. The questionnaire asked respondents to describe their vision for downtown revitalization; recent positive developments in the City; areas for further improvement / investment; desires for additional downtown services, businesses, or amenities; and proposed project ideas.

Several community organizations weighed in to share their ideas and voice their support. These included local institutions like Cohoes Music Hall/ Park Playhouse and Pioneer Savings Bank, significant employers such as Mohawk Fine Paper and Kelman Scrap Recycling, developers such as Gladue Properties and Prime Companies, cultural and faith-based organizations such as The Foundry for Art + Design and Spindle City Vineyard (church), the Cohoes LDC and IDA, and a diversity of other local businesses, developers, and non-profit organizations in the City.

### Public Outreach

From March 2020 onward, the City pivoted to creative ways of engaging the community remotely due to the pandemic. The City took its outreach online with a **Community Survey** as well as a **Live Virtual Public Meeting** and a **Virtual Open House**. Announcements, materials, and additional resources were posted to a dedicated website at CohoesDRI.com. Information was also dispersed through the City's official website and events calendar, print media, and social media channels including the City's Facebook page (5,000 followers) and Instagram account (800 followers) to reach a wide and diverse audience when many community members were staying at home. Due to the added flexibility and duration of online events, the City was able to reach an even larger and more diverse audience than previous in-person DRI events.

The image shows two documents side-by-side. The left document is a questionnaire titled "Cohoes DRI Application Project Ideas". It includes a logo for the City of Cohoes 150th Anniversary and text explaining that the city is applying for \$10 million in state funds. It asks respondents to describe their vision for downtown revitalization, recent positive developments, areas for improvement, and proposed project ideas. The right document is a letter from the City of Cohoes Office of Planning, dated May 26th, 2020, addressed to the Cohoes Business Community. The letter discusses the city's partnership with PlanPlus and the importance of the DRI application process.



## ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

With Cohoes competing against other cities, towns, and villages in the Capital District, our application should be built on input from the people who know Cohoes best: You! Public input will be collected throughout the application process. Without the ability to have traditional public meetings at this time, the city will employ alternative strategies to achieve a creative and collaborative process. Opportunities will be posted below and advertised through various community channels. The feedback we receive will play an important role in defining the vision for our downtown and developing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely goals to further that vision.



### Interactive Virtual Public Open House - online May 4th -6th

Thank you for sharing your input on the vision for revitalizing downtown Cohoes and the list of potential transformative projects by "attending" our virtual open house!



### DRI community survey - online April 10 - May 15

75 people took the online survey which asked community members about their vision for Downtown Cohoes, investments that will make this vision a reality, and why they think Cohoes a good candidate for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Thanks to everyone for your input!



### DRI Virtual Public Meeting - Recorded live on Monday May 4th 6:30 - 7:30pm

This live online meeting shared information on the DRI application process, vision for downtown revitalization, and potential transformative downtown projects. More than 40 community members joined the live meeting. The meeting presentation and recording is posted below.

[Presentation Slides - DRI Public Meeting May 4th \(click to view\)](#)

Video Recording:



VISIT US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



## **DRI Community Survey**

From April 10<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, community members were invited to participate in a community survey with a series of multiple choice and short answer questions related to the Cohoes DRI application. In the first section, respondents were asked to share their vision for downtown by completing the statement “I envision Downtown Cohoes will be \_\_\_.” They were then asked to indicate the types of projects and investments they felt were important for achieving this vision. In the second section, respondents were asked why Cohoes would be a good candidate for the DRI. They commented on the attractiveness and livability of their downtown, its defining features and characteristics, and perceived barriers to growth.

A total of 75 community members completed the survey, providing rich responses that detailed their view of downtown today and their vision for downtown tomorrow. The survey captured a cross-section of residents, both men and women, aged 22-65+ including a mix of native Cohosiers and more recent transplants. Respondents also had varied incomes, educational backgrounds, and housing needs.

The Vision of Downtown was crafted directly from the statements collection from the public via the community survey. In addition, the transformative projects proposed below directly address all of the top 10 investment types chosen by survey respondents:

### **10 most desired Investments**

1. Rehabilitation of old or vacant structures
2. Shopping & Retail
3. Dining & Restaurants
4. Neighborhood Beautification
5. Grocery & fresh food options (tie)
5. Music, Arts, & Culture programs (tie)
6. Parking
7. Walkability& Bikeability (tie)
7. Parks, Greenspace, Waterfront (tie)
8. Façade improvements

Data and quotes from survey responses have been included throughout this application.

Slides summarizing the community survey results were shared during a live public meeting

## Public input on vision & projects

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR DOWNTOWN COHOES?

**10 MOST DESIRED INVESTMENTS**

1. Rehab. of old or vacant structures
2. Shopping & Retail
3. Dining & Restaurants
4. Neighborhood Beautification
5. Grocery & fresh food options
5. Music, Arts, & Culture programs
6. Parking
7. Walkability& Bikeability
7. Parks, Greenspace, Waterfront
8. Façade improvements

## Attractive & Livable Downtown Community perspectives

**Why Cohoes?**

Community & Family-oriented  
Small city, big heart  
unbeatable location

*"It is a great small city with much to do, a great school district and it is a community with much outreach to people of all ages."*

*"I love Cohoes! Everyone knows everyone, the sense of community is very strong."*

**TOP 7 DOWNTOWN ASSETS**

1. Cohoes Music Hall
2. Remsen Business District
3. Cohoes Falls (proximity to)
4. Historic District / Architecture
5. Public Library
6. Rock the Block
7. Attractive, walkable streetscapes

*"My family moved here from NYC. We wanted to find a smaller town/community to live in that was close to, but not in, Albany."*

DRI Community Survey April 2020

## Cohoes' Positive Momentum Community perspectives

*"It is getting better and better and becoming more walkable. There are some great restaurants and shops in town, and Remsen street is coming to life"*

*"Cohoes has made huge efforts to revitalize its downtown, including renovation of canal square, concert series, new sidewalks on Remsen st, increased small business"*

*"The recent opening of so many bars and restaurants is great. The infill of new housing on empty/underused lots is brilliant."*

Public comments from the DRI Community Survey April 2020

## **DRI Virtual Live Public Meeting and Open House**

The City hosted a virtual public meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> for members of the public followed by a virtual Open House to present and collect feedback on the potential list of projects. The meeting was hosted live on GoToWebinar. Mayor Keeler together with City staff and consultants provided an overview of the DRI program, Cohoes' Round five application, and the proposed transformative projects. Speakers described the DRI boundary, downtown development indicators, DRI community engagement opportunities including preliminary survey results, and recent investments downtown. Next, they presented the draft vision for downtown Cohoes and the potential transformative projects.

Following the live presentation, the public was invited to participate in a virtual open house. The open house was designed to approximate a typical in-person event, with a series of informational and interactive boards. The online boards provided general information on the DRI program and Cohoes' Round V application, similar to the live event. In addition, they provided an opportunity to comment on the draft downtown vision and the proposed transformative projects which were each described on individual boards. Participants were also asked to share other ideas for general or specific improvements downtown, indicating target locations where applicable.

For those unable to attend the live session, a recording of the virtual meeting and the presentations slides were posted on CohoesDRI.com. The Open House was open online for three days.

The live meeting and open house drew over 60 participants including residents, downtown business owners, and other stakeholders. A large majority of participants expressed their support for the ideas contained in the draft vision during both events. Comments on the projects were positive, with constructive feedback on how the community would like to see investments prioritized downtown.

### Comments from the Virtual Open House:

*"We in Cohoes are on the verge of a brilliantly designed center-city, just on the verge. Let's tip over from the verge to actual."*

*"This is great! Love to see vacant buildings and area get refreshed and used. "*

*"Would love to see some mixed use on the Fire site on Remsen."*

*"Love that it is a mix of new construction with rehabilitation of existing."*

## City of Cohoes Virtual DRI Open House

**Welcome to our Virtual Open House!**

for the

**City of Cohoes' 2020 application to the  
NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)**



This virtual presentation aims to replicate the experience of an in-person Open House with a series of informational and interactive boards. The boards are grouped into three sections:

- (1) About the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (informational)
- (2) City of Cohoes 2020 DRI application and vision (interactive)
- (3) Potential Transformative DRI Projects (interactive)

Please feel free to browse the different sections and share your comments and ideas throughout. All responses are anonymous.

**Before exiting, please be sure to click "Submit" on the final page so your answers are recorded.**

OK

## Local Commitment to Implement Strategic Investment Plan

The City of Cohoes is excited about the opportunity to develop and implement a Strategic Investment Plan. Immediately upon DRI success the City is prepared to establish a Local Planning Committee (LPC). As referred to throughout this application, the City has many supportive community leaders who have indicated their support for the DRI process. The City anticipates that representatives from the following organizations and communities will be invited to serve on the LPC:

- City of Cohoes
- Albany County
- Cohoes IDA
- Cohoes LDC
- Spindle City Historic Society
- Cohoes School District
- Choose Cohoes for Art
- Small Business Community
- Faith community
- Banking community
- Local Developer
- Transportation agency
- Non-profit community
- Community residents

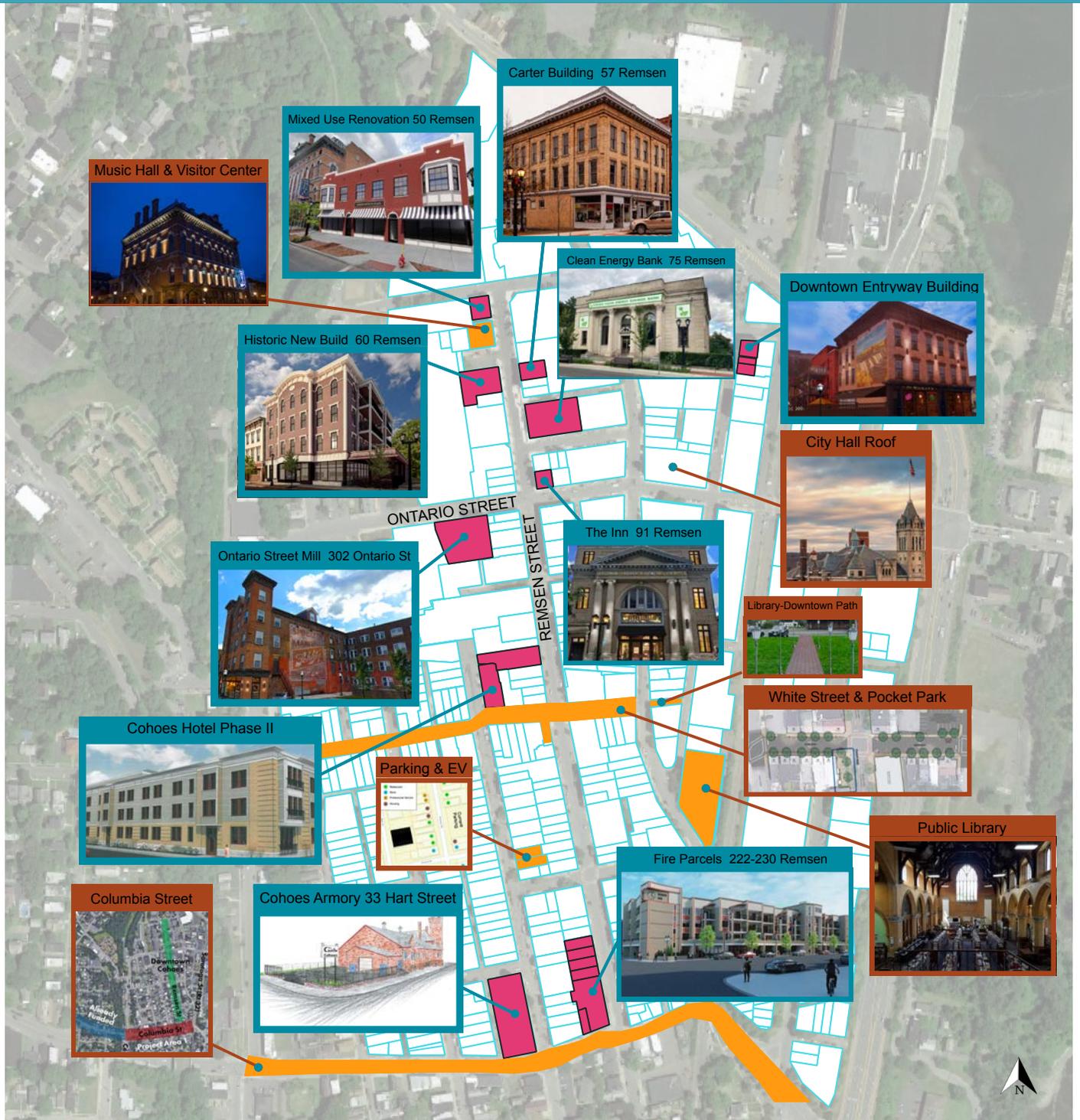
## 4g. Transformative Opportunities and Readiness

Cohoes is a city on the verge of flourishing again. Once an industrial powerhouse, Cohoes is finding its new footing as a dining and entertainment destination thanks to the historic, walkable downtown's revival through the "Restore Historic Cohoes" initiative. The projects of "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" including the forthcoming national model of municipally owned floating solar and Municipal Clean Energy Accelerator, aim to make Cohoes a national leader on sustainability.

With DRI support the nearly \$40 Million in projects, including nearly \$30 Million in private investment listed in this application are ready to become a reality and take Cohoes to the next level. A burgeoning city, long on the precipice of a revival will finally achieve its potential again.

Project	Location	Project Cost	Proposed DRI Investment
<b>Transformative Projects</b>			
Historic New Build	60 Remsen Street	\$4.7 Million	\$1.8 Million
Municipal Clean Energy Accelerator	75 Remsen Street	\$650,000.00	\$260,000.00
Remsen Street Fire Parcels	222-230 Remsen Street	\$10.1 Million	\$4 Million
Downtown Entryway Building	Canvass & Oneida Streets	\$600,000.00	\$240,000.00
Ontario Street Lofts	302 Ontario Street	\$3 Million	\$1 Million
Carter Building	57 Remsen Street	\$2.2 Million	\$750,000.00
Cohoes Armory	33 Hart Street	\$1.2 Million	\$1.2 Million
The Inn at Manufacturers Bank	91 Remsen Street	\$2.6 Million	\$1 Million
Cohoes Hotel Phase II	White & Main Streets	\$3.5 Million	\$1 Million
Mixed Use Renovation	50 Remsen Street	\$1.1 Million	\$400,000.00
<b>Public Projects</b>			
White Street Corridor & Pocket Park	White Street from Mohawk to Main	\$920,000.00	\$460,000.00
Small Business Grant Program	DRI Boundary Area	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
Music Hall & Visitor Center	58 Remsen Street	\$2.4 Million	\$1.9 Million
Mural Program	DRI Boundary Area	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
Public Library Restoration	169 Mohawk Street	\$1.7 Million	\$1.36 Million
Downtown-Library Pedestrian Connection	White & Canvass Streets	\$180,000.00	\$140,000.00
Facade Improvement Program	DRI Boundary Area	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
Immersive Downtown Music	Remsen Street	\$70,000.00	\$40,000.00
Columbia Street Streetscape	Lower Columbia Street	\$1.52 Million	\$1.22 Million
City Hall Roof	97 Mohawk Street	\$2 Million	\$1.6 Million
Backstreet Parking & EV Charging Station	48-50 Main Street	\$230,335.00	\$60,000.00
Branding and Marketing	DRI Boundary Area to Region	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$39,420,335.00</b>	<b>\$19,180,000.00</b>

# Proposed Projects Map



# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## HISTORIC NEW BUILD

### Creating a historic building for the next generation

The prefabricated metal building situated immediately next door to the historic Cohoes Music Hall has always stood out like a sore thumb. The undersized structure made with modern industrial building materials does not fit in among the beautiful, functional, and historic buildings that surround it. Over the course of its lifetime the building has served as a convenience store, an office building for the Cohoes Savings Bank and until recently, was home to the Cohoes Savings Bank Foundation.

The developers seek to honor the history of the surrounding buildings with new construction that matches the surrounding architectural styles. The proximity of the building to the Cohoes Music Hall creates a unique opportunity to build a modern structure to complement the historic venue, with a full service restaurant on the first floor to capture the crowds drawn by the Music Hall, a rooftop bar to capitalize on the sweeping views of downtown Cohoes, and twelve apartments that, situated between a live event venue and the newly renovated Canal Square Park, capture the essence of urban living.



**Total Project Cost**  
\$4.7 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1.8 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
PHG 60 Remsen, LLC

**Property Address**  
60 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Key Points

New restaurant in key location next to Cohoes Music Hall

Increasing downtown population density

Modern Building with historic design features

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT

COHOES  
**CLEAN  
ENERGY**  
SAVINGS BANK



## MUNICIPAL CLEAN ENERGY ACCELERATOR

### Clean Tech Focused Adaptive Reuse

For 100 years+ the iconic Cohoes Savings Bank building on the corner of Remsen and Seneca Streets was a place people of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences came to invest in their future and by extension in the future of the community: saving for Christmas Club or college, getting a loan for a new business or a first home, planning for what was next and building a foundation for progress realized by generations of families and enterprises.

The building at 75 Remsen Street is now being reimagined as **The Cohoes Clean Energy Savings Bank**, home to a municipal clean energy accelerator designed to drive innovation and implementation of tools and technologies to help transform Cohoes and communities like us around the region, state, and country who have aging infrastructure, historic buildings, and a determination to create a clean energy future at a pace and scale that the climate crisis demands.

Built in 1904, in the Roman and Greek influenced Beaux Arts architectural style, the building is well suited as a convening space. The grand main floor with open spaces and memorable murals is ideal for conferences, meetings, dinners, and other gatherings. Two floors of private offices, conference rooms, and spaces of various sizes will host and house established organizations, researchers, and new start-up companies. The building itself will become a living laboratory for “how to” clean energy conversions of historic spaces.

The “Cohoes Savings Institution” building that opened its doors in 1905 to leading industrialists and immigrants alike, and became a foundational part of the community and its history, will re-open with a new mission and vision that fulfills our city’s motto to “Honor the Past, Explore the Present, Inspire the Future.”

**Total Project Cost**  
\$650,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$260,000

**Property Sponsor**  
12th Street Ventures, LLC

**Property Address**  
75 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding and Grants

#### Key Points

Adaptive reuse of a historic building

Creating the framework to build a green infrastructure for the region as a whole

Increased daytime downtown foot traffic

# A TALE OF TWO FIRES

A 1988 fire ravaged a beloved block of businesses on the east side of Remsen Street, imperiling the future of the business district. Instead of devastation though, from the ashes where once stood aging storefronts rose vibrant commercial buildings, restoring hope to the block and the city. When a 2017 fire swept through the west side of Remsen Street, directly across the street from the 1988 fire site, it cleared nearly the entire block. Once again Cohoes stands at a crossroads. With the help of the DRI Cohoes will continue to emerge stronger than ever. A downtown resurgence, already well underway before the 2017 fire, was not deterred, and the commercial district continues to show new life. The completion of the proposed project at the 2017 fire site will represent another giant leap forward in the resurgence of downtown Cohoes.

1988

2017



# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## REMSEN STREET FIRE PARCELS

### A New Beginning Rises From The Ashes

Following a devastating fire that ripped through downtown, the City of Cohoes, in conjunction with the Industrial Development Agency and Local Development Corporation, is working on large scale redevelopment of six parcels at the intersection of Remsen Street and Columbia Street, the intersection of two of Cohoes' most important corridors. The LDC and IDA have formed a co-development committee which is currently in the process of acquiring the six parcels and will soon manage the RFP process for development.

Remsen Hub, the first proposal for the fire parcels, includes 48 apartments, six of them live work lofts, and a café. The first floor features an undulating façade that will encompass live work units. These spaces will create through a curved element, small individual garden type entries that feature individual retail and maker spaces. A coffee café will also occupy the first floor with an opening glass wall that will connect to an outdoor street side terrace. The second floor will include the living portion of the townhouse lofts as well as additional garden apartments. The third and fourth floors will integrate garden apartments which will recede and step back from the street plane as they ascend. The building will feature amenity spaces and a green roof terrace area. First floor and below grade on site parking will be incorporated.

While this design is not final, and an RFP process will be followed, this proposal is emblematic of the scope of projects the City of Cohoes, Local Development Corporation, and Industrial Development Agency expect to attract.



**Total Project Cost**  
\$10.1 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$4 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
Cohoes IDA & LDC

**Property Address**  
222-230 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2023

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Key Points

Reviving a key city block devastated by fire

Attracting jobs by creating live work spaces

Increasing downtown population density

Mitigating parking issues by incorporating a parking garage into the building

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## DOWNTOWN ENTRYWAY BUILDING

### Uplifting a building at the gateway improves form and function

The building at the corner of Oneida and Canvass Streets greets Cohoes residents and visitors alike as they enter the city from interstate 787, also known as Cohoes Boulevard. The building helps to set the tone for the City, and for many years that tone was one of action and life. Once a bustling restaurant, the commercial space has been vacant for many years, and the exterior of the building reflects the underuse.

In recent years, new investors have purchased the building and invested in improving the apartments on the upper floors. In 2021 the owners purchased an adjacent parking lot to improve the functionality of the building and allow the current parking lot to serve as an outdoor patio for the commercial space.

This transformative proposal seeks to bring the commercial area back to a usable space, turn the current parking lot into an outdoor patio, make the necessary improvements to the new parking lot to incorporate it into the building, and perform facade improvements.

ONEIDA STREET VIEW WITH PATIO



CANVASS STREET ENTRANCE



### Total Project Cost

\$600,000  
(An additional \$255,000 has been recently invested in the interior)

### DRI Funding Request

\$240,000

### Property Sponsor

MPW Rentals, LLC

### Property Address

59/61 Canvass Street  
38/40 Oneida Street

### Readiness Status

Construction ready to begin in 2022

### Funding Source

Private Funding

### Key Points

Bringing a commercial space back online

Creating Jobs

Improving the appearance of a major entryway to downtown

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## ONTARIO STREET LOFTS

### Adaptive reuse of a historic building

Built in 1864, the downtown mill is among the most historic buildings in the City of Cohoes. After spending decades using the power canal to produce clothing, the building became home to a series of grocery stores starting in the mid twentieth century, including Empire Super Market, Food Circus, and the present day Spindle City Market. These grocery stores have and continue to serve an aging and historically underserved population.

The proposed adaptive reuse of the building includes the transformation of the long vacant second, third and fourth floors into 18 market rate apartments. The commercial space on the first floor will be updated to continue housing a neighborhood grocery store well into the 21st century. Exterior renovations to secure the envelope of the historic building for the future as well as modern accessibility improvements will ensure that the mill remains a vital piece of the community for years to come.

**Total Project Cost**  
\$3 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
Stacey Nolan

**Property Address**  
302 Ontario Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

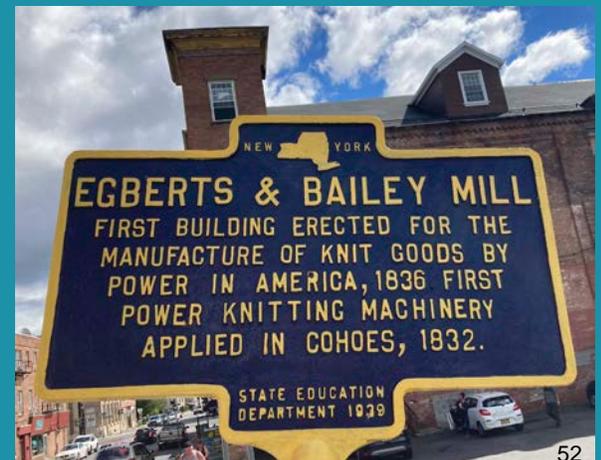
### Key Points

Updating a downtown grocery store that caters to an elderly and underserved community

Increasing downtown population density

Preserving a historic building

Immediately adjacent to the Ontario Street Mill was the Egberts & Bailey Mill. In the 1830s this mill was home to major innovations in power knitting. While the building no longer stands, it's history is honored at this location with a place marker, and the imprint of its outline is still visible on the west side of the Ontario Street Mill.



# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## CARTER BUILDING HISTORIC RESTORATION

### Creating a future for a historic building

The Carter Building, dating back to the early 20th Century, has long been a staple of downtown Cohoes. The building, once home to the Cohoes Retail Store, professional offices and residential apartments, spent much of its life as Calkin's Pharmacy from the 1950s until the doors closed in 2010. The building has been mostly vacant since that time, due in large part to the presence of asbestos which made the finances of a major renovation difficult.

The historic Carter Building is situated among the Cohoes Music Hall, Canal Square Park, the future "Green Energy Accelerator" building that was once Cohoes Savings Bank, and the upcoming historic new build at 60 Remsen. With the proper investment, the Carter building with its historic structure in a key vibrant area could be a major catalyst to breathing new life into downtown Cohoes.

Plans for the restoration include asbestos abatement, installation of an elevator to meet modern accessibility standards, new electrical and plumbing, historic renovation finish work, two new storefronts, eight one bedroom apartments, and a rooftop patio to take advantage of the sweeping views of downtown Cohoes with mountains in the distance.

53



ROOFTOP VIEW FROM THE CARTER BUILDING

**Total Project Cost**  
\$2.2 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$750,000

**Property Sponsor**  
John Nolan

**Property Address**  
57 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Key Points

Reviving an underutilized historic building in key downtown area

Increasing downtown population density

Creating two storefronts to add to the economic revival

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## COHOES ARMORY

### Restoring and Reimagining a historic building

One of 23 remaining armories designed by renowned architect Isaac Perry, the Cohoes Armory is a building of historic significance as well as great potential for the future. The Armory, completed in 1893, housed the national guard in Cohoes through the Spanish American War, World War I and World War II until it was vacated in 1964. The building was subsequently a clothing and uniform store until it was closed in the late 20th century.

Today, owners Dave Cox and Amy Chen work tirelessly to breathe new life back into the historic structure. Their vision is to transform the building into a multi-purpose place of community gathering. The "Cohoes Castle" will host circus training classes, as well as a diverse range of performing art forms including shows, concerts, workshops and classes.

Amy and Dave bring a wealth of experience to the restoration and reimagining of the Armory. Dave has spent the past six years putting to use his professional skills as a luthier, woodworker and metal fabricator to bring the once crumbling building back to life. Additionally, Dave is an accomplished performer, having appeared on the Late Show with David Letterman and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno. Amy holds a JD from Chicago-Kent College of Law, but realized that her calling is in youth arts education. Amy has held multiple positions with Cirque du Soleil's youth program in the South Bronx, and teaches circus art in the Hudson Valley.



**Total Project Cost**  
\$1.2 Million

(An additional \$600,000 in recent investment has been made in the property)

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1.2 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
Armory 33, LLC

**Property Address**  
33 Hart Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Key Points

Redeveloping a derelict building in a key revitalization area

Preserving a historic property

Bringing a new form of commercial activity to the region

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## THE INN AT MANUFACTURERS BANK

### Reclaiming a historic building

Built in 1906, the Manufacturers Bank is a beautiful historic building situated at the vital intersection of Remsen and Ontario Streets. Home to Manufacturers Bank, City Bank of Troy, State Bank of Albany and Bank of America over the course of a century, the building has been vacant or underutilized for more than a decade and is a prime candidate for adaptive reuse.

The ornate exterior houses a three story building with stunning original "bones" and tremendous opportunity. The first floor with its connected basement is an ideal location for commercial use. The third floor is a wide open ballroom complete with original fixtures. That space would nicely complement a restaurant and catering company on the first floor, opening the whole building up to hosting private events or partnering with surrounding spaces to host conventions. The second floor, currently long vacant office space, is proposed to become inn style rooms which could be rented by travelers passing through, visitors to Cohoes' many historic places, or rented together with the rest of the event space to host weddings, corporate events or conventions. Through the course of improvements the owner may consider an addition on the adjacent lot to house elements including an elevator and building utilities.

### Current Condition of the Second and Third Floors



**Total Project Cost**  
\$2.6 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
John Nolan

**Property Address**  
91 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Key Points

Creating inn style lodging for travelers and visitors

Revitalizing a historic building

Adding vibrancy to a key downtown intersection

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## "COHOES HOTEL" PHASE 2

### Anchoring a challenged neighborhood

Building off of the back of the former Cohoes Hotel Building, Cohoes Hotel Phase 2 extends down Main Street, ending at the intersection of Main and White Streets. It is representative of the next steps in the revival of Cohoes; extending the recent improvements on Remsen Street to impact still challenged areas including Main Street and White Street.

Starting in 2015 the City of Cohoes worked with developers to transform the once grand Cohoes Hotel, which had become a boarding house with deplorable living conditions, into market rate apartments. With phase one complete and fully occupied, the developers are ready to break ground on phase two, adding 23 market rate apartments, a fitness room and rooftop common room.

This development is part of a larger plan to uplift a neighborhood, incorporating streetscape improvements and smart street lighting, turning the area from a problematic one into a vibrant offshoot of the Remsen Street corridor.

**Total Project Cost**  
\$3.5 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1 Million

**Property Sponsor**  
Cohoes Hotel, LLC

**Property Address**  
Intersection of White & Main Streets. Rear addition to Remsen Street Building.

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

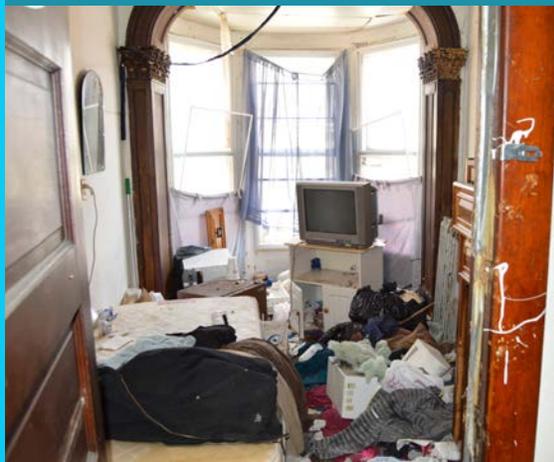
**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### COHOES HOTEL PHASE ONE TRANSFORMATION

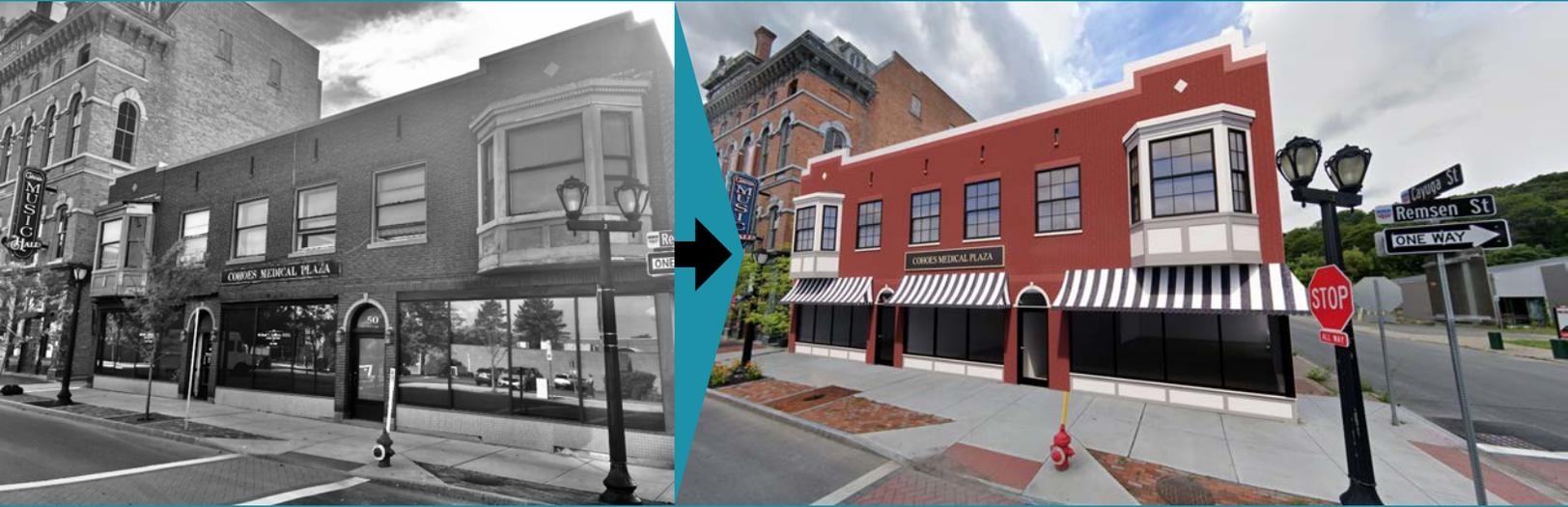
#### Key Points

Increasing downtown population density

Stabilizing force on a challenged street



# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT



## MIXED USE RENOVATION

**Total Project Cost**  
\$1.1 Million

(An additional investment of \$1.2 Million has already been made)

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$400,000

**Property Sponsor**  
50 Remsen Street, LLC

**Property Address**  
50 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

**Funding Source**  
Private Funding

### Mixed Use Renovation of an underutilized property

Immediately adjacent to the Cohoes Music Hall, the property at 50 Remsen Street has been under-utilized for many years. With less than half of the commercial space being utilized, a nearly empty second floor, and an increasingly derelict facade, the building has failed to achieve it's potential and has become a drag on the growth that surrounds it.

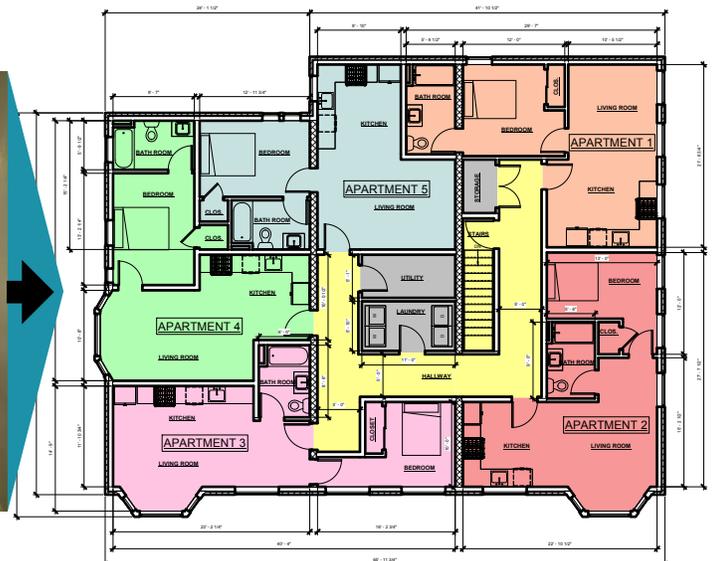
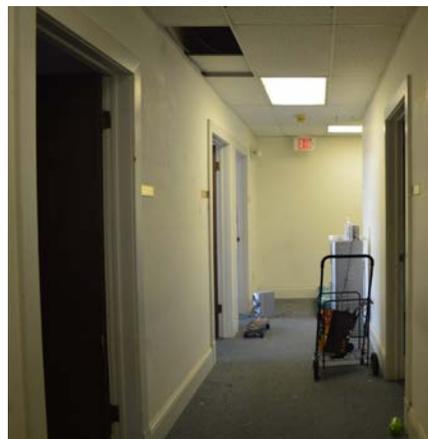
The new owners have plans to renovate the entirety of the first floor into a large family dentistry practice, turn the second floor into five market rate one bedroom apartments, and make improvements to the facade to match the surrounding area. With the proposed changes, 50 Remsen Street will achieve its potential to contribute to the rejuvenation of Downtown Cohoes by adding population density to our downtown neighborhood, contributing to the health and wellness of our community, and beautifying a building in our historic downtown to match the surrounding improvements.

### Key Points

Derelict Building in key redevelopment area

Improving access to healthcare

Increasing downtown population density



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$920,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$460,000

**Property Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
White Street between  
Mohawk Street and  
Main Street

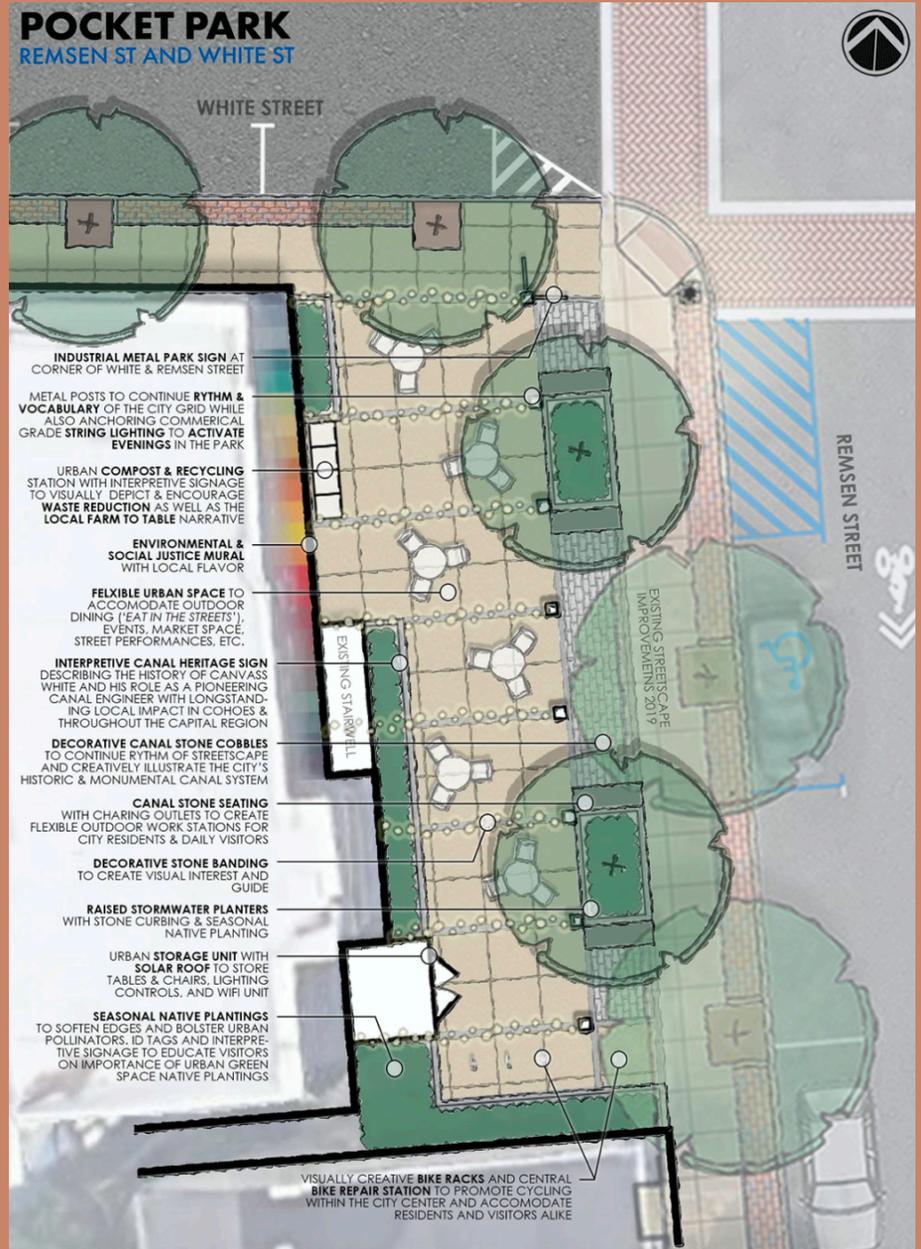
**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to  
begin in 2022

The project is a unique & creative streetscape improvement project on White St, located in a mixed-use small business district in the center of Cohoes' downtown. The project includes the development of a "pocket park" which will include a creative space for outdoor eating to support the Cohoes "Eat in the Street", a bike hub/decorative bike rack, repair station, an urban composting and recycling station and an environmental justice mural.

Cohoes Streetscape improvements are expected to increase residential occupancy and catalyze significant private developments. This project will sustain momentum and transform underutilized properties into livable and walkable neighborhoods consistent with regional priorities.

Cohoes envisions itself as a multi-modal hub situated at the crossroads of three counties and two waterways, the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. The City is building on existing assets, specifically, its proximity to regional bike paths and dedicated bus stops which demand mobility options for residents, businesses, and visitors.

## WHITE STREET CORRIDOR & POCKET PARK



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$200,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$200,000

**Project Sponsor**  
Cohoes LDC

**Property Address**  
Various locations  
throughout the DRI  
area map

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

With the completion of new build construction and restoration of historic buildings, the Cohoes Local Development Corporation work with business owners to fill the newly completed storefronts with a vibrancy befitting the new development.

The Cohoes Local Development Corporation has issued small business grants and loans in excess of \$450,000 since 2016, effectively breathing new life into the downtown. Two examples of past successes filling storefronts with the help of the small business grant and loan program are pictured below.

By funding the small business program going forward, the CLDC can ensure that business owners from a variety of backgrounds have the opportunity to contribute to and succeed in our downtown community.

# SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$2.4 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1.9 Million

**Project Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
58 Remsen Street

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

The First National Bank Building, built in 1874, is home to two of Cohoes' most important assets; The Cohoes Music Hall and the Cohoes Visitor Center. In order to maximize the impact of these assets today and preserve them for future generations, the City of Cohoes is in the process of a major historic renovation. In recent years the majority of the windows have been replaced, updated stage lighting and sound equipment have made the space a viable stage for modern shows, and elevator repairs have ensured the building remain ADA accessible. The city recently received a Preserve NY Grant to conduct a building condition survey, which will pinpoint the exact work that needs to be completed. High level costs of the remaining window replacements, roof repair, shoring up the building envelope, masonry work, HVAC updating, house lighting, interior ceiling restoration, and replacing the outdated rigging system are estimated at \$2.4 Million.

## MUSIC HALL AND VISITOR CENTER



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$250,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$250,000

**Property Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes & CLDC

**Property Address**  
Scattered throughout  
the downtown area

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

Over the course of the past decade Cohoes has emerged as up and coming center regional center of arts, entertainment and dining. That scene is anchored by the Cohoes Music Hall and the concert pavilion at Canal Square Park with a constantly growing number of shops, breweries and restaurants just steps away in the historic downtown.

Public art has the capacity to activate the imagination, inspire creativity, and help people to be more perceptive of the world around them. The City of Cohoes in partnership with the Cohoes Local Development Corporation is currently in the final stages of creating the first in what aspires to be a series of major public art; a mural in Silliman Park due to be completed in 2021. Many other locations throughout the downtown and beyond would benefit from the addition of public art as a way to uplift and inspire the community.

## MURAL PROGRAM



↑ POTENTIAL MURAL LOCATIONS ↑

# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$1.7 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1.36 Million

**Project Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
169 Mohawk Street

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

The Cohoes Public Library Building, one of three key municipal anchor buildings, is a historic award winning adaptive reuse of the former St. John's Episcopal Church, built in 1895.

Opened as a library in the 1970s, the building was closed to the public on July 2, 2021 after portions of the façade fell onto the sidewalk. City officials determined that emergency restoration work was required on the historic structure which houses the Cohoes Public Library, Parsons Child and Family Center, Mary's Corner, and a LMI medical practice. Funding was secured from the NYS Library Construction Fund in September 2021 for emergency restoration work.

The city is pursuing additional funding to support a comprehensive restoration and revitalization of the building, with the goal of creating a model 21st Century public library and human services center that will be a hub of the community. A building condition survey will create a roadmap for that work. As a component of that effort, the city is seeking \$1.7 Million to help close the building envelope and to upgrade the electrical capacity.

# PUBLIC LIBRARY RESTORATION



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$180,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$140,000

**Project Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
Extending from White Street between Mohawk Street and Canvas Street

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin in 2022

As downtown Cohoes has grown in population density and commercial foot traffic in recent years, the need for improved downtown connectivity to create a modern walkable city has become apparent. Streetscape improvements have been made to much of Remsen Street, the hub of the downtown business district, with the final phase fully funded and set to begin construction in Spring of 2022.

With an eye toward expanding the success of Remsen Street throughout the rest of the downtown, Cohoes is seeking funding to execute an urban connectivity plan. One of the elements of this plan (2c on the map) is a lit pedestrian walkway between the core of the downtown and the Cohoes Public Library which sits at the outskirts of the immediate downtown area. Connecting the library corridor to Remsen Street with a safe, lit walking path will improve pedestrian and handicap access to both the library and the downtown business district.

## DOWNTOWN-LIBRARY PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$200,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$200,000

**Project Sponsor**  
Cohoes Local  
Development Corporation

**Property Address**  
Scattered throughout  
DRI area

**Readiness Status**  
Ready to begin in  
2022

The Cohoes Local Development Corporation self funds a facade program aimed at uplifting neighborhoods by encouraging property owners to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings. To date the facade program has been wildly successful, having distributed in excess of \$70,000 since 2016. The program is prepared to expand exponentially with a financial infusion and uplift entire city blocks through exterior improvements.

## FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$70,000

**Property Address**  
Remsen Street

Music piped into the business district will help to curate an immersive experience in downtown Cohoes that will offer an intangible positive association with patronizing our small businesses and increase future foot traffic. Whether holiday music in December, patriotic marches during a parade, or a live Canal Square Concert being played all the way down Remsen Street, the 37 wirelessly connected speakers will have a transformative effect on the experience of shoppers and diners in downtown Cohoes.

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$40,000

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin in 2022

**Property Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes & LDC

## IMMERSIVE DOWNTOWN MUSIC



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$1,520,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1,216,000

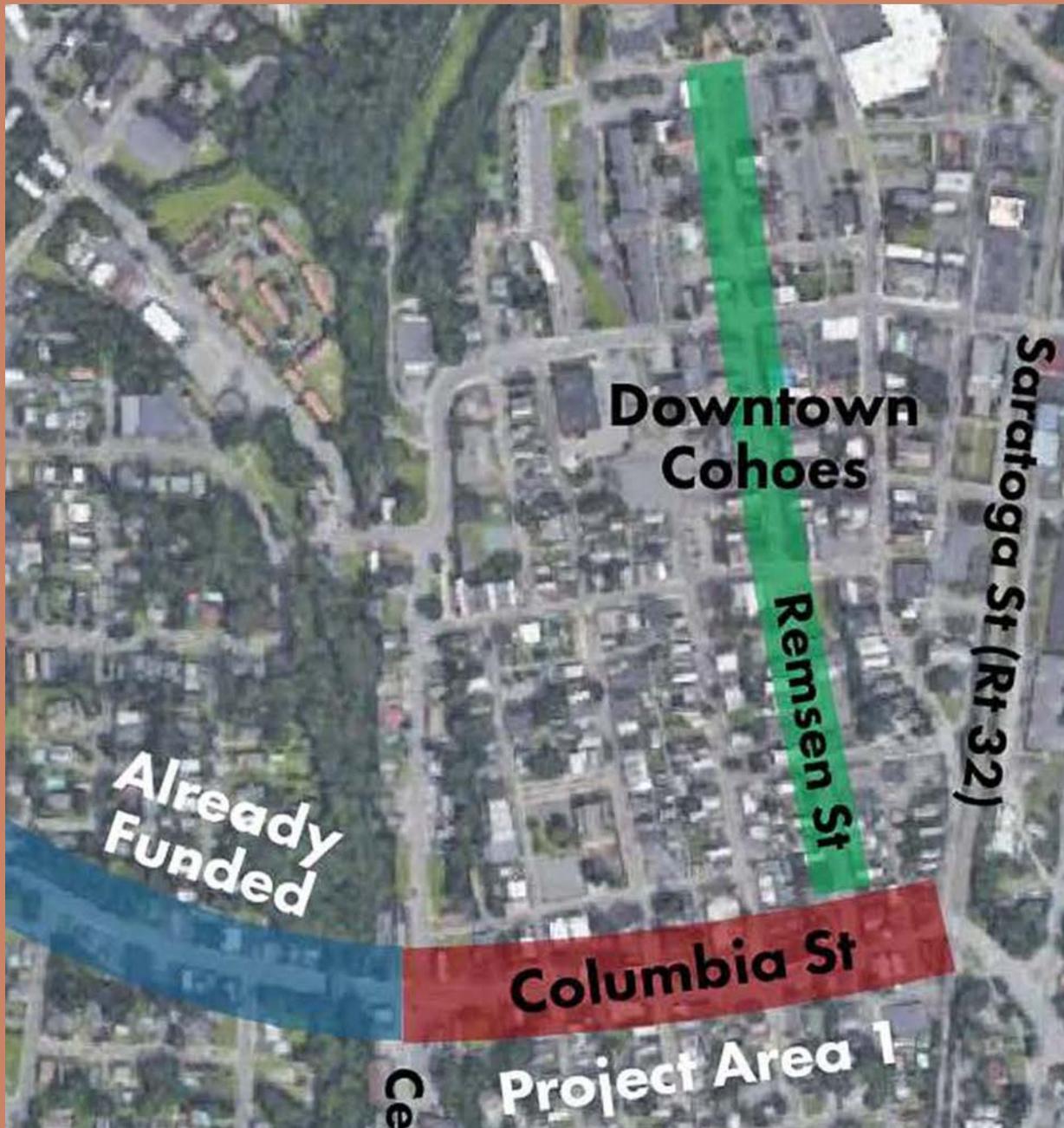
**Project Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
Columbia Street  
between Saratoga  
Street and Central  
Avenue

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

As the streetscape improvements are completed on Remsen Street and the City of Cohoes begins the process to extend neighborhood improvements to the surrounding areas, Columbia Street is one of the obvious next steps. Bisecting Remsen Street, and serving as one of the city's main thoroughfares, streetscape improvements to Columbia Street (Project Area 1, red on the map) would not only improve multimodal transportation, but uplift the aesthetics of the downtown area as a whole. Additionally, improvements to the section of Columbia Street to the west have already been funded and will be built in 2022.

## COLUMBIA STREET CORRIDOR STREETSCAPE



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$2 Million

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$1.6 Million

**Project Sponsor**  
City of Cohoes

**Property Address**  
97 Mohawk Street

**Readiness Status**  
Project ready to begin  
in 2022

Built in 1896 by noted architect J.C. Fuller, Cohoes City hall is more than the center of government for the City of Cohoes. It is the focal point around which downtown is built. It's grandeur is a symbol of a time when Cohoes was a leading global textile manufacturer. To restore Cohoes City Hall is to preserve the physical representation of the history of the city.

In order to accomplish this task, the City of Cohoes is pursuing a number of funding sources to address securing the envelope of the building. Such infrastructure repair is consistent with the REDC's objective to "Revive Infrastructure and Community" and Cohoes' revitalization plan to promote historic preservation and well-planned and sensitive infill development to attract technology-based companies and professional services, quality affordable housing, and tourism and river-based recreation to Downtown Cohoes and the Capital Region.

## CITY HALL ROOF



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$230,335.00  
(Includes past expenses)

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$60,000

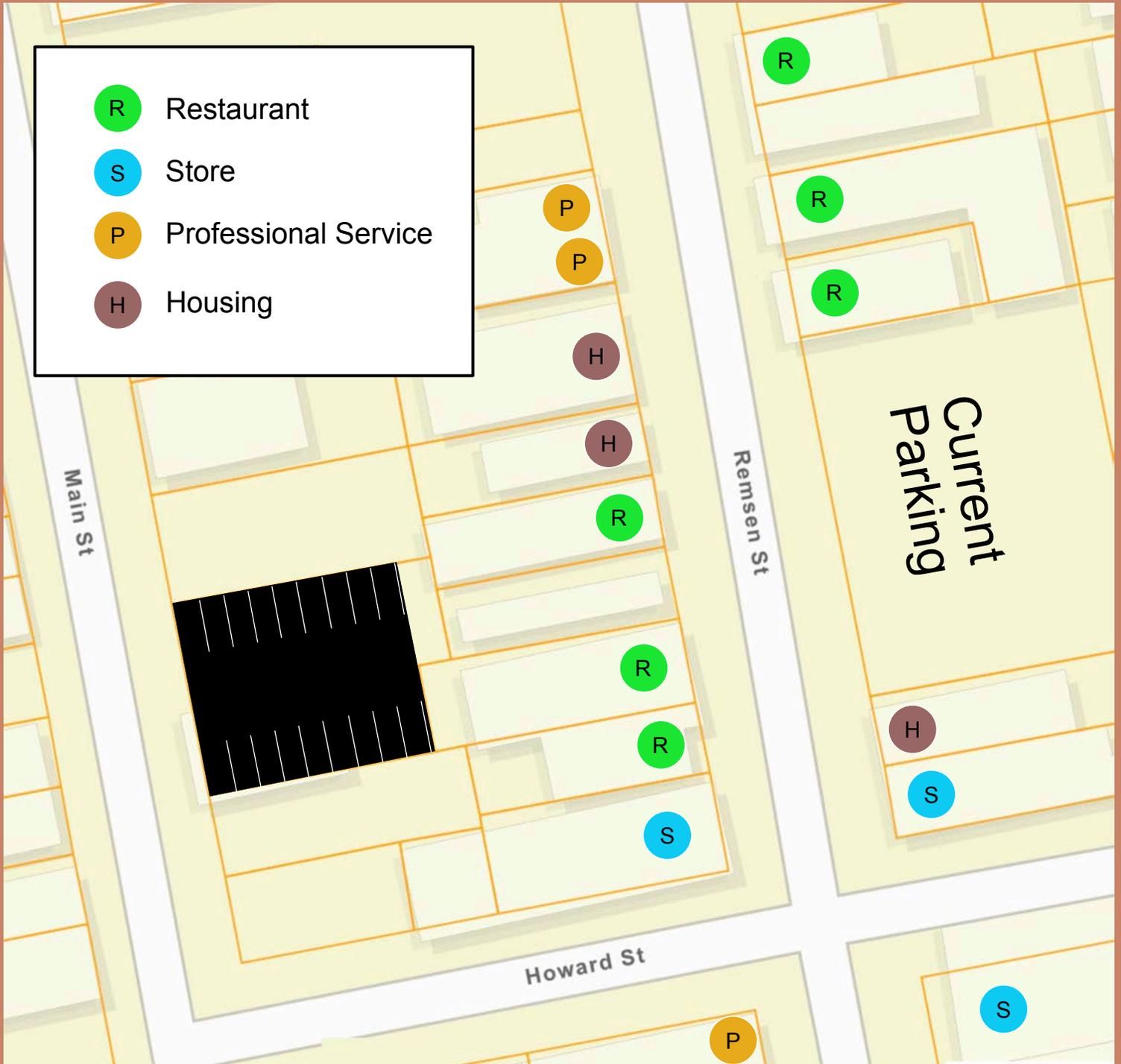
**Property Sponsor**  
Cohoes LDC

**Property Address**  
48-50 Main Street

**Readiness Status**  
Construction ready to begin in 2022

Increased traffic in downtown Cohoes as a result of rapidly filling storefronts and newly renovated living spaces is driving a growing demand for parking in the business district. In an effort to continue the commercial and residential growth of Remsen Street, the City of Cohoes is working to create backstreet parking to serve the business district rather than develop parking lots on the busiest commercial street. The goal is to incorporate five fast EV Charging stations into this parking lot.

## DOWNTOWN BACKSTREET PARKING & EV CHARGING



# PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Total Project Cost**  
\$100,000

**DRI Funding Request**  
\$100,000

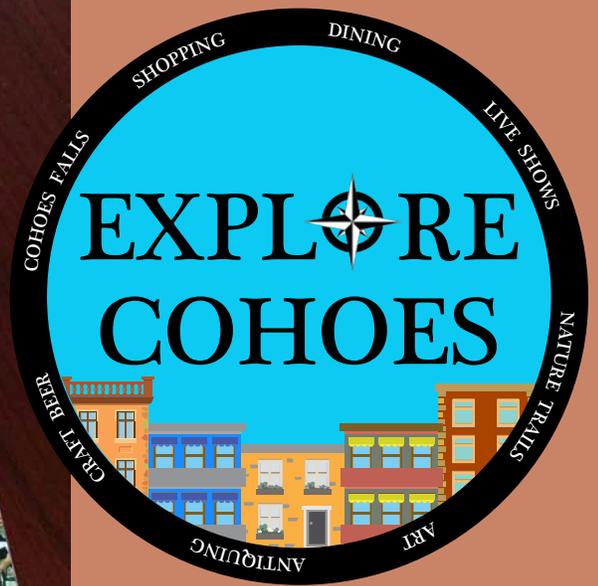
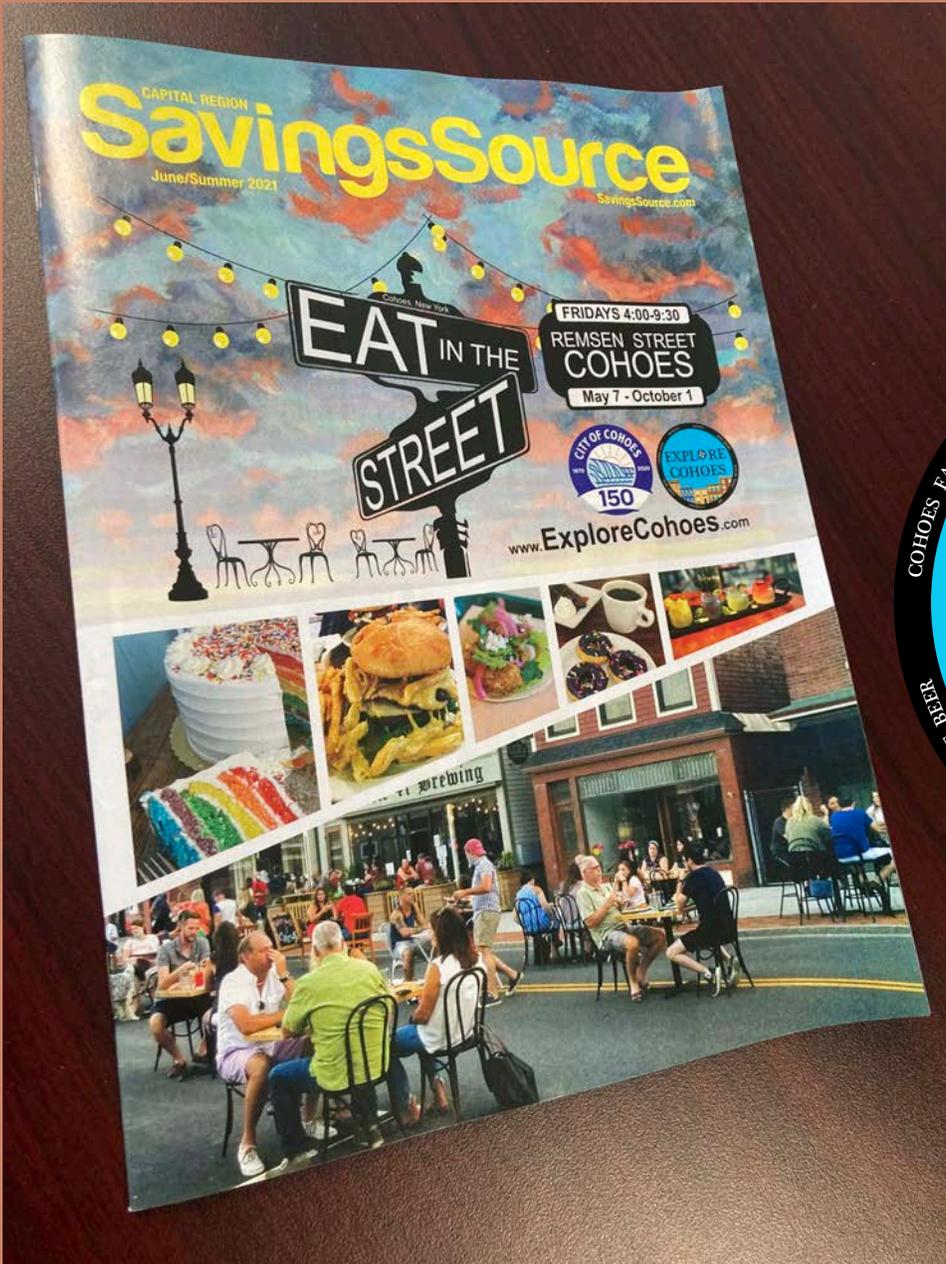
**Property Sponsor**  
Cohoes LDC

**Property Address**  
DRI District

**Readiness Status**  
Ready to begin in  
2022

In support of the improvements and new businesses in Cohoes the Local Development Corporation will take on branding and marketing to bring new visitors to Cohoes. Potential projects include advertising on the web using the recently created [www.ExploreCohoes.com](http://www.ExploreCohoes.com), printed and mailed promotional materials, newspaper advertising, and signage.

# BRANDING AND MARKETING



## Potential Transformative Projects



### 92 Main Street

The 8,676 square foot mixed use building, with first floor commercial space and eight second floor apartments was recently sold. Its location immediately between two properties listed in this application as transformative make it an ideal candidate for consideration in the future.



### 147 Mohawk Street

The 7,727 square foot former church stands next to the majestic Cohoes Public Library, and overlooks the vital Downtown Historic District. The current owner has expressed a willingness to sell the building so it can be preserved. That process has been slowed by the COVID pandemic but shows signs of resolving itself in the near future.



### 139 Remsen Street

The 9,832 square foot mixed use building features two first floor commercial units and 7 residential units on the upper floors. The building is currently in probate, but will soon become a prime location for redevelopment. Located in center of bustling Remsen Street, developing this property could be a major advance in the revitalization of the downtown.



### City Lofts Phase II

With the first phase of the City Lofts on Saratoga Street complete and fully occupied, the developers are considering moving forward with phase two of the project. With logistics delayed due to COVID the project, which would greatly add to downtown population density, may be ready for consideration in 2022.

## **4h. Administrative Capacity**

The City of Cohoes will be the lead agency for this project, and the consultant will work directly with the City's Department of Community & Economic Development and Planning Department. The City of Cohoes is prepared with the experience, community support, and investor confidence to proceed with the planning and implementation of the DRI. The Department of Community & Economic Development and Planning Department will be responsible for municipal project implementation using existing staff which includes, Community & Economic Director, Administrative Assistants (2), City Planner, City Engineer and City Comptroller.

The City of Cohoes Community & Economic Development Department has successfully administered over two million dollars in Grants in recent years, including but not limited to grant programs through CDBG, ESD, OPRHP and EFC.

The City of Cohoes has resources available through the Cohoes Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the Cohoes Local Development Corporation (CLDC), with a focus on revitalization of the downtown.

The Cohoes Local Development Corporation will be a key partner in the administration of the DRI program. The CLDC is a 501 (c) (3) organization focused on job creation, retention and advancing housing opportunities. The CLDC has completed and is currently engaged in many economic development initiatives including administering a Façade/Sign Program, Economic Development Grant Program and Small Business Loan Program. The City of Cohoes and the CLDC work together to sponsor "Eat in the Street" a program whereby the City shut down the main street in the business district and allows the restaurants and businesses to bring their tables outdoors and set up on the street. This program has helped many of the small businesses make up for lack of indoor space due to Covid 19 restrictions. The CLDC also provided over \$40,000 in small business re-open grants. During the peak of the pandemic, the City of Cohoes held more than a dozen ribbon cuttings for new business in the downtown business district.

The Cohoes Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is the City's agency appointed by the Mayor and Common Council. The IDA is able to provide Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), bonding assistance and sale and use tax exemptions for new construction and business. The Cohoes IDA has been a key partner in several of the projects throughout the City.

4i. Other - Letters of Support and Press





THE NEW YORK STATE  
LEGISLATURE

September 13, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

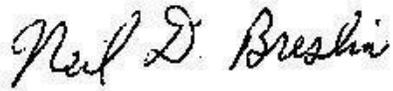
Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

We are writing as the State Senator and Assemblymember who represent the City of Cohoes to communicate our strong support for their application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

With a compact, historic, and walkable downtown in the center of the Capital Region, Cohoes is becoming a community of choice for people of all ages. Recent investments including adaptive reuse for event space and micro apartments, dance studios, microbreweries and new restaurants, as well as extensive park, greenspace and streetscape improvements in our business district are exciting and have begun to change the ‘look and feel’ of our community resulting in renewed energy that has not been in Cohoes for some time. As a result, we are also seeing interested investors come to Cohoes to reimagine our historic buildings as mixed-use places where people can live and work. This DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investment that can attract workers and residents to downtown, support redevelopment and ensure Cohoes will be an enduring community for current and future generations.

We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil D. Breslin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Neil D. Breslin  
Senator  
44<sup>th</sup> District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. McDonald III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

John T. McDonald III  
Member of Assembly  
108<sup>th</sup> District



DANIEL P. MCCOY  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

COUNTY OF ALBANY  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
112 STATE STREET, ROOM 1200  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207-2021  
(518) 447-7040 - FAX (518) 447-5589  
WWW.ALBANYCOUNTY.COM

DANIEL C. LYNCH, ESQ.  
DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

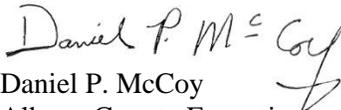
Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing on behalf of Albany County to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.

Sincerely

  
Daniel P. McCoy  
Albany County Executive



Thomas L. Amell  
Chief Executive Officer/  
President

652 Albany Shaker Rd.  
Albany, NY 12211  
P. 518.730.3051

amellt@pioneerny.com

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs, Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as President and CEO of Pioneer with a branch in the City of Cohoes, to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.

Sincerely,

TLA/amp



**COHOES MUSIC HALL**



**PLAYHOUSE STAGE COMPANY**



**PARK PLAYHOUSE**

**Board of Directors**

Allen S. Goodman  
*Chairman*

Benita Zahn  
*President*

Ilene D. Stein  
*Vice President & Chair,  
Community Engagement*

Matthew B. McKeon  
*Vice President & Treasurer*

Molly A. Breslin  
*Corporate Secretary*

Kathleen Lasch McNamee  
*Chair Emeritus*

Dorcey L. Appllyrs

James J. Barba

Kelsey Knutsen

Alan S. Lobel

Robert J. McNamara

Matthew T. Peter

Thomas Templeton

Ann F. Wendth

**Ex-Officio Directors**

Hon. William T. Keeler  
*Mayor of Cohoes, NY*

Hon. Kathy M. Sheehan  
*Mayor of Albany, NY*

Shirley W. Arensberg  
*Education Director Emeritus*

**Staff**

Owen M. Smith  
*Producing Artistic Director*

Ashley-Simone Kirchner  
*Director of Education*

Charles J. Kraus  
*General Manager*

Maureen Neufeld  
*Director of Development*

Dennis Strainge  
*Production Manager*

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez, Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

September 9, 2021

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as Producing Artistic Director of Playhouse Stage Company in Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). As the management entity for the Cohoes Music Hall, we have watched with great excitement as Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that and the City's receipt of this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

With a compact, historic, and walkable downtown in the center of the Capital Region, Cohoes is becoming a community of choice for people of all ages, backgrounds and identities. Recent investments including adaptive reuse for event space and micro apartments, our world class dance studio and rehearsal space, microbreweries and new restaurants, as well as extensive park, greenspace and streetscape improvements in our business district are exciting and have begun to change the 'look and feel' of our community resulting in renewed energy that has not been in Cohoes for some time. As a result, we are also seeing interested investors come to Cohoes to reimagine our historic buildings as mixed-use places where people can live and work. This DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investment that can attract workers and residents to downtown, support redevelopment and ensure Cohoes will be an enduring community for current and future generations.

I strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is well deserved. On a personal note, I hope you are both doing very well, and thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of our region.

Sincerely,

Owen M. Smith  
Producing Artistic Director  
Playhouse Stage Company

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as Managing Partner of Capital Companies NY in Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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Sincerely,



Daniel C. Oh  
Managing Partner  
Capital Companies NY



**mohawk**

September 14, 2021

465 Saratoga Street  
Cohoes, NY 12047  
800 THE MILL  
800 843 6455

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as CEO of Mohawk Fine Papers, Inc. in Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

With a compact, historic, and walkable downtown in the center of the Capital Region, Cohoes is becoming a community of choice for people of all ages. Recent investments including adaptive reuse for event space and micro apartments, dance studios, microbreweries and new restaurants, as well as extensive park, greenspace and streetscape improvements in our business district are exciting and have begun to change the 'look and feel' of our community resulting in renewed energy that has not been in Cohoes for some time. As a result, we are also seeing interested investors come to Cohoes to reimagine our historic buildings as mixed-use places where people can live and work. This DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investment that can attract workers and residents to downtown, support redevelopment and ensure Cohoes will be an enduring community for current and future generations.

We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. O'Connor, Jr.  
CEO

GLADUE PROPERTIES, LLC  
95 REMSEN STREET  
COHOES, NEW YORK 12047

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as real estate developer/investor in the City of Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

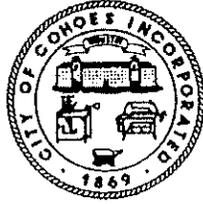
With a compact, historic, and walkable downtown in the center of the Capital Region, Cohoes is becoming a community of choice for people of all ages. Recent investments including adaptive reuse for event space and micro apartments, dance studios, microbreweries and new restaurants, as well as extensive park, greenspace and streetscape improvements in our business district are exciting and have begun to change the 'look and feel' of our community resulting in renewed energy that has not been in Cohoes for some time. As a result, we are also seeing interested investors come to Cohoes to reimagine our historic buildings as mixed-use places where people can live and work. This DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investment that can attract workers and residents to downtown, support redevelopment and ensure Cohoes will be an enduring community for current and future generations.

We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.

Sincerely,

  
Luke Gladue  
Member

*Gladue Properties*



**Board of Directors:**  
Rodney Dion -Chairman  
Edward Dudwoire-Secretay  
Daniel V. DeChiaro – Member  
Horace Hallock- Vice Chairman  
Jeffrey Moore - Member  
Ralph Pascale - Treasurer  
Laura Tarlo – Member

97 Mohawk Street  
Cohoes, New York  
12047-2897

**CITY OF COHOES  
INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY**

Phone: (518) 233-2117  
Fax: (518) 237-2168

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

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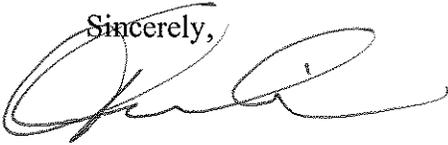
I am writing as Chairman of the City of Cohoes Industrial Development Agency to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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Page 2

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Sincerely,

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

Rodney Dion  
Chairman Cohoes IDA

**COHOES LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
97 Mohawk Street  
Cohoes, New York  
12047

Deborah Jacques  
Executive Director  
(518)233-2121 ext 218  
[Djacques@ci.cohoes.ny.us](mailto:Djacques@ci.cohoes.ny.us)

Barbara Hildreth  
Karen Miscavage  
Stephen Napier  
Jeffrey Bradt  
Evan Lamb

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as Chairman of the City of Cohoes Local Development Corporation to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

With a compact, historic, and walkable downtown in the center of the Capital Region, Cohoes is becoming a community of choice for people of all ages. Recent investments including adaptive reuse for event space and micro apartments, dance studios, microbreweries and new restaurants, as well as extensive park, greenspace and streetscape improvements in our business district are exciting and have begun to change the 'look and feel' of our community resulting in renewed energy that has not been in Cohoes for some time. As a result, we are also seeing interested investors come to Cohoes to reimagine our historic buildings as mixed-use places where people can live and work. This DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investment that can attract workers and residents to downtown, support redevelopment and ensure Cohoes will be an enduring community for current and future generations.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Hildreth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Barbara Hildreth  
Chairman Cohoes LDC

Sept 14, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street - Suite 1003  
Troy, NY 12180

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am Alana Sparrow, downtown resident of Cohoes and founder and creative director of The Foundry for Art Design + Culture, writing to communicate my strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding assistance. Cohoes has been building momentum over the past year with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With this generous \$10 million grant, Cohoes intends to develop plans for and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in downtown. The DRI, which Governor Cuomo introduced in 2016, invests \$100 million in ten downtown communities to 'unlock dormant potential in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and this grant would provide a tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

This project funding will help to support the city's multi-faceted, multi-phase projects combining multiple properties, interested parties, and businesses and institutions that are crucial contributors to the regional economy. Since last year's devastating fire along Remsen Street, the community has come together stronger than ever to take control of the city's destiny. Investment in filling the gap that was created by this tragedy is a key driver for this application. Further, Cohoes is a small community in the Capital Region with highly limited resources. This funding will have a significant impact on the renewing of Remsen Street in particular because the DRI District is compact and highly walkable. The DRI funding will allow the city to capitalize on prior and current private and public investments that can attract workers to the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable.

The city has identified transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds. We strongly believe that these DRI funds will result in the immediate and long-term revitalization and economic benefits that will span beyond the community and the City of Cohoes into the Capital Region. Your close and careful consideration to awarding the City of Cohoes with this year's DRI is genuinely appreciated and is much deserved.



Alana Sparrow  
Founder + Creative Director

**A NEW YORK STATE MINORITY WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS**



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**119**

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COHOES, NEW YORK 12047

TELEPHONE 518 229 2173

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MANUFACTURERS OF CREATIVITY

[asparrow@thefoundrysite.com](mailto:asparrow@thefoundrysite.com)

*from the desk of*

ALANA SPARROW



Prime Companies  
621 Columbia St.  
Cohoes, NY 12047  
518 785 9000

September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as a long-time property and business owner in Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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Sincerely,

PRIME COMPANIES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd C. Curley", written over a horizontal line.

Todd C. Curley  
Partner



September 9, 2021

Ruth H. Mahoney and Havidan Rodriguez  
Co-Chairs  
Capital Region REDC  
Hedley Park Place  
433 River Street – Suite 1003  
Troy, New York 12180

Re: Letter of Support for the City of Cohoes DRI Application

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Mr. Rodriguez:

I am writing as a Business Owner of several business located in Cohoes to communicate our strong support for the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Cohoes has been building momentum with the addition of new businesses in its downtown and new public-sector investments. With a \$10 million grant, Cohoes will identify and implement transformational projects to catalyze continued investment in the downtown. The DRI introduced in 2016 has the potential to invest \$100 million in ten downtown communities to provide opportunities in ways that create and propose the resurgence of urban areas throughout the state. Cohoes is already on a path to do just that, and receiving this grant would provide tremendous opportunity to continue its revitalization.

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Sincerely,



Rod Dion, President and Owner

Tech Valley Office Interiors, Inc.  
Nu2u Quality Used Office Furniture Inc.  
Harmony CoWorks, LLC



## Playhouse Stage happy being named to manage Cohoes Music Hall

Steve Barnes  
July 23, 2020

COHOES — Playhouse Stage Company has been chosen to manage the Cohoes Music Hall.

The announcement of the five-year deal was made

Thursday afternoon by Mayor Bill Keeler at the historic, city-owned venue. Keeler will present his recommendation to the city's Common Council for approval at its next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday. Owen Smith, producing artistic director of Playhouse Stage, said he was speaking for the 32-year-old company, known for its free Park Playhouse musicals in Albany's Washington Park during the summer, when he said, "We're over the moon, obviously, about this new opportunity." On a personal note, Smith added, "I'm more excited than I've been in more than a decade," since he was hired, at the beginning of 2010, to run the company he'd performed with as a youth.

Playhouse Stage was chosen to manage the venue over two other finalists: Music Hall Arts Alliance, a company founded by the music hall's outgoing executive director, Holly Brown, to run the facility starting at the beginning of 2018; and Albany-based Guthrie/Bell Productions, veterans of more than 25 years in the local concert scene. The three, winnowed from six initial applicants announced by city officials in June, were interviewed late last week about their respective proposals. The Keeler administration pushed to make the final selection quickly, to get the matter before the Common Council at its last July meeting, because the hall's current management contract expires at the end of this month.

Administration officials and a committee of outside experts worked on the selection process. Keeler said the committee unanimously recommended Playhouse Stage be awarded the contract.

Allen S. Goodman, chairman of Playhouse Stage's board of directors, said he believed the company stood out among the applicants to run the music hall because of the breadth and diversity of its experience. It has produced original shows for decades, Goodman said, and Smith also worked for six years in dual roles, running Playhouse Stage and as managing director of the Palace Theatre in Albany, which gave him extensive knowledge of working with outside promoters, presenters and touring acts. Other members of Playhouse Stage staff also worked at the Palace.

"We were the only bidder with experience producing art and presenting art, a lot of it local" Goodman said. "I think that was very appealing."

In late April, citing a projected \$1 million deficit in the city budget caused in part by the coronavirus pandemic, Keeler asked the Common Council to exercise the option to give 90 days' notice to cancel the contracts with Music Hall Arts Alliance to manage the hall and Playhouse Stage to present productions of its musicals at the circa-1873, 500-seat hall. In what various parties involved have described as a convoluted arrangement, Cohoes previously paid MHAA a fee to manage the hall and paid Playhouse Stage to mount its productions there; both companies paid the city a portion of their respective ticket revenues; and Playhouse Stage paid a rental fee to MHAA.

The net cost to city taxpayers was a combined \$200,000 annually, Keeler has said. He characterized the amount as unsustainable during current circumstances, especially given that, with the hall closed from mid-March through an unclear point in the future, the city receives no income from tickets. None of the proposals from the three finalists included any management or other fees to be paid by the city, though the municipality, as owner of the building, remains responsible for utilities and major maintenance.

“This implements a business model that is fiscally prudent for the city of Cohoes for years to come, thus assuring the viability of the music hall over the long term,” Keeler said.

## Micro-apartments and a cafe opening in Cohoes



Leigh Hornbeck  
February 27, 2020

The owners of 95 Remsen St., Cohoes uncovered original hardwood and terrazzo flooring, skylights and hand-crank awnings to create new retail, dining and living space. Terri and Luke Gladue celebrated a ribbon-cutting Thursday with Mayor Bill Keeler, Assemblyman John McDonald and members of the Common Council as well as staff from Empire State Development, which covered \$631,000 of the \$1 million project.

Cafe Monocle is a 1,200-square-foot restaurant on the first floor of the two-story building, along with a 3,000 square-foot dance studio called the Future of Talent. Upstairs are eight micro-apartments ranging in size from 300 to 500 square feet. The Gladues said the idea for the tiny apartments came during renovations.

"Once we discovered the patterns of the original terrazzo flooring in the hallways and the original wood floors in the former offices, we knew we had to preserve it, but how? We had to think outside of the box and the idea of tiny homes came to us. Rather than redesign the original second floor plan, we followed the path of the flooring to create eight unique micro units."

# THE RECORD

## Cohoes 'Floating Solar' demonstration project advances in Congress



COHOES, N.Y. — Plans by the city of Cohoes to generate clean energy by installing 8,000 “Floating Solar” panels on its water reservoir recently gained key support, with the approval by the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations of legislation that contains \$3 million in funding for the national demonstration project.

The federal investment, secured by Rep. Paul Tonko, is included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) FY2022 Appropriations Bill, reported out of the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations Friday. The bill now goes to the full House of Representatives for a vote.

“Cohoes’ municipally owned and operated floating solar project will offer untold potential in building smart, resource-efficient clean energy systems, and address climate and environmental justice issues all while driving down costs for the community,” Tonko said.

“This visionary project can serve as a model to inspire countless other communities across America to make these sustainable investments in renewable energy infrastructure. I pushed for months to secure strong Congressional support for this worthy project, and I will not stop working to ensure it receives the federal dollars it deserves,” Tonko exclaimed.

“The Cohoes municipal floating solar demonstration project will allow us — and the thousands of communities who follow our lead — to generate clean power and economic opportunity.

Producing clean energy on the surface of our city water reservoir will reduce our municipal buildings' electricity bills to zero, allowing us to reinvest that savings back into our community," Cohoes Mayor Bill Keeler said.

"As a long-time advocate for clean energy and environmental justice, Congressman Tonko immediately understood the potential impact of our vision when we brought the Floating Solar idea to him more than a year ago, and he has guided and supported us every step of the way," Keeler explained.

The city's proposed municipally owned and operated 3.2 MWdc Floating Solar demonstration project would be installed on its secured 10-acre water reservoir, at a cost of \$5.9 million. The city is seeking a total Federal share of \$4.788 million and a non-Federal share of \$1.209 million.

"This project would demonstrate that leveling the playing field by providing grants to municipalities — as an alternative option to current tax credits for private investments — for Floating Solar installations would incentivize municipalities to invest in their own energy infrastructure in a sustainable way, while realizing the full economic benefits of doing so," Cohoes City Planner Joe Seman Graves remarked.

"The project may also spark interest in tapping appropriate water surfaces as a viable platform for solar energy generation," Seman Graves noted.

In a 2018 report, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) researchers estimated "installing floating solar photovoltaics on the more than 24,000 man-made U.S. reservoirs could generate about 10 percent of the nation's annual electricity production." The NREL report indicates there are 492 reservoirs in New York State, encompassing 134,425 acres of water suitable for photovoltaics. This could generate 16.4 TW-hr/yr.

If installed, the Cohoes photovoltaic (PV) clean energy installation would generate 100% of the city's energy demand for its municipal facilities. The city's current annual electricity cost is approximately \$660,000 annually.

"Selling energy back to the grid, and reinvesting those savings into our community would have a generational impact on our residents," Keeler noted.

Given the available size of its water reservoir, the city will still have 40% of power-generating capacity to make available for other community purposes.

"We are working to ensure that this project has the broadest positive impact on our community, including exploring the possibility of the Cohoes School District and or the Cohoes Housing Authority also benefitting from this clean energy," Keeler added.

Cohoes is a Low-Moderate Income (LMI) community with an Environmental Justice designation. Floating solar arrays are a relatively new but proven technology used overseas – and in a limited way in the United States. Municipalities installing floating solar typically enter into either a lease agreement or a power purchase agreement with a third-party non-government entity.

"The private partnership approach facilitates overcoming up-front-cost barriers. However, the majority of the economic benefit, by way of tax credits and full life-cycle savings, accrues to the asset owner, which in this scenario is the private developer and not the municipality," Seman Graves said, indicating that it appears to be most economically advantageous over time (perhaps a novel approach in the United States) for the city to own and operate floating solar arrays on the Cohoes reservoir.

This transformative clean energy infrastructure proposal was developed in partnership with RETTEW Engineering and U.S. Floating Solar, and with other expert guidance.



Kumi Tucker

July 8, 2020

COHOES - Friday nights feature "Eat in the Street" through the summer.

Bye-i Brewery just opened last Thursday, adapting to social distancing by cutting capacity.

"So being able to have tables out here, even for one day a week, will be able to expand that and hopefully get more patrons to try our beer," said owner Bob Newberry.

"Eat in the Street" gives them more seating outside.

Customers in that area of Remsen will be able to order drinks from Bye-i and dinner from Cohoes House of Pizza and D & L Hospitality.

"Doing this 'Eat in the Street' will help all the small businesses here, all the restaurant owners, try to survive and get out of this pandemic," said D & L chef and owner Gio Lontoc.

"I'm hoping we have good weather that holds up, that we have a lot of people just enjoying the outdoors, enjoying downtown Cohoes, and everything that we have to offer and being able to try all of the new restaurants that have opened up here and really give us that push," said D & L owner Melanie Diaz.

For this first Friday, eight of the city's restaurants are taking part.

Organizers want this to be a fun, family event that shows off the city. They say that half capacity and takeout aren't enough to keep small restaurants thriving.

"We bring it out to the streets, hopefully they can make up for the seating they're losing inside," said Cohoes Local Development Corporation's Debbie Jacques.

Remsen Street will be shut down on Fridays from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. from Columbia to Ontario every Friday for 13 weeks.



# Taking a ride on the Cohoes culinary express

Published: Mar. 02, 2020, 3:12 p.m.

By [William M. Dowd](#)

Cohoes is a study in oddball statistics. It's a city, but at barely more than 16,000 residents it ranks behind 2,603 other American cities in size. However, according to Census Bureau stats, its population density is 4,349 per square mile, which is 953% higher than the New York State average, and 4,700% higher than the national average.

Tucked into the northeast corner of Albany County just across the 112th Street Bridge from Troy, it's a onetime cloth mill town (nickname: the Spindle City) that long ago fell on hard times -- deteriorating housing stock, little commercial life, and political corruption that recently saw its mayor [leave office in disgrace](#).

What it did have going for it was a performing arts center (the historic Cohoes Music Hall, built in 1874), waterfronts on two rivers (the Mohawk and the Hudson), its own waterfalls (Cohoes Falls, second in the state only to Niagara Falls), interesting geographic ambiance (it sits on mainland plus two islands, Van Schaick and Simmons), and 10 locks that are part of a historic American engineering marvel (the Erie Canal).

What it did not have was a restaurant scene. Once beyond the venerable Smith's of Cohoes, founded in 1937 on Remsen Street, the city's main thoroughfare, and a lot of pizza joints, there wasn't much else to draw visitors unless they really knew the bowels of the town. (If they did, they could find Joe's Tavern, founded in 1935 and not changing its menu very much for its first 75 years.)

That was before Don Russell came to town. After closing his middling Troy restaurant, The Irish Mist, he moved to Cohoes where he reinvented himself to become a city councilman -- now in his second term -- as well as a restaurant entrepreneur. First, he opened a wine bar in July 2014 called Spindles On Remsen, followed by his casual tavern Donnie Magoos in the spring of 2018, and this past December he opened Anthony's Italian Restaurant. All three are on Remsen Street.

Somewhere along the way, Russell also found time to launch a trio of seasonal "fests," actually block parties, on Remsen to draw more out-of-towners to a place that as recently as five years ago was deserted in the evening.

While all this was going on, other chef-entrepreneurs began looking at Cohoes as a place with possibilities rather than liabilities. People like Joe and Kelly Proctor, who opened the Cascade Kitchen & Bar in 2018, and Kelsey Knutsen opening Café Monocle last summer -- both on Remsen, of course, and like Michael Fortin, who had bought the aforementioned Joe's Tavern in 2011, then decided to branch out at a local country club in 2018.

Of course, there still are numerous pizzerias in town (Dom's, Mick's, Pop's, Cohoes House of Pizza, Inferno, New York Style, Pizza Stop, etc.), but Cohoes now appears to be on the way to becoming the sort of dining hotspot that helped spark Troy's downtown resurgence a decade or so ago.

Here is a look at seven trailblazers, six of them right on Remsen Street in a city now seeing an uptick in new commercial and residential construction for the first time in decades....

**Addendum: Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.**

As part of Cohoes' commitment to sustainability and the "Cleaner Greener Cohoes" initiative, the City is seeking opportunities to install electric vehicle (EV) fast charging stations in and around downtown.

As part of the proposed transformative public project "Downtown Backstreet Parking and EV Charging," the City proposes to install five fast charging EV stations (upper bound) within the DRI boundary. These would be located in a new parking lot near the corner of Main Street and Howard Street that is strategically located behind Remsen Street businesses. The project sponsor is the Cohoes Local Development Corporation. Please see the project sheet in this application for more information and a map.

The City would also be interested to identify additional locations for EV charging stations in parking areas and/or at destinations in and around downtown as part of its Complete Streets and sustainability efforts.