



## Downtown Revitalization Initiative

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# APPLICATION

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Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications should be submitted as Word documents and must be received by the appropriate Regional Council by 4:00 PM on June 1, 2018 at the email address provided at the end of this application. Application guidance is provided in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook* found on the DRI website at [www.ny.gov/dri](http://www.ny.gov/dri).

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### BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Central New York

Municipality Name: City of Syracuse

Downtown Name: Downtown Syracuse

County Name: Onondaga

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

Downtown Syracuse is the heart of our City and its resurgence serves as a model for neighborhood redevelopment initiatives city-wide. While considerable investment in several key projects has helped the city reclaim vibrancy over the past 10 years, Downtown Syracuse still has room to grow. Syracuse's urban core is an area in transition. Strategic investments lack connectivity and investing in the space *between* these success stories is necessary to catalyze additional investment and capitalize on previous success. High-end residential growth in Armory Square and along South Salina Street are in stark contrast to the emergency and transitional housing found at the adjacent Rescue Mission Campus. Intentional planning is needed to successfully support the diversity of users residing in this neighborhood. The \$76 million transformation of the Hotel Syracuse into the Marriott Syracuse Downtown, downtown's dedicated convention center hotel, necessitates the need for forward-thinking to create an active "convention district." Just south, Central Tech, a large vacant municipal asset has attracted the attention of many, and the South Salina Street corridor is brimming with possibility as organizations like the Syracuse Housing Authority and SUNY Employment Opportunity Center (SUNY EOC) review their own master plan and expansion plans, respectively. Through the \$10 Million Downtown Revitalization Initiative, Downtown Syracuse will undertake inclusive, purposeful investments for this area in transition and prioritize investments in projects that create a defined sense of place on the southern end of Downtown while incorporating economic opportunity for Syracuse area residents. The initiative will strategically fill and support market gaps and champion a higher quality of life for residents, employees, and visitors to Syracuse's urban core.

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### JUSTIFICATION

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

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Over the past 10 years, Downtown Syracuse has seen a surge of growth activity with nearly \$652 Million in completed investment activity, \$190 Million currently underway, and a 77% growth in its residential population, Downtown continues to drive investment in the City of Syracuse. Drawing on its strength as a central business district since the golden age of commerce along the Erie Canal, Downtown Syracuse is defined by its historic building stock that is rapidly evolving for modern-day use. Mixed-use developments span Clinton, Hanover, Cathedral, and Armory Squares, turning what was once a 9-5 office community into a 24-7 neighborhood complete with residences, offices, shops, services, and restaurants. Despite this exceptional comeback story, the fringe neighborhoods of Downtown remain disconnected and disinvested, awaiting catalytic change. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative will play a key role in connecting and providing transition strategies for isolated pockets of investment and wide-ranging socio-economic disparities on the southern end of Downtown, joining the near-south and near-west sides and other existing hot spots, while also extending Downtown's vibrancy into neighborhood districts on the southern and western gateways.

Community members recognize the importance of this target area. Since 2016, more than 50 community organizations, business and property owners have been meeting to plan for the needs of this neighborhood, recognizing that the users attracted to this area are diverse and require varying levels of support systems and amenities to be successful. This high level of community engagement speaks to the level of community desire for a successful southern neighborhood. Long term planning by the Syracuse Housing Authority, Rescue Mission, SUNY EOC, Onondaga County (with the Oncenter complex), and City of Syracuse provide the opportunity to lay the foundation for success of this neighborhood if a strategic planning effort is undertaken. Additionally, this initiative needs to incorporate the impacts that nearby assets such as University Hill, the Tech Garden (home of the Genius NY Program) will have on this neighborhood, as well as how investments in an Innovation Zone with competitive broadband access can make urban core businesses more economically competitive.

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## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook*.

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

Downtown Syracuse is largely defined as the area bounded by I-81 to the east, I-690 to the North, Onondaga Creek to the West, and Adams Street to the South. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative

target neighborhood was selected because of its tremendous potential to foster intentional, inclusive development in underutilized corridors that will connect the investments made in Downtown Syracuse with investments being made by a diversity of neighborhood partners so that a mutually beneficial and supportive environment will develop. The goal is to create connections between diverse uses of space and plan for the opportunities to strengthen economic viability of the near south side/downtown neighborhood, and east-west connections, for an active, attractive, vibrant, welcoming neighborhood. Within Downtown Syracuse, a concentrated district that includes a corridor stretching from State Street on the East, to Jefferson Street on the North, to the 300 block of West Onondaga Street on the West, to Adams Street on the South. This corridor encompasses significant institutional and civic assets, including art, culture, entertainment, and transportation resources. Planning is underway to create a more vibrant, visitor-friendly “Convention District,” and initial plans have received endorsements from both public and private stakeholders. To the west of this district, the West Onondaga Street and Gifford Street corridor offer potential to intentionally develop space to activate its use above its current vacant lot condition. To the South, the South Salina Street corridor offers significant connections between areas of economic interest. Central Tech is located one block east of Salina Street, New Street intersects Salina Street, and the South Ave Corridor Study is located two city blocks west of Salina Street. Additionally, this area is directly adjacent to the Syracuse Housing Authority that has developed a campus master plan. Within a two block area of South Salina there is tremendous opportunity to strategically plan for uses and developments that will support a vibrant urban center.

- 2) Description of catchment area.** Outline why the proposed DRI area, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.

Despite stagnant population and economic growth for Syracuse and Onondaga County in recent years, Downtown Syracuse’s population and investment numbers have seen a steady increase year after year. As developers have converted vacant office space into residential units, Downtown’s population has grown 77% over the past 10 years, for a current population of approximately 3,600 people. Meanwhile, the commercial environment sees continuous growth, with approximately 28,000 employees reporting to work in Downtown Syracuse each day. Tourism is also a growing market in this neighborhood. At the core of this district is a newly restored 261 room historic hotel, and a 120 room extended-stay hotel will soon be under construction. These new visitors will require places to shop, eat, and recreate. Opportunities to build connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Neighborhoods adjacent to the southern end of Downtown are not experiencing the same level of private investment which is taking place in the Downtown core. Adjacent to Downtown is the eight acre Rescue Mission campus and the burgeoning West Onondaga Street district.

- 3) Past Investment, future investment potential.** Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

Downtown Syracuse’s mixed-use investments over the past 10 years have exceeded \$662 million. Within the Convention District, public and private improvements have realized \$125 million in completed projects since 2012, with another \$80 million already underway. The largest investment in a single project thus far -- \$76 million – entailed the complete historic restoration of the Hotel Syracuse and its subsequent rebranding as the Marriott Syracuse Downtown, a 261 room hotel. Funded in part with \$3,645,000 in REDC funding – the largest CFA grant to date in Central New York – this hallmark project established a neighborhood anchor and provided the Onondaga County Convention Center (OnCenter) with a long-awaited, officially designated “convention center hotel.” The designation as the Convention Center hotel also allowed for more than \$15 million in state grant funds to be used to leverage the project. This region of Downtown Syracuse has also benefited from the \$18 million construction of a new Centro Bus Hub, located just one block from the Hotel Syracuse, serving 22 routes and bringing 8,500 riders to Downtown each day. Moreover, the Onondaga County Central Library in 2016 completed an \$8.7 million public investment on its Central Library in the Galleries building next to the Hotel, consolidating the library’s operations onto three floors and providing an accessible entrance for library patrons directly off Salina Street, Syracuse’s main street. The library’s renovation includes investments in technology such as a Makerspace, where teens can learn 3-D printing and other high-tech skills.

Private investment in the catchment area includes conversion of vacant or underused historic buildings into modern residences and commercial space. The Empire Building, completed this year, added 52 units of market-rate housing to the district following a \$10 million conversion. The Red House at City Center added three live-theater spaces in a state-of-the-art, 40,000 sq. ft. performing arts complex this spring, following a \$10 million transformation of the former Sibley’s department store garage and warehouse. Together with the Landmark Theatre, the addition of the Red House creates a theater district in the 300-400 blocks of S. Salina St. And in 2017, Clinton Plaza saw a \$20 million upgrade and preservation of 305 units of affordable housing.

**Additional projects** currently under construction or announced within the Convention District include:

- The conversion of two Greater Syracuse Land Bank properties into mixed-use developments: The Addis Building at 443 S. Salina is a historic structure that once held the Addis Department Store, and the Goldberg Building across street at 476 Salina was a popular furniture store. Additional resources from the REDC and Restore NY, combined with Syracuse IDA tax abatements and private investment, total approximately \$8.9 Million for these two mixed-use redevelopment projects. (Addis received an ESD grant of \$834,768 through the City’s nomination of the property for the Restore NY program in 2016.).
- The \$17 Million conversion of the Chimes Building at 500 S. Salina into more than 100 moderately-priced apartments, and restoration of its ground-floor storefronts and façade.
- Onondaga County will invest \$5.5 million into its Civic Center and War Memorial facilities. Plans include a new roof, soundproof theater doors, asbestos abatement, and new improvements, such as updated marquees and signage to welcome visitors.
- To serve growing demand for Downtown as a hospitality center, an event space called Rail Line will open on S. Clinton Street this summer, accommodating up to 250 guests per event.
- The \$20 Million redevelopment of the former Hilton tower into an extended-stay Hyatt House Hotel.

- The conversion of the historic Park Brannock building at 321 S. Salina and the adjacent building at 323 S. Salina into a ground-floor restaurant, basement speakeasy, and 16 upper-floor apartments called Whitney Lofts.
- The Tech Garden is one of New York State’s largest incubator facilities. It’s currently running the \$2.75 million Genius NY program, the area’s largest business accelerator program. Twelve teams have participated in the first two rounds of the program, all of which are in the unmanned aerial systems field, leveraging URI programs as well. Genius Three was announced last month. The Tech Garden participates in several NYS programs to provide tenants with entrepreneurial tax credit as well as virtual tenant credits.
- \$500,000 in New York Main Street grant funds, administered through the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, to support the development of 7 projects along the S. Salina and S. Warren corridors and incentivize the creation of affordable housing units and finished retail space.
- The Syracuse Housing Authority recently released a request for proposals for co-developers to assist in developing approaches for the revitalization of its properties in the East Adams Street neighborhood into mixed use, mixed income facilities.
- The SUNY Educational Opportunity Center was awarded capital funds in the Fiscal Year 2019 New York State budget for significant improvements to its facilities.

**The City of Syracuse** has made numerous **public investments** within this district; for example, the City:

- Supports ongoing investment in Downtown Syracuse through the non-profit Downtown Committee of Syracuse, which provides heightened services similar to those of a Business Improvement District and is funded through a City Special Assessment of all properties within the district.
- The City of Syracuse Industrial Development Agency provides sales tax abatements, mortgage recording tax abatements, and PILOT agreements for redevelopment projects throughout the City, including properties within the targeted investment area.
- Historically provides significant financial support for the ongoing blight-fighting work of the Greater Syracuse Land Bank.
- Plans to build broadband internet infrastructure in the Convention District (Warren Street corridor), facilitating future business development and technological innovation within this sector
- Is currently engaged in a comprehensive ReZone initiative, funded in part by a \$300,000 grant from NYSERDA. The project will update the City’s zoning ordinance for the first time in more than 60 years and will eliminate the 5 separate zoning districts within Downtown Syracuse and replace them with one unified zoning district. Having a clear, comprehensive, City-wide zoning code will facilitate continued mixed-use redevelopment and infill development in the urban core.
- Is leading efforts through a \$1.4 million Local Waterfront Revitalization Program grant to reestablish the urban core’s connection to Onondaga Creek and distressed neighborhoods south of Downtown. This includes the successful first phase of the Onondaga Creekwalk connecting Armory Square to Onondaga Lake.

- With funding from SIDA, Is leading the \$75,000 South Ave Corridor Study, a comprehensive economic development feasibility analysis to guide inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable investment just south of the target area.
- SIDA-sponsored installation of 7 new security cameras, fully integrated into the Syracuse Police Department’s systems, in southern downtown in 2017.

**Anchor Institutions:** Investments in this end of Downtown Syracuse have also enabled one of Syracuse’s anchor institutions, Upstate Medical University, to expand into Downtown Syracuse by relocating more than 400 staff members to the Galleries building. Upstate previously forayed into the southern Downtown market when it purchased an underutilized residential tower and converted it to 200 beds for medical student housing at 500 Harrison Street.

The Allyn Foundation recently announced plans to transform a vacant corner of Downtown Syracuse into a vibrant one through a \$22 million new construction project. The mixed-use development at the corner of Salina and Onondaga streets will transform a surface parking lot into a ground-floor public market, offering fresh healthy foods as well as start-up space for restaurateurs; non-profit office space on the second floor; and approximately 40 units of mixed-income housing on upper floors. The marketplace will address food access concerns in and around Downtown in a document food desert, while the mixed-income apartments will provide greater affordability to a broader range of residents. To oversee the project and anchor themselves in the neighborhood, the Allyn Foundation moved into temporary office space three doors down from their project site in May 2018.

In addition, Syracuse University – in conjunction with the City of Syracuse – received grant funding from the US Department of Transportation TIGER program as well as New York State, and has invested more than \$50 Million in infrastructure improvements to create the Connective Corridor, a multi-modal transportation network connecting Syracuse University with Downtown Syracuse through a series of complete streets, including stormwater infrastructure, designated bike lanes, a free bus shuttle connecting Downtown and the SU campus, public art, exterior lighting, and façade improvement projects. Downtown resident surveys reveal that 40% of Downtown’s population works or studies on The Hill, and many residents commute to SU from Downtown via the Connective Corridor.

**Arts investments** within the Convention District include the Everson Museum of Art, which after years of declining operations returned to the black this year; the RedHouse Performing Arts Center, which recently completed a rehabilitation of a vacant department store parking garage to construct three live performance studios and move from the outskirts of Downtown onto Downtown’s “Main Street”; to the Landmark Theatre, which completed \$18 Million in renovations when its stage house expanded in 2012 and is slated to invest \$850,000 in a new LED marquee. In addition, Onondaga County has committed \$5.5 million to improve its OnCenter facilities, including funds to upgrade the War Memorial, which hosts events ranging from rock concerts to AHL hockey to Disney on Ice.

These investments align with the **regional and local planning efforts** for the area, including the Convention District plan developed in conjunction with the ownership of the Marriott Syracuse Downtown and local WBE-landscape architecture firm Environmental Design and Research; the NYS DOT I-81 Community Grid option; Syracuse’s Invest Health initiative; a NY Main Street Grant award; OnCenter investments planned by

Onondaga County; and CNY Arts' recently awarded ESD planning funds to develop an Arts & Entertainment District Plan.

Looking ahead, several **underused properties** within the Convention District present additional **opportunities for redevelopment** within a Syracuse DRI Strategic Investment Plan:

- Jefferson Building: ground-floor retail with upper-floor middle-income housing
- Former Central High School redevelopment to mixed use, including possible educational or civic uses, in addition to commercial and residential space
- Syracuse Housing Authority master redevelopment plan: transforming 20 blocks of low-income public housing into a mixed-use, mixed-income East Adams neighborhood with a reinstated street grid
- The abundance of activity and the Tech Garden facility will require its ownership to investigate ways to continue to leverage the entrepreneurial growth currently underway
- Convention District streetscape improvement plan (providing year-round connectivity between Marriott Syracuse Downtown and the OnCenter)
- Planned NYS DOT upgrades as part of State Route 11's relocation to Salina Street.
- Onondaga County War Memorial and Civic Center facility improvements
- Development of vacant, useable space adjacent to the New York Susquehanna and Western elevated railroad infrastructure
- Extension of the Onondaga Creekwalk from Armory Square through southern Downtown into the City's Southside
- Opportunities to build connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Neighborhoods adjacent to the southern end of Downtown are not experiencing the same level of private investment which is taking place in the Downtown core. Adjacent to Downtown is the eight acre Rescue Mission campus and the burgeoning West Onondaga Street district. Interventions are needed to better integrate the development trends happening in along the adjacent corridors and connect these three neighborhoods
- Throughout these areas, consistent branding and streetscape enhancements are needed to encourage pedestrian flow
- Additionally, changes with the elevated portion of Interstate 81 may provide the opportunity to expand these connections east towards University Hill

**4) Recent or impending job growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Since 2015, Downtown Syracuse has added approximately 1,000 jobs across numerous sectors: Hospitality (Marriott Syracuse Downtown, 256 jobs); IT and Finance (Upstate Medical University, 400 jobs); Engineering (Arcadis, 250 jobs); and Internet-based Marketing companies like TCG Player, Terakeet and Digital Hyve are experiencing rapid employment growth. These companies have struggled to find appropriate space for their growing operations in the Downtown core. Tech-oriented companies along Warren Street – including Ephesus Lighting in the Barclay Damon Tower, TCG Player in the Galleries, and numerous start-ups at the Tech Garden – have created an unofficial **Innovation Quarter**, or I.Q., along Warren's south end. The Tech

Garden, located across from the Hotel Syracuse and one block from the Centro Bus Hub, just announced the winners of Round Two of the \$2.75 Million Genius NY competition and is currently recruiting applicants to the third round of its global search for innovative Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) industry start-ups.

The Marriott Syracuse Downtown engaged in local hiring and training practices to fill 50% of its hospitality jobs with City residents from adjacent zip codes – some of the most distressed in the CNY region. Marriott Syracuse Downtown management considers the hotel’s location – across from the Centro Bus Hub – to be a major asset for employees commuting to work. Management plans to pursue a similar hiring strategy at the neighboring 120 room Hyatt House.

A third-party survey of Downtown residents in Fall 2016 found that 55% of respondents both lived and worked in Downtown Syracuse. Major employment fields represented among survey respondents included Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (18%) and Healthcare and Social Assistance (17%). Moreover, numerous employers – particularly in the engineering sector – have moved from suburban Syracuse to Downtown as a recruitment strategy to attract young talent. Arcadis engineering moved 250 jobs and Firley, Moran, Freer & Eassa moved 90 jobs from the Town of DeWitt to Downtown this year, echoing a move made by O’Brien & Gere 8 years ago when they brought 300 employees from DeWitt to Downtown.

As the number of people living and working Downtown continues to grow, Downtown Syracuse has seen a resurgence of its retail community, both in the number and the diversity of stores and restaurants, as continuous residential growth fuels demand for food service and food retail. In the Fall 2016 resident survey, 96% of Downtown respondents cited the need for a grocery store to ensure Downtown’s upward swing.

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

Downtown Syracuse’s revitalization thus far has stemmed from its **rich historic building stock**. The first redeveloped neighborhood – Armory Square – was largely spared from demolition during Urban Renewal, and the remaining historic brick buildings provided the foundation for small-scale redevelopment projects starting in the 1980s. Over the past 30 years, that redevelopment has expanded to larger parcels and higher levels of investment; to date, Armory Square remains the only neighborhood in Downtown Syracuse where developers have chosen to build standalone new construction on large surface parking lots (e.g., Center Armory, combined Residence Inn and Courtyard by Marriott, Washington Station). This infill development has strengthened the existing neighborhood, infused millions of dollars of additional investment, and stabilized adjacent investments by complementing the existing streetscape and matching setbacks, materials, and other hallmarks of the existing architecture.

This kind of mixed-use, infill, and/or historic redevelopment work is supported by new state policies in the Office of Homes and Community Renewal, as well as by Syracuse’s **ReZone** initiative to rewrite the city’s zoning ordinance. The new ordinance emphasizes form over use – with a renewed focus on design standards



as well as mixed-use redevelopment. Form-based code uses design standards as an equalizer for a mix of uses, and it in many ways promotes the **integration of affordable housing** into neighborhoods by emphasizing exterior building appearance over interior use.

Despite Downtown Syracuse's success in redeveloping historic structures, very little funding has been available to address **the spaces in between the buildings**. For example, our Downtown currently has no consistent **wayfinding** signage for vehicles or pedestrians. While a handful of signs direct motorists from the highways to Syracuse's Visitor Center along with select museums and a local brewery, visitors to the Downtown have no clear street directions leading them from the Official Convention Center Hotel to Downtown's major restaurant districts in Armory Square and Hanover Square. Similarly, the City lacks signage directing visitors and residents to arts and cultural amenities or points of historical interest. Branded pedestrian signage identifying Downtown's 8 distinct central neighborhoods and key historic and cultural landmarks would go a long way in connecting existing yet geographically disparate investments in Downtown Syracuse.

In terms of streetscape, the **Convention District also lacks a designated, compelling, and sheltered pathway** to bridge the two blocks between the Marriott Syracuse Downtown and the OnCenter Convention Center. Separated by parking garages, driveways, and vacant storefronts, the path is uninviting and unclear. Coordinated planning efforts involving local developers, businesses, City and County staff, the Downtown Committee, and a local landscape architecture firm resulted in draft plans for a branded Convention District that would provide awnings for pedestrian protection, illumination for safety and intrigue, heated sidewalks for comfort even on the snowiest of days, and targeted retail recruitment (including the Downtown Committee's Art in the Windows and Pop-Up Retail programs) to fill key properties along the route.

While Downtown Syracuse is very **walkable** and bikeable due to new infrastructure in place from the Centro Bus Hub and Syracuse University's Connective Corridor project, there remains more to do to encourage pedestrian and cyclist flow throughout the area. Many Downtown residents who can afford a car choose to keep one because there is currently no full-service Downtown grocery store. Opportunity exists to encourage this type of development at Downtown Syracuse's southern end given the street-level availability of several centrally located buildings with sufficient square footage to support a Downtown grocer or other provider of household staples. These locations are within easy walking distance of both the Centro Bus Hub and nearby public housing developments owned by Syracuse Housing Authority. A survey of low-income Downtown residents found that many residents shop at the seasonal Downtown Farmers Market but turn to Rite Aid and convenience/corner stores for processed, packaged foods from October through June, when the Farmers Market is not in season. Led by the Downtown Committee, a team of five local organizations – including the Onondaga County Health Department, City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development, Cooperative Federal Credit Union (a CDFI), and Upstate Medical University won an Invest Health grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to focus on attracting investment for improving healthy food access and walkability in the southern end of Downtown.

**Existing amenities** that contribute to an attractive and livable Downtown include the availability of outdoor space along the ped/bike Creekwalk, which extends from Armory Square to Onondaga Lake; outdoor artwork including interactive instruments from Symphoria in M. Lemp Park and Columbus Circle; public art funded by the Connective Corridor, including large-scale sculptures and murals; outdoor fitness equipment behind The MOST, contributed for public use by Excellus; national Broadway tours at the Landmark Theatre; planned Broadband connectivity; innovative live/work housing models such as CoLiving and CoWorks at the Common Space building; and environmental maintenance and security provided year-round by Downtown’s nonprofit management organization, the Downtown Committee.

- 6) **Quality of Life policies.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

**The Downtown Committee of Syracuse** is a professional, nonprofit Downtown management organization incorporated 43 years ago to improve the quality of life of the Downtown district by providing environmental maintenance, security, marketing, communications, and economic development services to all Downtown property owners. Staff clean the sidewalks, beautify the streetscape through street furniture and a popular annual hanging flower basket program, and clear snow to ensure safe passage for pedestrians through Downtown’s streets. The security team, comprised of retired Syracuse police officers, works with all Downtown stakeholders to ensure employees, residents, and visitors feel safe; to connect homeless individuals with health and human services, and to keep the peace during popular Downtown events. Marketing and communications staff promote local businesses and celebrate their success, in addition to running eight annual events that bring people to Downtown and expand the region’s enjoyment of our urban setting. The economic development team helps to retain existing businesses and recruit new investment to Downtown through grant funding and management of NY Main Street grants, maintenance of a comprehensive Downtown property database, relationships with property owners and real estate professionals, and targeted recruitment of amenities and services.

**The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA)** promotes enhanced livability and quality of life in Downtown through its current effort to **overhaul the existing zoning ordinance**. ReZone Syracuse will be complete later this year, phasing out use-based, Euclidean zoning in favor of more flexible form-based code that will pave the way for more mixed-use development focused on higher-density, better-integrated design.

The City of Syracuse’s **Comprehensive Plan 2040**, adopted in 2014, includes long range planning for Land Use & Development, Bicycle Infrastructure, Capital Improvements, and in conjunction with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council – Transportation. For example, the **Onondaga Citizens League** recently completed a year-long study entitled, “How CNY Moves,” to explore opportunities for expanded complete-streets and multi-modal infrastructure. Moreover, **the redevelopment of I-81** (on Downtown Syracuse’s eastern border) will pave the way for more integrated street infrastructure to

better serve all users (vehicular, shared transportation, and pedestrian). Syracuse University's completion of the \$50 million **Connective Corridor** provided a great testing ground for many complete streets ideas that may be adjusted as necessary and adopted more broadly in other neighborhood gateways to Downtown Syracuse.

The City of Syracuse Industrial Development Agency provides sales tax, mortgage recording tax, and PILOT agreement abatements for redevelopment projects within the Convention District, including incentivizing mixed-income housing in private developments. The City of Syracuse has a Department Accountability, Performance, and Innovation, which is partially funded from a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Each year, the team focuses on one city-wide challenge that the mayor identifies, and acts as internal consultants to develop new, creative solutions that are implemented by City operating departments and external partners. Currently, the team is evaluating opportunities to promote housing stability in the City.

**The Greater Syracuse Landbank**, established in 2012 is a forward thinking, joint City-County initiative to address urban blight and strategically redevelop key neighborhood properties. The Landbank has been instrumental in improving the quality of life in the City of Syracuse. Plus, it works closely with area neighbors to remove, repurpose and redirect investments.

**F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse**, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering community dialogue around important civic issues released a 2014 series of recommendations on how to shape and Age-Friendly Central New York. The goal is to retain the aging baby-boomer population.

In May 2016, Syracuse was selected as an **Invest Health City** and awarded grant funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund to study best practices for developing a pipeline of redevelopment projects that promote walkability and increased access to healthy food to reduce chronic disease factors in low-income populations.

- 7) Public Support.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The initial local leads for the Syracuse Downtown Revitalization Initiative are the City of Syracuse partnered with CenterState CEO (CEO), the region's economic development organization and chamber of commerce, and the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, which represents Downtown's property owners, businesses and residents. The City maintains a strong working relationship with CEO and the Downtown Committee, which has a 43-year track record of convening local leaders and stakeholders to support Downtown revitalization efforts. All organization's have a long-standing and high success rate for partnering to secure grant funding that helps to leverage private investment for targeted, high-priority projects. Each frequently work with outside consultants to perform market studies of demand for housing, retail, and other industries and services, as well as to perform master-planning for neighborhoods and transportation systems.

Recently, the Downtown Committee has convened regular meetings of 15 stakeholders to collaborate on a **Convention District Plan** for a two-block stretch of Harrison Street. When the Hotel Syracuse reopened in as the official Onondaga County Convention Center Hotel (Marriott Syracuse Downtown), this corridor became the main pedestrian route for hotel guests to access the OnCenter. The Downtown Committee has organized a planning group consisting of City and County staff, adjacent property owners and managers, and design professionals to brainstorm the future of this corridor and raise funding for streetscape enhancements to activate and enhance the Convention District as a destination for visitors and residents alike. Additionally, since 2016 the Downtown Committee and City have convened a group of 50 community organizations, business and property owners to coordinate on planning efforts and needs for the southern downtown neighborhood. Through its legacy of promoting Downtown property owners' interests, the Downtown Committee has assembled a strong network of developers, municipal staff, elected local and state officials, and business and nonprofit partners who have a shared interest in promoting Downtown Syracuse's continued revitalization.

Citywide, through its Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) structure, the City of Syracuse provides the framework for neighbors to convene. TNT is a 501c3 Charitable organization that is directed by a 16 member Board of Directors. TNT sector groups comprises individuals, residents, professionals and officials who recognize and understand the varied aspects of each unique neighborhood within Syracuse. TNT identifies and builds upon community assets, and develops workable plans and priorities for neighborhoods. The plans direct resources in the most important areas in the most cost-effective ways. This process strengthens the democracy that is critical for a healthy city, improves the quality of life in the city, and builds the capacity to solve problems and create a desirable future.

In Spring 2017, the Downtown Committee also took on the role of convener for two additional issues: healthy food access and the public safety. Through the competitive Invest Health grant from the national Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Philadelphia-area Reinvestment Fund, the Syracuse team is focused on improving access to healthy food within the Harrison/Salina St. Convention District. And, by coordinating with the Syracuse Police Department, Rescue Mission, County Mental Health services, City of Syracuse Dept. of Neighborhood and Business Development, and 20+ property owners within the 400 and 500 blocks of South Salina Street and South Clinton Street, the Downtown Committee is helping to address safety concerns on the southern end of Downtown. Working with the police department, the Downtown Committee and City of Syracuse have ensured that all proper paperwork has been completed to allow the officers to best address the public safety that have been raised. Additionally, this active group of 20+ property owners has discussed early opportunities for "wins" within the neighborhood and how underutilized spaces can be better utilized and developed.

**8) Project List to Demonstrate Readiness:** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how most projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

Looking ahead, several **underused properties** within the Convention District present additional **opportunities for redevelopment** within a Syracuse DRI Strategic Investment Plan. Each of the projects below have been thoroughly investigated, have public support, and are viable to begin within 18 months of DRI award and planning.

- Jefferson Building: ground-floor retail with upper-floor middle-income housing
- Former Central High School redevelopment to mixed use, including possible educational or civic uses, in addition to commercial and residential space
- Syracuse Housing Authority master redevelopment plan: transforming 20 blocks of low-income public housing into a mixed-use, mixed-income East Adams neighborhood with a reinstated street grid
- The abundance of activity and the Tech Garden facility will require its ownership to investigate ways to continue to leverage the entrepreneurial growth currently underway
- Convention District streetscape improvement plan (providing year-round connectivity between Marriott Syracuse Downtown and the OnCenter)
- Planned NYS DOT upgrades as part of State Route 11's relocation to Salina Street.
- Onondaga County War Memorial and Civic Center facility improvements
- Development of vacant, useable space adjacent to the New York Susquehanna and Western elevated railroad infrastructure
- Extension of the Onondaga Creekwalk from Armory Square through southern Downtown into the City's Southside
- The Allyn Foundation's new construction of a mixed-use building on what is now a surface parking lot at 484 S. Salina St. This \$22 million project on Downtown's southern and western gateways will create a ground-floor public market, offering fresh healthy foods as well as start-up space for restaurateurs; non-profit office space on the second floor; and approximately 40 units of mixed-income housing on upper floors.
- Interventions are needed to better integrate the development trends happening in along the adjacent corridors and connect these three neighborhoods. Throughout these areas, consistent branding and streetscape enhancements are needed to encourage pedestrian flow.
  - Adjacent to Downtown is the eight acre Rescue Mission campus and the burgeoning West Onondaga Street district.
  - The South Salina corridor is a natural expansion from southern downtown's economic recovery and is an opportunity to integrate inclusive community development opportunities.

- Additionally, changes with the elevated portion of Interstate 81 may provide the opportunity to expand these connections east towards University Hill.

**9) Administrative Capacity.** Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award.

The City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development currently manages over \$3.5 million of HUD CDBG allocations annually; various NYS DHCR and ESD grant programs and four public authority entities. Project management responsibilities and fiscal management are divided among Neighborhood, Business, and Fiscal divisions.

The Downtown Committee is an experienced grant administrator, having served as the Local Program Administrator for six separate rounds of New York Main Street funding, including coordination with property owners, environmental remediation companies, design professionals, construction companies, and state employees in both DEC and HCR. Downtown Committee staff have also managed grants from Senator DeFrancisco, CNY Arts, the CNY Community Foundation, the Gifford Foundation, National Grid, Syracuse Parks Conservancy, and other grant-making entities.

The Downtown Committee works closely with the City of Syracuse, given its role as the representative of Downtown's constituency. It regularly communicates with the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Codes/Permits, Engineering, Law, and Neighborhood and Business Development, as well as the City-County planning agency (SOCPA), the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Small Business Administration.

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

The CNY REDC prioritizes three key goals in its annual Strategic Plan updates: Strengthening Targeted Industry Concentrations; Improving Connections to Regional, National, and Global Markets; Revitalizing Urban Cores, Main Streets, and Neighborhoods. Additionally, the *CNY Rising* Upstate Revitalization Plan prioritizes investment in key areas, including agriculture, economic inclusion, tourism, and unmanned systems, among other initiatives.

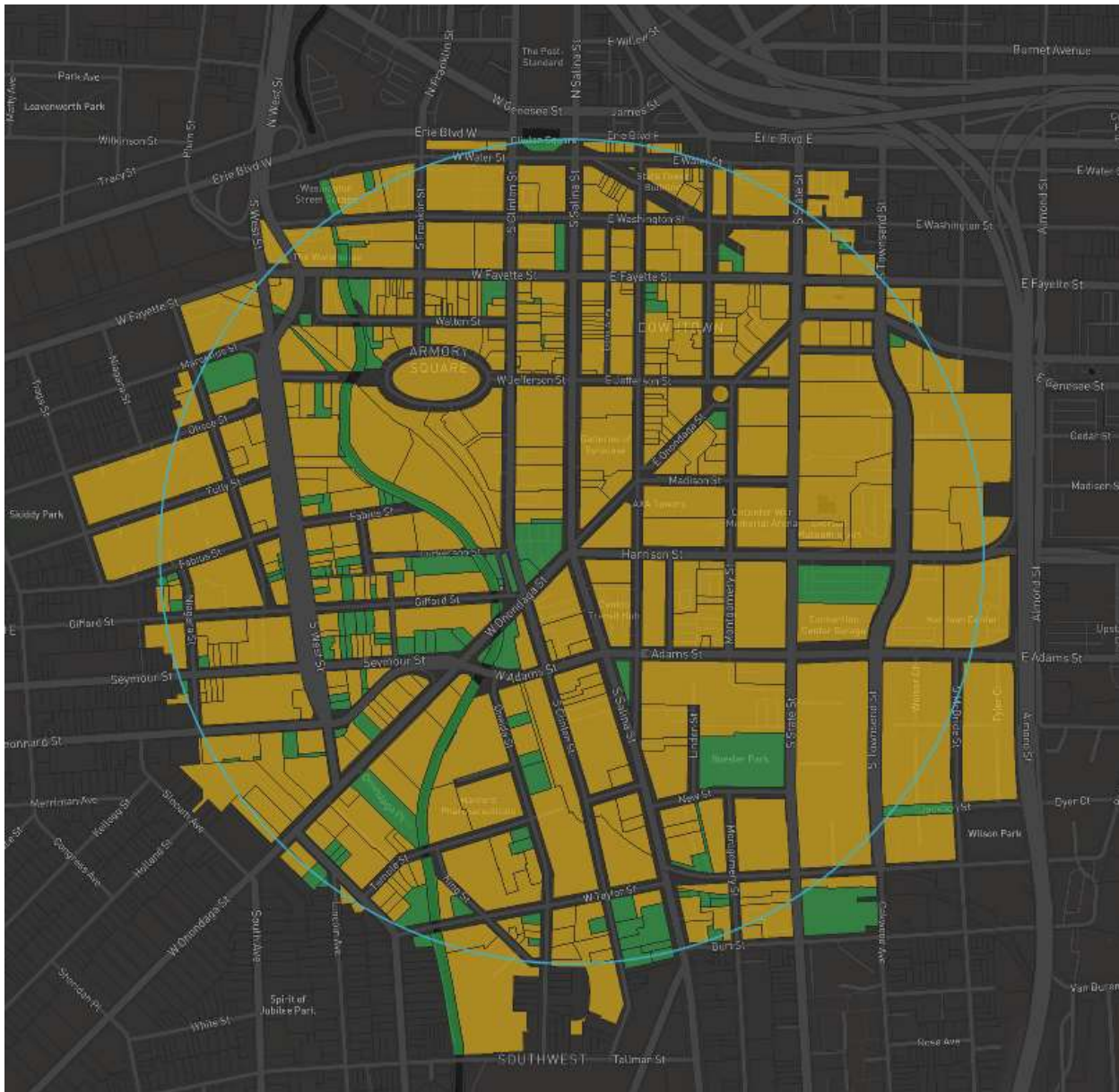
Downtown Syracuse is home to companies and institutions representing a spectrum of the region's strongest industry clusters and key transportation assets to connect workers to employment opportunities and goods to markets. The pipeline of projects presented within the Syracuse Convention District and its gateway neighborhoods align with these strategic priorities by promoting the development of a purveyor of fresh, healthy, locally grown foods; increasing the availability and diversity of housing in terms of unit mix and rent price; filling in gaps in the retail market; redeveloping commercial space for private business growth and expansion; providing better pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity between recent Convention District investments and established commercial districts within Downtown Syracuse; and represents an opportunity to creatively and strategically connect previous disparate areas.

Specifically, this proposal seeks to address **Actions to Advance Regional Strategies and/or Revitalization Plan** (as presented in the CNY REDC Progress Report) by:

- Developing environments to make arts and cultural institutions more competitive and sustainable.
- Catalyzing adaptive reuse of historic, vacant and underutilized properties.
- Connecting entrepreneurship support mechanisms to efforts to revitalize and reinvest in distressed neighborhoods.

Supporting anchor institution investment in urban communities.

\*Don't forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the proposed DRI Area. (See item 1.)



The map above highlights the target area for the Syracuse Downtown Revitalization Initiative area. The area is a half mile radius from the intersection of Salina Street, Harrison Street, and West Onondaga Street, as described more fully above.

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## EMAIL SUBMISSION ADDRESSES

Please submit your application as a Word Document to the Regional Council for your region.

Capital Region	<a href="mailto:NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov">NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov</a>
Central New York	<a href="mailto:NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov">NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov</a>
Finger Lakes	<a href="mailto:NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov">NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov</a>
Long Island	<a href="mailto:LIREDC@esd.ny.gov">LIREDC@esd.ny.gov</a>
Mid-Hudson	<a href="mailto:NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov">NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov</a>
Mohawk Valley	<a href="mailto:NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov">NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov</a>
New York City	<a href="mailto:NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov">NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov</a>
North Country	<a href="mailto:NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov">NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov</a>
Southern Tier	<a href="mailto:NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov">NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov</a>
Western New York	<a href="mailto:NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov">NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov</a>

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