



# Village of Highland Falls

Orange County, New York

## "HOMETOWN USA"



Downtown Revitaliation Initiative 2018



**Our Future is Even Brighter Than Our History!**

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# APPLICATION

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## **BASIC INFORMATION**

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: MHREDC

Municipality Name: Village of Highland Falls

Downtown Name: Hometown USA

County Name: Orange County

## **Vision for Downtown.**

The ghosts of the past whisper through the historic streets of Highland Falls, calling its over 3 million annual visitors to remember its renowned past. The stories of residents such as Molly Pitcher, J.P. Morgan, America's most famous generals, and non-other than Billy Joel bring with them a sense of awe and responsibility. This responsibility invites us to remember and celebrate the past. Equal to this responsibility is a growing excitement, an excitement that makes up the motto for Highland Fall's DRI Application, "Our future is even brighter than our history!"

In 1981, America celebrated the return of 52 hostages from Iran. The first stop these heroes made upon returning to the United States was the village of Highland Falls causing the national media to christen our village "Hometown USA." This application describes our village's vision of once again becoming America's hometown. With the support of MHREDC and Governor Cuomo's DRI, Highland Falls' Hometown USA District (HTD) will become the gateway to the American main street and spur an economic revitalization that creates new opportunities for the surrounding neighborhoods and the region. This revitalization will introduce catalytic projects and innovative solutions which have worked in other municipalities across New York and the nation as identified by research conducted jointly by the Village, the United States Military Academy at West Point (USMA), and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Landscape, and Architecture/PennPraxis. The revitalization will work in conjunction with previous and on-going federal and private investments in the area in order to capitalize and expand on the third highest tourist attraction in the state outside of New York City by extending stays and attracting return visitors. It will also support green and blue initiatives throughout the region while ensuring sustainable local infrastructure and responsible preservation. Projects have been carefully selected in order to leverage our diverse community as an ambassador to the 3 million annual visitors while providing a rally point for all who wish to contribute to this wonderful village where **our future will be even brighter than our history!**

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## **JUSTIFICATION**

The HTD is a ready area that has always been the Village's main gateway with virtually all visitors passing through it along Main Street and West Point Highway. This is the first, and often only, impression of main street America that millions of foreign tourists see each year. Whether visitors come from other countries to see USMA and its historic sites or whether they come from the surrounding areas to attend the only top-tier college football program in the region they pass through the HTD. The district is the location of town and village office buildings, financial and professional service offices, the Village's sole market, and key recreational areas.





Adjacent to the HTD are both mixed-income neighborhoods of this area and neighborhoods which have become dominated by section 8 housing. The compact, walkable status of this area is a key aspect of our green and blue attractiveness, and makes it an ideal location for maximizing DRI impact.

The Village is focusing the DRI investment in the HTD to provide an economic engine and cultural gathering point for the rest of the Village, Town, and surrounding community. This area is ready for economic development, is centrally located to the Village, and is readily accessible to the USMA community. Over the last few years, small business owners in the HTD have come together to assist each other in further development, and many new stores have begun to open and thrive. Additionally, multiple research projects conducted by the students at USMA have identified this area as a catalytic area which would drive widespread prosperity if properly redeveloped. The challenges that have been identified by joint USMA and village project groups are a lack of transportation for students, parking availability, consumer options, and storefront appeal.

With DRI assistance from NYS, the Village will be able to solve key infrastructure challenges and advance catalytic projects that encourage and support private investment and local business development. The DRI investment in capital projects along with the guided planning assistance will help the Village achieve a truly sustainable revitalization.

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## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

### **1) Boundaries of the Proposed DRI Area.**

The Hometown USA District is a walkable, compact area that focuses on Main Street and the immediate area. This district extends southward from the West Point Thayer Gate for approximately 1.2 miles. Additionally, the DRI would enhance Station Hill Road and the waterfront area which it leads down to. These areas have been identified as the readiest for revitalization by the USMA Village revitalization project team and provide many possibilities to drive economic growth for the Village and Region.

Main Street is made up of banks, churches, and store fronts that provide a ripe area for developing an active evening community life. The DRI would transform main street by extending the sidewalks and building a historic walk which would encourage couples and families to frequent the downtown area. This historic walk would also incorporate famous residents from the Villages past and would tie into the 12 million dollar Revolutionary War preservation project which will take place on West Point over the next seven years.

Development of the local waterfront access will nest perfectly with the NYS Waterfront initiative. Currently, Highland Falls is seeking support and funding to improve this area through the NYS LWRS/LWRP. A bike and walking trail would connect this development to the HTD and increase the appeal of main street.

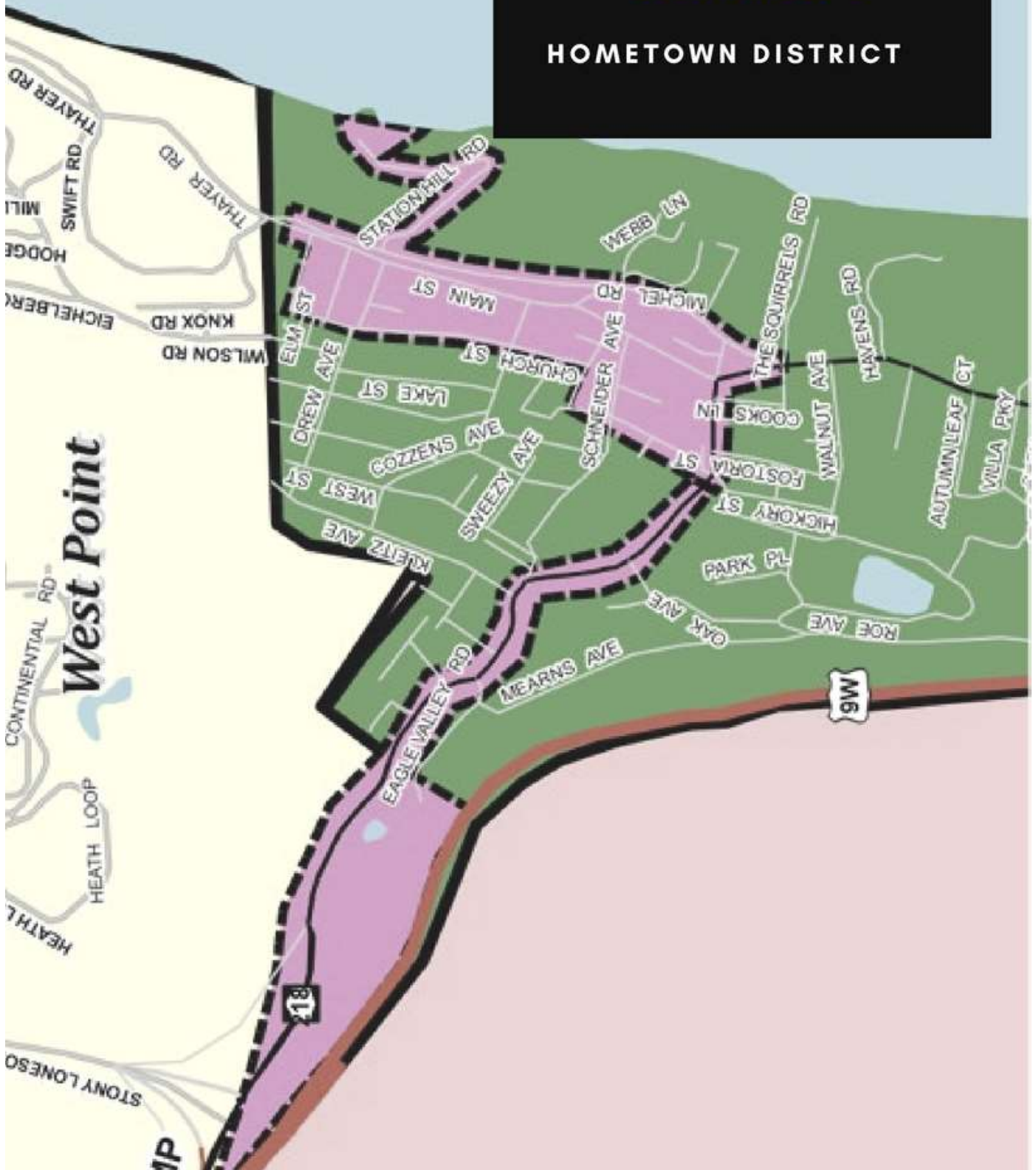
Additionally, Highland Falls would continue to connect the HTD and our green/blue initiatives by developing Highland Falls brook which runs parallel to Mountain Avenue and beneath the south end of the HTD.

Identifying this concentrated area will allow the DRI to have maximum affect with high quality projects that will be catalytic in driving the economic engine of the Village, and in turn affecting the entire catchment area in a significant way.



# HIGHLAND FALLS DRI AREA

## HOMETOWN DISTRICT



# WHAT MAKES HIGHLAND FALLS UNIQUE?

## Local Attractions

- Third largest tourist attraction in the State outside of NYC
- Over 500,000 Foreign Tourists
- Only Highest Tier college sports program in the region
- Waterfront Access
- Within leisure biking distance of Bear Mountain State Park and the Appalachian Trail
- Revolutionary War sites

## Opportunities

- Rail Access
- Student Population
- Military Population
- Untapped historic sites
- Underutilized store fronts
- Demand for additional restaurants
- Demand for more diverse marketplace
- Diverse Population
- Easy NYC access via rail and ferry

## 2) Description of Catchment Area.

The Village is the primary year-round downtown for the Town of Highlands, of which the 12,136 residents include residents from the Village of Highlands Falls, USMA (West Point), Fort Montgomery, and a portion of Bear Mountain State Park. Additionally, the academy has a transitional community of 4,500 students (and expanding) giving the HTD a college town feel. Many residents either work on or have jobs relating to the needs of the academy. However, due to recent legislation, congress has authorized a conveyance of land to be given to the Village of Highland Falls which would more than double the total amount of land available. This land would encourage a population increase and provide opportunity for job growth.

Sitting at the crossroads of four counties—Orange, Rockland, Putnam and Westchester—the Highland Falls DRI would also have significant impact on many municipalities. The Hamlet of Garrison across the river shares school facilities with the Highland Falls district, and Putnam, Rockland, and Orange counties all are impacted by the tourism which USMA generates. The volume of tourism is to such an extent that increased opportunities in Highland Falls would build up the entire region. Hotels, restaurants, and the nearby casino would all receive increased business and vibrancy that a successful DRI would bring. The Metro-North stations of Garrison and Peekskill are convenient connection points that incorporate our economy to the state's economy as a whole. As the experience in Highland Falls continues to improve, tourists will linger in the region and will be a benefit to all.

Highland Falls provides the primary downtown experience for West Point students who will become the future leaders of the U.S. Military. In many ways it shapes the abilities of these men and women to relate to the common American. Additionally, these women and men spend time abroad building important relations with other countries. A successful DRI would enhance the education of these future leaders and impact the community-military relationship around the country.

The impact that Highland Falls has on the impression of America abroad is also significant. Over half a million foreign nationals go through Highland Falls each year, and for many of them it is their only







## Hunter Lee's Story

"I am most excited about the future of Highland Falls because of the community. It is easy to feel isolated from the regular life when one is attending West Point. Having the village as place to go to experience perspectives, ideas, and normal life is essential to growing as a future leader."

Hunter is a Military History Major at USMA and has a passion for the history of the local community.

experience with American main street life. Giving these visitors a great impression would be significant in impacting the reputation of small town around the world.

### 3) Past Investment, future investment potential.

The HTD has an ideal combination of recent strategic investments, shovel-ready future opportunities, involved anchor institutions and partners, recent infrastructure improvements, and supportive policies and plans to jump-start the DRI planning process and to leverage the State's DRI investment in Utilizing

Highland Falls historic status to drive economic progress in the region.

Major local Infrastructure investments in the past decade, include: the Senior Center (<\$1M); Memorial Park (<\$1M); Ladycliff Park (<\$1M); Roe Park Improvements (\$1M); Davis Barracks Construction increasing student capacity by 1,000 (\$250M); West Point Visitor's Center—located in the HTD (\$25M); Street pavement and improvements (\$1M). Current projects include: Initial Marina development (\$5M); continued Street pavement and improvements (\$1M); Keller Hospital Improvements (\$25M); Revolutionary war preservation project (\$12M); O'Neal High School—serving Highland Falls, Fort Montgomery, Garrison, and West Point— infrastructure renovation (\$30M); Camp Natural Bridge Renovation—serving 1,000+ visiting instructors each summer (\$10M); Camp Bucker—Serving 2,000 students each summer (\$30M); New West Point research and development building (\$250M); New West Point centralized parking garage (\$150M); and water Plant Renovation (\$5M).

The key to the revitalization of the Hometown District will be to leverage recent and potential private infrastructure investment. The City has already attracted significant private investment in current and planned projects, including: The Holiday Inn expansion of over 120 additional rooms (~\$5M); the Old Guard Hotel with 100 rooms(~\$25M); MacDonald's renovation (<1M); Wallkill Savings and Loan Renovation (\$1M); the Auto Spa (\$5M); and the USAA Financial Center renovation (\$5M). Additionally, there have been several new businesses in the district, which have made significant improvements to their businesses: Emerillio's Italian Restaurant; Pied Piper Pies; and First Command Financial. Additionally, many legacy businesses have invested in improving their store fronts. Momentum has begun to build in the HTD, and interest in private investment is at an all-time high!

**Future Development Opportunities:** The HTD is ripe with potential for further development. There are many vacant commercial spaces. Additionally, there are several lots within the HTD which are ready to be developed upon the request of a potential tenant. Highland Falls residential neighborhoods, portions of which are in the DRI project area, have seen a healthy increase in property sales volume over the past 24 months, with increases in median sale price as well. Average days on market are decreasing and sales volume is increasing in the area as well.

High profile potential development opportunities include: the Penfed building, currently vacant upon the bank moving to another location within the Town. There is also the Highland Falls elementary school

building, which can either be purchased and developed by a private entity or renovated to once again hold students. There is a large vacant Train Station right on the marina which could be developed in many different ways, and there is additional land in this area that could be further developed.

**Demonstration of Village Commitment:** The Village of Highland Falls is committed and motivated to ensure that these projects are executed and brought to completion. The Village has already invested funds into aesthetic renovation and upkeep of main street. Additionally, it is in the process of revamping its codes and laws to hold stakeholders accountable to the improvement of the HTD. The Village has worked hard to raise the funds to purchase the required land for water access and has shown commitment to pursue all practical means of improvement. Additional completed and underway public investments include: improvements of 3 public parks in or near the HTD (Ladycliff, Memorial, and Roe Parks), street repair and repaving, purchase and renovation of a building for use as a Senior Center, replacement of two stretches of Main Street sidewalk and improvement of the greenbelt, restoration of the historic features and architecture of 8 key Main buildings through the MHREDC restore New York Communities award, entrance into the NYS LWRS program, and continued improvement of our segment of the Hudson Valley Greenway Trail.

Additionally, the village has actively sought out research and input from all available resources including repeatedly applying for this DRI grant, three separate projects driven by West Point research teams, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Landscape Architecture/PennPraxis. **The entire community is committed to making this Village's future even brighter than its history!**

**Consistency with the MHREDC's Strategy:** Our DRI strategy will support the four core strategies of the MHREDC. We will continue to invest in public infrastructure and business supports that will grow jobs in Highland Falls. The HTD will attract and retain millennials, professionals, and entrepreneurs who want to be in a livable, compact city infused with creativity and welcoming to new ideas. Our potential DRI freshlab project will expand the local food and beverage industry utilization of regional farms. In addition, our DRI will revitalize the region's infrastructure, by leveraging our unique number of visitors to create a vital and vibrant economic engine for the region, which in turn will help create an attractive destination for people to come visit, work, and live.

**Village Readiness:** The Village of Highland Falls, with the help and input of state and region, is ready to begin work on the projects that will transform the village into a small, but powerful, regional economic Engine. It has \$1.1 Million in its reserve fund, which can be used for land purchases or to initiate multiple projects. The Village also has an additional \$300,000 in DPW infrastructure funds that can be utilized to enhance the historic walk project. Additionally, Highland Falls has a AA S&P rating and a A1 Moody's rating. With the help of the DRI grant and the state and regional advisors, the Village is ready and waiting to transform into all that it can and should be. There has never been a better time than now. The future truly is incredibly bright!

#### 4) Recent or Impending Job Growth.

Due to previous land restrictions, the work force in the Village has maintained only a slight increase. Additionally, household income has not been increasing. However, there are many opportunities to accelerate this in the future.

**USMA Staff and Faculty-** The primary employer for Highland Falls is USMA which supports, educates, and trains a student body that is slated to continue to expand by over 1,000 in the next few years. Additionally, the federal government has consistently renewed its commitment to USMA as the premiere leadership



institution in the nation. In addition to major infrastructure projects, which support construction jobs in the area, USMA support staff and faculty will continue to expand which will provide more jobs to the Village and the local communities.

**Tourism, Hospitality & Entertainment** - Capitalizing on USMA's ever increasing tourism market, the areas restaurants, performance venues, art galleries, museums, and year-round festivals (all within walking distance of each other and the City's residential neighborhoods) are investing in expansion. There are multiple Hotels that are being built or expanding with additional growth possibilities adding to the area's employment, while also helping local businesses capture a greater share of tourism spending.

**Future Industrial Park** – The Federal government has approved the lease or conveyance of 248 Acres of land to the west of Highland Falls which has been templated as the future sight of an industrial park which would bring a large amount of diverse jobs to the area.

## 5) Attractiveness of Physical Environment.

The historic grandeur of Main Street from the J.P. Morgan investment area shines through in much of the basic architecture of the HTD. Additionally, the green belt that runs between Main Street and West Point Highway and the beautiful historic churches with their lawns provide lush centerpieces for a newly designed historic walk.

**Diversity of population and culture** Highland Falls has been identified among the safest and most livable villages in New York State. We embrace diversity both out of principle and necessity as the populations of women, people of color, and diverse identity continue to rise within the village and the West Point student body. Additionally, there is an even spread of age groups ranging from college students to veteran retirees. Senior activities are centrally planned, and the new senior center located in the HTD facilitates many of these.

**Housing** The HTD contains a diverse amount of housing options. Many of the storefronts on Main street itself have upper story apartments that will be highly attractive to millennials. Additionally, there is diverse housing ranging from apartment buildings, to town houses, to single family dwellings located just to the west of Main Street in the HTD.

**Parks and gathering areas** In the Villages center lies Roe park, a wonderful and diverse gathering area for outdoor activities that includes a Softball field, a Little League Park, a public pool, and children's play area. Additionally, there are two beautiful parks located along the green strip in the HTD (Memorial Park, and Ladycliff Park). The one aspect that is missing is a public gathering place. Due to this, one of the first projects addressed by the DRI would be a public amphitheater.

Highland Falls has a remarkable natural beauty and incredible historic architectural grandeur. However, too often that beauty is hidden. Our continued efforts and investment of the DRI will open our canopy in the HTD to highlight our incredible assets and bring them to public view. The Highland Brook—which runs through town, the dramatic ridge and bluff between Main Street and the Hudson River, and the incredible






greenway in the center of the HTD are all aspects that when highlighted provide a truly unique experience unlike any other in the region.

## 6) Quality of Life Policies.

The Village has adopted a comprehensive plan that is consistent with the vision, plans, projects and strategies in the DRI goals and vision. Our planning and zoning codes have been thoroughly reviewed and updated in preparation for the consolidation of the Village and Town of Highlands planning boards completed in 2017. Additionally, Highland Falls has put maximum effort into reducing empty houses caused by foreclosures and neglect. The Village is also committed to non-discrimination laws and policies including support of age-friendliness. We have a recently renovated Senior Center and a dial-a-bus service that greatly helps those who have physical, mental, or cognitive challenges. Also, the younger community has been supported through the renovation of Roe park and an emphasis of WIFI connectivity in private businesses. To further support these measures, the Village will also move toward a fully connected WIFI system that will embrace the local student population.

There is simply no other community within a 75-mile radius of New York City that can surpass the peacefulness, natural beauty, neighborliness, and civic spirit of Highland Falls. We have been Identified among the most livable Villages, as part of the cherished Greenway, and have been awarded as a Preserve America Community. It truly is no wonder that it was dubbed "Hometown USA."



**Eddie's Story**

"I decided to open a business in Highland Falls because of the incredible market potential. The recent and planned Main Street Improvement, and the proximity to West Point make it an ideal location. There are many more opportunities in Highland Falls, and I hope to continue to invest in this community.

Edward Major III is an West Point Graduate and Entrepreneur who is currently opening a bakery in Highland Falls

## 7) Public Support.

Support of the HTD has been cultivated using surveys and research groups that has both identified important stakeholders and incorporated the feedback of many citizens. This has brought incredible buy in to the process from all levels. A coalition of local leaders from Highland Falls, the Town of Highlands, the West Point community, and nearby municipalities has been established to insure mutual support of policies and this forum has and will be used to continue with this project. Additionally, the Town Supervisor, the Village Mayor, all Trustee s, representatives from West Point, and school

board representatives have each written letters detailing their support for this project.

The chamber of commerce, led by Jim Modlin, LTC (Ret.), PhD, and the Highland Falls Economic Development Corporation have also launched a parallel project cultivating input to improve services for residents and visitors. This initiative, driven by the private sector, will work hand in hand with the DRI to ensure comprehensive results that continue to drive the local and regional economies into the future.

The initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI planning committee are the Mayor Joseph D’Onogrio; Village Trustee Barbara Murphy, Barbara Mennite, PhD, of the Highland Falls Development Corporation, and Paul Walker, local pastor and West Point liaison.

## 8) Project List to Demonstrate Readiness:



**Development Goals:** There are three development goals that will drive the direction of the HTD development. These were determined after looking at the current makeup of the area and with an understanding of what the HTD can and should become. These goals are both lofty and realistic, and they will capture the dynamics of the vision put forth by the people of Highland Falls and the nearby communities.

- 1. Position the HTD as a great downtown experience for the local community especially for the families of USMA staff and faculty which might currently feel disenfranchised.** Due to the Villages focus on student life and its seasonal nature, the village is re-embracing its role of being home to the thousands of permanent residents and the families of staff and faculty. Though students and visitors are catered to, there are still some families that do not find what they are looking for and do not identify nearby highland falls as their home. The goal is to ensure that **every** resident of highland falls and USMA will see the HTD are their downtown and their first stop for community.
- 2. Encourage visitors to extend stays locally to fully tap into the tourist appeal.** Currently, the majority of visitors to West Point Historic sites and attractions (such as home football games) do not stay in the region for their visit. This is due to a lack of high quality hotels and little variety in local activities. This means that the majority of visitors consume products outside the region rather than feeding the local marketplace. This goal would ensure that visitors perceive holistic local experience of variety and comfort that will encourage them to stay locally and take advantage of multiple attractions in the area.
- 3. The HTD would provide a place of connection where people from all walks of life integrate so that the district truly becomes a microcosm of American life as “Hometown USA.”** The incredible overlap of military, civilian, foreign, and national populations is an incredible opportunity to encourage unity and provide a cultural catalyst of influence to spread community outside the local borders. The student population of USMA is equally spread across the nation providing a unique opportunity for idea incubation and cultural influence. This is a great opportunity and responsibility that should not be taken lightly. The HTD must provide places of connection that truly turns this community into microcosm of America. It must embrace and champion ideas of inclusivity and community that will spread from its Hometown USA roots.

**Development Strategies and Projects:** These strategies were developed through input from the Village, and with advice from USMA research teams commissioned to investigate growth potential and successful case studies. Each projects was carefully selected to ensure that it supports a strategy and in turn leads to the accomplishment of one of the identified goals. This ensures that energies and resources are not being wasted on projects that will not effectively and efficiently impact the HTD, catchment area, and the region. The strategies are focused on connecting people within the identified catchment area to the HTD, and in turn maximizing the impact that those connected people have. They address issues of logistics, culture, finances, geography, and publicity in order to maximize connection through modern means. The strategies then develop means which to maximize the impact on the community and in turn maximize the impact of the community on the connected peoples. We believe that they will be effective in reaching our goals, and that confidence comes from thorough research of academic literature, case studies, and local surveys.



# Goals-Supporting Strategies-projects and opportunities

## Connect with local

### Population

- Provide desired products and services
- Enhance Downtown Experience
- Provide convenient transportation

## Extend Visitor

### Stay

- Provide desired products and services
- Enhance Downtown Experience
- Provide convenient transportation

## Hometown USA

### Influence

- Provide desired products and services
- Enhance Downtown Experience
- Provide convenient transportation

## Catalytic Projects

**1** Establish community Restaurant lab

**5** History Walk

**9** Amphitheater

**2** Storefront facelift

**6** Parking Garage

**10** Art Galleries

**3** Lighted Brick Walk

**7** Bike/Walk Trails

**11** Molly "Pitcher" exhibit

**4** Evening/ Weekend Bus service

**8** Marina Development

**12** Visitor Connection Center

## Additional Project Opportunities

Land Conveyance  
Industrial Park

Elementary School  
Building Utilization

Rail Station  
Utilization

Elementary School  
Building Utilization

Hotel capacity  
expansion

HTD apartment  
renovations





## Explanation of Major Projects

**Community freshlab restaurant incubator:** This project is modeled after Batavia’s restaurant incubator and the concept is to address the restaurant sales leakage, capitalize on local product, and strengthen restaurant management. This would address the dissatisfaction of the local restaurant business that was highlighted in the recent survey of West Point and Highland Falls residence which showed that 81% of respondents spent less time in Highland Falls due to the lack of desirable restaurants and stores. This project would provide a space for independent research while bringing in consultants to help elevate the current offerings.

**Storefront Facelift:** Recent research by joint West Point and Highland Falls teams identified the Main Street storefronts as a major problem both connecting with the local population and extending the stay of visitors. To address this problem the Village would require all businesses in the HTD to meet a centralized code of red brick with white trim or stone storefronts. Additionally, a uniform signage requirement would be adopted to ensure a high-quality aesthetics that maintains the historic nature of the Village. DRI would be utilized to create a fund for repayable grants. These grants would allow storefront owners to immediately improve their storefront, and they would be repaid over the next 5 years.

**Historic Walk:** Highland Falls’ historic walk would be expanded and improved upon to provide a high quality experience. A faux brick walkway would replace and expand the current Main Street sidewalks which would then connect through the two beautiful parks currently in the HTD resulting in a walkable loop connecting parking and business. Additionally, powerlines and utility poles would be removed and placed beneath the walkway, and trees and historic plaques would give a high-quality experience to the visitor and resident alike. The historic plaques would also contain AI experiences that would connect to one’s smartphone—through fully connective village WIFI—and show visitors how that area would have looked at the time of that exhibit. Additional lighting would be installed along the walkway with overhead lighting enhancing the two shopping areas. This historic walk would also connect the biking/walking trails of Highland Falls Brook and Station Hill Road.

**Bus Service/Parking garage:** The recent survey of West Point cadets showed that 60% did not spend as much time in Highland Falls as they would like with 50% saying that the distance to walk was too far. Additionally, 20% of all respondents identified a lack of parking as the reason they spent less time in Highland Falls as they desired. To address these issues Highland Falls will charter a weekend bus service to connect students to the HTD. Additionally, an area for a parking garage has been identified as this would be a priority for the DRI funds.

**Green and Blue Bike/Walk Trails:** Bike/Walking Trails will be developed connecting the Historic walk to the new Amphitheater and waterfront/marina area enhancing the current greenway. Additionally, a new trail would be initiated along the Highland brook, a stream with 7 waterfalls and a magnificent high mountain reservoir. DRI funds would be used to improve a publicly owned parcel that would become a park and trail head. This set of trails would link to the Bear Mountain State park, the Appalachian trail, and the region big loop drawing additional visitors to the area.



Highland Brook is a stream that currently travels through the Village unnoticed. It originates from a magnificent high mountain reservoir, travels beside Mountain Avenue through the heart of the HTD, crosses under Main Street, to the grand East side bluffs, and down into the river. The trail design would include green infrastructure measures, including watershed protection and the safeguarding of the town's drinking water. A park and trail head would be built on the south side of Mountain Avenue at its intersection with Route 9W. This trail head would double as a trail head for the future big loop trail. A continuing woodland nature trail would connect this park to the several identified locations along the brook and down into the Village center. As the trail enters the HTD a park would be located which would include a butterfly garden and an area for lawn and board games. Here the Highland Brook trail would connect with Historic Walk and lead visitors on a walking tour of the Village.

**Marina Development:** The Village is currently completing the purchase of the land containing the marina, and this land is rich for development and provides unique views of the dramatic ridgeline along Main Street and the HTD. There is potential for diverse on-water recreation and also transportation across the river and connection to NYC. This project has already been initiated, and much of it can be paid for through other means such as the LWRP.

Connecting this development to the HTD would be a beautiful walk/bike trail along Station Hill road. This trail would be a continuation of the Highland Brook branch with the Historic Walk in between. These trails would provide residents and visitors alike with an unparalleled experience with the purpose of retaining visitors and improving quality of life.

**Amphitheater:** This project would build a generous public path and amphitheater on the bluff between Main Street and the Hudson to capitalize on the extraordinary river and mountain views from the bluff. This amphitheater would create an extraordinary setting for events including plays, concerts, graduations, and public forum events. This project would also capitalize on the extraordinary river and mountain views that are currently hidden from visitors and residence.

This cultural keystone will provide a place of engagement for the entire catchment area including global visitors and the future military leaders of this country. It will provide a gathering place of ideas where America's cultural history meets its present and future.

**Margaret Cochran Corbin "Molly Pitcher" Exhibit:** A Molly "Pitcher" exhibit would be erected to celebrate one of the most famous residents of Highland Falls. Additionally, this exhibit would celebrate inclusion, and it would be a forum of influence to highlight the achievements and contributions of women throughout the fight for America's freedom. This exhibit would connect the Highland Falls Brook trail with the Historic Walk, and it would be a focal point for local history.

**Visitor Connection Center:** Highland Falls will establish a kiosk inside of the West Point Visitor Center, and will also establish a connection center along the greenway and historic walk within the HTD. This connection center will ensure that visitors learn of the opportunities within Highland Falls. There will be maps of the various trails, historic sights, and suggested hotel, food, and service options. The chamber of commerce would also sponsor this project.

**Veteran Employment:** Highland Falls will institute policies for veteran employment in conjunction with the ongoing REDC initiative. The large veteran community in Highland Falls provides a perfect opportunity for encouraging veteran businesses and service-disabled veteran businesses as well as other employment opportunities.





**9) Administrative Capacity.**

We are a small, but mighty “can do” community with future forward focus. Highland Falls has many proficient civic volunteers to help with the administrative side of the DRI including a former Corps of engineer supervisor, PhDs, administrators, professionals, skilled technicians, and teachers. Additionally, the Villages DPW is larger and more organized than typical Villages of its size due to the current infrastructure and current beautification responsibilities. Simple shifting of responsibilities will allow a high level to be maintained on all projects during and after the DRI. Finally, the Village is prepared to organize officially appointed volunteer and paid positions in order to ensure the proper administration of the DRI both now and into the future.

Though a small municipality, Highland Falls is uniquely prepared for a DRI grant. It is truly not too big of a project, and the commitment level of the Village cannot be rivaled. Lessons learned from previous applications, and from other municipalities, have been incorporated to ensure that the future of Highland Falls, the Mid-Hudson region, and State will be maximized through our selection for the DRI.

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

The future is truly bright for Highland Falls. The DRI is to be given to a downtown area based on it’s potential for transformation. Highland falls has the greatest potential for transformation due to its readiness, its strategic impact, and its compact size.

Highland Falls is ready and willing to learn from other communities, but also prepared to think outside the box and impliment modern and holistic strategies that completely transform the Village. Despite our history, we are not afraid of change. Instead, the citizens of Highland Falls are willing to do whatever it takes to implement whatever strategies are necessary. We have a comprehensive plan for tranformation, but we also look forward to regional and state direction and input to help us maximize each dollar of investment. We have begun this process already, and we have shown our willingness to invest in needed





infrastructure and projects. A DRI grant in Highland Falls would be an immediate impact felt throughout the catchment area due to our readiness to change and invest now.

We recognize that Highland Falls is not the largest community vying for this \$10 million award but we will achieve the largest and most sustainable economic development result due to our strategic impact. Almost 25% of the region's visitors come through the identified Hometown district, and our projects are thoughtful, fine-grain, and specifically calibrated to boost the growth and development of the region at large. Our strategic impact is greater than our size and greater than any other municipality in the Mid-Hudson region.

The compact size of Highland Falls is an incredible benefit when evaluating the potential for transformation. Because of the focused nature of our downtown area each dollar of public and private investment can have outsized impact on the downtown itself. This impact will then transfer to economic, community, and cultural impact throughout the catchment area. The small size of the identified Hometown District help give it great transformation potential.

Our economic and blue/green initiatives are big ideas that will have a big impact. Highland Falls have incredible potential for transformation and would be the best investment of the regional DRI award. We believe that if awarded this DRI prize, we will demonstrate the wisdom of holistic and inclusive planning for economic development, just as the Regional Councils were intended to do. Awarding of the DRI to Highland Falls would ensure that futures of the Village, catchment area, and region would all be even brighter than their histories.