



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

APPLICATION

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.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Mid-Hudson

Municipality Name: Village of Millerton

Downtown Name: Millerton

County Name: Dutchess

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

For many generations, Millerton has been an economic and social center for the surrounding area. It is a small town that has served as a major railroad community, a farming community and now a community reshaping itself to be a cultural center with art galleries, restaurants, a theater, retail shops, residential units, professional offices, and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail which attracts local residents as well as people from surrounding towns, counties and states.

While there is a desire for Millerton to grow, there is the reality that without improvements to an aging infrastructure, economic and cultural development becomes stagnant. With decaying water lines and without a central sewer system, business development is limited, and as a result, impacts job availability and stunts the employment opportunities available to the local population. While the village has a growing population of weekenders with the sophistication necessary to advance the community, the community is not wealthy and income from property taxes is limited. Fifteen percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Sixty percent of school-aged children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Housing costs continue to go up as the quantity and quality of available stock declines.

The dream for the future would include a state of the art wastewater treatment system that allows for businesses to grow, increasing job opportunities, attracting private investors and more full-time residents as well as the development of housing affordable to a diverse population. Millerton is at a crossroads and while there is great hope and commitment to move forward, there is the reality that without resources it may not be possible.

JUSTIFICATION

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

There is no community in our region that a ten-million-dollar revitalization grant would not be beneficial but the ROI (return on investment) for Millerton would be measurable and comprehensive. This grant could provide core funding for a regenerative wastewater treatment system for which a feasibility study is currently being conducted. Lack of a central wastewater system is inhibiting the growth of the business district of the Village. In addition, it would provide the needed resources to address an aging water system (current mapping for this system has just been completed), repainting of the municipal water tower and allow for the repair and replacement of aging sidewalks to include ADA compliant crosswalks. Dutchess County Planning recently completed a Pedestrian Plan for Millerton which will serve as a guide in this process. Millerton is a vibrant community with a diverse population of both full-time residents and “weekenders.” These improvements to the infrastructure would ensure continued growth and enable Millerton to serve as a cultural and economic engine for the eastern side of Dutchess County.

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.

The downtown neighborhood are the boundaries of the Village of Millerton which is entirely located within the Town of North East, in Dutchess County.



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.

Millerton is strategically situated as the central economic and cultural hub at the center of a “city” of small towns in the northeast corner of Dutchess County. Millerton sits at the intersection of a Federal highway (Route 44), and a State highway (Route 22). This crossroad allows for easy access to Millerton from other parts of our region including the neighboring states of Connecticut and Massachusetts as well as from Poughkeepsie and across the Hudson River and New York City (only two hours by train or car). It is also the reason, despite its modest resident population, Millerton is a much larger municipality attracting thousands of people to it and through it on a year-round basis.

Since its days as an agricultural railroad center, Millerton has functioned as the downtown for many of the adjacent communities in New York and New England. Millerton provides goods and services not offered in the nearby communities. For example, there is a movie theater which offers both first run films and live feed cultural performances (“The Moviehouse” with 60,000 tickets sold annually), an independent bookstore (Oblong Books), multiple art galleries and antique stores. It has a well-known coffee house (Irving Farm) and a tea room (Harney’s). Millerton also offers a wide variety of restaurants making it a dining destination. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail passes through the center of the village and was enjoyed by more than 65,000 people last year.

There is no “off season” in Millerton. Local businesses and restaurants are year-round operations. The community spirit has given rise to a number of Village-wide activities throughout the calendar year which attract large audiences. In May, the American Legion Post 178, hosts a Memorial Day parade honoring veterans. To Village residents and visitors, this marks the official start of the summer season. In July, hundreds of bicyclists descend on Millerton for the annual Harlem Valley Rail Ride. In autumn, “Fall for Art” organized by the Millerton Business Alliance (MBA), pairs each business with at least one local artist and turns the Village into a weekend art gallery. The day after Thanksgiving, the Festival of Lights and a free movie at the Moviehouse draws hundreds of local families to the Village to celebrate the start of the winter holiday season. Millerton is also within close proximity to Catamount Ski Area in nearby Hillsdale. The Farmers’ Market operates year-round and offers local farm products to hundreds of visitors who shop there annually.

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.

PAST INVESTMENTS

- In 2017, The Dutchess County Planning Department completed a Pedestrian Plan for the Village. This project is ready to move forward.
- The Moviehouse, a four-screen movie theater located in the middle of the Village, is the arts and cultural heart of the Village. It draws audiences from the surrounding region to the Village which helps support the complementary businesses in the community. Located in a 1903 Grange Hall, the

business has grown, developed and transformed itself since “movies” were first screened in the Millerton Opera House (now the Moviehouse) in 1912. Its owners have invested significantly in its purchase and renovation.

- Harney & Sons Tea Blenders is a significant regional business with national and international distribution, with 155 employees, a retail tea room located in Millerton and a 99,000 square foot manufacturing and packaging facility less than a mile away.
- Irving Farm, a coffee shop in the middle of the Village, is part of a small company operating in Millerton and New York City. Irving Farm recently built a 7,000 square foot coffee roasting facility in the Village.
- Associated Lightning Rod is another distinguished local company, with a growing footprint of operations. They recently installed lightning protection on St. Patrick’s Cathedral in NYC as well as at JFK Airport.
- The Millerton Library, located on Main Street, created a beautifully crafted stone patio and seating area in front of the library as a reading and gathering spot.

FUTURE INVESTMENTS

- Currently a feasibility study is being conducted by the Village’s engineering firm for the wastewater treatment project.
- The expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail has the potential to drive significant future public investment. The Rail Trail is presently complete from Wassaic to Millerton. A section from Millerton to Copake remains to be completed. Dutchess County has committed \$11,000,000 to its construction and has scheduled completion of the Trail by 2019. Because of its rural location, the trail rarely passes through the center of a town. Millerton is fortunate to be a village where the trail intersects with Main Street. In recognition of this, the Village recently applied for and was awarded a Community Development Block Grant of \$75,000 for the purpose of installing composting toilets on the Rail Trail, in close proximity to Main Street.

Future private investment will likely come from these principal sources:

- From additional retail, commercial investors, service and B2B businesses opening, and from existing ones expanding
- From the continuing growth of arts and culture organizations, such as the Moviehouse, The Re Institute, and 14th Colony Artists
- Partnering with Townscape, a local nonprofit, investing in the beautification of the Village
- Eddie Collins Field Recreational Facility Revitalization project will seek funding from private investors and grants

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.

There are five principal areas in which job growth has been increasing.

1. The first is in retail. Millerton has a lively group of small retail businesses on Main Street, almost all locally owned and almost all staffed by their owners and additional staff. This includes antique stores, a book store, a sporting goods store, boutiques, a hardware store, a frame shop, a furniture studio, and a wine shop to name a few.

2. Culture and the arts is a second major sector of potential employment. Artists' studios and galleries have found a home on Main Street adding to the vibrancy of the Village by hosting openings and welcoming visitors to enjoy their creations. There is a music studio owned and staffed by local musicians. This group is often found playing at the gazebo where the Rail Trail intersects with the Village. The Moviehouse, with its four screens, is located in the heart of the Village, and draws people from 20-30 miles around, and sometimes even further. The owners of The Moviehouse are presently looking for opportunities to expand and have researched suitable adjacent properties. A group of local citizens has been exploring the potential for a small live theater for plays, dance and cabaret, which would further cement Millerton's reputation as a home for the arts and would nicely complement the cultural center that has blossomed in Wassaic, 12 miles to the south.

3. A third area is in agriculture and food distribution. Millerton has been an agricultural town and a commercial center since 1852, and substantial agriculture continues to this day. There are 16 farms still operating in the Town of North East, for which Millerton is the downtown. These are not the traditional dairies of the past, but smaller, high quality fruit and vegetable growers, organic poultry and meat producers, Community Supported Agriculture's (CSA), and high-end hay and horse farms. Millerton has seen an influx of younger farmers, such as the three young women (all local) who have started Rock Steady Farm and Flowers. They have taken over an existing farm, where they grow a wide variety of vegetables and operate a CSA at yet another farm. This is especially meaningful for graduates of Webutuck High School, many of whom come from families with agricultural backgrounds. All of these agricultural enterprises feed into the Village's year-round Farmers' Market, run by the North East Community Center, which provides fresh and healthy produce to residents and visitors, and which also reaches lower income residents through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, WIC checks and other programs.

4. A fourth area of job opportunity is attributed to licensed professionals. Office space is a premium in Millerton because professionals enjoy the visibility of having offices on Main Street. Many of the professionals such as lawyers, doctors, accountants, architects, and interior designers contribute to job opportunities and advancement of careers for their employees.

5. The fifth area is in the service industry. As mentioned previously, Millerton has a variety of eateries with different price points to suit all levels of income. These establishments provide jobs for a range of skill sets from chefs to dishwashers. Adding to the amenities in the Village are hair and nail salons, yoga studios, and an herbalist which need staff to keep their businesses running efficiently.

All of the above-mentioned areas for job sustainably and growth depend on a robust infrastructure designed to propel Millerton into an efficient and prosperous village. The lack of a municipal sewer system has been a stumbling block, as there is not adequate land available to expand antiquated septic systems. The growth of the Main Street section of Millerton has been stymied by the challenge of wastewater treatment. Business owners have to install and operate expensive septic systems, and many of these require frequent pumping. A

sewer system for Millerton has been a long-standing goal of the Village, the residents, business owners, and professionals. The potential for development resulting from a modern, efficient and environmentally advanced system cannot be understated. Without it, the Village will be unable to maintain the current needs of Main Street or attract businesses to the Village.

- 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.

Named one of “The Ten Coolest Small Towns in America” by Frommer’s Budget Travel Magazine, the Village of Millerton is a charming 19th century jewel box of a downtown. Main Street starts at an intersection with single family houses that lead into commercial buildings from the western end of the Village. Retail stores, antique stores, a yoga studio, and Harney Tea Room welcome locals and visitors.

Moving along, there is the Rail Trail crossing, a gazebo and across the street a restored one-room school house and visitor information center. Mixed use buildings make up much of the Main street with eateries and retail shops and above these establishments are residential dwellings and office spaces.

The street curves around past Terni’s a fourth-generation owned sporting goods store, where it has been rumored to be visited by Babe Ruth, continuing on to Irving Farm Coffee Shop, where TV stars, millennials and organic farmers stand in line for lattes, past The Moviehouse, with its clock tower, listed in the national register of historic places.

Continue past a recently renovated Victorian house known as the Millerton Inn, where the Hall of Fame ballplayer Eddie Collins was born, down a tree-lined avenue with everything from a well-loved library, an art gallery, restaurants, a hair salon, residential houses and finally ending at the exquisite 1868 Baptist church (one of three churches along the street) with its rose window and colorfully painted wood façade. There is something for everyone on Main Street.

The Millerton Farmer’ Market runs year-round and attracts many hundreds of customers to its vendors of local farm products, meats, and cheeses, who then eat and shop in the village. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail begins 11 miles to the south, and by 2019 will continue straight through to meet up with the northern section in Copake, making a total 30-mile path through woodlands and wetlands along the far eastern edge of the state. When completed, it will include outdoor classrooms designed in collaboration with the renowned Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. A 16-acre public park, Eddie Collins Field contains a ball field and basketball courts along with a state of the art, handicapped-accessible playground. All of these features are used by Millerton’s economically and ethnically diverse population – longtime residents, weekenders, new Americans, young families and the elderly.

Among other things, Millerton lacks a multi-use facility for events and public meetings, permanent space for programs for children and families, and rentable office space that is handicapped-accessible by elevator (all of the downtown offices are above retail stores but do not have elevators). A portion of this grant could be

used to construct such a facility contributing to the greater economic vitality in the downtown. If both the Village and Town offices were to relocate there, it could contribute to cost sharing between the two governments.

- 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.

In the Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Millerton and the town of North East (in which the village is located), goal #4 states: “Recognize and support the Village of Millerton as the primary center of the community and encourage it to continue to function as the commercial and population center.” The Village and the Town recognize that the 1994 Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated. A review of the Comprehensive Plan is currently underway by a joint committee of Village and Town officials, Community leaders and residents of both the village and town.

The ability to revise the Village’s zoning depends largely on the installation of a Village wastewater system. If Millerton is unable to put such a system in place, growth will be inhibited and there are few, if any, zoning changes that can be made to “revitalize” existing commercial properties and residential housing.

In 2017 the Dutchess County Planning Department completed a comprehensive study and developed a Pedestrian Plan to address the inadequacies of the existing downtown area as it relates to pedestrians, parking and vehicle traffic patterns. With funding, sidewalks can be repaired or replaced, crosswalks added where needed and existing crosswalks made ADA compliant. All of which will add to the viability of the Village center and increase the theme of the village as a walking community for residents and visitors of all ages.

In 2009, after an extensive and concerted effort on the part of residents, and with the support of local government, Millerton’s downtown received recognition from the National Park Service, with its Main Street Historic District being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition enables property owners to apply for certain tax credits for investments and renovation of historic building facades.

- 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.

In addition to municipal officials (both elected and appointed), Millerton has several very active business and nonprofit organizations all of whom are focused on moving the downtown forward. These groups are dedicated and committed to working together on downtown revitalization.

Townscape, a 501(c)(3) organization, has been devoted to the improvement of the village. Successful accomplishments include the planting of many trees, annual flower planting, providing the winter holiday tree lights for the entire length of the downtown business district and supplying the village with new park benches, tables, and chairs.

The Millerton Business Alliance (MBA) is an association of Village of Millerton and Town of North East business owners. This organization plans events to enhance Millerton’s business district as a destination in the tristate area. An example is “Fall for Art” which is held every fall and in which each business is partnered with a local artist. The businesses stay open late, serve refreshments and host art gallery openings up and down Main Street.

The Friends of the Irondale Schoolhouse, another nonprofit organization, worked tirelessly to purchase, move and restore a 19th century abandoned one room school house from the Town to the Village center. It is located at the junction of Main Street and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and serves as the weekend visitor center throughout the summer months. It opens Memorial Day weekend with open house festivities and remains open until late in the fall.

The North East Historical Society, which contributed significantly to the designation of the Main Street Historical District is finalizing a walking tour of downtown Millerton to serve as a guide to visitors.

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association works to build community and regional support for the Rail Trail. The Association played an important role in putting together the funding to complete the section of the trail north of Millerton to link with the completed section of trail in Copake, NY (linking Dutchess County with Columbia County).

The North East Community Center (NECC) is a highly regarded social services nonprofit that has served the residents of Millerton and its surrounding areas for over 25 years. NECC sponsors the Millerton Farmers’ Market, provides “Dial-a-Ride” services for those that need local transportation and provides a large-scale job training and paid internship program that prepares teenagers for careers and provides supervised workers for local businesses.

The Village Board will pull skilled members from these groups as well as municipal officers and community leaders to form the DRI Planning Committee.

- 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.

The Village of Millerton continues to make strides to move the community forward. There are currently several projects in process and several studies underway for additional projects that will need only funding to complete. These include a feasibility study for a wastewater treatment system for the village, a “shovel ready” project to bury the power lines on Main Street, a study to replace outdated water meters and move from a “flat rate” billing to a “usage” billing for municipal water, a completed Pedestrian Plan to guide the repair and replacement of the village sidewalks as well as streamline parking areas and traffic flow on certain village

streets. There is also a committee working with a Greenway Grant to facilitate an engineering study to revitalize Eddie Collins Park (the local recreation center).

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 Village of Millerton currently utilizes administrative staff to manage grants and construction projects. The municipality also receives support and assistance from local nonprofit organizations such as Townscape of Millerton which has aided in grant applications and administration. Should the Village of Millerton be fortunate enough to be awarded a DRI grant, the Board of Trustees would immediately convene a group comprised of Village officials and community leaders to ensure timely and effective oversight of concurrent contracts.

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

The Board of Trustees as well as community leaders in the Village of Millerton are committed to the continued development of the Village. The community, however, cannot sustain the growth of Main Street without improvements and upgrades to its aging infrastructure and installation of a municipal wastewater treatment system. Millerton is the economic and cultural hub of northeastern Dutchess County and ensuring its continued development will have far reaching benefits for a large portion of the county. Rural areas, are at times, neglected in economic development planning and this application is an effort to bring the needs of the rural community to the forefront. There is a commitment by the members of this community to move forward and advance Millerton. We hope that others will see the value in that vision as well.

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

EMAIL SUBMISSION ADDRESSES

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

Capital Region	NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov
Central New York	NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov
Finger Lakes	NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov
Long Island	LIREDC@esd.ny.gov
Mid-Hudson	NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov
Mohawk Valley	NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov
New York City	NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov
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