WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE
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FOREWORD
Downtowns define our cities and regions. With their energy and diversity as well as their artistic, cultural and historical assets, vibrant downtowns serve as anchors and catalysts for local and regional growth. These enduring qualities attract businesses, jobs, residents and visitors, and provide the critical infrastructure and diverse tax base necessary for broader and more inclusive growth.

Despite their tremendous value to our society and economy, downtowns suffered decades of disinvestment, economic decline and community malaise with the advent of sprawl and de-industrialization. But people and businesses once again recognize and appreciate what downtowns have to offer. And with that, downtowns are beginning to revamp and re-invent themselves, in many cases using their proud heritage not as a whimsical look backward to a bygone era, but as a catalyst for a brighter future. Yes, downtowns and cities are on the comeback trail, but obstacles remain and the DRI serves as that critical launch pad.

Recognizing both the potential and the challenges of our urban centers, Governor Andrew Cuomo launched a major new initiative in 2016 — the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Through the DRI, the Governor moved to aggressively accelerate and expand the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood centers to serve as centers of activity and catalysts for investment in all ten regions of the state. The DRI represents an unprecedented and innovative plan-to-act strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation.

In the first four years of the DRI, the State has committed $400 million to invest in downtowns that are ripe for revitalization and have the potential to become magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, greater economic and housing diversity, and opportunity. Each year, the Regional Economic Development Councils select ten downtowns to receive $10 million each to refine a vision and strategy for revitalization and to implement projects that show the greatest potential to improve the economic and social vitality of their downtown areas. The projects realized through DRI grant funds in turn catalyze multifold additional investments and projects, which creates the momentum and progress necessary to sustain a long-term successful revitalization effort. The excitement and community pride generated by the DRI are clear and palpable.

### DRI Round Four Communities

<table>
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<td>Finger Lakes</td>
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<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
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<td>North Country</td>
<td>Potsdam</td>
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<td>Capital Region</td>
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<td>Mid-Hudson</td>
<td>Peekskill</td>
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<td>New York City</td>
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<td>Baldwin, Town of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hempstead</td>
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</table>

The ten communities selected in round four of the DRI are confronting a serious challenge—the COVID-19 pandemic. But in uncertain times, one thing is certain —cities are resilient; they adapt to change, even in a crisis like this. And the DRI is proving to be resilient and adaptable, too.
In the face of COVID-19, round four DRI communities have effectively pivoted to examine the immediate impacts of the pandemic and expand their downtown strategic investment plans to respond to this new challenge through the recommendation of projects that will support recovery and resiliency, especially for the small businesses that represent the heart of our downtowns. The ten round four communities demonstrated a true commitment to realizing their community visions for vibrant and robust downtowns, even in the midst of NY PAUSE. Indeed, each of the ten communities pursued innovative strategies to engage local stakeholders and successfully identify viable and impactful revitalization projects in safe and effective ways.

The DRI process involves a combination of community-based strategic planning, inter-agency project support and leveraging of outside investments. The process starts with a community-based Strategic Investment Plan that sets the path for successful downtown revitalization—a clear vision for the downtown; goals and strategies to accomplish the vision; and catalytic projects identified in the plan.

The strategic planning process is led by Secretary of State Rossana Rosado and facilitated by staff from the Department of State’s Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure, with the assistance of NYS Homes and Community Renewal and Empire State Development. This collaborative multi-agency effort mobilizes the expertise, technical assistance and project management skills of State agencies alongside those of a team of consultants to support a Local Planning Committee (LPC) in each DRI to develop a community-based vision, goals and strategies for downtown revitalization.
Central to the Strategic Investment Plans are the slate of viable, transformative and catalytic projects identified by each LPC that will help realize the community’s vision for revitalization of its downtown. Of the projects included in the plans, those that are ready to go and show the greatest potential to contribute to revitalization, especially when knitted together with other projects, are awarded DRI funding.

The DRI is much more than a one-off $10 million grant. Firstly, the projects are not selected in a vacuum, rather, they are synergistic and catalytic—that is, they work in concert to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Secondly, the positive momentum created by the DRI generates exponential effects that leverage additional public and private investments that, in turn, create a self-perpetuating cycle of revitalization.

We often hear the phrase “live, work and play” to describe city life, but we need to move beyond that limited characterization. Downtowns are so much more than that; they are a place to connect, eat, shop, drink, learn, absorb, innovate, observe and interact—they serve as a spark to human inventiveness and social entrepreneurship. Downtowns also offer public gathering spaces that allow people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds to interact safely and comfortably to appreciate the diversity of city life.

There is no cookie-cutter formula for our urban centers. Each one is unique—a different vibe, heritage, culture; a whole different story to tell if we listen carefully enough. And we do just that - the DRI treats and respects each downtown as its own special place—which is the hallmark of what we call “placemaking.”

The DRI has launched a renaissance in downtown redevelopment. With bottom-up leadership and top-down assistance from the State, deep participation from within the community and collaborative partnerships with public and private investors, the DRI is truly paying dividends by not just transforming the existing community, but also by creating new and yet-to-be-discovered opportunities for generations to come.
INTRODUCTION

The New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a statewide program that awards $10 million to 10 communities throughout New York State. The City of Niagara Falls was selected as the 2019 Western New York recipient of the DRI program. This funding will be utilized by the City of Niagara Falls to implement public and private projects in the City’s North End, also known as the Bridge District, to advance the community’s vision for revitalization.

NIAGARA FALLS DRI BOUNDARY

The Bridge District extends 26 blocks from Chasm Avenue to Portage Road in the City of Niagara Falls. The Bridge District is supported by an active Main Street Business District adjacent to the Niagara River and Niagara Gorge Trail System. This area is well positioned for redevelopment opportunities due to the area's concentration of economic activity and influence of prominent local anchors, such as the Niagara Falls International Train Station, Niagara Falls Public Safety Building, Rapids Theatre, DiCamillo Bakery, Niagara University, Niagara Falls Public Library, and Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center. Other local institutions in and around the Bridge District include Wrobel Towers, Heart Love & Soul, and the American Legion.
CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

Based on a review of existing conditions and market analysis of the DRI area, several challenges and opportunities were identified. These lay the foundation for potential projects to improve the quality of life and catalyze new development in the DRI area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aging and declining population</td>
<td>Diversification of housing options and amenities within the DRI area will attract new and diverse residents to the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging building stock with a number of vacancies and underutilization</td>
<td>Existing building stock is compact, which lays the foundation for a walkable and connected downtown area. There is an opportunity to adaptively reuse buildings and infill vacant sites to create expanded business and employment opportunities within the DRI area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low median household income and limited employment opportunities</td>
<td>Significant major employers and institutions, such as Niagara University, located within or proximate to the DRI area. These institutions should be leveraged to increase workforce and career development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High concentration of rental households and vacant units</td>
<td>Available space and unmet demand for retail and housing investments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low tourism rates within the DRI area</td>
<td>Leverage regional tourism market with significant historic and natural assets to expand tourism options within the DRI area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underdeveloped access to parks and open space in the DRI area</td>
<td>Increased connectivity through public realm enhancements and accessible park space to create a pedestrian-friendly environment for residents and visitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dilapidated street infrastructure and lack of ADA-accessible connections throughout the DRI area</td>
<td>Opportunity to invest in public realm and streetscape infrastructure to create a safe, accessible and connected neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diverse retail options in the DRI area</td>
<td>Retail gap analysis reveals an opportunity for an additional 5,600 SF of retail space within the DRI area for smaller-scale storefronts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office demand in the DRI area and Niagara Falls is low</td>
<td>The age characteristics of residents and proximity to major institutions creates an opportunity for medical office space in the DRI area.</td>
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Throughout the DRI planning process, the project team utilized numerous methods of engagement to gain input from the community on a future vision and desired projects for the Bridge District.

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (LPC) MEETINGS
The LPC consisted of local and regional leaders, non-profit organization representatives, business owners and stakeholders. Monthly meetings were held with the committee to guide the development of the Downtown Profile and vet projects for inclusion in the Strategic Investment Plan. All LPC meetings were open to the public, advertised through various print and online methods, and included a public comment period.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS
Three public workshops were held throughout the DRI planning process. The purpose of these meetings was to educate the community about the DRI process and solicit feedback on potential DRI projects. The project team utilized creative and innovative methods of engagement to generate excitement from community members about future revitalization opportunities.

OPEN HOUSE
The project team held an open house to provide an informal opportunity for the public to learn more information about the DRI planning process, share ideas and ask questions. The open house was set up at the International Train Station on December 18th.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
The project team held two engagement sessions with Niagara University students to discuss the DRI process and understand their desires regarding future revitalization. Approximately 50 students participated and provided feedback on the types of private and public investment they believed would benefit the Bridge District.

ONLINE WEBPAGE
A project-specific webpage was created for the DRI planning process. This webpage provided 24/7 access to community members to stay up to date on meeting presentations and deliverables. It included a comment page where webpage visitors could post questions or comments to the project team. This page was also utilized to provide information regarding upcoming meeting and engagement sessions.

In March 2020, Governor Cuomo's executive orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic forced a pause in the DRI planning process until August 2020. In August, a virtual LPC briefing was held to provide an update to committee members regarding the status of proposed projects and the DRI program timeline.
VISION, GOALS + STRATEGIES
The LPC and public developed a vision statement that is reflective of the future revitalization goals for the Bridge District. This vision statement provides the basis for the encompassing DRI goals and strategies, which define measurable actions necessary to achieve the vision.

VISION

The Bridge District is an active and vibrant neighborhood with a walkable public realm. Main Street serves as a retail, entertainment, and mixed-use hub comprised of diverse incomes and occupations. The District supports growing businesses that serve local residents and leverage the area’s proximity to Toronto and Buffalo. Its access to natural, recreational, cultural and educational resources offers a welcoming neighborhood for both residents and visitors that celebrates the area’s uniqueness.

GOALS

STRENGTHEN THE BRIDGE DISTRICT’S PUBLIC REALM

1. Improve the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements
2. Incorporate a variety of public art installations throughout the Bridge District
3. Enhance the signage and wayfinding system to improve the user experience
4. Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events
5. Create clear linkages between the State Park and the Main Street Business District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1. Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors
2. Support complementary infill development that contributes to the District’s character
3. Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment
4. Create a funding assistance program to aid property owners with small-scale improvement and maintenance projects

1. Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities
2. Improve access to local and natural assets
3. Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System
4. **GOALS**

**4. RETAIN AND ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS TO THE BRIDGE DISTRICT**

1. Promote a mix of high-quality affordable and market rate housing within the Bridge District to fill existing gaps in the marketplace
2. Encourage the renovation of upper stories to residential use
3. Support the availability of professional resources and neighborhood amenities to ensure a high quality of life for existing and new residents
4. Enhance digital connectivity to increase access to high speed internet and new technology platforms

5. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

5. **CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE FOR THE BRIDGE DISTRICT**

1. Support existing businesses within the Bridge District to ensure their long-term sustainability
2. Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies
3. Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District
4. Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities
5. Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities
RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

1 MAIN STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

This project includes sidewalk improvements, enhanced intersection improvements, installation of street trees and furniture, and replacement of light poles on Main Street from Chasm Avenue to Pierce Avenue. Improvements are anticipated to enhance the street’s sense of place and improve pedestrian access within the Bridge District.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $3,720,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $4,230,000

2 WHIRLPOOL STREET CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENTS

This project includes streetscape enhancements on Ontario Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Lincoln Place, Linwood Avenue, Division Avenue, and Willow Street from Main Street to Whirlpool Street, and two intersection improvements on Whirlpool Street to improve walkability and connectivity.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $3,145,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $3,530,000

3 FREEDOM PLAZA AND OVERLOOK

This project includes the construction of a plaza space and elevated overlook to create a public gathering space for community use along Whirlpool Street that connects to the new State Park.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $1,500,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $1,500,000
**ACADEMIC INNOVATION HUB**

This project involves the development of an academic and community space for Niagara University’s use in the former First Congregational Church on Cleveland Avenue. Programming will provide multi-disciplinary services for Niagara University students and the local community, such as professional workforce training, job promotion, small business development, early childhood care, and an eSports lab.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $1,100,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $2,500,000

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**NEIGHBORHOOD STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**

This project includes sidewalk reconstruction and street tree planting on Ontario Avenue, Niagara Avenue, Cleveland Avenue and Michigan Avenue from Main Street to 10th Street to improve neighborhood walkability.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $990,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $1,100,000

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**1810 + 1812 MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT**

This project proposes the renovation of two vacant buildings on Main Street into a mixed-use development with a boutique hotel and retail space. This project will provide necessary neighborhood amenities for residents and visitors in the Bridge District.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $700,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $2,309,000
7 PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE

This project includes the installation of public art murals at seven locations throughout the Bridge District to celebrate the area's history and heritage.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $615,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $768,317

8 SMALL PROJECT GRANT FUND

This project proposes the implementation of a capital improvement program for small-scale building improvements throughout the DRI area for commercial and residential properties.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $600,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $1,200,000

9 2025 MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT

This project involves building rehabilitation of 2025 Main Street to enhance the existing retail space on the first floor and create nine residential apartments on the upper stories, which are currently vacant.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $500,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $2,047,000
SOUTH TRAIN STATION SITE IMPROVEMENTS

This project will complete improvements to the vacant site, located south of the Train Station, at the intersection of Main Street and Ontario Street to position it for future development. Improvements will include wall and railing repairs, clearing and grubbing of trees, site work and replacement of street trees.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $450,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $500,000

LEASABLE COMMERCIAL SPACE AT THE TRAIN STATION

This project includes the development of 4,500 SF leasable space in the International Train Station for commercial use. Specific project components include the installation of an HVAC system, upgraded lighting and a smoke evacuation system to facilitate a variety of commercial end use options.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $450,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $500,000

2002 MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT

This project proposes the renovation of a currently vacant building located at 2002 Main Street into a 6,700 SF mixed-use building with retail, community service, and office space.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $400,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $1,414,000
13 MAIN STREET / CLEVELAND AVENUE PUBLIC PLAZA

This project includes the creation of a plaza and event space, inclusive of public art, special paving, and landscaping in front of the Public Safety Building to provide a passive recreation space for residents and visitors along Main Street.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $295,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $325,000

14 DICAMILLO BAKERY EXPANSION

This project proposes the creation of a small museum/gallery space and an outdoor dining area at DiCamillo Bakery. This project also involves the purchase of permanent equipment, such as a flour hopper and mixer, to expand the bakery’s production.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $250,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $650,000

15 RAPIDS THEATRE UPGRADES

This project includes improvements to the Rapids Theatre to improve building visibility and enhance tourism. Specific improvements include new theatre flooring, interior and exterior paint and ceiling repairs. Exterior improvements also include the installation of a new LED sign that extends from the Rapids Theatre to the adjacent building and stamped concrete building in between the buildings.

DRI FUNDING REQUEST: $235,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $390,000
16 **HEART, LOVE AND SOUL BUILDING AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

This project includes the construction of a new 300 SF front entrance and site enhancements to improve the functionality and aesthetics of the existing building.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $220,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $292,800

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17 **SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING**

This project proposes the installation of wayfinding signage throughout the DRI area to identify the Underground Railroad Heritage Center, the First Congregational Church, and direct users to key destinations within the Bridge District.

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST:** $135,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $150,000

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The social and economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely be far reaching and be felt in the Western New York region. The majority of recommended projects in this Strategic Investment Plan have the ability to mitigate these impacts and facilitate economic recovery in the City of Niagara Falls.
MANAGEMENT PLAN
The management plan specifies a framework for the implementation and maintenance of each project recommended for DRI funding.

PUBLIC PROJECTS
The City of Niagara Falls will be the local entity responsible for the coordination, management, and execution of all publicly-sponsored projects. The City of Niagara Falls is comprised of a number of departments and individuals who have expertise and experience in the management of projects similar in scope, including streetscape improvements, site preparation, and signage installation and local grant programs.

PRIVATE PROJECTS
Privately-sponsored projects will be coordinated and executed by the individual private project sponsor. Many of the project sponsors for these projects are individuals or organizations with documented experience and capacity to implement the projects successfully. State agencies, such as Empire State Development, Department of State, and Department of Homes and Community Renewal will contract directly with these project sponsors. All private development projects will be required to meet local regulations and obtain local and state permits and approvals. The City of Niagara Falls is willing and able to provide support to assist with project implementation where necessary.

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<th>SPONSOR SPONSOR</th>
<th>SPONSOR TYPE</th>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
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<td>City of NF</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
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<td>Academic Innovation Hub</td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
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<td>2025 Main Street</td>
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<td>Leasable Space in the Train Station</td>
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SECTION I
DOWNTOWN PROFILE & ASSESSMENT
In August 2019, the City of Niagara Falls was selected as the Round 4 Western New York recipient of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The DRI is a statewide initiative that provides funding to boost the economies of local communities. The City of Niagara Falls is well positioned to implement key projects that will advance the community’s vision, due to a large number of properties in the Bridge District ripe for investment as well as its natural resources, such as the Niagara Gorge and Niagara River frontage.

**NIAGARA FALLS DRI BOUNDARY**

The Niagara Falls DRI area, also known as the Bridge District, is comprised of 210 acres running along the Niagara River between Niagara Falls State Park and Whirlpool State Park. The 26-block downtown district has historically served as the Niagara Falls retail shopping district and contains residential, public safety, and natural resource amenities that make this area attractive for development.

The DRI area represents a well-defined, concentrated area of economic activity and redevelopment opportunities that can leverage prominent local anchors, including but not limited to, the Niagara Falls International Train Station, Niagara Falls Public Safety Building, Rapids Theatre, DiCamillo Bakery, Niagara University, Niagara Falls Public Library, and Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center. Other local institutions and prominent buildings in and around the Bridge District include Wrobel Towers, Heart Love & Soul, and the American Legion.
NIAGARA FALLS DRI BOUNDARY

LEGEND
DRI AREA

NIAGARA RIVER

CHASM
GILLETTE
BELLEVUE
DEPOT
NORTH
ONTARIO
NIAGARA
CLEVELAND
LINCOLN
DIVISION
LINWOOD
WILLOW
PIERCE
ORCHARD
CHILTON
PORTAGE

0 0.125 0.25 mi

GARDEN
CENTRE
FAIRFIELD
GROVE
H.S.
H.S.

NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

I-3
REGIONAL CONTEXT

The DRI area is located along the Niagara River in the Western New York region. The Niagara Falls DRI lies adjacent to the international border between the United States and Canada. The DRI area is proximate to other metropolitan areas, including the City of Buffalo, City of Lockport, City of Rochester and Toronto, Canada making it easily accessible to dense urban centers and populations.

THE NIAGARA RIVER IS THE PHYSICAL BORDER BETWEEN THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS AND CANADA. HISTORICALLY, THE NIAGARA RIVER WAS AN IMPORTANT CROSSING POINT FOR FREEDOM SEEKERS FOLLOWING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.
Previous planning efforts and recent investment within the City of Niagara Falls provides context on the community’s future vision for the neighborhood, which involves reconnecting people to the Niagara Gorge and reactivating historic and cultural vibrancy of the neighborhood. This vision provides the framework for future investment projects, implemented through the DRI program, that will catalytically change the Niagara Falls Bridge District. This section provides an overview of relevant planning efforts and recent investment within the Niagara Falls Bridge District that have set the stage for this future investment.
RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS

Nearly 20 years ago, recognizing the significance of this area, the City set an ambitious vision for the Bridge District with the development of the Main Street Business District Revitalization Study. Since then, several complementary plans have furthered the City’s efforts to inform future development.

MAIN STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION STUDY (2001)

The Main Street Business District Revitalization Study encompasses the DRI area as well as areas along Main Street and the Niagara Gorge. The Study identified goals, details regulatory changes and design guidelines, and provided an inventory and analysis of the local market. This information was used in the development of a master plan that looks to:

- Create a place for gatherings and festivals;
- Restore a “sense of place”;
- Reconnect Main Street to the Niagara River Gorge and State Park;
- Establish critical mass as a way to attract visitors;
- Improve the pedestrian experience;
- Preserve and enhance the existing architectural history and urban design traditions;
- Establish new design guideline and regulatory standards; and
- Encourage private sector investment.

To facilitate these efforts, 30 initiatives and physical improvements were proposed - 14 of which are within the DRI Area. As is stated within the Study, “The Master Plan strives to create Main Street as the best ‘neighborhood’ business district possible but also improve the quality of life for the citizens and act as a magnet for tourists, who often seek ‘local flavor.’”

The Main Street Business District Revitalization Strategy proposed several projects within the DRI area. The study recommends mixed-use and infill development on Main Street between Division and Willow Avenues, as well as streetscape enhancements to improve pedestrian linkages within the area.
CITYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2009)
The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2009, creates a framework for directing positive change within the City. A total of eight principles guide the plan, its strategies, initiatives and policies. These include:

1. Build on core assets;
2. Develop the waterfront: recreation, adjacencies, and cultural potential - “The Big Move”;
3. Create green streetscape connections that link the river-front amenities to the city, its neighborhoods and main streets;
4. Prioritize residential development: revitalize neighborhoods and make living in the Core City attractive;
5. Plan to become a more compact, attractive and manageable city;
6. Commit to sustained small-scale incremental change, design excellence, and authentic place making;
7. Carefully target catalyst projects to ignite renewal efforts and encourage private sector interest and reinvestment; and
8. Build strategic partnerships and promote a common agenda to undertake catalyst projects.

Furthering these principles are core City strategies including “big moves” such as reconnecting the City to its waterfront and “core city precinct strategies” such as strategies for the Customhouse and North-Main Loft Precinct. These strategies are intended to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision for the City and the Bridge District.

ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE (2009)
The City of Niagara Falls updated the Zoning Ordinance concurrently with the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The Ordinance includes residential, commercial, downtown, industrial, open space, institutional, and negotiated planned development districts. There are also three overlay districts, which include a waterfront overlay, a design district overlay and an urban renewal area overlay, all of which are within the DRI area.

WHAT IS AN OVERLAY DISTRICT?
Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district over an existing base zone. Overlay districts are intended to identify special provisions for uses or design guidelines in addition to those stated in the underlying base zone.
REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION OF THE NIAGARA GORGE RIM (2011)
The Niagara Greenway Commission’s Ecological Standing Committee and the City studied the potential for regional economic growth based on the full removal of the Robert Moses Parkway (RMP) and restoration of the Niagara Gorge to its natural ecological condition. The Study Area included lands from the rim of the Niagara Gorge to where adjacent neighborhoods abut the RMP from First Street in the City to Center Street in the Village of Lewiston. The study concluded that roadway removal and ecological restoration are not unrealistic goals or without precedent. The study proposed a phased approach to removal and restoration. As a result of this study and subsequent studies, the Robert Moses Parkway removal project is currently underway in the City.

NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN (2012)
The Niagara Falls Heritage Underground Railroad Heritage Area was designated as a New York State Heritage Area in 2008. The purpose of the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area Management Plan is to identify, communicate and celebrate resources within the Heritage Area associated with historic and contemporary experiences with the Underground Railroad. Recognizing an unparalleled density of resources, narratives, sites, and experiences related to the history of the Underground Railroad, the Heritage Area encompasses all of the City of Niagara Falls.

The Management Plan developed long-range actions and specific recommendations for Underground Railroad Sites including those within the DRI Area, such as the International Suspension Bridge at Whirlpool Street, Maid of the Mist Landing at the dock at Niagara River just south of the Suspension Bridge, First Congregational Church, Colt Block at the northeast corner of Main and Ontario Streets, and School for the Deaf or Blind African American Children at 1810 Main Street.

One of the recommendations specific to the Bridge District included the development of the Underground Railroad Heritage Center in the historic Customhouse. This was recently accomplished as part of the construction of the International Intermodal Train Station.

THE MISSION OF THE HERITAGE CENTER IS TO REVEAL AUTHENTIC STORIES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM SEEKERS AND ABOLITIONISTS IN NIAGARA FALLS THAT INSPIRE VISITORS TO RECOGNIZE MODERN INJUSTICES THAT STEM FROM SLAVERY AND TAKE ACTION TOWARD AN EQUITABLE SOCIETY.
NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR PROJECT FINAL SCOPING REPORT (2013)

The Niagara Gorge Corridor Project Final Scoping Report study area is a six-mile long area that includes the Robert Moses Parkway and the parallel roadways from Main Street in the City of Niagara Falls to Center Street in the Village of Lewiston. Similar to the Regional Economic Growth Through Ecological Restoration of the Niagara Gorge Rim Study, and many other studies that have questioned the usefulness of the existing RMP, the Report recognizes a need to develop an appropriately scaled transportation network to link together existing and proposed roadways, attractions, overlooks, trails and cultural/historic sites in a more natural, park-like setting along the corridor while improving vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle access and safety features along the Niagara Gorge Corridor (NGC). The project objectives that are used to evaluate the Report’s six alternatives for the NGC include:

- Improve access and transportation
- Promote and conserve the ecology and environment of the NGC
- Support local economic vitality
- Minimize impacts to adjacent neighborhoods
- Support the Niagara River Greenway Plan

Evaluation, featuring public and stakeholder involvement, identified three recommended alternatives for the next phase of the project development, including the removal of the Parkway.

ON THE EDGE: REIMAGINING THE NIAGARA GORGE & NORTH END (2014)

On the Edge: Reimagining the Niagara Gorge & North End is a graduate student studio report from the State University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning that explored the future potential of reshaping the Niagara Gorge and the parallel Main Street area from Findlay Drive to Niagara Street. The plan was based on the vision set forth in the City of Niagara Falls Comprehensive Plan (2009) and explored existing conditions that identified a proposed master plan that focuses on an intermodal transportation hub to the north, a cultural district to the south, and a new parkway design.

THE ‘ON THE EDGE’ PLAN SAW THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRAIN STATION AS A CATALYST FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL ACTIVITY IN THIS SECTION OF NIAGARA FALLS.
URBAN DESIGN PLAN (2019)

To prepare for the DRI, the City conducted a public outreach program for the Bridge District and developed a new Urban Design Plan. The Plan looks to improve connectivity, aesthetics and character while creating more usable and accessible space and increasing critical mass through new commercial, retail, and residential uses. The Plan identifies signature projects such as a Main Street Plaza and Event Space, reconfiguration of intersections, streetscape and connectivity improvements, as well as aesthetic enhancements.
RECENT INVESTMENT

In recent years there have been several key investments that fulfill the established long-term goals of City planning efforts. These investments have sparked revitalization in the Bridge District and set the stage for the DRI program to build off this positive momentum.

INTERMODAL TRAIN STATION

Opened in 2016, this $43 million, intermodal train station is serviced by Amtrak and is a hub for intercity rail between New York City and Toronto. Transportation options at this train station include international rail, public bus transportation, Discover Niagara Shuttle and bicycle ride sharing. With accommodations for both U.S. and Canadian federal customs agencies, the station has resulted in expedited cross-border travel and is a focal point of the Bridge District. A new rail bridge across Main Street was also constructed as part of the Train Station’s infrastructure improvements.

DISCOVER NIAGARA SHUTTLE

The Intermodal Train Station is the hub for the Discover Niagara Shuttle, which is projected to have a potential $70 million economic impact by 2020. This shuttle service provides service to 17 destinations along a 14-mile route between Niagara Falls and Lewiston, NY. Major destinations that are in close proximity to the Bridge District include Old Fort Niagara, Whirlpool State Park, the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center and Underground Railroad Heritage Center.

REDDY BIKESHARE STATION

Reddy Bikeshare is a program that offers bike sharing in the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Bike facilities in the Bridge District were installed at the Intermodal Train Station, the Municipal Complex, and Niagara Falls Public Library. These facilities provide opportunities for cycling as an accessible, alternative mode of transportation for residents and visitors.

NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE CENTER

Opened in 2018 in the historic U.S. Customhouse, the Heritage Center is an experiential museum that provides a gateway to the Underground Railroad and abolitionist history of the area. The Heritage Center invites community members and visitors to learn about the authentic stories of the Underground Railroad freedom seekers traveling through Niagara Falls.
REMOVAL OF THE ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY AND RECLAMATION OF THE GORGE RIM

In November 2018, Governor Cuomo began a nearly $50 million project to remove an underutilized two-mile segment of the Parkway and reclaim the Gorge Rim lands by restoring native landscaping and creating a 140-acre unbroken, fully accessible ribbon of green space from Niagara Falls State Park to Whirlpool and DeVeaux Woods State Parks. This project, led by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is currently under construction between Findlay Drive and Main Street and anticipated to be completed in 2020.
WNY REDC ALIGNMENT

The Niagara Falls DRI is well aligned with the 2011 Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNY REDC) Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan aims to make fundamental improvement in the WNY economy to ensure sustainable and long-term growth in jobs and income in the five-county region and contribute to the resurgence of the broader economy of New York State. Specifically, the Niagara Falls DRI will help to achieve measures of success with a focus on strengthening the WNY economy. The Niagara Falls DRI aligns to the strategies and industry sector targets within the WNY REDC Strategic plan, including:

Implement Smart Growth:
Opportunity to reinvest in the Bridge District through the reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings, preservation of a historic building stock and development of key public spaces for a walkable and unique urban community. This reinvestment has the potential to improve the quality of life for existing residents as well as attract new residents and visitors to the community. The implementation of smart growth principles in the Bridge District has the potential to change the course of the community that has seen years of disinvestment and the impact of being cut-off from the City’s prominent natural feature, the waterfront. Investments in multi-modal transportation, such as sidewalks, will create renewed connections from City neighborhoods to the Niagara Gorge system.

Prepare Our Workforce:
With proximity to Niagara University, the Niagara Falls Public Library, Harry F. Abate Elementary School and the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, the Bridge District has the potential to connect to improved opportunities to access resources that prepare our workforce by partnering with these institutions. The area’s income and unemployment rates suggest more sustainable wage jobs are needed in the area; the Bridge District is a prime location for workforce investment that prepares residents for available opportunities.

Foster a Culture of Entrepreneurship:
As the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway redefines the Bridge District as an area with extraordinary potential for improvement, this adjacent Main Street business community provides those with an entrepreneurial spirit to take advantage of underutilized buildings and transform the community into a hub for growth and development. Furthering this potential is the opportunity to partner with higher educational institutions to build the skills needed to promote entrepreneurial development.
Tourism: The primary reason tourists visit Niagara Falls is to experience its incredible natural waterfront features. The City has the potential to expand tourism from a single attraction destination to a community destination with the utilization of assets in the Bridge District.

Bi-National Logistics: The DRI area has incredible potential to capitalize on its international connection to Canada. With expedited border crossings at the Train Station, not only will travel to Canada from the Bridge District be an attractive feature, but the area is the closest American city to the growing population of the Greater Toronto Area. There is an opportunity to leverage this location to attract additional visitors and residents to the DRI area.

Higher Education: The availability of underutilized buildings in the Bridge District provides the opportunity to bring higher education to the community by partnering with local institutions such as Niagara University. Improved connection to higher education has the potential to prepare students with the skills necessary for WNY REDC target industry sectors.
WNY REDC STRATEGIES

Specific strategies within each of these sub-sectors that proposed DRI projects align to include:

- Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles
- Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields
- Protect water resources, waterfronts and habitats
- Increase diversity in labor force
- Develop and cultivate the WNY talent pool that includes workers with advancement potential, underemployed, unemployed, and special populations
- Align education and skills training to a competency based job market for current, new and future business/employers to increase productivity, labor force capacity and job growth
- Engage students, parents, educators and businesses in the P-12 system to build awareness and promote the connection between schooling, career & college readiness to increase timely high school and post-secondary completions
- Foster and support entrepreneurs
- Fund entrepreneurs
- Facilitate growth of quality tourism product
- Increase employment in bi-national logistics and/or higher education
- Increase income in bi-national logistics and/or higher education
- Increase investment in bi-national logistics and/or higher education
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Socio-economic characteristics are often utilized by planners to understand a community and its surrounding region. Data such as age characteristics, educational attainment, household income, and other representative figures help identify specific needs and opportunities in a community. Demographic data of the Bridge District and the City of Niagara Falls was analyzed in relation to Niagara County and New York State to develop goals and strategies for successful revitalization in the Niagara Falls Bridge District.
The Niagara Falls DRI area is comprised of 947 residents, which represents 1.9% of the City of Niagara Falls' total population of 48,516 residents.

The DRI area population has decreased 20.2% since 2000; however, it is projected to decrease at a slower rate by 2024. By 2024, the population in the DRI area is projected to be 913 residents. The City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County have also experienced population decline, but at a much lesser rate than the Niagara Falls DRI area (12.7% and 2.5% respectively).

Population rates over the last 20 years within the DRI area and Niagara Falls have declined. The anticipated investment in the DRI area over the next few years is expected to reverse this trend.
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Community age distribution provides a quick look into the makeup of a community. Niagara Falls DRI residents are fairly evenly distributed in terms of age. The largest age group in the Niagara Falls DRI area is 51 and older.

The DRI area also has the oldest median age of 48 when compared to the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County, which have median ages of 41.2 and 43.8, respectively.

Almost half of DRI residents are 51 years and older. Creating quality housing and amenities that cater to this demographic as well as strategies to attract young families and millennials will be important to sustaining the DRI area.

EDUCATION

Educational attainment can be indicative of the types of employment opportunities within a neighborhood or community. Approximately 24% of the DRI area population has no high school diploma compared to approximately 12% in the City of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls also has a higher number of residents with a Bachelor’s degree or more (18.3%) compared to residents in the DRI area (15.9%).

Education rates indicate a potential need for non-traditional educational programs, diverse job opportunities and workforce development.
DIVERSITY

The DRI area has a diverse mix of residents with varying ethnicities. The DRI area has a nearly even mix of population identified as “White” (44.5%) and “Black” (44.7%). Other races within the DRI area include those identified as “Hispanic Origin” (5.7%), “Two or More Races” (6%), “American Indian” (2.7%) and “Asian” (1.6%). This make-up is different than the City of Niagara Falls, where those identified as “White” made up a larger percentage of the population (67%) and those who identified as “Black” made up a smaller percentage of the population (23.2%).

DIVERSITY INDEX

Diversity index represents the likelihood two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity). This index is critical to tracking and understanding the diversity of communities and shifting demographics of race and ethnicity. The DRI area is significantly more diverse with an index of 64.5, as compared to the City of Niagara Falls (53.8) and Niagara County (29.2).

The DRI area is more racially diverse than the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County. Cultural diversity benefits a community by fostering creativity and expanding the skill sets of that community.
CRIME

The Crime Index is an indication of relative risk of a crime occurring and is measured against the overall risk at a national level. Values above 100 indicate that the area has above average risk of crime occurring compared to the US. Numerous types of crimes, such as personal crime, murder, rape, robbery, assault, property damage, burglary, larceny and others are calculated as part of the total crime index. The crime index for the DRI area was compared to the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County. According to what is known as a “crime index” the DRI area experiences more types and incidents of crime than both the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County.

Higher crime rates in the DRI area may be due to the presence of high building vacancy rates. Redeveloping vacant buildings and infilling vacant sites will attract more people to the area, potentially reducing crime rates.

COMMUTING PATTERNS

Commuting patterns are helpful in understanding the linkages between a community and the surrounding region. Commuting patterns for the Niagara Falls DRI area indicate that a majority of people that work in the DRI area live outside of the DRI area. There is a nearly even distribution of people coming into the DRI area to work and those leaving the DRI area to work. Only four residents in the DRI area work within the DRI and a total of 360 residents work outside of the DRI area.

Due to the large number of residents that leave the DRI area for employment, there is an opportunity to expand employment and business opportunities within the DRI area, as well as attract workers to live in the DRI area.
**INCOME**

Income is considered a key economic indicator for measuring the well-being of a population and can indicate economic growth or decline. The median household income in the DRI area ($15,967) is significantly lower than the City of Niagara Falls ($38,369). The average income for residents in the DRI area is below the poverty lines for both a family of two and an individual. Projected income levels for the DRI area and City are anticipated to remain largely stagnant until 2024.

The median household income for the DRI area and the City of Niagara Falls indicates a need for more diverse job opportunities within and around the DRI area.

**EMPLOYMENT**

There are approximately 88 businesses employing 816 workers in the DRI area. Major business segments include Other Services (excluding Public Administration), Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail Trade. The unemployment rates in the DRI area and the City of Niagara Falls are fairly low (5.3% and 5.1% respectively) but higher than the New York State rate of 4.0%. However, the lower household incomes within the area suggest that there is an opportunity to attract additional businesses and diversify job opportunities in the DRI area.

The expansion of diverse jobs and businesses are needed in the DRI area to attract additional employment opportunities, residents and investment to the DRI area.
**HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

The average household size is calculated by dividing the total population by the number of households. While the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County both have average household sizes greater than two people, the average household size for the DRI area is 1.61 people. The smaller household size in the DRI area may be due to the one bedroom apartments in Wrobel Towers and the older age of DRI residents.

The small average household size within the DRI area suggests that more single adults than families live in the DRI area. This indicates an opportunity to attract a greater diversity of residents and families which can be accomplished through housing investment and services.

**HOUSING TENURE**

Household tenure describes homeownership within a certain area. The DRI area has a large renter population, with 57.7% of residents renting their home or apartment and 25.2% of residents owning their home. Many residents live within Wrobel Towers, which includes 250-one bedroom apartment units. Conversely, homes within the City of Niagara Falls are mostly owner-occupied at 48.6%. Additionally, vacancy rates within the DRI area are higher as compared to the City of Niagara Falls.

There is a significant number of renters within the DRI area. Vacancy rates are also high and projected to increase. These conditions reflect the need to renovate existing vacant and underutilized buildings to diversify and modernize housing opportunities in the DRI area.
**HOUSING STOCK**

There are a total of 697 housing units in the DRI area. The majority of the housing units are single-family homes (251 units total or 32%). Wrobel Towers comprise 30% of the housing units in the DRI area, while the remaining units contain a mix of two-family and multi-family units. Two-family homes comprise Approximately 47% of the housing stock within the DRI area was built before 1939. The City of Niagara Falls has a similar housing stock to the DRI area. Comparatively, Niagara County contains a greater supply of newer housing units.

The housing stock is aging and newer housing development has slowed in the DRI area. New housing options are needed in the DRI area to retain

**RENTAL MARKET VALUES**

The rental housing rates within the DRI area have an average monthly rental rate of $461. This rate is lower than the City of Niagara Falls’ average monthly rental rate of $678. It should be noted that the majority of rental units in Wrobel Towers are one-bedroom units, which may lower the average monthly rental rate in the DRI area.

Lower rental rates indicate the DRI area is affordable but also reflects the quality of housing that is available to residents.
Understanding the physical characteristics of the Niagara Falls DRI area sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses within the community. This section provides a physical analysis of the DRI area, including an assessment of the existing land use, regulatory zoning provisions, and vacant and underutilized sites.
LAND USE

Land use within the Niagara Falls DRI is predominately categorized as community services, comprising approximately 61.3% of the total acreage. These community services primarily include the open space between the Niagara River and Whirlpool Street (encompassing the Niagara Gorge), the Niagara Falls Public Safety Building, the Niagara Falls Public Library and Harry F. Abate Elementary School.

Parks and Open Space comprise approximately 22% of the DRI area, which includes portions of the elementary school and other portions of the Niagara Gorge along the Niagara River.

Commercial land, which is comprised of retail, office space and multi-family housing developments, exist throughout the DRI area but is concentrated along Main Street, comprising approximately 7% of the DRI land area.

Vacant land uses (approximately 6% of the DRI land area) exist throughout the DRI area and present an opportunity for additional development and revitalization within Niagara Falls.

Residential land use, in the form of single-family residential homes, makes up approximately 4% of the DRI land area.

Public services comprise approximately 1% of the DRI area and encompass the International Train Station and the railroad tracks extending east and west from the station. There are no industrial uses within the DRI area.

Land uses in this section were derived from the NYS Property Classification Codes - Assessors Manual. As defined by this manual:

- Community Service land use includes property "used for the well being of the community", such as schools, health care, cultural and recreational facilities, and parkways, etc.
- Public Service land use includes property "used to provide services to the general public", such as water and sewer treatment facilities, landfills, and railroads, etc.

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE DRI AREA HAS A DIVERSE MIX OF LAND USES AND DENSE DEVELOPMENT THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE AREA’S WALKABILITY AND CONNECTIVITY.
ZONING

Land uses within the City of Niagara Falls are regulated through the City of Niagara Falls Zoning Code, which was adopted in 2009. There are six zoning districts within the Niagara Falls DRI area, ranging from single-family residential to institutional. The largest zoning districts within the area include Open Space and Commercial zoning. The following describes the goals for each of the DRI area zoning districts:

**DETACHED SINGLE RESIDENTIAL**
(R1-C)
This district allows for medium density and is intended primarily for development in the form of single-family detached dwellings with a maximum density of nine units per acre.

**MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL**
(R-3B)
This district is intended primarily for more urban-style developments or a combination of residential building types oriented to the street.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL**
(C1-A)
This district is intended to allow a range of residential and limited small-scale retail and service uses. The businesses allowed in this district are intended to provide convenience services primarily to the immediate surrounding neighborhood. Development is to be pedestrian oriented, with parking and storage areas in the rear of structures or hidden from the street.

**TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL**
(C2-A)
This district is intended to allow for a mix of residential and commercial uses along major travel corridors. Permitted uses include a full range of service, retail, and office uses serving a local or regional market, and residential uses on or above the ground floor. Buildings should be close to the front lot line with parking areas hidden or to the rear. Drive thru uses are restricted.

**GORGE VIEW - NORTH MAIN**
(D3-A)
This newly created district is intended to enhance opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors to enjoy the benefits of newly created access to the Niagara River Gorge through the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway. This district will allow for a diverse combination of commercial, residential, and mixed-use building types within the North Main Street Precinct.

**INSTITUTIONAL**
(INS)
This district is intended to support a range of uses, including public and private education, health care, cultural and research centers. Buildings should be designed to provide visual interest and create enjoyable, human-scale spaces.

**OPEN SPACE**
(OS)
This district is intended to protect the function, health and integrity of the City’s natural system environment and provide open areas for recreation and conservation to enhance the City’s quality of life.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ZONING PLAYS A ROLE IN THE TYPES OF USES AND BUILDINGS PERMITTED IN THE DRI AREA. EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS ALLOW A RANGE OF USES WITH A FOCUS ON PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY.
ZONING

DOWNTOWN PROFILE

Legend:
- R1-C: Detached Single Residential
- R3-B: Multi-Family Residential
- C1-A: Neighborhood Commercial
- C2-A: Traditional Commercial
- D3-A: Gorge View North Main
- INS: Institutional
- OS: Open Space
- DRI Area

Niagara River

GARDEN
CENTRE
FAIRFIELD
GROVE

13TH

0 0.125 0.25 mi
RECENTLY ADOPTED BRIDGE DISTRICT ZONING CHANGES

Zoning changes with the Bridge District were adopted by the Niagara Falls Common Council in late March 2020. The changes allow for a greater mix of uses, while also facilitating increased densities and emphasizing the importance of high quality design elements. Specific changes to zoning districts in the Bridge District include:

- Establishment of the D3-A District to enhance the opportunity for residents, businesses and visitors to enjoy the benefits of the newly created access to the Niagara River Gorge. Density is intended to be moderate and promote a high-quality public realm and pedestrian experience.

- Expansion of the C2-A zone to preserve historic buildings and encourage their adaptive reuse.

- Change portions of the district zoned as R3-B to R3-C to allow for higher density residential development.

These changes are anticipated to provide for a diverse combination of commercial, residential, and mixed-use building types and provide for enhanced integration of these uses.
VACANT & UNDERUTILIZED LAND

The Niagara Falls DRI area has seen recent investment; however, there are a number of vacant, underutilized and partially utilized sites. Most notably and visible are the number of underutilized sites and vacant storefronts along Main Street. Properties identified as potential revitalization and redevelopment sites include:

- 1708 Main Street (former Jenss Department Store);
- 1810 Main Street;
- 1812 Main Street;
- 1902 Main Street;
- 2001 Main Street;
- 2002 Main Street;
- 2025 Main Street; and
- 2109 Main Street.

The majority of this land is privately owned. City-owned vacant parcels include property along the railroad tracks, 2220 Main Street and 2201 Whirlpool Street.

KEY TAKEAWAY

VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SITES PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN EXISTING BUILDING STOCK AND INCREASE DENSITY AND VIBRANCY WITHIN THE DRI AREA.
VACANT & UNDERUTILIZED LAND

LEGEND
- VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SITES
- PUBLICLY OWNED LAND
- DRI AREA

NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE
TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems support the movement of goods and people in and around the City and Bridge District. Creating safer and accessible transportation options will increase mobility of residents and visitors to and within the DRI area, which is anticipated to drive economic development and spur private investment within the Bridge District. This section provides an overview of the Bridge District’s street network and public transportation system.
STREET NETWORK

The DRI area is comprised of principal arterials, minor collectors, major collectors, and local roadways as defined by the New York State Department of Transportation. The principal arterial roadway within the DRI area is Main Street, which traverses north-south throughout the study area and carries between 4,000 and 8,000 vehicles per day. Minor arterials include Whirlpool Street, Cleveland Avenue, 11th Street, Lockport Street, and Portage Avenue. These roadways carry between 800 and 2,000 vehicles per day.

The Niagara Falls DRI area also has a network of sidewalks and crosswalks. Many of these pedestrian amenities and connections are in disrepair and are not ADA-compliant. Sidewalks and intersections along Main Street provide ADA-accessible curb ramps; however, the majority of side streets do not contain this infrastructure. Streetscape and connectivity improvements are necessary to improve walkability, safety, and accessibility as well as increase quality of life for residents.

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE DRI AREA HAS A NETWORK OF STREETS AND SIDEWALKS THAT CONNECT PEOPLE TO LOCAL DESTINATIONS. IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO INCREASE WALKABILITY AND SAFETY WITHIN THE DRI AREA.
Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) provides transportation services to the City of Niagara Falls and the DRI area. A total of five NFTA bus routes travel within the DRI area to transport residents to other areas in the City and destinations within Western New York, including the City of Buffalo, City of Lewiston, and the Fashion Outlet Mall. All bus routes connect to the Portage Road Transportation Center just south of the DRI area. This transportation center serves as a bus hub for passengers and allows them to wait indoors for transportation services. Bus routes operate Monday through Friday from approximately 5:00 AM to 12:00 AM, on Saturday and Sundays from approximately 6:00 AM to 12:00 AM. There are approximately 25 bus stops located in the DRI area, mainly located along Main Street and 11th Street.

The recently constructed Niagara Falls International Train Station is located in the northern end of the DRI area. This transportation hub offers easy access to public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, taxis, shuttles, and park and ride transportation options. Residents and visitors have access to national and international destinations on two major Amtrak service lines, Empire Service and Maple Leaf Service. These lines offer daily trains between Niagara Falls and New York City to the east, and to Toronto Canada to the northwest.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE DRI AREA. THESE OPTIONS OFFER RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DESTINATIONS. IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ARE NEEDED TO INCREASE FREQUENCY AND RELIABILITY.
ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS + EMPLOYERS

Anchor institutions are key industries, employers, community facilities and local attractions that are integral to the community. These institutions play a critical role in community character as they are intertwined with a place’s identity.

For the City of Niagara Falls, anchor institutions have historically been dependent on heavy industry and manufacturers. With personnel reductions and closures, the City has had to look for new opportunities to develop new anchors in the community. The result is a greater focus on community facilities and attractions, particularly those related to historic and natural features of the City.
CITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Numerous anchor institutions the City of Niagara Falls contribute to tourism and attraction efforts of the City. Higher education institutions also support the community and bring new talent to the area.

TOURISM ATTRACTIONS
There has been steady investment in the tourism infrastructure to better connect the community to the natural features that bring so many to this City. With the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway, the Bridge District will be better connected to the waterfront. Features like the Niagara Falls State Park, Devil’s Hole State Park, Whirlpool State Park, the Aquarium of Niagara, Niagara Adventure Theatre, Niagara Gorge Discovery Center and the First Congregational Church are part of a larger package of tourism attractions that can expand the visitor potential to the DRI area.

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
Niagara University is located in the northern portion of the City of Niagara Falls. Niagara University is a liberal arts school with approximately 3,300 undergraduate students and 850 students enrolled in the graduate division. Many students and faculty of the University either live or are patrons of businesses within the Bridge District and therefore are major constituents of the neighborhood. Colleges at the university include the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Business Administration, the College of Education and the College of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

NIAGARA FALLS CULINARY INSTITUTE (A DIVISION OF NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE)
Located at Old Falls Street in Niagara Falls, the Culinary Institute welcomes visitors and students, featuring state-of-the-art kitchens and its own restaurant, bakery café, TV studio, giftshop, and Barnes & Noble bookstore. Visitors of the Culinary Institute can enjoy, Savor, a student run fine dining restaurant with an in-kitchen chef’s table.
SENECA NIAGARA RESORT AND CASINO

Seneca Niagara Resort and Casino is a full-amenity resort located just off John Daly Boulevard in the City of Niagara Falls. This 604-room hotel and casino offers a premier destination for residents and visitors with a number of restaurants, retail stores and full gambling casino. The casino is also a venue for world-renowned shows and performances. The casino employs approximately 3,000 full-time employees.

NIAGARA MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER

Niagara Memorial Medical Center is a full service, 171-bed medical center located in downtown Niagara Falls approximately 0.7 miles from the Bridge District. This hospital offers inpatient and outpatient services including a 120-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation center, six primary care practices, a outpatient services center, sports medicine and a health clinic for members of the Tuscarora Indian Reservation.
Anchor institutions within the DRI area are a mixture of long-standing icons within the community such as DiCamillo Bakery, The Book Corner and the Niagara Falls Library as well as new cultural and community facilities such as the International Intermodal Train Station and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center. Together, these institutions have shaped the identity of the Bridge District.

**INTERNATIONAL INTERMODAL TRAIN STATION**

The International Intermodal Train Station serves as a transportation hub within the Bridge District. This station provides intercity rail between New York City and Toronto. The Train Station also serves Reddy Bikeshare and acts as a hub for the Discover Niagara Shuttle, a hop-on-hop off shuttle that runs during peak season and carries over 33,000 passengers yearly along the Niagara River Corridor. With this intermodal activity, the Train Station is a critical element for the development of the DRI area.

**NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE CENTER**

The Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center is a museum that opened in the U.S. Customhouse in 2018. This cultural attraction tells the authentic stories of freedom seekers and abolitionists through multiple interactive exhibits to connect the public to the area’s historic past.

**THE RAPIDS THEATRE**

This historic theatre originally opened in 1921 as a luxury movie house. After periods of decline, the theatre underwent several renovations totalling $1.8 million as an indoor concert venue and events center in the heart of the Bridge District. The Rapids Theatre now hosts concerts throughout the calendar year with a concert hall that holds up to 1,700 people. The Theatre is also nationally recognized as a top choice wedding venue.

**PARKS AND TRAILS**

The DRI area is accessible to Whirlpool State Park and the Niagara Gorge Trail System. These park and open spaces attract many visitors and tourists to the area along the scenic Niagara River.
NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Located at 1425 Main Street, the Early W. Brydges Building became the home of the Niagara Public Library in 1974. By 1995 the library collection contained more than 400,000 printed volumes, periodicals, audio and video tapes, a Local History Department, Children’s Department and Audio Visual Department. The Library employs 32 full-time employees.

NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
Opened in 2009, this state-of-the-art facility houses approximately 100 employees in the Police Department and City Courts. This complex represents a $43 million investment on Main Street within the Bridge District.

DICAMILLO BAKERY
Opened in 1920, DiCamillo Bakery carries on its renowned family baking tradition with its corporate office and retail store on Linwood Avenue in the Bridge District. The bakery secured a grant from the City of Niagara Falls to complete facade improvements and perform upgrades to the interior retail space that were completed in Summer 2020.

THE BOOK CORNER
The Book Corner is located on Main Street in the Bridge District. This bookstore is Western New York’s largest independent bookstore serving the local community on Main Street since 1927. The store has three levels of new and used books for sale and is a staple retail establishment in the Bridge District.

HARRY F. ABATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Harry F. Abate Elementary School is located at 1625 Lockport Street in the Bridge District. This pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 neighborhood school has been a prime public facility in the Bridge District since it was opened in September 1972.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
The First Congregational Church is located at 822 Cleveland Avenue between the Niagara River and Main Street Business District. This church, which was built in 1853, is one of Niagara Falls’ oldest and historic churches with ties to the Underground Railroad abolitionist movement. The church is an active place of workshop for residents in the Bridge District.
ANCHOR EMPLOYERS

Of the largest employers in Western New York, six are located within the City of Niagara Falls and include industries such as hospitality, gambling, health care, public schools, higher education and municipal government. These six employers employ approximately 7,000 people in the City of Niagara Falls. The table demonstrates the new landscape of employers within Niagara Falls, an area once dominated by industrial and manufacturing employment stemming from hydroelectricity production derived from the Falls in the 1800s.

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<td>HIGHER EDUCATION</td>
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*Ranked by number of full time employees (FTE)

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE CITY HAS NUMEROUS ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYERS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE VITALITY OF THE AREA. SINCE THERE ARE NO MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE DRI AREA AND MANY RESIDENTS ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THE DRI AREA FOR EMPLOYMENT, THE CITY SHOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THESE INSTITUTIONS TO DRIVE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT AND PROMOTE NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE DRI AREA.
The City of Niagara Falls is one of the most historically and culturally rich places, as the site of key events in American history, the use and legacy of hydropower, and the immense scenic beauty and resources. The City intends to celebrate and promote these resources to drive tourism and enhance resident quality of life, as reflected in past planning efforts.

The DRI area itself is home to a wealth of historic and cultural resources including a National Heritage Area and a National Historic Building. Other resources lie just outside or adjacent to the DRI area. These are unique community assets that continue to define the City and the DRI area today. Relevant historic and cultural resources within the Niagara Falls DRI area are described in this section.
HERITAGE AREAS

NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
National Heritage Areas (NHA) are designated by Congress as places where “natural, cultural and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape”. NHAs support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, heritage tourism, and educational projects as an approach to economic development. Congress established the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area on May 8, 2008. This area is a 13-mile corridor along the Niagara River from the City of Niagara Falls to Lake Ontario. This area is one of only 55 NHAs registered throughout the United States.

NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE AREA
The New York State Heritage Area Program preserves and develops areas of special historical significance. The program currently features 20 Heritage Areas, one of which is the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area (designated in 2008). This heritage area boundary encompasses the municipal limits of the City of Niagara Falls. The area is directed by the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Commission with the mission to educate and inform the community about the Underground Railroad and Abolitionist movement, and to conserve and enhance the historic, cultural, economic and architectural resources of the City. The area’s Management Plan guides the establishment, management, and operations.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses within the U.S., used by enslaved African Americans to escape into free states and Canada. The City of Niagara Falls played a pivotal role for these freedom seekers, acting as a small funnel to channel people from all over the southern U.S. across the Niagara River into Ontario, Canada. These freedom seekers came to Niagara Falls due to its access to Canada across the Niagara Gorge.
NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTERED
DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS

U.S. CUSTOMHOUSE
The U.S. Customhouse is located on the northern end of the DRI area on Depot Avenue, adjacent to the International Train Station and the Suspension Bridge across the Niagara River. The U.S. Customhouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and the State Register in 1980. This building was built in 1863 as the Port of Entry into the United States. This structure now serves as the Underground Railroad Heritage Museum in the City of Niagara Falls.

CHILTON AVENUE-ORCHARD PARKWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT
The Chilton Avenue-Orchard Parkway Historic District is located just south of the DRI area. This district encompasses all residential buildings along Chilton Avenue and Orchard Parkway with 103 contributing buildings and 36 non-contributing buildings. This area is one of the City’s last remaining contiguous and largely intact historic neighborhoods that represents the City’s growth and prosperity at the turn of the 20th century.

SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPLEX
The Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church Complex was recently registered to the New York State and National Register of Historic Places in 2019. This listing lies just outside of the DRI area at the corner of South Avenue and 11th Street. The Complex is comprised of four buildings of notable historic character, including the True Bethel Baptist Church, which provides religious services to the public today. These buildings were built between 1889 and 1960 and display Gothic Revival, Italian Renaissance and Romanesque style architecture.
FAITH-BASED RESOURCES

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
The First Congregational United Church, located on Cleveland Avenue, is one of Niagara Falls’ oldest and historic churches. This church was established in 1853 and remains as an active place of worship in the City today. This church is historically significant due to its ties to the Underground Railroad abolitionist movement and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church is located on Michigan Avenue in the DRI area. This church was founded in 1907 and hosts services at 10 AM every Sunday. The church also provides Sunday school to area residents.

HEART, LOVE AND SOUL
Heart, Love and Soul located on Ontario Avenue is a non-profit organization serving residents in the City of Niagara Falls. This organization provides case management, care coordination and homeless outreach services, supplies an average of 60 breakfast and 150 dinner meals daily, serves pantry food for qualifying families, and is a community center for local residents.

KEY TAKEAWAY
MUCH OF NIAGARA FALLS’ HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PAST IS SHOWCASED THROUGH ITS BUILDING STOCK. THE BUILDING STOCK ON MAIN STREET IS NOT LISTED ON THE STATE OR NATIONAL REGISTERS BUT IS HIGHLY INTACT AND DISPLAYS HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES. THESE RESOURCES SHOULD BE PROMOTED TO INCREASE RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BRIDGE DISTRICT.
RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Access to parks, open space and recreational resources is an important component of improving resident quality of life and visitor sense of place. These assets often contribute to a community’s overall revitalization. Recreational resources within and in close proximity to the Bridge District are described in this section.

BENEFITS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

• Access to the outdoors reduces stress levels, contributing to happier and longer lives.

• Parks provide a space for people to interact with one another and help to build a stronger community.

• Parks improve the environmental conditions by providing an increased awareness of the natural environment, improving air conditions, and aiding in stormwater management.

• Parks and trails provide attractions for tourism and make a community more desirable for business and residential development resulting in increased property values.
PARKS AND TRAILS

WHIRLPOOL STATE PARK
Whirlpool State Park is located on the Niagara Scenic Parkway north of the Bridge District. The Whirlpool State Park provides scenic overlooks with views of the Niagara Fall’s Whirlpool and rapids. There is also gorge level access which offers hiking and fishing access along the Niagara River. The Discover Niagara Shuttle system transports residents and visitors to this park space for sightseeing and recreational usage.

NIAGARA GORGE TRAIL SYSTEM
The Niagara Gorge Trail System is comprised of a number of small trail sections totalling over 10 miles along the Niagara River. This system travels north-south throughout the DRI area. These trails vary in degrees of user difficulty and extend from Niagara Falls State Park to Artpark State Park in Lewiston. Hiking is typically recommended between April and mid-November for users to enjoy the terrain and scenic views of the Niagara River.

NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY PROJECT
The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation, the City of Niagara Falls, Empire State Development, and the New York Power Authority is advancing the Niagara River Greenway Project. The purpose of this ongoing project is to reconnect residents and visitors to the City’s natural resources, such as the Niagara River and Gorge. The project involves the removal of the existing Robert Moses Parkway, reconstruction of Whirlpool Street as an at-grade roadway, construction of a pedestrian and bicycle trail network along the Niagara Gorge rim and restoration of the landscape with native plant species.

LEGENDS PARK
Legends Park is a City-owned park located just outside the DRI area adjacent to Harry F. Abate Elementary. This park is comprised of a running track and three basketball courts for community use.

HEALTHY LIVING ANALYSIS
Accessibility to parks and open spaces serves as a catalyst for active living and contributes to a community’s overall quality of life. In traditional neighborhoods, a 1/4-mile radius is considered a comfortable distance that people will walk to an amenity or service, and serves as the basis to determine the availability of parks within the DRI Study Area. The entire DRI area is within 1/4 mile of a park or open space.

KEY TAKEAWAY
The parks and trails located in the DRI area serve the DRI population; however, additional gathering spaces and passive recreation could be created. The city should continue to plan future investments that improve physical connectivity and create new gathering places for residents and visitors.
HEALTHY + AFFORDABLE FOOD ACCESS

The presence of healthy food retailers, such as grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and specialized food stores, such as meat and seafood markets, dairy stores, and produce markets, is an indicator of a healthy community. Resident access to healthy food retailers in the Bridge District was explored to determine if healthy and affordable food is accessible to residents.

FOOD PANTRIES IN NIAGARA FALLS

There are a total of eight food pantries in the City that serve affordable and healthy food to eligible residents. These food pantries include:

- Heart, Love and Soul (Within DRI area)
- Community Missions
- Divine Mercy
- Salvation Army
- Niagara Community Action Program
- St. John de LaSalle Community Care
- St. Joseph Outreach
- Word of Life
HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Median household income within the DRI area falls below the poverty line for a family of two in the Niagara Falls DRI area. This is an indicator that access to healthy and affordable food is essential for the health of the DRI area population. Establishments that sell healthy food to residents in the DRI area include the following:

HEART, LOVE AND SOUL
Heart, Love and Soul provides hot meals to local residents daily. This organization also provides access to a food pantry with healthy food options; however, the food pantry is only available for qualifying residents, based on income levels.

TOPS SUPERMARKET
Tops Supermarket is located on Portage Road just outside of the DRI area. This is a local food retailer that provides access to fresh foods to area residents daily. While outside the DRI area, this supermarket is within a 5-minute walking distance of the Public Library.

KEY TAKEAWAY

HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE BRIDGE DISTRICT; HOWEVER, MANY RESIDENTS ARE OLDER IN AGE AND DO NOT HAVE A CAR WHICH LIMITS ACCESS TO THESE HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS. THE CITY SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROMOTE EXISTING SOCIAL SERVICES AND MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO INCREASE RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE AND ATTRACT RESIDENTS.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS

Typically, residents in a downtown living environment are willing to walk up to 15 minutes to their destination. The map shows walking distances in 5-minute increments from each of the healthy food providers near the DRI area. While the majority of the DRI area is within a 15-minute walking distance from a food retailer, many residents in the DRI area are older in age and do not have access to a car. This means that many residents may need to rely on public transportation options within the area to access available healthy food.
HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

LEGEND

TOPS SUPERMARKET
HEART LOVE AND SOUL

GREEN 5-MINUTE WALKING DISTANCE
YELLOW 10-MINUTE WALKING DISTANCE
RED 15-MINUTE WALKING DISTANCE

NIAGARA RIVER
Environmental constraints are important to understand as they impact project viability, development costs and timing of project implementation. Flood hazards and the presence of contaminated sites were examined to determine if any constraints exist that could impact project development or implementation within the DRI area.
BROWNFIELDS

Brownfield sites are properties where redevelopment and investment have been impeded by the presence, or perceived presence, of contamination. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation hosts a comprehensive database of potentially contaminated or recently remediated sites throughout New York State. Sites within the DRI area, included in the database are listed below:

1. Whirlpool Bridge
2. Public Safety Building (915 Cleveland Avenue)
3. 2014 11th Street

Based on their remediation and/or clean up status, these sites do not present an environmental hazard nor do they have long-standing environmental issues that would hinder redevelopment.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies flood hazard areas in communities. Within the DRI area, the only designated flood hazard area is categorized as Zone A, which has a 1% annual chance of flooding (also known as the base flood or 100-year flood). This area is confined to the limits of the Niagara River, meaning that there is minimal flood risk on lands within the DRI area.

FLOOD ZONES

The most hazardous flood zones are V and A, with V being the first row of beach front properties and A being located near a lake, river, or other body of water. Subclasses of Zone A are differentiated based on how they might be flooded. Areas in Zone C, where elevations are higher than the 500-year floodplain, are at the lowest risk of flooding; however, almost 25% of flood claims come from areas in Zone C.

KEY TAKEAWAY

THERE ARE LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS WITHIN THE DRI AREA INDICATING FEW ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT.
MARKET ANALYSIS

To provide context on local and regional trends, market conditions specific to the DRI area, City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County were analyzed. Specific focus areas for this analysis included housing, retail and services, and tourism. Targeted opportunities for the DRI area based on this analysis are described in this section.

GOALS OF THIS SECTION

This section analyzes the local and regional marketplace and sets forth the following goals:

- Define the region’s competitive advantages;
- Identify specific market opportunities for the Niagara Falls DRI area; and
- Determine project types that will create jobs, incentivize business and development, and diversify the Bridge District.
HOUSING MARKET

An analysis of existing and future housing market trends was conducted to identify existing housing conditions and challenges within the DRI area.

RESIDENTIAL DEMAND

The majority of the existing housing stock in the DRI area is older in age and the rental rates in the DRI area are lower than the City of Niagara Falls. Additionally, between 2019 and 2024, the Niagara DRI area is projected to see a reduction in households earning less than $15,000 and over $50,000. In terms of householder age, the DRI area is projected to decline in households with householders under 35 and those within the 45 to 64 age cohorts. The Niagara DRI is projected to see the largest increases in households earning between $15,000 and $24,999 and aged 65 and older.

Similarly, the City of Niagara Falls is projected to see a decline in households with householders under 35 and those within the 45 to 64 age cohorts between 2019 and 2024. Growth by income follows a slightly different trend within the City with a large reduction in households earning less than $75,000 and a significant increase in those in income cohorts above $750,000. A large increase in householders above the age of 65 is anticipated in the DRI area from 2019-2014.

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</table>

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE POPULATION IN THE DRI AREA IS AGING AND DECLINING. NEW AND DIVERSIFIED HOUSING OPTIONS ARE NEEDED TO REVERSE THESE TRENDS.
ANNUAL MIGRATION

Annual migration data for Niagara County was used to help define housing opportunities for the Niagara Falls DRI area. The majority of individuals moving to Niagara County come from within New York State at approximately 71.8%. Erie County is the most common county of origin for Niagara County, accounting for 55.0% of total in-migration. Monroe County accounts for 3.8% of Niagara County in-migrants, followed by 1.9% for New York County, 1.2% for Allegheny County, and 1.1% from Genesee County.

To better understand the individuals who are moving into Niagara County, a tapestry segmentation profile was developed for the top five counties. Tapestry segmentation is a tool used by retail site selectors and decision makers to understand the consumer characteristics of an area by classifying consumers according to demographic, socioeconomic, housing and lifestyle characteristics. It is based on the concept that people with similar demographic characteristics, purchasing habits, and media preferences naturally gravitate toward each other and into the same neighborhoods.

The tapestry segmentations of the primary migration locations suggest that most individuals moving to Niagara County are coming from areas much like itself – communities whose residents are generally hardworking, cost conscious, and family oriented. In terms of lifestyle, these individuals prefer to live in traditional communities with access to open space and value their time at home. Urban amenities are also desired by these groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From within New York</td>
<td>5,432</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie County</td>
<td>4,094</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe County</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York County</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattaraugus County</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cortland County</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other counties</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Different State/</td>
<td>2,073</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,446</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY TAKEAWAY

THE CITY SHOULD ENSURE SERVICES AND AMENITIES ARE IN PLACE TO ATTRACT A MIX OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, FAMILIES, AND RETIREES TO THE DRI AREA, WHICH WILL INCREASE DEMAND FOR HOUSING.

HOMES ON CHILTON AVENUE (JUST SOUTH OF DRI AREA)
RETAIL MARKET

An analysis of existing and future retail market trends was conducted to identify retail market opportunities that will create an attractive and vibrant business environment. Generally, residents seeking downtown living desire a variety of amenities within a short walking distance to their dwelling. For this reason, a 15-minute walking distance around the central point of the DRI area was utilized for this retail market analysis.

REGIONAL RETAIL MARKET

The City of Niagara Falls and surrounding municipalities have a number of large shopping centers. However, department store closures have led to a general increase in the vacancy rate within the Western New York market. As of 2018, the Niagara market had nearly 4.1 million square feet of retail inventory, with 429,000 square feet available (10.5% vacancy rate). Generally, retail space for lease and sale in the City of Niagara Falls is older in age and lower in quality, meaning newer, updated space is needed.

DRI AREA RETAIL TRADE GAP

A retail gap analysis was conducted to identify retail market opportunities in the DRI area. This gap analysis is measured by estimating sales surplus and sales leakages, which indicate whether an area has unmet demand for a particular service. Retail sectors that show leakage represent opportunities for new or expanding businesses. According to this analysis, there is enough unmet demand to support an additional 5,632 square feet of retail space in the DRI area. Pairing retail with other smaller footprint uses will allow the DRI area to capitalize on this unmet demand. The types of retail stores with the greatest potential for success in the DRI area include:

- Department Stores
- Clothing Stores
- Building Materials and Supplies
- Electronics and Appliance Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Restaurants and Eating Establishments

RETAIL WITHIN THE DRI AREA

Today’s retail stores, depending on the type of business, perform better with a more compact space (typically 600-900 square feet), due to their affordability for start-up businesses. Main Street, in the DRI area, is lined with architecturally interesting buildings that provide a strong sense of place for enhanced walkability. Some of the existing buildings are in need of repair; however, they provide a strong foundation for redevelopment due to their smaller footprint. These buildings provide an opportunity to tap into the small-scale niche markets that are in more demand across the US and provide space for potential unique clothing, food, and general merchandise stores in the DRI area.

TOP SUPPORTABLE RETAIL CATEGORIES IN THE DRI AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Category</th>
<th>Retail Gap</th>
<th>Supportable SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Stores</td>
<td>$2,205,268</td>
<td>1,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Stores</td>
<td>$1,711,739</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bldg Material &amp; Supplies Dealers</td>
<td>$1,452,898</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</td>
<td>$1,089,216</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>$739,209</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants &amp; Eating Places</td>
<td>$591,521</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$7,789,851</td>
<td>3,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Additional retail categories are not shown in this chart.
OFFICE MARKET

The existing and projected office market demand in the City of Niagara Falls and DRI area was explored to determine specific opportunities for development.

OFFICE DEMAND

Future demand for office space can be determined by analyzing projections of employment growth in office-utilizing industries. The majority of office-utilizing industries in Niagara Falls are projected to decline into 2029, resulting in a net decline in office-utilizing industries of 343 jobs or 4.4%. Niagara County is projected to gain 225 additional office workers for a 0.9% growth by 2029. Overall, there is limited office space currently in the DRI area; however, downtown office space is becoming more popular throughout the country and can be leveraged for the DRI area.

MEDICAL OFFICE SPACE

Nationally, the aging population and increasing number of people that are insured are driving an increase in health care demand. In response, the health care industry continues to grow and medical office building (MOB) vacancy rates have fallen. Medical office buildings are trending towards flexible space (flex space) and multi-specialty offices. This allows for the incorporation of a range of medical technology and equipment used in procedures and appointments. Additionally, the amount of technological equipment being used in procedures and appointments has been increasing, further adding to the demand for efficient space. Flex space allows for adaptability as technology changes or the needs of patients change. For both the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County, the ambulatory care sector is projected to grow. By 2029, Niagara Falls can expect to add 122 new medical office jobs contributing to a medical office space demand of over 30,000 rentable square feet (RSF) within the City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDICAL OFFICE SPACE DEMAND, 2019 - 2029</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY TAKEAWAY

PROJECTED POPULATION RATES SUGGEST AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF OLDER RESIDENTS LIVING IN THE DRI AREA. THIS PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP NEW MEDICAL OFFICE SPACE IN THE DRI AREA TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THESE RESIDENTS.
Tourism is a critical part of the City’s success, due to its local and natural assets. This section provides an overview of tourism market opportunities specific to the DRI area.

In 2017, approximately 7.6 million visitors from around the globe visited the international tourist destination of Niagara Falls. Highlights of the tourism market of Niagara Falls includes:

- The peak visitation period for Niagara Falls is July through September where 34% of all overnight trips occur.
- Lodging was the number one visitor spending category accounting for 33% of total visitor spending at $231 million.
- Approximately 46% of visitors spent the night generating $694 million in spending.
- Restaurant, Food, and Beverage was the second leading spending category with approximately $142 million in spending or 21% of visitor total expenditure.
- Niagara County tourism has grown significantly from 2016 to 2018, with an increase of 15.6% in spending.
- Niagara Falls and Niagara County area projected to experience a growth in the tourism industry.
- The Traveler Accommodation sub-sector is projected to experience major growth, adding 310 jobs in the City of Niagara Falls by 2029.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

**TOURISM IS THE CITY’S KEY ECONOMIC DRIVER AND IS SHOWN TO BE A GROWING SECTOR. THE DRI AREA SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS THAT COME TO THIS AREA ANNUALLY.**

**NIAGARA FALLS VISITOR SPENDING**

SOURCE: NIAGARA FALLS 2017 VISITOR REPORT

- 21% FOOD & BEVERAGE
- 33% LODGING
- 18% RETAIL
- 17% RECREATION
- 11% TRANSPORTATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DRI AREA

The following targeted strategies to capitalize on the existing tourism market within the City of Niagara Falls area presented.

- **Branding and Marketing** | There are multiple entities within the City of Niagara Falls that promote the City and its assets to attract visitors from all over the world. Destination Niagara USA takes the lead on marketing efforts with the promotion of local attractions and things to do in the area through a web interface and dedicated travel guide. Marketing is also promoted through social media outlets and the City webpage. Marketing should not only focus on the attraction aspect of Niagara Falls, but also promote the area for a great place for business development. Marketing collateral for the City and DRI area could focus on the proximity of the DRI area to major metropolitan areas, easy access to intermodal transportation, and highlight specific sites ripe for redevelopment.
Wayfinding and Placemaking | A visitor’s experience can greatly depend on their ability to easily navigate to and between destinations. Connecting different visitor experiences through signage, public art, lights or other means is crucial to telling the City of Niagara Falls’ story and highlight its assets. Signage should be accommodated for multiple modes of transportation, including: pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists. Other forms of story telling can include sculptures, public art installations and murals. Historic art displays throughout the DRI area will aid in bringing awareness of the Underground Railroad history of the City of Niagara Falls to light and celebrate this area’s pivotal role during this period of American history.

TOURISM PLACEMAKING

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA) is one of 55 designated National Heritage Areas in the United States. In an effort to tell the story of the Underground Railroad and those involved, the NFNHA has begun an initiative to foster pride in the area and celebrate local history throughout the City through the implementation of murals and public art near the International Train Station. Murals depicting historical figures involved during this movement are portrayed using vibrant colors and artistic creativeness. This type of public art has shown to benefit communities and engage local residents to increase community pride and quality of life.
CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

This section provides an overview of the key challenges and opportunities in the DRI area based on the analysis presented in the Downtown Profile. These challenges and opportunities lay the foundation for identifying DRI projects that have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life and catalyze new development in the DRI area.
## CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DRI AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aging and declining population</td>
<td>Diversification of housing options and amenities within the DRI area will attract new, diverse residents to the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging building stock with a number of vacancies and underutilization</td>
<td>Existing building stock is compact, which lays the foundation for a walkable and connected downtown area. There is an opportunity to adaptively reuse buildings and infill vacant sites to create expanded business and employment opportunities within the DRI area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low median household income and limited employment opportunities</td>
<td>Significant major employers and institutions, such as Niagara University, located within or proximate to the DRI area. These institutions should be leveraged to increase workforce and career development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High concentration of rental households and vacant units</td>
<td>Available space and unmet demand for retail and housing investments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low tourism rates within the DRI area</td>
<td>Leverage regional tourism market with significant historic and natural assets to expand tourism options within the DRI area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdeveloped access to parks and open space in the DRI area</td>
<td>Increased connectivity through public realm enhancements and accessible park space to create a pedestrian-friendly environment for residents and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilapidated street infrastructure and lack of ADA-accessible connections throughout the DRI area</td>
<td>Opportunity to invest in public realm and streetscape infrastructure to create a safe, accessible and connected neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diverse retail options in the DRI area</td>
<td>Retail gap analysis reveals an opportunity for an additional 5,600 SF of retail space within the DRI area for smaller-scale storefronts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office demand in the DRI area and Niagara Falls is low</td>
<td>The age characteristics of residents and proximity to major institutions creates an opportunity for medical office space in the DRI area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION
COMMUNITY
VISION, GOALS +
STRATEGIES
COMMUNITY VISION

Throughout the DRI planning process, the project team engaged in several visioning activities with the LPC and public to define a future vision for the Bridge District. This vision and encompassing goals and strategies are intended to provide the framework for the Bridge District Strategic Investment Plan.
The Bridge District is an active and vibrant neighborhood with a walkable public realm. Main Street serves as a retail, entertainment, and mixed-use hub comprised of diverse incomes and occupations. The District supports growing businesses that serve local residents and leverage the area’s proximity to Toronto and Buffalo. Its access to natural, recreational, cultural and educational resources offers a welcoming neighborhood for both residents and visitors that celebrates the area’s uniqueness.
Specific goals and strategies were developed to ensure the fulfilment of the established community vision. The goals represent big picture objectives of the Bridge District while the strategies are intended to provide specific methods of achieving the goals. Projects recommended for DRI funding are anticipated to fulfill these goals to work toward the desired Bridge District vision for the future.
GOALS

1. STRENGTHEN THE BRIDGE DISTRICT’S PUBLIC REALM
   1. Improve the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements
   2. Incorporate a variety of public art installations throughout the Bridge District
   3. Enhance the signage and wayfinding system to improve the user experience
   4. Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events
   5. Create clear linkages between the State Park and the Main Street Business District

2. ACTIVATE VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED BUILDINGS
   1. Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors
   2. Support complementary infill development that contributes to the District’s character
   3. Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment
   4. Create a funding assistance program to aid property owners with small-scale improvement and maintenance projects
PROMOTE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BRIDGE DISTRICT

1. Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities
2. Improve access to local and natural assets
3. Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System

RETAINT AND ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS TO THE BRIDGE DISTRICT

1. Promote a mix of high-quality affordable and market rate housing within the Bridge District to fill existing gaps in the marketplace
2. Encourage the renovation of upper stories to residential use
3. Support the availability of professional resources and neighborhood amenities to ensure a high quality of life for existing and new residents
4. Enhance digital connectivity to increase access to high speed internet and new technology platforms
GOALS

5. CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE FOR THE BRIDGE DISTRICT

STRATEGIES

1. Support existing businesses within the Bridge District to ensure their long-term sustainability
2. Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies
3. Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District
4. Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities
5. Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities
SECTION III
DOWNTOWN
MANAGEMENT +
IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGY
OVERVIEW

Recommended DRI projects are only as good as the project sponsor’s capacity to implement improvement projects. Successful projects are those that are implemented within a concise timeframe and will have a significant impact on the DRI area. Collaboration and coordination between local municipal entities, private entities, and supporting organizations will ensure the successful facilitation of project implementation in the Bridge District.
PUBLIC PROJECTS

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS
The City of Niagara Falls will be the local entity responsible for the coordination, management and execution of nine publicly-sponsored projects proposed for DRI funding. The Mayor of the City of Niagara Falls was closely involved in the development of proposed projects and is committed to ensuring their implementation. The City of Niagara Falls is also comprised of a number of departments and individuals who have expertise and experience in the management of projects similar in scope, including streetscape improvements, site preparation, and signage installation and local grant programs.

The City’s Acting Director of the Department of Planning and Economic Development led the development of the City’s DRI application and has been an active member of the DRI process. The Director and staff will work closely with the Mayor, Common Council and other City departments to manage the implementation of all proposed projects.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
One branding and marketing project is proposed for DRI funding by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA), a non-profit organization in the City. The NFNHA and City have an on-going working relationship and will coordinate and manage project implementation collaboratively.
PRIVATE PROJECTS

Projects that involve new development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of buildings within the Bridge District will be managed and coordinated by the private project sponsor. Many of the project sponsors for these projects are individuals or organizations with documented experience and capacity to implement the projects successfully. State agencies, such as Empire State Development, Department of State, and the Department of Homes and Community Renewal, will contract with these project sponsors.

All private development projects will be required to meet local regulations and obtain local and state permits and approvals. The City of Niagara Falls is willing and able to provide support to assist with project implementation where necessary.
The timeline for each recommended project in this Strategic Investment plan vary; however, all recommended projects are ready to begin implementation within four months of DRI award announcement. Projects are listed in descending order based on DRI request amount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>PROJECT SPONSOR</th>
<th>SPONSOR TYPE</th>
<th>PROJECT PARTNERS</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement Streetscape Enhancements on Main Street</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NYSDOT</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Neighborhood Connections to Whirlpool Street and State Park Trail System</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NYSDOT</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the Implementation of the Freedom Plaza and Overlook</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NYSDOT</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish an Academic Innovation Hub</td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement Streetscape Improvements on Neighborhood Side Streets</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Summer 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transform 1810 + 1812 Main Street into a Boutique Hotel</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Studio</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch a Public Art and Placemaking Initiative</td>
<td>Niagara Falls National Heritage Area</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Private property owners, City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a Small Project Grant Fund</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovate 2025 Main Street into a Mixed-Use Development</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital Studio</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautify the South Train Station Site</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NYSDOT</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Leasable Commercial Space in the Niagara Falls Train Station</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redevelop 2002 Main Street into Retail and Office Space</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Studio</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Public Plaza on Main Street at Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an Outdoor Eating Space and Museum at DiCamillo Bakery</td>
<td>DiCamillo Bakery</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the Historic Rapids Theatre</td>
<td>John Hutchins</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the Entryway to the Heart, Love &amp; Soul Organization</td>
<td>Heart, Love &amp; Soul</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a Signage and Wayfinding System</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION IV
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
OVERVIEW

Community engagement was a critical component of the overall DRI planning process. The project team engaged key stakeholders and met with various groups throughout the community to obtain a comprehensive view of desired improvements in the Bridge District. The project team utilized interactive and creative methods of engagement including:

- Local Planning Committee Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Student Engagement Sessions
- Stakeholder Meetings/Project Sponsor Coordination
- Project-Specific Webpage
At the beginning of the DRI planning process, a Local Planning Committee (LPC) was created. This LPC was comprised of local and regional leaders, non-profit organization representatives and key stakeholders within the Bridge District neighborhood. The purpose of the LPC was to guide the consultant team and provide feedback on proposed projects, which ultimately lead to the development of the Strategic Investment Plan.
LPC MEETINGS

The LPC meet seven times throughout the DRI process. A summary of each meeting is provided.

MEETING #1 | OCTOBER 22, 2019
This meeting provided an overview of the purpose the DRI, roles and responsibilities of various parties, and outlined the scope of work and anticipated timeline for the project. At this meeting the LPC participated in a visioning exercise that identified member’s perceptions regarding strengths and weaknesses of the Bridge District as well as future improvements for the area.

MEETING #2 | NOVEMBER 14, 2019
At this meeting, the LPC reviewed key findings from the Downtown Profile and Market Analysis, and discussed the project evaluation criteria to be utilized in this process. The Open Call for Project Proposals was also released to solicit potential project from business and property owners within the District.

LPC’S VISION FOR THE BRIDGE DISTRICT
At the first LPC meeting, members were asked a series of questions related to the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the Bridge District. The most common answers are noted below.

**ASSETS**
- Location
- Buildings
- People
- Bi-National

**CHALLENGES**
- Blight
- Attitude/Perception
- Disinvestment
- Financing

**FUTURE**
- Vibrant
- Change
- Robust
- Diverse

**SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS**
- Restaurants
- Housing
- Streetscape Improvements
- Family Friendly Activities

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING #3 | DECEMBER 10, 2019
At this meeting, the LPC discussed the results from the public engagement session that was held in November. The LPC reviewed the draft vision, goals and strategies for the DRI area and provided insights for potential changes and revisions. The LPC also reviewed proposed projects for consideration, including those submitted through the Open Call for Project Proposals, and provided feedback on projects that should be further developed or removed from consideration based on the established project evaluation criteria.

MEETING #4 | JANUARY 14, 2020
At this meeting, the LPC confirmed the vision, goals and strategies for the Bridge District. Following a review of proposed projects, the LPC engaged in an interactive activity using $10 million each to select their highly supported projects. This allowed the LPC to understand which projects had high support and those that had low support by committee members.

MEETING #5 | JANUARY 21, 2020
The LPC scheduled an additional meeting to review the results from the interactive activity and refine the list of recommended projects for DRI funding. The LPC discussed each of the projects in detail and categorized each project by the following:

- **Recommended Projects** - projects the LPC recommends for DRI funding
- **“Not a Good Fit for DRI” Projects** - projects that are important to the area’s revitalization but may be better suited for other funding sources
- **“Maybe” Projects** - projects that require additional information or need to be further refined

$10 MILLION EXERCISE
On January 14, 2020 the LPC participated in an exercise to spend $10 million on the proposed DRI projects. The following projects were highly supported by the LPC.

- Public Art and Placemaking Initiative
- Small Project Grant Fund
- Academic Innovation Hub
- 2025 Main Street ($500,000)
- Leasable Space at the Train Station
- 2002 Main Street ($400,000)
- DiCamillo Bakery Expansion
- Rapids Theatre Upgrades
- Heart, Love and Soul Improvements
- Signage and Wayfinding
MEETING #6 | FEBRUARY 11, 2020
This meeting was held to provide an overview of the public engagement that occurred in early January and review project changes since the last LPC meeting. At this meeting, the LPC discussed the projects in detail and arrived at a recommended list of projects to include in the Strategic Investment Plan.

MEETING #7 | MARCH 10, 2020
This meeting was held to review project changes and confirm the LPC’s final project recommendation list for DRI funding. At this meeting, the LPC came to a consensus on 17 projects to be included in the final recommendation list as part of the Strategic Investment Plan. The final project list contained a total of $15.3 million in requested DRI funds.

LPC BRIEFING | AUGUST 6, 2020
In late March 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo enacted New York State PAUSE orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These orders also applied to the DRI Program, forcing a pause in the planning process until August 2020. On August 6th, 2020 a virtual LPC briefing was held to provide an update to committee members regarding the status of proposed projects and the remaining DRI program timeline. The project team indicated that they met with all project sponsors included in the original list of recommended projects and that all projects were positioned to be implemented if DRI funding was awarded.
Public engagement occurred throughout the DRI process and provide insights to the project team on which types of revitalization projects were most important to the community and its constituents. Three public workshops were held over the course of the DRI planning process to solicit input from the community.
WORKSHOP #1 | NOVEMBER 14, 2019
The public was invited to this workshop to learn about the DRI and provide their input on projects they believed were necessary for Bridge District revitalization. Participants were asked to write their thoughts on large post-it notes and discuss future improvements as a group.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

DESIRED REVITALIZATION PROJECTS
During the public workshop, participants were asked to identify one project they believed would have the greatest impact in the Bridge District. Below is a list of the key ideas generated:

- Community Center
- Department Store
- Grocery Store
- Retail Options
- Entertainment
- Enhanced Landscaping
WORKSHOP #2 | FEBRUARY 4, 2020
This workshop provided an overview of the identified strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified in the Downtown Profile and Market Analysis. The public was also introduced to the proposed DRI projects and participated in an exercise to “vote” for their preferred projects.

WORKSHOP #3 | MARCH 10, 2020
The final public workshop was held on March 10th directly following the final LPC meeting. At this meeting, the public was invited to learn about the 17 projects recommended for DRI funding by the LPC.

HIGHLY SUPPORTED DRI PROJECTS

- DiCamillo Bakery Expansion
- Small Project Grant Fund
- 2025 Main Street
- 2002 Main Street
- Rapids Theatre Upgrades
- Academic Innovation Hub
The project team conducted stakeholder meetings throughout the DRI process to obtain necessary information from individual stakeholders, project sponsors and interested organizations. Meetings also occurred with local, regional and state agencies to understand on-going projects and further develop proposed DRI projects.
In addition to the engagement described, the project team utilized creative strategies to connect with interested community members. These engagement methods allowed the project team to reach a wider audience than those who were able to participate in the regularly scheduled meetings.

**NIAGARA FALLS DRI WEBPAGE**

A project-specific webpage was created for the DRI planning process. This webpage provided 24/7 access to community members to stay up to date on meeting presentations and deliverables. It included a comment page where webpage visitors could post questions or comments to the project team. This page was also utilized to provide information regarding upcoming meeting and engagement sessions.
OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS
An Open Call for Project Proposals was solicited through the Niagara Falls DRI process. Neighborhood residents, property owners, and business owners were encouraged to submit proposals to be considered by the LPC for DRI funding. A total of 10 proposals were received and reviewed by the LPC.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Niagara University is a major anchor institution in the Bridge District. Many attending students spend time or live in the Bridge District area. Due to their substantial presence in the neighborhood, the project team held two engagement sessions with Niagara University students to discuss the DRI process and understand their desires regarding future revitalization. Approximately 50 students participated and provided feedback on the types of private and public investment they believed would benefit the Bridge District.

The students participated in the $10 million exercise that was also conducted with the LPC and public. Students expressed their support for public infrastructure improvements, such as streetscape enhancements and public art installations throughout the neighborhood to enhance the sense of place. They also indicated that if additional affordable apartments and retail stores were available in the District, they would spend additional time and money in the area.
SECTION IV
PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR DRI FUNDING
A total of 17 projects were identified by the Local Planning Committee for inclusion in the Strategic Investment Plan. Recommended projects are intended to catalyze economic development and increase the quality of life for residents in the Bridge District. All identified projects are aligned to the established DRI vision and are anticipated to fulfill the defined goals and strategies.

**PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- **Transformational Impact**, projects that can significantly change the District
- **Catalytic Impact**, projects with the ability to spur additional investment
- **Consistency**, alignment with the local vision and goals
- **Feasibility**, reasonable project costs and the ability of the project sponsor to implement
- **Market Potential**, demand to fill existing gaps
- **Community Support**, local and regional endorsement
- **Local Impact**, direct or indirect impact on tax revenues and jobs

**IMPACTS ON COVID-19 RECOVERY**

Projects were also evaluated based on their ability to mitigate economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. A description of how projects may help to facilitate COVID-19 economic recovery is included in applicable project profiles.
# SUMMARY TABLE OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NUMBER</th>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>TOTAL PROJECT COST</th>
<th>DRI FUNDING REQUEST</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implement Streetscape Enhancements on Main Street</td>
<td>$4,230,000</td>
<td>$3,720,000</td>
<td>V-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improve Neighborhood Connections to Whirlpool Street and State Park Trail System</td>
<td>$3,530,000</td>
<td>$3,145,000</td>
<td>V-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Complete the Implementation of the Freedom Plaza and Overlook</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>V-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish an Academic Innovation Hub</td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>V-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Implement Streetscape Improvements on Neighborhood Side Streets</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>$990,000</td>
<td>V-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Transform 1810 + 1812 Main Street into a Boutique Hotel</td>
<td>$2,309,000</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>V-44</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Launch a Public Art and Placemaking Initiative</td>
<td>$768,317</td>
<td>$615,000</td>
<td>V-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Implement a Small Project Grant Fund</td>
<td>$1,200,000</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>V-61</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Renovate 2025 Main Street into a Mixed-Use Development</td>
<td>$2,047,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>V-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Prepare the South Train Station Site for Investment</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>V-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Create Leasable Commercial Space in the Niagara Falls Train Station</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>V-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Redevelop 2002 Main Street into Retail and Office Space</td>
<td>$1,414,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>V-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Create a Public Plaza on Main Street at Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>$325,000</td>
<td>$295,000</td>
<td>V-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Create an Outdoor Eating Space and Museum at DiCamillo Bakery</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>V-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Enhance the Historic Rapids Theatre</td>
<td>$390,000</td>
<td>$235,000</td>
<td>V-110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Strengthen the Entryway to the Heart, Love &amp; Soul Organization</td>
<td>$292,800</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
<td>V-117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Implement a Signage and Wayfinding System</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
<td>V-124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$23,406,117</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,305,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

1. Main Street Streetscape Enhancements
2. Whirlpool Street Connectivity Enhancements
3. Freedom Plaza and Overlook
4. Academic Innovation Hub
5. Neighborhood Streetscape Enhancements
6. 1810 + 1812 Main Street
7. Public Art + Placemaking Initiative
8. Small Project Grant Fund (not mapped)
9. 2025 Main Street
10. South Train Station Site Improvements
11. Train Station Leasable Space
12. 2002 Main Street
13. Main / Cleveland Public Plaza
14. Dicamillo Bakery Expansion
15. Rapids Theatre Upgrades
16. Heart, Love + Soul Building / Site Improvements
17. Signage + Wayfinding (not mapped)

PROJECT TYPE + SYMBOLOGY

- Public Improvement Projects
- New Development + Redevelopment
- Branding + Marketing
- Revolving Loan + Grant Funds

Public Art + Placemaking Initiative - Project Locations

DRI Area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY</th>
<th>TOTAL PROJECT COST</th>
<th>DRI FUNDING REQUEST</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCES</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
<th>JOBS CREATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implement Streetscape Enhancements on Main Street</td>
<td>Sidewalk improvements, enhanced intersection improvements, installation of street</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$4,230,000</td>
<td>$3,720,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improve Neighborhood Connections to Whirlpool Street and State Park Trail System</td>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction, repaving, and street tree planting on five side streets and two intersection improvements on Whirlpool Street.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$3,530,000</td>
<td>$3,145,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Complete Implementation of the Freedom Plaza and Overlook</td>
<td>Construct a plaza space and elevated overlook to create a public gathering space for community use.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish an Academic Innovation Hub</td>
<td>Development of an academic and community space for Niagara University’s use.</td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>Private equity</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Implement Streetscape Improvements on Neighborhood Side Streets</td>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and street tree planting from Main Street to 10th Street on side streets to improve walkability.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>$990,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Summer 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Transform 1810 + 1812 Main Street into a Boutique Hotel</td>
<td>Renovation of two vacant buildings on Main Street into a mixed-use development with a boutique hotel and retail space.</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>$2,309,000</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>Private equity; historic tax credits</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Launch a Public Art and Placemaking Initiative</td>
<td>Public art mural installations at seven locations throughout the Bridge District.</td>
<td>Niagara Falls National Heritage Area</td>
<td>$768,317</td>
<td>$615,000</td>
<td>Grant funding</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Implement a Small Project Grant Fund</td>
<td>Implementation of a capital improvement program for small-scale building improvements throughout the DRI area.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$1,200,000</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2026</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Renovate 2025 Main Street into a Mixed-Use Development</td>
<td>Building rehabilitation to enhance the retail space on the first floor and create residential apartments on the upper stories.</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>$2,047,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>Private equity; historic tax credits</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>PROJECT NAME</td>
<td>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY</td>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td>DRI FUNDING REQUEST</td>
<td>FUNDING SOURCES</td>
<td>START DATE</td>
<td>END DATE</td>
<td>JOBS CREATED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Beautify the South Train Station Site</td>
<td>Position the site for future development, including minor wall and railing repairs and replacement of street trees.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Create Leasable Commercial Space in the Niagara Falls Train Station</td>
<td>Develop 4,500 SF leasable space in the International Train Station for commercial use, including HVAC, upgraded lighting and a smoke evacuation system.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Redevelop 2002 Main Street into Retail and Office Space</td>
<td>Renovate 2002 Main Street into a 6,700 SF mixed-use building with retail, community service, and office space.</td>
<td>Blue Cardinal Capital</td>
<td>$1,414,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>Private equity; historic tax credits</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Create a Public Plaza on Main Street at Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>Create a plaza and event space, inclusive of public art, special paving, and landscaping in front of the Public Safety Building.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$325,000</td>
<td>$295,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Create an Outdoor Eating Space and Museum at DiCamillo Bakery</td>
<td>Creation of a small museum/gallery space, an outdoor dining area, sidewalk and landscaping improvements at DiCamillo Bakery. Includes purchase of state of the art equipment to expand production.</td>
<td>DiCamillo Bakery</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Private equity</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Winter 2022</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Enhance the Historic Rapids Theatre</td>
<td>Implement improvements to the Rapids Theatre to enhance building visibility and enhance tourism.</td>
<td>John Hutchins</td>
<td>$390,000</td>
<td>$235,000</td>
<td>Private equity</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Strengthen the Entryway to the Heart, Love &amp; Soul Organization</td>
<td>Construction of a new 300 SF front entrance on the existing building and site improvements to enhance building functionality.</td>
<td>Heart, Love &amp; Soul</td>
<td>$292,800</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
<td>Grant funds</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Implement a Signage and Wayfinding System</td>
<td>Installation of wayfinding signage to identify and direct users to the key destinations throughout the Bridge District.</td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
<td>City Bond</td>
<td>Winter 2021</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PROJECT 1**
**IMPLEMENT STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS ON MAIN STREET**

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total DRI Funds</td>
<td>$3,720,000 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>$4,230,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Main Street Corridor is the primary roadway that traverses the entire Bridge District and is the first impression of the neighborhood for residents and visitors. Improvements are necessary to enhance the public realm and create an attractive, welcoming sense of place between Main Street and surrounding neighborhoods and destinations. Proposed improvements are intended to create a safe, walkable and connected environment for all modes of transportation, with an emphasis on improving pedestrian linkages.

Specific improvements along Main Street from Chasm Avenue to Pierce Avenue include:

- Sidewalk reconstruction on both sides of the street;
- Enhancement of pedestrian crossings with ADA-accessible curb ramps and highly visible crosswalks at all intersection corners;
- Installation of street trees and pedestrian amenities, including benches, bicycle racks, and trash receptacles;
- Replacement of existing light poles and conversion to LED lighting.

The proposed improvements are critical for the revitalization of the Main Street Business District to reverse the current deteriorating conditions of the neighborhood and provide the foundation for future investment. The creation of a beautified, walkable and connected district is anticipated to draw additional visitors, residents and businesses to the DRI area. Additionally, targeted investments in public realm improvements, such as streetscape projects, are anticipated to help foster a sense of place in the DRI area that will ultimately create a solid foundation for small business growth and job creation in Niagara Falls. If selected for DRI funding, this project will enhance the corridor’s infrastructure and will be the first step in assisting with the local economy’s revitalization and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**

The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor for the implementation of streetscape improvements. The New York State Department of Transportation is the property owner of Main Street.

**CAPACITY**

The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed streetscape improvements. The City has demonstrated successful implementation of several past streetscape projects. Since 2007, the City of Niagara Falls has received and successfully managed 63 grants totalling over $17,000,000. The City will engage with the NYS Department of Transportation to implement the proposed improvements. The City has a working relationship with the agency on numerous public streetscape projects.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor)
- New York State Department of Transportation (property owner)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Strengthen the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements.** The proposed project involves the implementation of streetscape enhancement along Main Street in the Bridge District to enhance the public realm and create walkable connections throughout the neighborhood.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The proposed project will encourage pedestrian travel by providing a safe and attractive streetscape in the Bridge District that will encourage walkability for residents and visitors.

- **Create clear linkages between the State Park and the Main Street Business District.** Creating walkable connections on Main Street will encourage pedestrian activity within the Bridge District and to the new State Park and trail system.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** Public investment in public infrastructure, such as streetscape improvements, has been shown to enhance the surrounding business community and attract additional residents.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** Streetscape improvements on Main Street will enhance public accessibility throughout the Bridge District and to local destinations, such as the International Train Station and Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** A high-quality public realm will help leverage private investment in the community.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements night life and after hour activities.** Walkability and comfort of the streetscapes is necessary to provide an atmosphere that welcomes people at all times of the day and night.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The proposed project will invest in a previously developed area and attract additional investment to the area.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** Established connections and public accessibility through infrastructure improvements are anticipated to enhance tourism, enhance resident quality of life and spur development in the business community.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Improve walkability, safety and aesthetics within the neighborhood
- Increase access to local and natural assets
- Enhance the public realm and neighborhood sense of place

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Create clear and walkable connections throughout the District
- Leverage and augment private investment
- Increase residents and employees in the Bridge District

**Long-term benefits:**

- Positively impact neighborhood property values

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The proposed project was well supported by the LPC and public throughout the DRI planning process. Streetscape enhancements were explicitly stated in the City’s DRI application as a necessary improvement to the Bridge District.

JOBS CREATED

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements</td>
<td>$1,684,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$3,720,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$510,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>installation of street trees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and pedestrian amenities</td>
<td>$1,314,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Improvements</td>
<td>$331,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace and convert light</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poles to LED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersection Improvements</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced crosswalks and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amenities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$1,314,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED   $3,720,000
TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES $510,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST          $4,230,000

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate was prepared by a licensed landscape architect and transportation engineer and is based on standard construction estimating methods. The cost of the improvements is based on comparable streetscape improvement costs in New York State and the Western New York region.

The proposed project is justified due to its potential to create improved walkability, safety and aesthetics in the Main Street Business District that are anticipated to leverage additional private investment and consumer visitation and spending in the Bridge District. The improvements are anticipated to increase quality of life for existing residents and draw additional residents to the Bridge District. Additionally, the project in combination with other DRI proposed projects including Whirlpool Street Connectivity Improvements on the west side of Main Street, Neighborhood Streetscape Enhancements on the east side of Main Street and the Main Street / Cleveland Avenue Public Plaza will dramatically change the public realm and sense of place within the Bridge District.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require permits for construction by the City of Niagara Falls and the New York State Department of Transportation.
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
All concept design and cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeline for implementation is approximately 24 months and can commence immediately upon DRI award announcement.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   • Execute contract for design services

2. Design Phase (6 months) - Spring 2022
   • Develop construction documents and specifications
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   • Issue bid documents
   • Award bid to contractor

3. Construction Phase (12-16 months) - Winter 2023
   • Sidewalk reconstruction
   • Installation of crosswalks, curbs, sidewalks, street trees and street furniture
   • Replacement of light poles and conversion to LED

PROJECT REPORTING
The City of Niagara Falls will hire a project engineer to oversee the implementation and construction of all improvements. The City will continue to monitor the economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after construction completion.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

• Increased pedestrian activity
• Reduced number of traffic incidents, including vehicle and pedestrian incidents
• Increased number of residents
• Increased private investment in the surrounding area
• User feedback
IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS TO WHIRLPOOL STREET AND STATE PARK TRAIL SYSTEM

PROJECT 2

DRI FUNDING REQUEST

Total DRI Funds: $3,145,000 (89%)
Total Project Cost: $3,530,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Robert Moses Parkway traverses the DRI area and has historically cut off the Bridge District neighborhood from the Niagara River. Construction is currently underway to remove the Parkway and create a trail network and park system that reconnects the neighborhood to the area’s natural features. While this is a major improvement for the City of Niagara Falls, the existing conditions of the neighborhood street infrastructure in the DRI area is deteriorated and in need of upgrades. The proposed project involves streetscape improvements along neighborhood side streets from Whirlpool Street to Main Street to enhance connections to the new State Park area. Streets included in the project include Ontario Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Lincoln Place, Division Avenue, Linwood Avenue and Willow Avenue.

Specific proposed improvements include:

- Milling and repaving of the roadway
- Installation of new curbing, sidewalks, street trees and street furniture
- Crosswalk improvements at Cleveland Avenue and Division Avenue and Whirlpool Street
- Replacement of existing light poles and conversion to LED

These connections will create a more walkable neighborhood and improve the resident quality of life by providing access to natural and recreational resources in the Bridge District. The proposed sidewalk enhancements along residential streets in the DRI area will also provide safe access to the State Park and facilitate outdoor passive and recreation opportunities for all.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**
The City of Niagara Falls is the property owner/sponsor for the implementation of streetscape improvements on proposed neighborhood side streets.

**CAPACITY**
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed streetscape improvements. The City has demonstrated successful implementation of several past streetscape projects.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor)
- New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The proposed project will encourage pedestrian travel by providing safe and attractive streetscapes between the Main Street corridor and the new State Park.

- **Improve the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements.** The proposed streetscape enhancements will reshape the character of the Bridge District and create a sense of place in the Bridge District.

- **Create clear linkages between the State Park and the Main Street Business District.** Utilizing these neighborhood streets as walkable connections between Main Street and the new State Park creates a cohesive natural and cultural destination for residents and visitors.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** Clear connections between Main Street and the State Park will help facilitate private investment in the surrounding area.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The improvements in the proposed project will provide better access to commercial and cultural destinations and recreational tourism attractions.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** The proposed project will provide direct enhanced connections to local destinations that will encourage walkability in the Bridge District.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** A high-quality public realm will help to leverage private investment in the community.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements night life and after hour activities.** Enhancing the pedestrian experience is necessary to providing an atmosphere that welcomes people to the District day and night.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The proposed project helps to create a walkable neighborhood and leverage additional investment in the Bridge District.
• **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The connections in the proposed project capitalize on the extraordinary potential that waterfront access brings to the Bridge District.

• **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** The project links recreational tourism destinations to the Main Street entertainment and business district, which creates a more robust tourism destination for visitors in the City of Niagara Falls.

**ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS**

**Short-term benefits:**

- Improve walkability, safety and aesthetics within the neighborhood
- Increase access to local and natural assets
- Enhance the public realm and neighborhood sense of place

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Create clear connections from the Main Street corridor to the new State Park
- A visible public investment that leverages private investment

**Long-term benefits:**

- Create an active and healthy residential community
- Enhanced destination for residents, visitors, businesses and investors
- Positively impact neighborhood property values

**PUBLIC SUPPORT**

The proposed project was well supported by the LPC and public throughout the DRI planning process. The proposed project also relates to several key City planning initiatives including the Main Street Business District Revitalization Study and the Comprehensive Plan including goals related to restoring a “sense of place,” reconnecting Main Street to the Niagara River Gorge, improving the pedestrian’s experience, enhancing area aesthetics, and encouraging private sector investment.

**JOBS CREATED**

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.
## PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Ontario Street</td>
<td>$101,710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>$618,520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, enhanced intersection connection, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Lincoln Place</td>
<td>$316,186</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Division Avenue</td>
<td>$656,487</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$3,145,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, enhanced intersection connection, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Linwood Avenue</td>
<td>$432,641</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Willow Street</td>
<td>$571,489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mill and repave street, sidewalk reconstruction, install new curbs, install street trees and structural soils, and replace/convert light poles to LED.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$832,967</td>
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<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,145,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$385,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,530,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate was prepared by a licensed landscape architect and is based on standard construction estimating methods. The cost of the improvements is based on comparable streetscape improvement costs in New York State and the Western New York region.

The proposed project is justified due to its potential to leverage and build on the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway and development of the New State Park, reconnecting Main Street to the City’s renowned waterfront. The enhanced connections will create improved neighborhood walkability, safety and aesthetics that are anticipated to leverage additional private investment and consumer visitation and spending in the Bridge District. The improvements are intended to increase quality of life for existing residents and draw additional residents to the Bridge District.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require permits for construction from the City of Niagara Falls.
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS

All concept design and cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeline for implementation is approximately 24 months and can commence immediately upon DRI award announcement.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - Execute contract for design services

2. **Design Phase (6 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (12-16 months) - Winter 2023**
   - Roadway milling and repaving
   - Installation of curbs, sidewalks, street trees and street furniture
   - Replacement of light poles and conversion to LED
   - Complete intersection improvements

PROJECT REPORTING

The City of Niagara Falls will hire a project engineer to oversee the implementation and construction of all improvements. The City will continue to monitor the economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after construction completion.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Increased pedestrian activity
- Reduced number of traffic incidents, including vehicle and pedestrian incidents
- Increased number of residents
- Increased private investment in the surrounding area
- User feedback
PROJECT 3
COMPLETE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREEDOM PLAZA AND OVERLOOK

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $1,500,000 (100%)
Total Project Cost $1,500,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Robert Moses Parkway, which traverses the DRI area, is currently being removed as a vehicular transportation corridor to create a trail network and park system along the Niagara River. As part of this effort, New York State and the City envisioned the completion of the Freedom Plaza and Overlook that was intended to connect residents and visitors to the waterfront and create a unique public gathering space that leverages scenic views of the river corridor.

The full vision for the Freedom Plaza and Overlook was not able to be completed due to financial constraints. An 18-space parking area and enhanced greenspace/trail are moving forward as part of the original project, with additional funding requested through the DRI to fully complete the project as originally conceptualized.

Specific components of the project include:

- Construction of a plaza space with an open lawn area
- Construction of an elevated overlook at the former Suspension Bridge abutment

The tourism industry has been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with almost 40,000 tourism and hospitality jobs lost in the Buffalo-Niagara region through May 2020. This project will allow residents and visitors to be outdoors and in a socially-distanced environment and is anticipated to increase local tourism in the City of Niagara Falls by drawing visitors from Canada.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**
The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor. New York State is the property owner.

**CAPACITY**
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed project. The City has experience in implementing similar projects in conjunction with the State, including the Robert Moses Parkway removal project.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor)
- New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (property owner)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the incorporation of a variety of public art installations throughout the Bridge District.** The proposed project will create a public gathering space that is intended for resident and visitor use. The project provides a space for future interpretation of the area’s history through public art and signage installations.

- **Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events.** The public plaza will provide a centralized gathering space along the Niagara River that will enhance the District’s sense of place.

- **Create clear linkages between the State Park and the Main Street Business District.** The proposed project is anticipated to draw visitors to the Main Street Business District and vice versa.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** Utilizing this space for passive events and gathering space has the potential to drive private investment that can capitalize on increased resident and visitor traffic within the Bridge District.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The proposed project will enhance recreational and tourism opportunities within the Bridge District and is anticipated to draw additional residents from Canada into the United States.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The plaza will provide a comfortable place to sit and relax that encourages increased pedestrian activity in the Bridge District.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** The implementation of this project is anticipated to attract additional activity and investment into the Bridge District.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities.** The proposed project will create a gathering space for users of the park and trail system and is intended to lengthen the amount of time residents and visitors stay in the Bridge District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The public plaza helps to create a more walkable and connected community asset.
• **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields.** The public plaza provides an attraction for the Bridge District that gives Niagara Falls resident’s an additional reason to visit this City neighborhood.

• **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** With the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway, there is extraordinary potential to bring tourism into the Bridge District, this plaza space provides a centralized node on the park and trail system that will encourage additional tourism opportunities in the District.

**ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS**

**Short-term benefits:**

- Convert an underutilized area into an active and vibrant space for residents and visitors
- Provide a space for community events
- Connect users of the trail system to a parking area and overlook
- Provide a public location for Bridge District wayfinding and public art

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the Bridge District
- Draw additional visitors into the Bridge District

**Long-term benefits:**

- Attract additional development and investment in the Bridge District
- Create a destination that connects users to natural, historic and cultural resources of the Bridge District

**PUBLIC SUPPORT**
The proposed project was well supported by the public during the DRI planning process. The Freedom Plaza and Overlook project was originally conceptualized through the Robert Moses Parkway project visioning process. Due to financial constraints the entirety of this vision was not able to be implemented; therefore, DRI funding of this project will facilitate a community established public space vision for the Bridge District as originally developed.

**JOBS CREATED**

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources. It should be noted that design of this project has been previously completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construct plaza and Niagara River overlook at the Suspension Bridge abutment</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate for this project was developed as part of the original conceptual design by New York State Parks. The project is a justified use of funds based on its use as a community gathering space within the Bridge District. The plaza, which is anticipated to draw tourists and additional visitors into the Bridge District, will increase consumer spending and activity along the Main Street Business District. This project along with the proposed Whirlpool Street Connectivity Enhancement project will create walkable connected spaces and encourage passive recreation in the Bridge District.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require permits for construction from the City of Niagara Falls and New York State.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS

All concept design and cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeline for implementation is approximately 14 months and can commence immediately upon DRI award announcement.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   • Execute contract for design services

2. Construction Phase (12 months) - Spring 2023
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   • Issue bid documents
   • Award bid to contractor
   • Construction of public plaza and overlook

PROJECT REPORTING

The City will work directly with New York State and hire an experienced landscape architecture and engineering firm to oversee all technical components of the project including design, permitting, approvals and construction administration. Upon completion of the plaza, the impact the space has on downtown revitalization will be measured by:

• Number of visitors utilizing the space
• Number of events and attendance at each event
• Private investment in the Bridge District
• User feedback
ESTABLISH AN ACADEMIC INNOVATION HUB

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $1,100,000 (44%)
Total Project Cost $2,500,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Niagara University (NU) is a bi-national university with campuses in Vaughan, Ontario and Niagara Falls, NY. The University is committed to establishing a footprint within the Bridge District that will be a major anchor for the local community. This project proposes the renovation of the First Congregational Church on Cleveland Avenue into an academic innovation hub. This innovation hub will be a center for multi-disciplinary services including professional workforce training, job promotion services, urban development and planning, English as a second language programs, small business development, early childhood care, community and civic engagement, and an eSports lab. The University’s innovation hub and academic center will also serve children and families within the Bridge District and draw additional traffic to the Main Street Business District. The services provided by this facility will prepare the population for new job opportunities in a changing and evolving job market through job training, as well as provide access to technology, allowing individuals to identify available employment opportunities in the region.

NU’s multi-use high technology academic center is intended to support academic programming, bi-national professional development, economic development, and help foster a sense of community in the Bridge District. This project will allow NU and its sister universities of DePaul and St. John’s to leverage existing resources to spur new businesses that can support job growth within the Bridge District.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR

NU is the project sponsor and will be responsible for the implementation of the project. NU is actively working with the First Congregational Church on an agreement to purchase the property. NU and the First Congregational Church have signed a letter of intent for NU’s purchase of the property.

CAPACITY

NU will be responsible for project implementation and administration. NU will work in partnership with the First Congregational Church to complete the project.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- Niagara University (project sponsor)
- First Congregational Church

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** The project proposes the rehabilitation of a historic building within the Bridge District into an active space for community, educational and business use.

- **Support the availability of professional resources and neighborhood amenities to ensure a high quality of life for existing and new residents.** The proposed project will establish a neighborhood amenity in the Bridge District due to its offering of community services, including workforce training, professional and career development courses, small business development assistance and early childhood care. These programs will be an amenity for existing and new residents of the Bridge District.

- **Enhance digital connectivity to access high speed internet and new technology platforms.** The project proposes the installation of high-speed internet to facilitate high-tech facilities, such as computer labs and academic learning spaces, for use by existing and new residents of the Bridge District.

- **Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies.** The proposed project will include facilities such as computer labs and conference rooms for business owners and entrepreneurs.

- **Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities.** The proposed project is lead by Niagara University, an anchor educational institution just outside of the Bridge District. The proposed space is intended to provide resources and amenities for students, residents and businesses within the Bridge District to increase quality of life and increase career opportunities in the City of Niagara Falls.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The proposed project involves the restoration of an existing building within a densely developed neighborhood.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, and brownfields.** The proposed project involves investment within a core neighborhood in the City of Niagara Falls.

- **Develop and cultivate the WNY talent pool that includes workers with advancement potential, underemployed, unemployed and special populations.** The proposed project will provide workforce development and training programs for an area with a low employment rate and median household incomes.
• Align education and skills training to a competency-based job market for current, new and future businesses/employers to increase productivity, labor force capacity and job growth. The proposed project will provide professional resources to residents, small business owners and entrepreneurs to increase labor force and economic development opportunities within the Bridge District.

• Foster and support entrepreneurs. The proposed project will provide services to small-business owners and students in and around the Bridge District who may be interested in starting a business or expanding a current business.

• Increase investment in higher education. The project will expand the services provided by a major university in the City of Niagara Falls.

ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

• Immediate University presence in the Bridge District
• Conversion of a vacant building into an active use in the Bridge District
• Increased foot traffic in the neighborhood

Mid-term benefits:

• Beautification of the area to promote additional neighborhood revitalization
• Increased employment opportunities
• Access to professional workforce and career development programs

Long-term benefits:

• Positive impacts to neighboring property values
• Increased number of small businesses located within the Main Street Business District
• Increased economic development and private investment in the Bridge District

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Throughout the DRI planning process, this project has received support from the LPC. The LPC and larger community recognizes the importance of a university’s presence on the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, Niagara University students are very supportive and excited about the potential to expand the University’s presence to the Bridge District.
JOBS CREATED
The proposed project is expected to create between 10-15 immediate full-time jobs in association with Niagara University.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY
The location for the proposed project, 822 Cleveland Avenue, is currently owned by the First Congregational Church. NU and the First Congregational Church have signed a letter of intent for NU's purchase the property to facilitate project implementation.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interior and Exterior Improvements</td>
<td>$1,426,545</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive reuse of First Congregational Church into an Academic Innovation Hub</td>
<td></td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical and Plumbing Systems</td>
<td>$251,771</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including HVAC, plumbing, electrical work and equipment</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft costs</td>
<td>$821,684</td>
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<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
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<td>$1,100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION

The cost estimate was developed by a registered architect and is based on standard construction costs. The project is feasible, and costs are justified since the proposed project will introduce University presence in the Bridge District and is anticipated to have a substantial impact on the surrounding community. Adaptive reuse projects are estimated at approximately $130/square feet; therefore, the costs for this project are reasonable. The presence of a university in this neighborhood will increase the volume of people in the District, which will increase opportunities for spending and investment. Since NU is one of the largest anchor institutions in the City of Niagara Falls, it employs a significant number of people that will likely utilize the new hub and spur additional economic investment in the area. Additionally, the programming to be instituted in the innovation hub will provide essential community services for the residents of the Bridge District and is anticipated to draw additional residents to the DRI area.

The project is close to several other proposed DRI projects including Main Street Streetscape Improvements, Main Street / Cleveland Avenue Public Plaza, Whirlpool Street Connectivity Enhancements, and Redevelopment of 2002 Main Street. The combination of these improvements will have a significant positive impact on the Bridge District, substantially increase the sense of place and remarkably change the public realm experience at the Main and Cleveland intersection.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The proposed project will require permits and approvals from the City of Niagara Falls. This project may require approvals from SHPO.
EXISTING CONDITIONS OF FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

PROPOSED ACADEMIC INNOVATION HUB
All preliminary cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeframe for implementation is approximately 20 - 24 months.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (4 months) - Winter 2021**
   - Completion of preliminary design
   - NU to issue RFP for design services

2. **Design Phase (6 months) - Spring 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications for installation
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents and award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (12-16 months) - Winter 2023**
   - Construction of academic innovation hub

**PROJECT REPORTING**

NU will oversee the implementation and construction of the proposed project. NU will continue to monitor economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after the academic hub is in operation. Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Number of jobs created
- Number of students enrolled in academic classes
- Number of residents utilizing workforce development training and assistance
- Number of small businesses utilizing assistance and space
- Number of new small businesses in the Bridge District
- Number of children enrolled in the early childhood care center
IMPLEMENT STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS ON NEIGHBORHOOD SIDE STREETS

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $990,000 (90%)
Total Project Cost $1,100,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
In the Niagara Falls DRI, deteriorated sidewalk conditions and lack of pedestrian walkability and accessibility was identified as a major concern; therefore, this project is intended to improve streetscape conditions in the DRI area. Improving streetscape connections on neighborhood side streets will create a more walkable and accessible community for existing residents and visitors. Streetscape enhancements will improve safety and uplift the visual character of the Bridge District’s residential areas. Specific proposed improvements include sidewalk reconstruction and the installation of street trees. The improvements are proposed on several streets from Main Street to 10th Street including:

- Ontario Avenue
- Niagara Street
- Cleveland Avenue
- Michigan Avenue

These improvements are also anticipated to create enhanced connections to the Main Street Business District which will increase accessibility to local retail and services for residents of the DRI area.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
The City of Niagara Falls is the property owner/sponsor for the implementation of streetscape improvements along neighborhood side streets.

CAPACITY
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the proposed neighborhood streetscape improvements. The City has successfully implemented numerous streetscape projects, including enhancements on Third Street, that have generated spin off economic development dollars for the neighborhood.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor and property owner)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Improve the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements.** The proposed streetscape enhancements will connect neighborhood side streets to the Main Street Business District. These improvements will enhance the Bridge District’s public realm and neighborhood connectivity.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** The proposed project will invest in the streetscape improvements to enhance neighborhood connectivity and increase pedestrian accessibility. These connections will help to facilitate subsequent private investment in the surrounding area.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The proposed project will encourage pedestrian travel by providing safe and attractive streetscapes between the Main Street corridor and residential neighborhoods.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** Investment in the public realm will provide a necessary uplift for the Bridge District and encourage private investment in the City. This investment is intended to draw businesses and residents to the Bridge District.

- **Support the availability of professional resources and neighborhood amenities to ensure a high quality of life for existing and new residents.** Enhancing pedestrian amenities and improving the public realm in the Bridge District’s residential neighborhoods will provide necessary infrastructure improvements for existing residents and has the ability to attract new residents and businesses to the area.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The proposed project is intended to create walkable neighborhoods and enhance connections from these neighborhoods to the Main Street Business District.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The proposed project enhances the Bridge District’s sense of place and provides needed improvements to neighborhood infrastructure.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

- Increase pedestrian safety
- Increase public access to Main Street from adjacent neighborhoods
- Increase walkability and connectivity in the Bridge District

Mid-term benefits:

- Enhance access to amenities for existing residents
- Increase the number of residents in the Bridge District
- Draw pedestrian traffic from Main Street into the Bridge District neighborhoods

Long-term benefits:

- Positively impact neighborhood property values and the surrounding business community
- Set the stage for future private investment in the DRI area

PUBLIC SUPPORT
The project was identified by the public as an important project to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity in the Bridge District’s neighborhoods. Streetscape enhancements were explicitly stated in the City’s DRI application as a necessary improvement to the Bridge District.

JOBS CREATED
No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Ontario Avenue</td>
<td>$241,676</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$990,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and installation of street trees/structural soils from Main Street to 10th Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Niagara Avenue</td>
<td>$279,335</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and installation of street trees/structural soils from Main Street to 10th Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>$112,615</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and installation of street trees/structural soils from Main Street to 10th Street</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements on Michigan Avenue</td>
<td>$157,550</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sidewalk reconstruction and installation of street trees/structural soils from Main Street to 10th Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$308,824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td>$990,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION

The cost estimate was prepared by a licensed landscape architect and transportation engineer and is based on standard construction estimating methods. The cost of the improvements is based on comparable streetscape improvement costs in New York State and the Western New York region.

The project is a justified use of funds based on its ability to enhance neighborhood quality of life, strengthen pedestrian linkages and increase walkability in the Bridge District. Improvements that increase connectivity to business districts have been shown to increase local consumer spending and result in higher surrounding property values. Additionally, enhancement of the public realm is anticipated to increase existing resident quality of life and draw additional residents to the Bridge District. The project will also build off other proposed public infrastructure improvements including the Main Street Streetscape Enhancement project and the Main Street / Cleveland Avenue Public Plaza.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The proposed project will require permits from the City of Niagara Falls.
CURRENT CONDITIONS ON ONTARIO AVENUE

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS ON ONTARIO AVENUE
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
All concept design and cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeline for implementation is approximately 20 months and can commence immediately upon DRI award announcement.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   • City of Niagara Falls issue RFP and execute contract for design services

2. Design Phase (6 months) - Summer 2022
   • Develop construction documents and specifications
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   • Issue bid documents
   • Award bid to contractor

3. Construction Phase (12 months) - Summer / Fall 2023
   • Sidewalk reconstruction
   • Installation of street trees

PROJECT REPORTING
The City of Niagara Falls will hire a project engineer to oversee the implementation and construction of all improvements. The City will continue to monitor the economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after construction completion.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

• Increased pedestrian traffic along Main Street and on neighborhood side streets
• Increased number of residents in the Bridge District
• Increased private investment in businesses and residences
• User feedback
PROJECT 6
TRANSFORM 1810 + 1812 MAIN STREET INTO A BOUTIQUE HOTEL

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $700,000 (30%)
Total Project Cost $2,309,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The proposed project involves the renovation of 1810 and 1812 Main Street in the Bridge District. These buildings are currently vacant structures built in 1931 with advanced interior and exterior deterioration. The buildings are strategically located across the street from the Niagara Falls City Court and Police Station and the historic Rapids Theatre. The project proposes the renovation of approximately 11,000 square feet of space into a mixed-use hospitality venue, inclusive of a 16-room boutique hotel and retail space to serve the residents and visitors of the Bridge District.

Specific improvements include:

- Abatement of asbestos, lead and mold contamination
- Removal of all deteriorated plaster and finishes
- Repair of structural floor and roofs
- Repointing and repair of building facade, including exterior masonry in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines
- Installation of an elevator for ADA-access
- Installation of new mechanical and electrical systems
- Installation of new finishes for a boutique hotel and retail space

The project is located within the Main Street Business District and is proximate to several attractions, including the Rapids Theatre and natural assets. The creation of a boutique hotel and food and beverage establishment in the Bridge District will encourage increased tourist traffic and spending, as well as support job creation opportunities in the DRI area. The addition of 8-12 new jobs will offset significant private sector job losses in the region in 2020.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
Blue Cardinal Capital, LLC (BCC) is the property owner and project sponsor.

CAPACITY
BCC will be responsible for the long-term implementation of this project. The BCC team brings extensive real estate development experience to this project. Collectively, the team has a diverse set of skills and experiences in fields including asset management, site acquisition, and business development. Several key team members who will be involved in project implementation include Robert Richardson, John Cake, and Nicholas Delmonte.
Robert Richardson is the Founder and the Managing Partner of BCC. Prior to founding BCC Bob was the Chief Operating Officer at EB-5 New York State and a Vice President at M&T Bank.

John Cake is head of Blue Cardinal Studio. Prior to Blue Cardinal, John ran Hunt EAP’s Rochester office as a Partner and VP of Architecture.

Nicholas Delmonte is the Director of Asset Management and Partner at Blue Cardinal Capital has worked on the executive team at Hart Hotels where he focused on improving operational efficiencies and financial performance of their hotels while optimizing the company’s portfolio structure through development, financing and asset repositioning.

Additionally, BCC has shown extensive commitment to the revitalization of the Bridge District area based on their recent purchase of property in the area. BCC has acquired approximately 40 buildings within the Bridge District in 2019 at a cost of approximately $3,200,000. BCC intends to develop these properties into active and vibrant uses for the benefit of residents and visitors over the next 10 years.

**PROJECT PARTNERS**

- Blue Cardinal Capital (project sponsor and property owner)
- Blue Cardinal Studio, a company affiliated with the property owner Blue Cardinal Capital, will be providing project management services related to the design and construction activities (project management services)

**STRATEGIES**

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** Rehabilitation of these structures will contribute to the District’s historic character. A mixed-use retail/hotel concept will serve both residents and visitors. By breathing new life into 1810-1812 Main Street, the project sponsors will activate one of the most prominent structures in the Bridge District and restore the historic character of its façade.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** The presence of a local hotel on the Main Street Bridge District will encourage visitors to explore the City of Niagara Falls beyond the major tourist attractions. Visitors are anticipated to spend additional time in the Bridge District.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements night life and after hour activities.** Retail and hotel use support daytime activity due to operating hours of retail and facilitation of local tourist stays.

- **Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities.** Successfully transforming 1810-1812 Main Street into a boutique hotel will allow for hospitality industry workforce development opportunities.
The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Implement smart growth.** The adaptive reuse of 1810-1812 Main Street aims to activate Main Street and increase livability and walkability by activating the street wall.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, and brownfields.** The proposed project will catalyze additional private investment in the Bridge District neighborhood to increase economic development and residential quality of life.

- **Build target industry sections by facilitating the growth of quality tourism product.** The proposed use of 1810-1812 Main Street capitalizes on the existing tourism industry in Western New York and encourages the creation of visitor infrastructure (i.e. a boutique hotel). The planned renovation of the Niagara Hotel indicates that demand exists.

### ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Create new retail and hotel space and attract new businesses
- Draw visitors to the Bridge District
- Restore the aesthetic value of the building façade

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase the visitation and walkability of the Bridge District
- Preserve historic buildings along Main Street
- Create employment opportunities

**Long-term benefits:**

- Create new businesses
- Support entrepreneurs looking to invest in Niagara Falls
- Increase local property values

### PUBLIC SUPPORT

During the DRI planning process, these projects were highly supported by the public and LPC. As indicated by the engagement activities through the DRI, the public and market analysis have identified the adaptive reuse of existing buildings as a top priority for revitalization of the Bridge District.
JOBS CREATED
It is estimated that the project will create 8 to 12 permanent jobs.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY
BCC is the owner of 1810-1812 Main Street; therefore, no acquisition of property will be necessary to implement the project.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interior and Exterior Renovations</strong></td>
<td>$1,367,916</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive reuse of 1810-1812 Main Street into a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private Loan (pending)</td>
<td>$1,154,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boutique hotel and retail space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Systems</strong></td>
<td>$412,823</td>
<td>Private Equity (secured)</td>
<td>$152,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Tax Credits</td>
<td>$302,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td>(pending)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft Costs</strong></td>
<td>$528,261</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$700,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,609,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,309,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate was prepared based on standard construction estimating, utilizing consultation from a real estate development company and licensed architects. A pro forma analysis was completed and indicated a positive return on investment over a nine-year period. The project will have a net operating income of $110,581 in year one and $133,386 in year nine. The addition of revenue producing sources will help sustain the project for continued economic development benefits in the Bridge District.

The project is a justified use of funds based on its anticipated economic development and revitalization benefits. The project is intended to increase tourism in the Bridge District and extend the length of time visitors spend in the City of Niagara Falls. The project will also add a potential food and beverage location on Main Street as a needed business-type identified in the market analysis. According to the market analysis, the DRI trade area can support approximately 5,600 square feet of additional retail space, of which restaurants and eating places were of top priority. This project, in combination with other proposed DRI projects, such as 2025 Main Street and 2002 Main Street, will create an enhanced sense of place on Main Street in the Bridge District.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The project will be guided by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, as historic tax credits are a funding source. The Historic Tax Credit is also administered by NYS Parks and the National Park Service and SHPO approval will be necessary. Local approvals and building permits are required. Additionally, a permit from NYS Department of Health will be required to operate a food service establishment.
CURRENT CONDITIONS AT 1810 + 1812 MAIN STREET

PROPOSED RENOVATION OF 1810 + 1812 MAIN STREET
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The project is currently in the concept/planning stage. The construction timeline is anticipated to be approximately 10 months and can commence upon announcement of DRI award.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 month) - Winter 2021**
   - Select and engage designer through RFP process

2. **Design Phase (1-3 months) - Spring 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications for building renovation
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals (including historic tax credit submission)
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (6 months) - Fall / Winter 2022**
   - Abatement of asbestos, lead and mold
   - Interior and exterior renovations

PROJECT REPORTING
Blue Cardinal will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring of project advancement. Blue Cardinal will utilize its affiliate Blue Cardinal Studio to oversee all technical aspects of the design, permitting and approval.

Metrics to determine project success after implementation include:

- Vacancy rate
- Net revenue from retail sales
- Average daily rate of the hotel
- Number of full-time, living-wage jobs created
LAUNCH A PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE

DRI FUNDING REQUEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DRI Funds:</th>
<th>$615,000 (80%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>$768,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Placemaking and public art are important components of creating an enhanced neighborhood sense of place. The proposed project will unify and enhance public and private spaces within the Bridge District to create an aesthetically pleasing destination where residents celebrate pride in their community and tourists learn about the area’s culture and history. The proposed project involves the installation of seven public art murals throughout the Bridge District with the intention of capturing the history and heritage of the Bridge District and creating a strong sense of place. Several of the art installations are proposed at key destinations within the Bridge District, including Wrobel Towers, Heart, Love & Soul, Head Start, The Connection, DiCamillo Bakery and the Harry F. Abate Elementary School. Each public art installation will be coordinated by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFnHA), an organization that has successfully installed several interpretive art features and has established the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center within the Bridge District.
**PROJECT LOCATION**

Public art installations are proposed at several locations throughout the Bridge District, including:

1. 1625 Lockport Street
2. 811 Linwood Avenue
3. 1631 Main Street
4. 1700 Main Street
5. 800 Niagara Avenue
6. 939 Ontario Avenue
7. Main Street/Depot Avenue
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
The project sponsor is the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. The project is proposed at several locations throughout the Bridge District with various property owners. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will work in collaboration with property owners to facilitate public art installation. The property owners of the proposed locations include:

1. 1625 Lockport Street – Niagara Falls School District
2. 811 Linwood Avenue – DiCamillo Bakery
3. 1631 Main Street – Community Action Organization
4. 1700 Main Street – Pinnacle West Holdings Inc
5. 800 Niagara Avenue – Niagara Falls Housing Authority
6. 939 Ontario Avenue – Heart, Love & Soul
7. Main Street/Depot Avenue – City of Niagara Falls

CAPACITY
The proposed project will be implemented by the NFNHA in coordination with the City of Niagara Falls. The NFNHA and City have partnered on several successful public art and placemaking efforts within the City and Bridge District. Examples of recent installations include a $2,500,000 exhibit at the Niagara Falls Underground Heritage Center and the Heritage Art Mural Project on Main Street in the DRI area, which successfully installed eight murals in 2019. Additionally, the NFNHA has received letters of support and obtained commitment from all property owners where installations are proposed. The NFNHA has also included costs for the use of high-quality, anti-graffiti glaze that will prolong the life of the art murals for at least 10 years following installation.

PROJECT PARTNERS
The project will require support and coordination with various property owners throughout the Bridge District. Project owners and partners include:

- Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (project sponsor)
- City of Niagara Falls (property owner)
- Niagara Falls Housing Authority (property owner)
- Pinnacle West Holdings Inc (property owner)
- Community Action Organization (property owner)
- DiCamillo Bakery (property owner)
- Heart, Love & Soul (property owner)
STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the incorporation of a variety of public art installations throughout the Bridge District.** The proposed project proposes the installation of public art installations, including art murals and interpretive features at several properties throughout the Bridge District.

- **Support existing historic, recreational, and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The proposed project will install public art at several local institutions within the Bridge District, including the Harry F. Abate Elementary School, Heart, Love & Soul, DiCamillo Bakery, The Connection Building, Head Start and Wrobel Towers.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle system.** Beautification of the Bridge District through public art is anticipated to enhance the neighborhood’s sense of place. This will encourage visitors and residents to spend additional time in the District and increase quality of life for existing residents.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields.** This project will celebrate the local history of this area and increase resident quality of life.

- **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** This project is located in an area with historical significance. Public art installations throughout the District are intended to celebrate this history and culture that is anticipated to attract tourists and visitors to the neighborhood.

ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Improve the City’s public realm and attractiveness
- Celebrate and connect residents and visitors to the area’s cultural heritage
- Foster community pride and stewardship
- Draw additional visitors to the Bridge District and activates tourism
**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase tourist spending in the Bridge District
- Incorporate local artisan work into the built environment
- Strengthen public-private partnerships in the neighborhood

**Long-term benefits:**

- Increase surrounding property values
- Support the expansion and relocation of businesses to the Bridge District
- Enhance resident quality of life
- Attract additional residents to the Bridge District

**PUBLIC SUPPORT**

The project is well supported by the local community; the proposed project is a continuation of recently installed public art and placemaking efforts in the neighborhood by the NFNHA. The project has received support from numerous local organizations and businesses who are excited to participate in celebrating the Bridge District’s local history and culture. Specific businesses, organizations and agencies include the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Housing Authority, Community Action Organization, Head Start, Heart, Love & Soul, and DiCamillo Bakery.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table provides a summary of the proposed project's budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry F. Abate Elementary School Mural</td>
<td>$20,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DiCamillo Bakery Mural</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HeadStart Building Mural</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Connection Building Mural</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$615,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrobel Towers Mural</td>
<td>$364,000</td>
<td>NFNHA Grant Funds</td>
<td>$153,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart, Love and Soul Mural</td>
<td>$21,300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street/Depot Avenue Mural Completion</td>
<td>$93,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and General Costs</td>
<td>$196,517</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</strong></td>
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<td>$615,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$153,317</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$768,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION

The cost estimate was prepared based on estimates from manufacturers of public art pieces for other cities as well as local experience with similar installations in the Bridge District. NFNHA is a committed organization that has implemented numerous public art projects and will facilitate the implementation of the project. The NFNHA has also included costs for the use of high-quality, anti-graffiti glaze that will prolong the life of the art murals for at least 10 years following installation.

The cost of the project is justified due to its potential to enhance the cultural experience and promote tourism in the Bridge District. Public art and placemaking efforts reflect a positive return on investment. According the market analysis, public art attracts a greater volume of foot traffic which increases business spending and revenues. Case studies of public art impacts in other U.S. cities have shown that a $1,000 mural can increase business revenues by $20,000 or a 1,900% return on investment. Additionally, interpretive signage has been proven to create a positive perception of the built environment. This project will also build off the enhancements proposed in other DRI projects, including the DiCamillo Bakery Expansion and Heart, Love & Soul Building and Site Improvements.
IMAGES OF CURRENT CONDITIONS

DICAMILLO BAKERY

HARRY F. ABATE ELEMENTARY

WROBEL TOWERS

THE CONNECTION BUILDING
IMAGE OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

REPRESENTATIVE MURAL INSTALLATION ON THE CONNECTION BUILDING
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The timeframe for implementation is approximately 18 months and can commence upon announcement of DRI award. Commitments from property owners have been obtained and preliminary planning has been initiated.

1. Immediate Next Steps (4 months) - Winter 2021
   • Obtain required approvals and permits
   • Issue procurement process for local artist designs

2. Design Phase (8 months) - Fall 2022
   • Development of construction documents and specifications for art installations

3. Construction Phase (6 months) - Spring 2023
   • Implementation of designed art installations

PROJECT REPORTING
NFNHA will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring of project advancement. Metrics to determine project success after implementation include:

• Increased visitors to the Bridge District
• Increased consumer spending
• Increased private downtown investment
IMPLEMENT A SMALL PROJECT GRANT FUND

DRI FUNDING REQUEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DRI Funds:</th>
<th>$600,000 (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>$1,200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

During the DRI planning process, the number of vacant and underutilized buildings in the Bridge District was identified as a concern, with a range of investment warranted. The proposed project will designate grant funds that will be used to leverage private investment in such buildings to allow for their redevelopment or rehabilitation with a preference for revitalization of vacant or underutilized buildings, including historic preservation. Improvements covered under the grant fund would include:

- Building renovation, including interior and exterior improvements on commercial and residential properties including roof, window, or door repairs, façade improvements, ADA accessibility improvements, and exterior signage installation;
- Capital improvements, including purchase of permanent machinery and equipment, such as furnaces and water heaters;
- Mechanical, electrical and plumbing upgrades and improvements within existing building; and
- Soft costs, such as design and contingencies.

Many of the businesses within the DRI area are classified as "small businesses", which are those that have less than 100 employees. According to Forbes Magazine, small businesses have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 pandemic; 75% of small businesses indicated that they might not fully recover from the pandemic due to their loss of sales. The proposed investments will support both small businesses and residents in the DRI area and are anticipated to allow business owners to invest in their spaces and rebound from reductions in income streams in 2020.

The City of Niagara Falls Office of Community Development will be the administrator for this grant fund. A Coordinator will be identified to solicit applications from Bridge District property owners that meet the basic criteria of the program. Public information meetings will be held within the community where the Coordinator will be available to answer questions and review draft applications as appropriate.
Applicants will be required to submit evidence of compliance with program guidelines as well as documentation of appropriate criteria, such as SHPO approval and bank financing. A formal written scope of work will be required, including the following elements:

- Immediate health and safety concerns;
- The correction of existing code violations;
- Environmental hazards;
- Installation of energy conservation measures;
- Accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Consistency with any other local program design guidelines; and
- Preservation of historical elements of the building.

A grant match for property owners will be required for all proposed projects. The match requirements for commercial and residential properties are included below.

- Commercial Properties:
  - Up to 75% of total project cost ranging from $1,000-10,000
  - Up to 60% of total project cost ranging from $10,001-20,000
  - Up to 50% of total project cost ranging from $20,001 to $50,000
  - Up to 40% of the total project cost ranging from $50,001 to $100,000
  - Up to 25% of the total project cost ranging from $100,001 to $200,000

- Residential Properties:
  - Up to $10,000 in DRI grant funds, up to 75% of total project cost

Projects approved locally will be submitted to the Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) for review prior to notifying the business owner of formal funding. Once awarded, property owners will be notified of the amount and conditions of the award and will be given the notice-to-proceed. The Coordinator will periodically monitor construction activities (together with the City’s code enforcement officer) and will collect documentation from the awardee of partial or total completion of the project. The awardee will periodically submit for reimbursement of funds expended, which the Coordinator will compile and present to the Committee for approval and processing of the drawdown. Once received, the Coordinator will submit payment to the awardee as appropriate and once appropriate releases are submitted (ex: release of liens).
Final payment of no less than 20% of the award will be withheld until the certificate of occupancy is granted for the project in question. Final guidelines will be drafted should this request be awarded. The guidelines will specify the following criteria:

- **Location**: Projects must be located within the Niagara Falls DRI Boundary.
- **Historic Preservation**: Projects will be expected to comply with SHPO guidelines for historic preservation. Projects with historic value or in danger of being lost in part or in total to disrepair or damage will be prioritized.
- **Private match**: The program will require a minimum private contribution of the total project cost, as noted in the Project Description above. The source of non-DRI funds can be of any type except in-kind contributions. This includes cash, loans, and other grant or revolving loan funds. Expenses incurred prior to official grant award will not be considered as part of the match. Grant requirements will vary based on primary commercial or residential use.
- **Job creation**: Project funds will be prioritized to those projects that are expected to create jobs within downtown Niagara Falls.

Property owners will be subject to a five-year look back to ensure the properties are being utilized for the use described on their DRI funding application. Those who do not abide by the five-year look back will be subject to a clawback of DRI funds.

Funds will be dispersed on a rolling basis as applications are received and funds are awarded and dispersed. Completion of revolving loan and grant fund projects will occur when all funds have been dispersed.

The property owners of 734 Willow Avenue have expressed an interest in this fund and have a project eligible for competition. Additionally, the public expressed support and a need for a small grant improvement fund to assist existing property owners with residential properties in need of repairs and upgrades.

**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for grant administration and project oversight.

**CAPACITY**
The City of Niagara Falls has a successful history of administering grants, including planning and capital projects that have resulted in the transformation of the Niagara Falls community. Due to the City of Niagara Falls’ long history of administering a wide range of programs, this request has a very high degree of readiness and can be implemented immediately upon award.

**PROJECT PARTNERS**
- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor)
STRATEGIES
The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** Establishing the grant fund is intended to revitalize currently underutilized and vacant buildings in the Bridge District.

- **Encourage the renovation of upper stories for residential use.** The proposed grant fund encourages the redevelopment of existing properties to support expanded housing opportunities for downtown residents.

- **Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies.** The proposed grant fund is intended to encourage downtown property owners to adaptively reuse their buildings and increase retail and business opportunities in the Bridge District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The proposed grant fund is intended to encourage investment in the Bridge District that enhance the resident quality of life and tourist experience.

- **Foster support and fund entrepreneurs.** The purposed grant fund will provide funding for entrepreneurs and encourage new business growth and employment opportunities in the City.

ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Aid in the conversion of vacant and underutilized buildings
- Improve the aesthetic character of the Bridge District through façade and building improvements
- Expand the development of the Bridge District
- Enhance the Bridge District’s sense of place
- Renovate existing buildings for continued use

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Expand business opportunities in the Bridge District
- Increase the number of visitors and tourists in the area

**Long-term benefits:**

- Positively impact neighboring property values
- Increase quality of life for existing residents
- Attract additional residents to the Bridge District
PUBLIC SUPPORT
Through the DRI planning process, the public expressed support for the small project grant fund. The revitalization of vacant and underutilized buildings, and implementation of façade improvements was indicated as a need for the Bridge District. Additionally, during several meetings the LPC indicated that this fund would provide multiple small businesses, property owners and residents and opportunity to enhance and revitalize underutilized buildings.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a small project grant fund</td>
<td>$1,200,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed) Private Investment</td>
<td>$600,000 TBD based on individual projects and match contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,200,000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variation in project type and applicant match requirements may change the anticipated total project cost

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The City of Niagara Falls has the ability to implement this project immediately upon award. There is a need and demand for revitalization of vacant and underutilized properties. The small project grant fund is anticipated to:

- Increase local job opportunities;
- Increase tax revenues;
- Attract additional residents, and
- Increase tourism opportunities.

Renovation, restoration, and reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings will result in an overall net benefit to the community through a net increase in property tax revenues, rental income, customer spending, residential occupants, and increased spending by new residents. The specific economic benefit of individual projects funded through the grant fund will vary based on a variety of factors, including the type and size of the project. The number of jobs created, total tax revenue, and other financial benefits of investments will be identified on an individual project basis.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

EXISTING UNDERUTILIZED BUILDING ON MAIN STREET

REPRESENTATIVE RENOVATION OF UNDERUTILIZED BUILDING ON MAIN STREET
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The City successfully administered similar programs Citywide, such as the Commercial Grant Assistance Program, Commercial Façade Rebate Program and Commercial Loan Subsidy Program. The grant fund can be created immediately upon announcement of DRI award. The grant application process will remain open until all funds are expended or until Winter 2026.

PROJECT REPORTING
The following metrics will be monitored during and after implementation of the grant fund:

- Amount of grant funds used annually
- Amount of private-sector investment leveraged
- Number of buildings rehabilitated through the grant funds
- Number of new businesses attracted to the Bridge District
- Number of ground floor spaces renovated through the fund that are leased by businesses within one year of obtaining a certificate of occupancy
- Number of new residents in the Bridge District
PROJECT 9

RENOVATE 2025 MAIN STREET INTO A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

DRI FUNDING REQUEST

Total DRI Funds: $500,000 (24%)
Total Project Cost $2,047,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2025 Main Street is located within the heart of the Main Street Business District. This three-story building currently has an operating convenience store on the first floor and two floors of vacant space. The upper floors have been unoccupied for years and have sustained extensive water damage, which will require full reconstruction and renovation.

The owner proposes the renovation of this approximately 10,000 square foot building into a mixed-use space retaining the existing commercial use on the first floor as well as adding the infrastructure necessary to create a second retail space option. The upper floors will be renovated into modern apartments, which will allow residents to live and work in the Bridge District.

Specific improvements include:

- Abatement of potential asbestos, lead and mold
- Façade improvements, including repointing and repairing exterior masonry in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines, to restore the building’s historic character
- Roof replacement
- New flooring and finishes
- Installation of an elevator for ADA-accessibility
- Installation of all new mechanical and electrical systems, including HVAC

According to the New York State Department of Labor, there was a 16.8% private sector job loss in June 2020 compared to the prior year. The majority of this job loss was seen in the hospitality and leisure sector, which includes food accommodation and services. The proposed project is intended to provide assistance to a local small business owner to facilitate investments that will open a new retail offering to local residents and expand the diversity of housing options in the DRI area. The new retail space is also anticipated to create up to 10 new job opportunities in the DRI area.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**

Blue Cardinal Capital, LLC (BCC) is the property owner and project sponsor.

**CAPACITY**

BCC will be responsible for the long-term implementation of the renovation of 2025 Main Street. The BCC team is well versed in real estate development projects throughout Western New York. The team is comprised of a number of key personnel with diverse skill sets and have extensive experience in asset management, site acquisition, and business development. Several key team members responsible for project implementation include Robert Richardson, John Cake, and Nicholas Delmonte.
BCC is also committed to the Bridge District's revitalization due to their recent purchase of approximately 40 buildings in 2019. BCC intends to develop these properties into active and vibrant uses for the benefit of residents and visitors over the next 10 years.

**PROJECT PARTNERS**

- Blue Cardinal Capital (project sponsor and property owner)
- Blue Cardinal Studio, a company affiliated with the property owner Blue Cardinal Capital, will be providing project management services related to the design and construction activities (project management services)

**STRATEGIES**

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restorations of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** The proposed project will restore the historic character of an existing building on Main Street and create a mix of uses with commercial and residential space.

- **Encourage the renovation of upper stories for residential use.** This project will include the renovation of upper stories for residential use.

- **Promote a mix of high-quality affordable and market rate housing within the Bridge District to fill existing gaps in the marketplace.** The proposed project involves the creation of modernized apartments within the Bridge District that are intended to attract additional residents to the area.

- **Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies.** This project involves the creation of a commercial space on the first floor that could be occupied by a retail business on Main Street.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities.** Since the proposed project combines a mix of uses, this will help sustain a 24/7 active Main Street in the Bridge District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Implement smart growth.** The adaptive reuse of 2025 Main Street aims to activate Main Street and increase livability and walkability by activating the street wall.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, and brownfields.** The redevelopment of this property represents investment in an underutilized property on Main Street in the Bridge District and is intended to increase resident quality of life and create an active business district.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

- Create new and contemporary housing options in the Bridge District
- Create desirable retail and night life options in the Bridge District
- Restore the building facade
- Provide workforce opportunities for individuals in the retail and food industry

Mid-term benefits:

- Increase the visitation and walkability of the Bridge District
- Create employment opportunities

Long-term benefits:

- Enhance livability of the area to promote residential growth of the Bridge District
- Strengthen the tourism industry in the region
- Increase surrounding property values

PUBLIC SUPPORT
Throughout the course of the DRI planning process, there has been strong public support for this project. The need to create retail and employment opportunities downtown was heavily emphasized during engagement activities with the LPC and community members.

JOBS CREATED
Following the construction of the project, approximately 10 new jobs will be created. These jobs include one property manager, one retail manager and one maintenance manager. The retail space will create an estimated seven jobs, depending on the ultimate use of the space. The existing convenience store will retain four existing employees.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY
Blue Cardinal Capital is the owner of 2025 Main Street; therefore, no acquisition of property will be necessary to implement the project.
**PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES**

The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interior and Exterior Renovations</td>
<td>$1,220,541</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive reuse of 2025 Main Street</td>
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<td>Private Loan (pending)</td>
<td>$1,023,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private Equity (secured)</td>
<td>$247,155</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Tax Credits (pending)</td>
<td>$276,345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Systems</td>
<td>$343,496</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, utilities and equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$482,963</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED** $500,000

**TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES** $1,547,000

**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $2,047,000

**FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION**

The anticipated redevelopment cost is based on industry standards for comparable development in the Buffalo/Niagara Falls region. A pro forma analysis was conducted and included reasonable rental income, expense and vacancy assumptions. The project is projecting a 7% equity IRR over a nine-year period. In addition, the 7% interest rate on their construction loan is reasonable. A solid benchmark for debt service coverage ratio is typically around 1.25, which is roughly where this property is projected to stabilize. Therefore, a reduction in DRI funding would jeopardize the project team’s ability to secure debt financing and/or offer competitive returns to equity investors.

The Main Street Business District contains numerous vacant and underutilized buildings and the restoration of prominent buildings such as 2025 Main Street, in conjunction with other DRI projects, has the potential to spur additional investment in the Bridge District. This project will enhance the public realm, promote economic development, and add new housing stock to attract additional residents. In the long-term, it will promote the growth of a thriving tourism industry and stronger tax base. Overall, the development of this property will enhance the livability of Main Street and complement other redevelopment efforts in the DRI area.

**REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

The project will require approvals from the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Historic Tax Credit is also administered by NYS Parks and the National Park Service. The proposed project will also require local approval and building permits from the City of Niagara Falls.
CURRENT CONDITIONS AT 2025 MAIN STREET

PROPOSED RENOVATION OF 2025 MAIN STREET
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The project is currently in the concept/planning state. The construction timeline is anticipated to be approximately 12 months and can commence upon announcement of DRI award.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   • Engage designer and architect

2. Design Phase (5 months) - Spring 2022
   • Develop construction documents and specifications for building renovation
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals (including historic tax credit submission)
   • Issue bid documents
   • Award bid to contractor

3. Construction Phase (6 months) - Winter 2022
   • Abatement of asbestos, lead and mold
   • Interior and exterior renovations

PROJECT REPORTING
BCC will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring. They have identified an architect that they would like to partner with on the project and are planning to bid the construction portion to a general contractor. Project management services will be provided by Blue Cardinal studio.

Metrics to determine project success after implementation include:

• Vacancy rate
• Net revenue retail sales
• Number of full-time, living wage jobs created
• Number of visitors
PROJECT 10
PREPARE THE SOUTH TRAIN STATION SITE FOR INVESTMENT

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $450,000 (90%)
Total Project Cost $500,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The City of Niagara Falls owns a vacant 2.25-acre parcel just south of the International Train Station in between Whirlpool and Main Streets. The site's location at the Train Station, offering easy access to major cities, such as Toronto, make it an ideal site for investment and redevelopment. Site improvements on the southeastern corner of this site are proposed to stabilize the site and prepare it for redevelopment. Specific proposed improvements to this site include:

- Repairs to the retaining wall and railing
- Clearing and grubbing of trees and site work on the corner of Main Street and Ontario Avenue

The proposed improvements will complete preliminary site work necessary to create an attractive site for redevelopment to prospective developers. Anticipated future development of this site could include a hotel for travelers and tourists or a mixed-use development with retail and housing options for the neighborhood.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor. The City currently owns two of the three parcels comprising the South Train Station site, with the NYSDOT expected to transfer title ownership of the smallest parcel to the City by late 2020.

CAPACITY
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed project. The City has successfully managed grant funds for projects with a similar scope of work. The City also has a strong network of public and private partners to ensure successful project implementation.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls
- New York State Department of Transportation

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** The proposed project is intended to clean up this vacant site to attract a future developer that will catalyze investment in the Bridge District.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The proposed project will encourage pedestrian travel by providing a safe and attractive site between on the Main Street corridor.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** Investment in the public realm will encourage private investment on this prime site in the City. This investment is intended to draw business to the Bridge District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The proposed project intends to redevelop a vacant site within a core neighborhood in the City of Niagara Falls.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields.** The proposed project will provide an incentive to future developers to create an active and vibrant use that will benefit the residents and visitors of the Bridge District.

- **Increase investment in bi-national logistics.** Future development facilitated by the proposed project will likely be an attractive feature within the Bridge to serve those traveling to and from Canada.

ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Improve site conditions within the Bridge District
- Enhance landscaping along Main Street

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase development opportunities within the Bridge District
Long-term benefits:

- Positively impact neighborhood property values
- Set the stage for future private investment in the Bridge District

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The project was included in the City’s original DRI application since the development of the site is a City priority. The project will advance the established community vision and goals by creating development opportunities within the Bridge District.

JOBS CREATED

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention Wall Demolition and Repair</td>
<td>$352,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete partial wall demolition and repair</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Removal and Planting</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove existing trees to increase site visibility from Main Street and Ontario Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$103,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION

The cost estimate was prepared by a registered landscape architect and structural engineer and is based on standard construction estimating methods. The project is a justified use of funds based on its ability to enhance site aesthetics and improve development opportunities within the Niagara Falls DRI area.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The proposed project will require approvals and permits from the City of Niagara Falls.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS

PROPOSED SITE CONDITIONS
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS

All concept design and cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeframe for implementation is approximately 14 months and can commence upon DRI award announcement.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - City of Niagara Falls issue RFP and execute contract for design services

2. **Design Phase (6 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (6 months) - Spring 2023**
   - Replacement of street trees along Main Street and Ontario Street
   - Implementation of minor repairs to retaining wall and railing

PROJECT REPORTING

The City of Niagara Falls will hire a project engineer to oversee the implementation and construction of all improvements. The City will continue to monitor the economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after construction completion.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Enhanced site conditions
- Developer interest in the site
- Site purchase by private developer
- Increase in property values
PROJECT 11
CREATE LEASABLE COMMERCIAL SPACE IN THE NIAGARA FALLS TRAIN STATION

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $450,000 (90%)
Total Project Cost $500,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Niagara Falls International Train Station was opened in 2016 and represents a significant investment in the Bridge District. The Train Station currently houses the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center and offers national and international public transportation options to resident and visitors of the City of Niagara Falls. The Train Station has approximately 4,500 square feet available space for additional development that was envisioned for commercial use and retail tenants; however, additional upgrades and systems are needed to provide the infrastructure necessary for a future tenant(s). These improvements are intended to attract interest from developers to develop this currently vacant space. The improvements would support a range of retail uses, including a small commercial kitchen for food and beverage service.

Specific components of the project include:

- Installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system
- Installation of upgraded lighting system
- Installation of a smoke evacuation system

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in reduced tourist spending in the DRI area and the City of Niagara Falls. The proposed project is intended to provide a new and modern, ready to utilize space for a local business with the potential to create new local jobs in the community. The new retail space is anticipated to attract tourists and increase dollars spent in the DRI area. This project also has the potential to facilitate small business investment through the completion of internal build out elements.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**

The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor. The NYSDOT is expected to transfer ownership title of the property to the City by late 2020.

**CAPACITY**

The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the proposed project. The City has successfully implemented public improvements within the City with the utilization of state and federal funds in recent years.
STRATEGIES
The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events.** The proposed project would enhance an existing major multi-modal transportation hub that is used by many residents and visitors of the Bridge District.

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** The Train Station currently houses the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center and is a transportation hub in the City. The proposed improvements will add additional retail space to this building to create a space where users of the Train Station and Bridge District can enjoy and utilize.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** The proposed project will add necessary amenities to the Train Station for tourists and visitors. These amenities are anticipated to attract additional tourists to the Bridge District to explore the area’s key destinations.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** The proposed project is intended to establish privately operated commercial uses in a publicly accessible Train Station.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements night life and after hour activities.** The proposed project expands business development opportunities in the Bridge District that can potentially be supported both day and night. If a small café or bake shop were to locate in the Train Station, it would serve residents and visitors at all times of the day and work to support additional visitors to the District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The Train Station is currently underutilized. The proposed project provides development of key public spaces for a walkable and unique urban community. This reinvestment has the potential to improve the quality of life for existing residents as well as attract new residents and visitors to the community.

- **Foster and support entrepreneurs.** Renovation of the remaining space in the Train Station provides those with an entrepreneurial spirit to take advantage of underutilized buildings and transform the community into a hub for growth and development.

- **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** Adding amenities to the existing Train Station has the potential to expand tourism from a single attraction destination to a community destination, extending visits and promoting the development of additional tourism infrastructure.
**ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS**

**Short-term benefits:**

- Establish a commercial space in the Bridge District
- Increase employment in the Bridge District

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase the number of visitors to the Bridge District
- Increase Train Station users

**Long-term benefits:**

- Positively impact neighboring property values
- Attract new residents to the Bridge District

**PUBLIC SUPPORT**

This project was highly supported by the public and LPC during the DRI planning process. The public expressed interest in creating storefront spaces for a small restaurant and retail space for train passengers, as well as the desire to use the space for more engagement activities.

**JOBS CREATED**

This project has the potential to create approximately 5 - 10 new full-time jobs in the Bridge District, depending on final use.

**ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY**

The NYSDOT is the title holder of the property. The NYSDOT is expected to transfer ownership to the City of Niagara Falls by late 2020. No purchase of property is needed for project implementation.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Space Build Out</td>
<td>$375,000</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including finishes and mechanical system installation and upgrades</td>
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<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Costs</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including design, contingencies and general requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate for this project was developed by a licensed architect and is based on standard construction estimating methods and similar projects. The project is a justified use of funds based on the benefits to users of the Train Station and future visitors of the Bridge District. Currently, the utilization of the Train Station is low, especially during the winter months. The addition of retail space, such as a small coffee and sandwich shop, would provide a necessary amenity for transit riders. The proposed project is anticipated to increase the users of the Train Station and visitors to the Bridge District and contribute to the consumer and tourist spending in the DRI area.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require local approvals and building permits.
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS

All preliminary cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeframe for implementation is approximately 12 months and can commence upon the award of the DRI grant.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - City of Niagara Falls issue RFP for completion of construction documents

2. **Design Phase (4 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (6 months) - Winter 2022**
   - Completion of mechanical and electrical system upgrades

PROJECT REPORTING

The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring of project advancement. An architectural firm will be hired to oversee all technical aspects of the design, permitting, approvals, and construction administration.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Increase in the number of tourists and visitors
- Increase users of the Train Station
- Job creation
DRI FUNDING REQUEST

Total DRI Funds: $400,000 (28%)
Total Project Cost $1,414,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2002 Main Street is a two-story building located at the corner of Main Street and Cleveland Avenue across the street from the Niagara Falls Public Safety Building and adjacent to the First Congregational Church. The building is currently vacant, and the proposed renovation of the building will add a ground retail and community space as well as office space on the second floor. The proposed scope of building renovation includes:

Specific improvements include:

- Abatement of potential asbestos, lead and mold
- Façade improvements, including repointing and repairing exterior masonry in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines to restore the building’s historic character
- Roof replacement
- New flooring and finishes
- Installation of an elevator for ADA-accessibility
- Installation of all new mechanical and electrical systems, including HVAC

The new commercial space will include a food and beverage storefront, such as a café and bake shop. The first floor will also be modified to include a general use assembly space on the west side of the building (closest to the church) that will be made available for community gathering use. The upper stories will accommodate modernized office space to expand business opportunities in the DRI area.

According to USA Facts, America’s urban areas have sustained more job losses as compared to more rural areas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While many jobs are coming back online as the year continues, in June 2020 available jobs were still 9.5% lower than those available in June 2019. The proposed project has the potential to create new jobs in the City of Niagara Falls, support a local small business entity and encourage locally driven business growth in the DRI area. This project also includes a community and office space which can be utilized by local residents.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**

Blue Cardinal Capital, LLC (BCC) is the property owner and project sponsor.

**CAPACITY**

BCC will lead and be responsible for the implementation and long-term sustainability of this project. BCC has a number of key staff members and partners to ensure successful project implementation. Their team has experience in real estate development and redevelopment projects in the Western New York area. Key personnel include Robert Richardson, John Cake, and Nicholas Delmonte. BCC has a vested interest in the revitalization of the Bridge District and is committed to its success. In addition to this project, BCC intends to adaptively reuse and redevelop multiple properties in the Bridge District. These projects are intended to spur economic development in the neighborhood and bring renewed vitality to the Main Street Business District.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- Blue Cardinal Capital (project sponsor and property owner)
- Blue Cardinal Studio, a company affiliated with the property owner Blue Cardinal Capital, will be providing project management services related to the design and construction activities (project management services)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events.** The proposed project will include the development of community-oriented space in association with the First Congregational Church.

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** The proposed project will restore the building for mixed-use, which include retail and office space. An office and retail concept will serve both residents and visitors.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities.** The development office and retail space will increase the number of day and nighttime employees in the Bridge District.

- **Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities.** Successfully transforming 2002 Main Street into personal office and community space would create office space for local entrepreneurs and business owners, bringing them into the Bridge District and adding to Main Street’s local retail and professional economy.

- **Create unique and flexible workspaces to attract emerging companies.** The proposed project involves the addition of modernized office space in the Bridge District to attract additional businesses in the Main Street Business District.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Implement smart growth.** 2025 Main Street, as part of the Niagara Falls Bridge District DRI, aim to activate Main Street and increase livability and walkability by activating the street wall.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, and brownfields.** This project re-purposes a vacant space by converting the structure into a mixed-use development. This will promote sustainability of the neighborhood by providing a retail amenity and event space that will draw visitors to the Bridge District. The project will create opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in Niagara Falls.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

• Create new retail and office space
• Attract new businesses to the Bridge District
• Draw residents and visitors to the Bridge District
• Rehabilitate an existing underutilized building
• Restore historic character of an existing building

Mid-term benefits:

• Increase daytime traffic and local spending in the Bridge District
• Create employment opportunities

Long-term benefits:

• Increase local property values

PUBLIC SUPPORT
Throughout the course of the DRI planning process, there has been strong public support for this project. The need to create retail and employment opportunities downtown was heavily emphasized during community engagement activities.

JOBS CREATED
It is estimated that the project will create up to 15 new jobs. A total of approximately 5 to 7 jobs will be created by the retail space, and 6 to 8 jobs depending on the type of office tenant secured for the space.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY
Blue Cardinal Capital is the owner of 2002 Main Street; therefore, no acquisition of property will be necessary to implement the project.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interior and Exterior Renovations</td>
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<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptive reuse of 2002 Main Street into retail</td>
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<td>Private Loan (pending)</td>
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<tr>
<td>and office space</td>
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<td>Private Equity (secured)</td>
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<td>Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Systems</td>
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<td>Historic Tax Credits (pending)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, utilities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED** $400,000

**TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES** $1,014,000

**TOTAL PROJECT COST** $1,414,000

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION

The proposed redevelopment cost is based on industry standards and comparable developments in the Buffalo/Niagara Falls region. A pro forma analysis was conducted and included reasonable rental income, expense and vacancy assumptions. The project is projected to return a 10% on investment over a nine-year period.

The Main Street Business District contains numerous vacant and underutilized buildings and the restoration of prominent buildings such as 2002 Main Street, in conjunction with other DRI projects, has the potential to spur additional investment in the Bridge District. This project will change the face of the Main Street Business District, promote economic development and add needed office space in the Bridge District.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The project will require approvals from the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Historic Tax Credit is also administered by NYS Parks and the National Park Service. The proposed project will also require local approval and building permits from the City of Niagara Falls.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

CURRENT CONDITIONS AT 2002 MAIN STREET

PROPOSED RENOVATION OF 2002 MAIN STREET
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The project is currently in the concept/planning state. The construction timeline is anticipated to be approximately 12 months and can commence upon announcement of DRI award.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   - Select and engage designer

2. Design Phase (5 months) - Summer 2022
   - Develop construction documents and specifications for building renovation
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals (including historic tax credit submission)
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. Construction Phase (6 months) - Winter 2022
   - Abatement of asbestos, lead and mold
   - Interior and exterior renovations

PROJECT REPORTING
BCC will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring. They have identified an architect that they would like to partner with on the project and are planning to bid the construction portion to a general contractor. Project management services will be provided by Blue Cardinal studio.

Metrics to determine project success after implementation include:

- Vacancy rate
- Net revenue retail sales
- Number of full-time, living wage jobs created
- Number of visitors
CREATE A PUBLIC PLAZA ON MAIN STREET AT CLEVELAND AVENUE

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds: $295,000 (90%)
Total Project Cost: $325,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This project proposes the creation of a public plaza on Main Street at Cleveland Avenue. This project will transform underutilized lawn in front of the City of Niagara Falls Public Safety Building into an active destination for community gathering and public events. The Public Safety Building is a state-of-the-art building that opened in 2009 and is home to the Police Department and City Courts. At 135,000 square feet, the Public Safety Building is a stately structure that shows investment in the Main Street area. The development of a public plaza will add a community element to this site, drawing residents and visitors to participate in activities and passive recreation opportunities in the Bridge District.

Specific elements of the proposed project include:

- Decorative pavement treatment from the planned gateway at Main Street and Cleveland Avenue into the plaza space to connect the streetscape to the public plaza
- Permeable hardscape with landscaping to accommodate use as a plaza
- Installation of tree plantings, landscape features and light poles
- Flexible performance space

The property is owned by Bellevue Local Development Corporation, which is managed by the City and was established to develop and construct the Public Safety Building or other functions related to the administration of justice for the City. The concept of creating a public plaza in this location was established in the original plans for the Public Safety Building, but due to budgetary limitations was not completed. DRI funding will allow the City to move forward with this feature landmark, centrally located along Main Street in the Bridge District.
PROPERTIES OWNER/SPONSOR
The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor. Bellevue Local Development Corporation, an LLC of the City of Niagara Falls is the property owner of 1925 Main Street.

CAPACITY
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed project. The City has experience in implementing similar projects throughout the City. The City will maintain and sustain the project long-term.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor)
- Bellevue Local Development Corporation (property owner - an LLC of the City of Niagara Falls)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Enhance the signage and wayfinding system to improve user experience.** The plaza is at a key location for wayfinding and can serve as a meeting place node within the Bridge District. Specifically, the plaza is a potential location for signage and wayfinding for the Discover Niagara Shuttle.

- **Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events.** The public plaza will provide a centralized gathering space along Main Street that will enhance the District’s sense of place by incorporating a dedicated location for people to gather along the Main Street corridor.

- **Support complementary infill development that contributes to the District’s character.** Investment in the plaza will complement the investment in the Municipal Complex and serve as an iconic community commitment to the Bridge District.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** Utilizing this space for passive events and gathering space has the potential to drive private investment that can capitalize on increased resident and visitor traffic along Main Street.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The public plaza will provide opportunities for cultural enrichment of residents and visitors.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle System.** The public plaza will provide a comfortable place to sit and relax that encourages increased pedestrian activity in the Bridge District.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** The public plaza will encourage additional foot traffic and activity along the Main Street corridor and is anticipated to attract private investment to the Bridge District.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities.** The public plaza will activate the Main Street corridor during the daytime and familiarize residents and visitors with the Bridge District and welcome people back for other activities that may take place in the evening.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The public plaza helps to create a more walkable community by providing a place for respite along the Main Street corridor.
- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields.** The public plaza provides a feature attraction that welcomes people to enjoy the cultural and historic resources in this key waterfront neighborhood in the City of Niagara Falls.

- **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** With the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway, there is extraordinary potential to bring tourism into the Bridge District, this public plaza serves as a wayfinding node and meeting place for visitors to connect the diverse tourism offerings of this commercial area.

### ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

**Short-term benefits:**

- Convert an underutilized grassy area into an attraction along Main Street
- Provide a space for community events
- Provide a centralized public location for Bridge District wayfinding and public art

**Mid-term benefits:**

- Increase pedestrian traffic in the Bridge District
- Provide a visible public space on Main Street to link to Whirlpool Street via Cleveland Avenue and bring visitors into the Bridge District

**Long-term benefits:**

- Attract additional development and investment in the Bridge District.
- Serve as a destination in the Bridge District that connects to a wide array of natural, historic and cultural resources

### PUBLIC SUPPORT

The proposed project was well supported by the Local Planning Committee during the DRI planning process. The proposed project also aligns with guiding planning documents in the City of Niagara Falls and it is identified in the Bridge District Urban Design Plan. The public plaza will help achieve Main Street Business District Revitalization Study goals of creating a place for gatherings and festivals, restoring a “sense of place,” improving the pedestrian’s experience and enhancing the area aesthetics. In addition, the public plaza is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive principles of creating green streetscape connections that link the riverfront amenities to the City and its neighborhoods.
JOBS CREATED
No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Installation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscaping and Site Amenities</td>
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<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
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<td>Including design and contingencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED $295,000
TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES $30,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST $325,000

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate for this project was developed by a licensed landscape architect and is based on standard construction estimating methods and similar projects. The project is a justified use of funds based on its use as a community gathering space on the Main Street Business District. The plaza is anticipated to draw people to the Bridge District, which will ultimately translate into additional spending from local consumers and tourists. Plazas are known to contribute to business vibrancy and reduce commercial building vacancies. In the case of Union Square North in Manhattan, NY, the addition of plazas, simplified intersections, and installation of a bike lane reduced commercial vacancies by 49%.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require local approvals and permits for construction from the City of Niagara Falls.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

EXISTING MAIN STREET/CLEVELAND AVENUE VACANT SPACE

PROPOSED PUBLIC PLAZA
**TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS**

All preliminary cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeframe for implementation is approximately one year and can commence upon the award of the DRI grant.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - City of Niagara Falls issue RFP and execute contract for design services

2. **Design Phase (6 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents
   - Award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (4 months) - Winter 2022**
   - Construction of public plaza

**PROJECT REPORTING**

The City will hire an experienced landscape architecture and engineering firm to oversee all technical components of the project including design, permitting, approvals and construction administration. Upon completion of the plaza, the impact the space has on neighborhood revitalization will be measured by:

- Number of visitors utilizing the space
- Number of events and attendance at each event
- Private investment along Main Street
- User feedback
PROJECT 14
CREATE AN OUTDOOR EATING SPACE AND MUSEUM AT DICAMILLO BAKERY

DRI FUNDING REQUEST
Total DRI Funds:       $250,000 (38%)
Total Project Cost    $650,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DiCamillo Bakery is a locally-owned family business with five locations in the Western New York region. The bakery’s corporate office and production facility is located on Linwood Avenue between Whirlpool Street and Main Street adjacent to the Niagara River. This project proposes the renovation and expansion of facility amenities to enhance the customer experience, increase production, and celebrate the bakery’s history in Niagara Falls. Phase I of the project includes façade improvements and renovation of the retail space and was completed in Summer 2020. The proposed DRI project continues the progress of these improvements and will create a tourist-friendly, four-season anchor in the Bridge District.

Specific components of the project include:

- Creation of an outdoor dining space for patrons that will attract and retain visitors to the area
- Site and landscaping enhancements, including street tree and plantings as well as sidewalk repair, to beautify the building’s exterior appearance
- Creation of a 360 square foot gallery space to display the bakery’s historic baking equipment and relics
- Purchase of state-of-the-art baking equipment, including a flour hopper system and mixer, to expand the facility’s production

Restrictions on business operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a reduction in product sales resulting in reduced income revenue streams for local businesses. Small businesses in the DRI area, such as DiCamillo Bakery were impacted particularly hard. This project will help to retain local workforce during a period when job cuts are prevalent, and also provides access to healthy, affordable food options.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
The property is owned by the DiCamillo family. Skip DiCamillo represents the family as the property owner and project sponsor.

CAPACITY
The DiCamillo family has operated a successful business in the Bridge District for nearly 50 years. The business has implemented several grant-funded projects, including a façade improvement grant from New York State, and most recently, a $200,000 Small Business Support Fund Grant from the City of Niagara Falls. Enhancements to the building façade and interior retail space was completed in Summer 2020. As successful third generation business owners within Western New York, the DiCamillo’s are committed to the area and intends to expand production of goods within Niagara Falls and the region.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- DiCamillo Bakery (property owner and project sponsor)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Improve the Bridge District’s sense of place through streetscape enhancements.** The DiCamillo Bakery is part of the neighborhoods brand and the new gallery space will help tell the story of the bakery and all of the people who have contributed to its success as employees, owners, and dedicated customers.

- **Create public gathering spaces to support year-round events.** The bakery operates year around and the new gallery space can be used for small gatherings. Additionally, the outdoor seating can be used as a formal or informal event/gathering space.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** As a third-generation business, transitioning to the fourth generation, the DiCamillo Bakery has a rich history in the Bridge Street District, which will be celebrated by the proposed gallery space. The purchase of new equipment will support the continued success and growth of this business, which is an incredibly important institution in the area.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** The proposed outdoor dining area will expand access to this asset. Improvement to the public realm, such as sidewalk repair, will make it safer for patrons to access the bakery, particularly people who are wheelchair users or have mobility challenges.

- **Support existing businesses within the Bridge District to ensure their long-term sustainability.** The project will enhance the customer experience, increase the facility’s production, and celebrate the bakery’s history in Niagara Falls, which will contribute to the continued success of the business in the years to come.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** The project includes street plantings, sidewalk improvements, and other investments that will increase the customer and visitor experience in the area.

- **Create a vibrant daytime atmosphere that complements nightlife and after hour activities.** Currently bakery patrons park and walk into the building. Adding outdoor seating will literally put people on the street, which will bring the energy and vibrancy of the bakery into the public realm.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in infrastructure on “smart growth” principles.** The project will support the smart growth principles of walkability, sense of place, compact building design, and community collaboration.

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The project represents a significant investment in the Bridge District neighborhood.
• Develop and cultivate the WNY talent pool that includes workers with advancement potential, underemployed, unemployed, and special populations. The expansion of the outdoor seating area will require the bakery to staff 1-2 additional workers per shift, expanding employment opportunities in the community.

• Foster and support entrepreneurs. The DiCamillo’s have run a successful business in the area for 50 years and are supportive of, and mentors to, new entrepreneurs and businesses in the community.

• Facilitate growth of quality tourism product. The bakery currently attracts tourists and regional consumers to the DRI throughout the year. The expansion will allow the business to increase its visibility, accommodate more patrons, and tell its story of the business and the community.

ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

• Enhance site and building aesthetics
• Increase walkability and connectivity to local assets
• Seating/dining opportunities for customers
• Expand production capabilities

Mid-term benefits:

• Increase number of customers and diners
• Increase tourism opportunities and tourist spending
• Increase activity year-round
• Create expanded job opportunities in the Bridge District

Long-term benefits:

• Increase surrounding property values
• Activate location adjacent to recreational tourism opportunities
• Increase size of trade area
• Demonstrate the ability of businesses to succeed in the Bridge District

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The bakery has a strong customer base that is excited about the proposed improvements to the existing bakery. The project was also one of the most highly supported projects by the LPC and public throughout the DRI planning process.
JOBS CREATED
The proposed dining space will create additional seating, which will require at least up to two new full-time staff per shift to serve those customers seasonally. The purchase of new equipment is also expected to expand production capacity, which will likely necessitate additional hiring as the business grows.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY
The project sponsor is the property owner; therefore, no acquisition of real property is needed.

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase I</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Improvements</td>
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<td>Facade improvements and interior retail renovation</td>
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<td>Small Business Support Grant Fund</td>
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<td><strong>Phase II</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Improvements</td>
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<td>Outdoor dining space with tables/chairs, sidewalk repair and installation of permeable pavers, new lighting and fencing</td>
<td>$117,521</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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<td>Museum/Gallery Space</td>
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<td>Demolition and creation of a museum/gallery space</td>
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<td>Private Equity (secured)</td>
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<td>Equipment Purchase</td>
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<td>Purchase/installation of permanent flour hopper and mixer</td>
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<td>Soft Costs</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>$650,000</td>
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</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The cost estimate was prepared by a licensed landscape architect and licensed architect and is based on standard construction estimating methods. The project is a justified use of funds based on its ability to support business growth in the community, enhance neighborhood quality of life and expand tourism opportunities in the DRI area. DiCamillo Bakery is a largely successful business with its corporate facility located in the DRI area. Improvements that support this business and provide opportunities for its growth is crucial to attracting people to the DRI area and creating an active streetscape. Walkability improvements planned along Whirlpool Street will provide a connection from Niagara Gorge users to the DiCamillo Bakery. The proposed gallery and outdoor dining space will be a destination and attraction for the anticipated increase of tourists in Niagara Falls.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require approvals and permits from the City of Niagara Falls.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

PROPOSED BUILDING AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS
EXISTING INTERIOR CONDITIONS

PROPOSED MUSEUM AND GALLERY SPACE
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS

The project can be implemented immediately upon announcement of DRI grant award. The anticipated timeline for project construction is approximately 12 months.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - Owners to secure contract for design services
   - Purchase and install flour hopper system and mixer

2. **Design Phase (3 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Secure contract for construction services

3. **Construction Phase (8 months) - Winter 2022**
   - Install outdoor seating and infrastructure improvements (1-2 months to complete)
   - Complete interior renovations (8 months to complete)

PROJECT REPORTING

DiCamillo Bakery will hire an architect and landscape architect to oversee the implementation and construction and continue to monitor the economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after construction completion.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Increased pedestrian traffic along Linwood Avenue
- Increased bakery production
- Increased retail sales
- Increased tourism spending in DRI area
- Increased private investment
DRI FUNDING REQUEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DRI Funds:</th>
<th>$235,000 (60%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>$390,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Built in 1921 as a luxury movie house, the Rapids Theatre has a varied history as an entertainment attraction in the Bridge District. Although it has seen periods of neglect, since its purchase by the current owner in 2007 there has been nearly $3 million invested in renovations including new sound and lighting system, an outdoor electronic marquee above the theatre doors, a maplewood bar, new floor, and art-deco plaster repaired walls. The venue welcomes a variety of musical acts and serves as a space for weddings and special events. These events serve to activate Main Street in the Bridge District.

The proposed project includes needed repairs to the Rapids Theatre as well as improvements to 1701 Main Street, which abuts the south side of the theatre and has the same property owner as the theatre. Plans for 1701 Main Street are to redevelop the currently vacant building into the Barrel Pub and Cigar Bar. This planned development will serve as a complementary dining and entertainment attraction that will offer facilities not currently available at the Rapids Theatre or in the Bridge District.

Specific proposed repairs and improvements include:

- Exterior and interior painting at the Rapids Theatre
- New interior flooring for 14,000 square feet at the Rapids Theatre
- Miscellaneous ceiling repairs at the Rapids Theatre
- A stamped concrete patio between the Rapids Theatre and the neighboring building
- Fabrication and installation of a 4’ x 228’ single sided LED digital display screen that will extend across the Rapids Theatre, across the fence of the adjacent courtyard, and onto the planned Barrel Pub and Cigar Bar building.

Normally, the summer months are the busiest time of year for the Rapids Theatre; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic planned performances were cancelled, resulting in a reduction in ticket sales and revenue. The proposed project is intended to support this small business by enhancing the venue’s visibility along the Main Street Business corridor and improving the outdoor experience for performance attendees, while also helping to address significant job losses in the hospitality industry.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
The Rapids Theatre, Inc. is the project sponsor. The managing member of the corporation is John L. Hutchins. Mr. Hutchins is also the owner of 1711 Main Street and 1701 Main Street (adjacent property).

CAPACITY
John Hutchins, the managing member of the Rapids Theatre, Inc., has owned and operated several businesses and properties over the last 40 years. Mr. Hutchins has also been responsible for the renovations to the Rapids Theatre since 2007 and the successful operation of the Theatre since its public opening in 2009.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- John Hutchins (property owner and project sponsor)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Enhance the signage and wayfinding system to improve user experience.** The digital display screen across two buildings will serve to unify this portion of the streetscape as a visually appealing major attraction and be a key wayfinding element on this anchor institution.

- **Support complementary infill development that contributes to the District’s character.** The improvements to the Rapid Theatre and the neighboring property will help to support the development of the Barrel Pub and Cigar Bar, a complementary dining and entertainment venue connected to the Rapids Theatre via the improved courtyard.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The project improvements will demonstrate the commitment to preserving and enhancing the Rapids Theatre as a key historic and cultural resource along Main Street.

- **Support existing businesses within the Bridge District to ensure their long-term sustainability.** The Rapids Theatre has been a cultural destination in the Bridge District since 2009, repairs and improvements to the building and the neighboring property will help to sustain the theatre and expand its potential to develop this key resident, visitor and investor attraction.

- **Facilitate a mix of public and private infrastructure investment in the District.** This project will help to support private investment in the Bridge District, complementing infrastructure investment in the public realm.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods, brownfields.** The Rapids Theatre is one of the anchor institutions in the Bridge District that brings people into the neighborhood. Investment in this resource has the potential to promote investment in the surrounding area.

- **Foster and support entrepreneurs.** The current owner purchased the building at a time when it was in significant disrepair and focused on restoring it as a historic entertainment venue in the Bridge District; this project will support continued efforts to maintain and expand this Niagara Falls destination.

- **Facilitate growth of quality tourism product.** The Rapids Theatre has been able to bring in bands of national reputation, but it’s the quality of the venue attracts people and bands to come back for repeat shows and events. Investment in the building will foster continued growth of the Rapids Theatre as a tourism destination for Western New York and Southern Ontario.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

- Improved visual appeal of the streetscape
- Continued renovation of a historic building on Main Street

Mid-term benefits:

- Create a popular and attractive tourism destination for residents and visitors
- More recognition as an entertainment venue
- Attract more visitors to the area

Long-term benefits:

- Encourages additional private investment in the Bridge District
- Increase surrounding property values

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The proposed project was well supported by the LPC throughout the DRI planning process. The proposed project is consistent with several City planning documents, including enhancing the area’s aesthetics, preserves and enhances the existing architectural history and encourages private sector investment, building on a core asset.

JOBS CREATED

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY

The project sponsor is the property owner; therefore, no acquisition of real property is needed.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sign Fabrication and Installation</td>
<td>$215,600</td>
<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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<td>Interior and Exterior Paint</td>
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<td>Private Equity (secured)</td>
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<td>New Flooring and Ceiling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stamped Concrete</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$235,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$155,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL PROJECT COST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$390,000</td>
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FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The budget for the proposed project is based on detailed cost estimates from a construction management company and a sign company. The project is a justified use of funds based on its ability to enhance a destination that has brought growth and revitalization to the Bridge District and is working to continue to expand its potential and the potential of the surrounding area. Investment in the Rapids Theatre and the planned private development of the Barrel Pub & Grill on the neighboring property shows dedication to the transformation of the area by the property owner and project sponsor.

The Rapids Theatre has been in operation since 2009 and is an established concert and event venue. The concert hall holds 1,700 people and brings in a variety of musical genres and other events. The Rapids Theatre is also an award-winning venue for weddings and special events. Demonstrating the success of the venue, it was named WeddingWire.com’s Couples Choice Award for six consecutive years, beginning in 2014. Investment in the exterior and interior of the building will promote the continuation of a growth trend at Rapids Theatre that was at 25% in its 8th year of operation.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
The proposed project will require local approvals and permits for construction by the City of Niagara Falls.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
The Rapids Theatre, Inc., is prepared to begin work on the project upon selection announcement, its project readiness is a key advantage. In addition, the private project at 1701 Main Street is anticipated to begin in 2020, with the proposed projects furthering these redevelopment efforts for a larger impact to the Bridge District.

1. Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals

2. Design Phase (3 months) - Spring 2022
   • Develop construction documents and specifications
   • Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   • Secure contract for construction services

3. Construction Phase (6 months) - Fall 2022
   • Interior and exterior improvements

PROJECT REPORTING
The Rapids Theatre will be responsible for project oversight and the technical aspects will be administered by the construction management company and the sign company for their respective work on the proposed project.

Metrics to determine the impact on downtown revitalization will include:

• Increased number of events
• Increased attendance at events
• Private investment on Main Street
• User feedback
STRENGTHEN THE ENTRYWAY TO THE HEART, LOVE & SOUL ORGANIZATION

DRI FUNDING REQUEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DRI Funds:</th>
<th>$220,000 (75%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>$292,800</td>
</tr>
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</table>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Heart Love & Soul, located on Ontario Avenue, is a food pantry, dining room, and social care provider that offers services for thousands of economically disadvantaged residents in the City’s North End neighborhoods. The organization is currently in the process of expanding their facility and will open a new 6,000 square foot space behind the existing building, known as ‘Daybreak’. This expansion will provide multi-purpose rooms and computer labs dedicated for training, education and services for residents.

The proposed project includes improvements to the existing building and site to architecturally link both buildings and create a cohesive campus. Specific improvements to the building and site include:

- Construction of a new 288 square foot entrance to the main building
- Installation of new sidewalk, signage, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities in front of the new entrance

The proposed building entrance on the main building in combination with site improvements will enhance both the appearance and functionality of the Heart, Love and Soul facility by creating an attractive, functional and accessible space for community members.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in the Buffalo-Niagara region has almost tripled to 14.3% in June 2020 from a rate of 5.1% in January 2020, creating an increased need for the availability of these types of services. The implementation of this project will help execute the organization’s mission to support disadvantaged residents, especially in a struggling economic atmosphere in which COVID-19 has exacerbated; by providing access to training opportunities to put people back to work and ensuring those who are currently unemployed or rely on this food pantry do not go hungry.
PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR
Heart Love & Soul, Inc. is the property owner and project sponsor.

CAPACITY
Heart Love & Soul, Inc. will be responsible for implementation of the proposed project. The organization, whose Board of Directors is appointed by the President of Niagara University, has demonstrated capacity to implement and sustain the proposed project. The Daybreak facility is a $2,000,000 project that is currently under construction and slated to open in late 2020. The design for the new entrance to Heart, Love & Soul has been produced by the same architect (smartDESIGN) that designed Daybreak. TM Montante is the anticipated construction manager for the proposed project.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- Heart, Love & Soul (property owner and project sponsor)
- TM Montante (construction manager)

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and restoration of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors.** The proposed project involves the enhancement of an existing building within the DRI area. This facility provides a multitude of services that serves existing residents within the Bridge District and larger community.

- **Support the availability of professional resources and neighborhood amenities to ensure a high quality of life for existing and new residents.** Heart, Love & Soul is a non-profit organization that serves the local Niagara Falls community. The proposed project will allow the organization to expand and develop programming and necessary services and amenities for existing residents, which will also draw additional residents to the Bridge District.

- **Support educational institutions and promote entrepreneurship and workforce development opportunities.** The proposed project will enhance access to Heart, Love & Soul’s Daybreak facility, which will provide resident access to computer labs and educational and training programs.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, village, neighborhoods and brownfields.** The proposed project invests in a local organization that serves existing residents of the DRI area. Investment in this organization will allow continued growth and services for the local community.

- **Develop and cultivate the WNY talent pool that includes workers with advancement potential, underemployed, unemployed and special populations.** The expansion of the Daybreak facility will allow the organization to continue and expand educational and training services they provide to the community, which are anticipated to provide skills to a currently underemployed area in the City of Niagara Falls.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

- Improve building and site accessibility for users
- Increase pedestrian linkages to the Heart, Love & Soul facility

Mid-term benefits:

- Increase resident access to necessary services
- Increase the number of residents in the Bridge District

Long-term benefits:

- Positively impact neighboring property values
- Increase skilled workforce in the Bridge District

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The proposed project was well supported by the LPC throughout the DRI planning process.

JOBS CREATED

No jobs will directly result from the implementation of this project.

ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY

Heart, Love & Soul is the property owner of the proposed project; therefore, no acquisition of real property is necessary.
**PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES**
The table provides a summary of the proposed project’s budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition of Existing Entrance</td>
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<td>Building Entrance Construction</td>
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<td>Site Improvements</td>
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<td>Soft Costs</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</strong></td>
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<td>$220,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>$72,800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>$292,800</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION**
Heart Love & Soul hired an architect and development firm to develop cost estimates and construction documents. The budget is based on standard construction estimating methods. The project is justified based on its ability to connect the community to necessary services for low to mid income residents, such as a food pantry, community space and educational and workforce training programs. Heart, Love & Soul is an important asset for the community and the proposed project will allow the organization to continue providing services to existing residents.

**REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**
The proposed project will require local approvals and building permits.
IMAGES OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

EXISTING BUILDING ENTRANCE

PROPOSED BUILDING ENTRANCE AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS
TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS
All preliminary engineering and cost estimating has been completed for this project by a licensed engineer and construction management company. The timeframe for implementation is approximately 10 months and can commence upon the DRI award.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (2 months) - Winter 2021**
   - Heart, Love & Soul to engage architect for final design services

2. **Design Phase (4 months) - Summer 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Secure contract for construction services

3. **Construction Phase (4 months) - Fall 2022**
   - Construct new building entrance and complete façade improvements
   - Complete site improvements

PROJECT REPORTING
Heart Love & Soul will be responsible for project oversight and monitoring of project advancement. Heart Love & Soul has hired an architectural firm to oversee all technical aspects of the design, permitting, approvals, and construction administration.

Metrics to determine project success after implementation include:

- Increase in residents utilizing the facility and services
- Increase in programming
- User feedback
**PROJECT 17**

**IMPLEMENT A SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING SYSTEM**

**DRI FUNDING REQUEST**

| Total DRI Funds: | $135,000 (90%) |
| Total Project Cost | $150,000 |

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Bridge District is an area of rich historic and natural significance due to its role during the Underground Railroad era and its adjacency to the Niagara River. Several destinations, such as the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (NFURHC), Suspension Bridge, and Niagara Gorge, draw a significant number of visitors to the area. Enhancement of the signage and wayfinding system to identify and guide visitors to key destinations is needed in the Bridge District. The project proposes the implementation of identification and directional signage throughout the DRI area to increase awareness of key tourist destinations.

Proposed signs within the DRI area include:

- One identification sign for the NFURHC;
- One interpretative sign for the First Congregational Church;
- Vehicular directional signage on Whirlpool Street and Main Street; and
- Discover Niagara Shuttle locational signs on Main Street.
**PROPERTY OWNER/SPONSOR**
The City of Niagara Falls is the project sponsor. The City will work with the New York State Department of State (owner of Whirlpool Street and Main Street) and USA Discover Niagara to implement wayfinding signage in the DRI area.

**CAPACITY**
The City of Niagara Falls will be responsible for the long-term implementation and maintenance of the proposed project. The City has experience in implementing similar wayfinding signage for the Discover Niagara Shuttle service and other tourism signage in the City.
PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Niagara Falls (project sponsor and property owner – International Train Station)
- New York State Department of Transportation (property owner – Main Street and Whirlpool Street)
- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center / Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
- First Congregational Church
- Discover Niagara

STRATEGIES

The proposed project is aligned to numerous strategies that are intended to fulfill the established Niagara Falls DRI goals. These strategies include:

- **Enhance the signage and wayfinding system to improve the user experience.** This project proposes the installation of wayfinding signage to identify key destinations and increase tourist exploration within the Bridge District.

- **Support existing historic, recreational and cultural institutions and assets to increase tourism opportunities.** The proposed project will identify the Underground Railroad Heritage Center, a significant cultural and historic institution in the Bridge District. The project is anticipated to increase the number of visitors to the Bridge District due to enhanced guidance.

- **Facilitate public infrastructure improvements to encourage private investment.** Signage and wayfinding is a public infrastructure improvement that will connect residents and visitors to local destinations in the Bridge District. Due to ease of access, tourism is anticipated to increase in the Bridge District which will drive additional investment in the DRI area.

- **Improve access to local and natural assets.** Additional signage and wayfinding within the Bridge District is intended to identify and direct visitors to key destinations.

- **Encourage visitors to explore the Bridge District on foot or via the Discover Niagara Shuttle system.** The project proposes the installation of Discover Niagara Shuttle signage within the Bridge District to increase the use of the service and visitation to key attractions in the area.

The proposed project also aligns with several WNY REDC economic development strategies including:

- **Invest in downtowns, villages, neighborhoods and brownfields.** The proposed project is intended to provide easier navigation to key destinations and assets, which will increase tourism and resident quality of life in the Bridge District.

- **Facilitate the growth of quality tourism product.** The proposed signage and wayfinding system improvements is anticipated to increase the use of the Discover Niagara Shuttle service, which transports tourists from the City of Niagara Falls to the Village of Lewiston.
ANTICIPATED REVITALIZATION BENEFITS

Short-term benefits:

- Increase visibility of DRI assets, including the NFURHC and the Discover Niagara Shuttle system
- Activate tourist destinations in the City
- Celebrate the area’s cultural heritage

Mid-term benefits:

- Increase the number of tourists in the DRI area
- Increase tourist spending in the DRI area

Long-term benefits:

- Support expansion of tourism opportunities in the City
- Increase quality of life in the DRI area

PUBLIC SUPPORT
Wayfinding and interpretive signage was identified in the City’s DRI application as an important project to increase public access to key tourism assets in the DRI area. The project was highly supported by the LPC during the DRI planning process. Similar signage for the Discover Niagara Shuttle system was installed previously and has been successful and well-liked by the community.
PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES
The table provides a summary of the proposed project's budget and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>AMOUNT ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification Sign</td>
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<td>DRI Funds (proposed)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Sign</td>
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<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular Directional Signs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discover Niagara Shuttle Location Signs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soft Costs</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL DRI FUNDS REQUESTED</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROJECT COST</strong></td>
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<td>$150,000</td>
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</table>

FEASIBILITY AND COST JUSTIFICATION
The general locations for sign installation have been pre-determined based on user input and existing pedestrian/vehicular travel patterns. Specific locations and messaging will be determined during the detailed design phase of the project. Signage for the Discover Niagara Shuttle has been installed in other City locations and will serve as the design basis for future signs in the Bridge District.

The cost estimate for this project was developed by a licensed landscape architect and is based on standard construction estimating methods and similar projects. This project is a justified use of costs based on its ability to improve tourism opportunities in the DRI area and benefit the residents and visitors of the City. A cohesive signage and wayfinding system in the Bridge District will guide users and increase access to key destinations within the Bridge District. This ease of access is anticipated to increase the number of potential visitors and tourists to the area, which will result in increased consumer spending in the DRI area.
IMAGES OF PROPOSED CONDITIONS
The installation of wayfinding signage is proposed throughout the Bridge District. Representative examples of the types of signage that can be installed are shown below.
**TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT READINESS**

All cost estimating has been completed for this project. The timeframe for implementation is approximately 10 months and can commence upon the award of the DRI grant.

1. **Immediate Next Steps (4 months) - Winter 2021**
   - City of Niagara Falls to issue RFP for design services/fabrication

2. **Design Phase (2 months) - Spring 2022**
   - Develop construction documents and specifications for installation
   - Obtain necessary permits and approvals
   - Issue bid documents and award bid to contractor

3. **Construction Phase (4 months) - Fall 2022**
   - Installation of signage and wayfinding

**PROJECT REPORTING**

The City of Niagara Falls will oversee the implementation and construction of all wayfinding signs. The City will continue to monitor economic impacts and perceived benefits for the project after installation of signs are completed.

Potential metrics to measure impacts and benefits include:

- Increased visitors to the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, International Train Station and First Congregational Church
- Increased users of the Discover Niagara Shuttle service
- Increased consumer spending
- User feedback
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED PROJECTS

During the DRI planning process, the LPC also identified projects that are aligned to the Niagara Falls DRI vision and goals but are not recommended for DRI funding. While this project had strong community support and would also contribute downtown revitalization, there may be more suitable funding streams to assist with implementation.
SUSPENSION BRIDGE STORE

RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST
$404,000

LOCATION
1601 Main Street

DESCRIPTION
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul purchased the 4,000 SF building located at 1601 Main Street in 2017. The project involves the interior and exterior renovation of the currently vacant building into a thrift store to serve Bridge District residents. The retail store would sell gently used home goods and clothing. The project is anticipated to add a small-scale retail storefront to the Main Street Business District, which was identified as a need in the market demand analysis conducted as part of the DRI process.