



**Western New York
Downtown Revitalization Initiative
and Smart Growth Community Fund**

APPLICATION

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

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: Town of Ripley

Downtown Name: Known Hamlet of Ripley

County Name: Chautauqua

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

Provide an attractive and welcoming gateway for those entering NYS from the West attracting visitors and businesses to the Hamlet as a catalyst for implementation of the Main Street Revitalization Plan.

JUSTIFICATION

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

The area selected for the project is Main Street (NYS Route 20 from Wiley Road to the East and Shortman Road to the West) and State Street (NYS Route 76 from NYS Route 5 to the North and the Railroad crossing to the South). The Town would also request to include Shortman Road.

We have completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan for the Hamlet of Ripley. That plan has identified that the derelict condition of the Thruway Exit at Ripley handicaps the Town's ability to attract visitors. In addition, the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP includes the Hamlet of Ripley and State Street as targets for development.

The Town has invested in the area by securing funds to bring water and sewer to Shortman Road. Encouraging travelers to exit the Thruway and travel Route 20 into Chautauqua County would enhance the ability to market

Ripley and improve tourism volume for the County as a whole. Tourism is a key component of WNY REDC's goals for our region.

The identified area for this project also contains two shovel-ready sites. One is located on the corner of Route 76 and North State Street. This site has water and sewer services available. A second certified shovel-ready site is located on East Main Street (Route 20 between Shortman Road and Barnes Road, adjacent to the NYS Thruway).

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

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

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



Ripley DRI 4.pdf

The area selected for the project is Main Street (NYS Route 20 from Wiley Road to the East and Shortman Road to the West) and State Street (NYS Route 76 from NYS Route 5 to the North and the Railroad crossing to the South).

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

The Town of Ripley, with a population of 2500, has supported a downtown area in the past. We supported a hardware store, grocery store, pharmacy, barber shops, and bars, and a bank. We now only have a bank and a hardware store. A history of downtown fires destroyed many of our businesses. Most were not rebuilt. Until recently NYS gas taxes were much higher than PA gas taxes and businesses depending on gasoline sales also closed.

There is good news. The gasoline taxes are now equable and slightly in our favor. Water infrastructure investment on the Lake Road has caused a small building boom on Lake Erie. The existing stock of housing in the hamlet is experiencing quick turnover when listed on the market. We attribute much of this movement to be a result of sending our junior and senior high school students to Chautauqua Lake High School on a unique tuitioning arrangement.

We have recently completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan that includes research on the types of services the Town is willing to support. The Draft Plan is located online at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pc0uAZKLVwCg7zPIPM_VY8UoPQkF0NKv/view?usp=sharing

A developed, attractive Gateway will encourage families to get off thruway when entering NY and stopping in the Hamlet.

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

Recent investments in the DRI area include:

Water and sewer investment at the Gateway Site connecting to the Hamlet will stimulate growth at the Thruway exit and encourage travelers to stop and travel in Chautauqua County.

Prior expansion of water service to the Lake Road (NYS Route 5) has resulted in an increase in upscale housing development on the Lake.

The town has invested in planning efforts with a just completed Main Street Revitalization Plan and participation in the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP process that also includes projects in the Hamlet.

The Town is planning a solar energy field (located in the proposed DRI area on North State Street) to supply electricity to the Fire Department, Ripley Central School District, Ripley Town Library, Water and Sewer Department, Highway Department and the Town Hall.

A Shared-services agreement with a neighboring Township allowed us to demolish a derelict building at the center of town and replace it with a new Town Park. Town staff and Board members were certified in asbestos abatement in order to make the project affordable.

Tuitioning our Junior High and Senior High School to Chautauqua Lake Central School has saved tax payer money and made our community more attractive to families with children.

We have received a \$240k grant from DOS for the development of our 14.5 acre Town Park on Lake Erie through LWRP funds.

An additional water project has been approved and we are awaiting funding extend town water to additional homes on NYS Route 5. This project will enable the Town to interconnect with the Town of Westfield through an intermunicipal agreement. There are numerous lots awaiting development along East Lake Road.

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

The extension of Town water lines to the Lake Erie shore has led to the construction of many homes on the Lake. The families attracted to this area are more likely to be professionals than the average Ripley resident. Technology has allowed many of the new residents to live on the Lake while working for firms located elsewhere. Most of the families who have built in this area are from outside the County. This construction boom has reduced the tax load on the residents of the Hamlet.

Young families now are more likely to consider Ripley as our Junior High and Senior High School students now attend Chautauqua Lake High School. This has improved both the quantity and quality of options for our students and also improved the range of social interactions for our students.

The craft beverage industry has also had a positive impact on the economy of Ripley. These facilities also serve as event venues. It is our plan that an attractive and welcoming gateway to New York State will encourage travelers to exit the Thruway at the tolls and travel through the Chautauqua to experience all the Town and County have to offer.

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

Ripley is the Western Gateway to New York State. The fact that Thruway Tolls begin at this point is a small incentive for travelers to exit and explore at that point. We plan to provide more incentives. The more that through traffic can be encouraged the better it is for all Chautauqua County Businesses.

In the Hamlet we have a former Convenience Store that is proposed to be developed as a venue for small shops. Interested investors include a Butcher shop, a local produce shop, a bakery shop, a veteran's crafting shop, and other craft and antique vendors. The surrounding communities have grocery stores with meat/produce/bakery departments, but no "boutique" shops providing these services exist are locally available.

Recent population trends have shown a larger than expected growth from residents who are newly retired. This is a result of former residents who have returned after completing careers elsewhere. These returning residents have provided a rich pool of volunteers for community activities.

Young families are choosing Ripley because we have improved our educational opportunities through a contract with Chautauqua Lake Central School. Housing in the Hamlet remains affordable and upscale homes are being constructed on the Lake.

Wineries and Breweries, vineyards and hops abound. Travelers are often quite curious about the sudden appearance of acres of vineyards. There are three wineries within one mile of the Thruway exit. After visiting these businesses, travelers may continue on Route 20 to visit many more.

The historic Hamilton Mansion provides an upscale Air BNB in the Main Street Revitalization area.

The Main Street plan includes provisions to promote cycling along Route 20. Plan will make downtown bikeable and walkable and surrounding areas are already heavily used by cyclists and the northern border of the project is on the Seaway Trail that is known as the “Northern Tier” for cyclists traveling across the country in the summer.

The owner of the old post office building wants the building to be used as a community center and a venue for art and theater.

Ripley Beach Town Park is being revitalized with a \$240k grant through the CFA from the LWRP project.

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

A new Zoning map has been developed with assistance from the county planning department.

We have developed a Main Street Revitalization Plan and we are participating in the Northern Chautauqua LWRP process that also includes Main Street and the South State Street corridor.

We are in the process of installing a solar energy field that will serve all taxing entities in the Town of Ripley. These include the Public Library, Ripley Central School, The Town of Ripley, and the Fire Department.

The members of the Main Street Revitalization Steering Committee will form the core of a volunteer downtown management structure.

The Ripley Town Board makes a priority of remaining current in all non-discrimination and age friendly policies.

- 7) Public Support.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and

implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The Town of Ripley has just completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan funded through the CFA.

The Steering committee remains active and is anxious to put plans into action. The Town Board has endorsed this application and a Public Hearing was conducted on May 29, 2018, to seek additional input and comment.

The Town of Ripley will be the Lead Agency for this project and the Deputy Town Supervisor, Michael Rowe, will be the contact person.

The Town Supervisor and the Deputy Supervisor remain involved in the development of the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP planning process.

The Ripley Town Supervisor is chairman of the Chautauqua County Planning Board.

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

The old feed mill next to the RR tracks on South State has been purchase and work begun to develop a Brewery and Restaurant. Assistance from the State would speed development.

Investors are interested in the purchase of the old Stop and Shop on Main Street and additional small businesses wish to rent space. Proposals exist for a butcher shop, a local produce market, bakery, flower shop, craft shop, and antique shop.

The private owner of the old post office would like to offer his building as a community center for use as meeting space, art gallery, and performance space. He is working on the interior himself, but is interested in any assistance that would be available.

The Odd Fellows Hall has been included in the LWRP and the Main Street plans. This is one of the only old traditional main street facades located in the Hamlet. It is proposed to become an open air public facility. A preliminary plan for the project has been completed by Clarke, Patterson.

When water and sewer projects are completed on Shortman Road (Thruway exit) it is anticipated that a hotel would decide to locate there. There are no hotels available along the NYS Thruway until the Fredonia exit.

Gas stations are now competitive with PA. It is likely that the Thruway exit would attract such a business.

A streetscape plan has been included in the Main Street Plan.

Land has been acquired and the Town is meeting with NYSERDA about options for developing a solar project on North State Street.

A local medical professional is exploring developing the old Town Building on South State Street as a site for his business with space for related services.

A local ice cream manufacturer has acquired a former bar/restaurant on Main Street as a facility to produce ice cream and also to sell ice cream.

The owner of the Hardware Store has plans to expand business to include lumber. He has applied to become a certified MWBE. He will be the only such certified business in Chautauqua County.

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

The Town has completed numerous water projects in recent years and are currently proceeding with sewer and water expansion. We are currently managing a \$240,000 grant through the LWRP for the development of Ripley Beach Town Park. We work closely with the County Planning Department.

Town labor (water and sewer/ highway dept) can provide labor for many projects (prevailing wage is an incentive for involvement). We have used them in the past for water lines /demolition projects.

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

Attached are letters of support from the Chautauqua County Executive and the Northern Chautauqua County Community Foundation.

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

EMAIL SUBMISSION ADDRESS

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

Western New York NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov



Ripley DRI Target Area

LEGEND

 DRI Target Area

Lake Erie

Shovel Ready Site

INTERSTATE 90

STATE

COMMUNITY BUILDING

PROPOSED SOLAR ARRAY

TOWN HALL

MAIN

HISTORIC FEED MILL

NYS Certified Shovel Ready Site

SHORTMAN

RT20



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

