The DRI Action Plan presents a range of coordinated and interconnected economic development, transportation, housing, and community projects, initiatives and other actions that support the Vision of the DRI Plan. The projects included in the Action Plan are not limited to projects that are proposed for DRI funding. The goal of the Action Plan is to present a holistic approach to downtown revitalization that includes public and private construction projects, legislative and regulatory actions, branding and marketing, and programs to support businesses and residents.

The Action Plan Project Profiles on the following pages include summary information about projects including both those that may be candidates for DRI funding (i.e., Priority Projects) and those that are not proposed for DRI funding but that would accomplish Middletown’s vision and that could be targeted for other existing state programs or other public or private funds.

In the Action Plan, each project, action, or initiative will be presented with the summary information listed below. The Priority Project Profiles will include more rigorous analysis. For the Action Plan section of the DRI Plan, the goal is to provide high-level information and order-of-magnitude numbers to help guide discussion and prioritization by the Local Planning Committee.

Each of the Action Plan Profiles on the following pages outlines the following items:

1. **Project name**

2. **Strategy or strategies addressed by the project**

3. **Brief project description**

4. **Projected benefits**

5. **Estimated order-of-magnitude costs**

6. **Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources**

7. **A general timeframe for implementing the action**

8. **Feasibility**
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Goal A: Make Downtown a more attractive, walkable and functional place for residents, employees and visitors

Project A-1: Improve Façades and Storefront Signage

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.

Brief project description

Middletown has a number of buildings with attractive facades, some with historic brick details. However, as discussed in Section 1, there are a number of storefronts that are uninviting or in poor condition. The mixed condition of buildings has contributed to a visual discontinuity and a lack of a sense of place in the downtown area. Improving the business streetscape and aesthetics will promote Downtown’s commercial vitality by creating an attractive and inviting commercial area which will encourage greater use by residents and visitors.

In the past, some property owners in the downtown area have been reluctant to invest in streetscape improvements such as façade treatments, signage, lighting, window displays and landscaping, due at least in part to the costs involved. This program would provide an incentive to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts.

The program would include low-interest financing through a revolving loan program for businesses to upgrade their storefronts, as well as a small grant program for items such as signage. The low-interest loans could be combined with Main Street grants administered by the Office of Homes and Community Renewal. Loan funds would to help cover some of the design and construction costs, up to a pre-designated maximum amount.

The program would also address enforcement to ensure existing storefronts are in compliance with standards in the City’s building code. Property owners would submit an application to the program and would be selected based on the strength of the application.
Projected benefits

As seen in the experiences of other cities, potential benefits from storefront improvement programs have been known to include:

- Commercial building improvements resulted in an increase in sales in the year after the improvements were made;
- Sales improvements were sustained for several years;
- Sales increases exceeded increases in local taxes;
- The improvements attracted new businesses and shoppers to the target area;
- Participants were often motivated to make additional improvements (such as to interior spaces or product lines); and
- Owners/tenants of properties and businesses in surrounding areas were motivated to make improvements.

Estimated cost

Low (<$200,000)

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources

- DRI funds.
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal).
- Matching funds from other NY State CFA programs.
- Private investment required to match the DRI investment.
- Outside support from locally based corporations and foundations that may have an interest in participating.

Timeframe for implementing the action

Short Term – This can be implemented within 1 year.

Feasibility

Easy

---

1 NTHP Dollars & Sense #12: An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Physical Improvements on Retail Sales (based on Brenda R. Spencer’s Master of Architecture thesis from Kansas State University in 1995)
Project A-2: Improve Downtown Wayfinding Signage

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Improve Downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Improve linkages among the Downtown, SUNY Orange, Touro College and Fei Tian College/Academy.
- Identify and strengthen Downtown gateways from surrounding neighborhoods and regional transportation connections.

Brief project description
The Wayfinding Signage project would locate and install a multifaceted suite of wayfinding components: gateway signs; signs orienting drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists; kiosks with maps; lighting; and special paving treatments. This implementation phase requires the completion of the Downtown Branding Program [see B-1], which includes the design of the wayfinding components. The wayfinding elements will direct people to municipal parking; shopping areas; open spaces; major venues such as the Paramount Theater; and institutions including SUNY Orange, Touro Medical College and Fei Tian Academy/College.

Middletown has a unique cultural heritage, several regional attractions and a number of architecturally compelling buildings in a downtown that some find difficult to navigate. The lack of comprehensive wayfinding and a modest signage system currently fail to assist visitors and even local residents in spending time to explore the Downtown’s offerings. Introducing a signage program gives the Downtown district the opportunity to have an identity and a larger presence among the surrounding neighborhoods and corridors. Wayfinding would also address the community’s diverse demographic through tri-lingual signage.

The wayfinding signage system would include uniform, attractive, geographically oriented maps, signs and kiosks. In order to present Downtown Middletown as an aesthetically pleasing, safe and welcoming environment, wayfinding signage at gateways and kiosks should be paired with lighting, landscaping and other sidewalk amenities. The suite of wayfinding elements include:

- **Gateways**: Located at appropriate intersections where corridors terminate into downtown. Large enough for vehicular sighting and experiential for pedestrians and cyclists (e.g., East Main Street, Fulton Street Corridor, Wickham Avenue Corridor).

- **Kiosks**: Located at strategic intersections to guide pedestrians to specific points of interests or active streets. These will include maps that highlight current location and distances to other places (e.g. Erie Way Park, Thrall Library, Paramount Theater Park, start of Heritage Trail Spur). A gateway kiosk should be created at the Woolworth’s Building to direct people from the Heritage Trail to downtown attractions.
- **Directional street signs**: Located along all streets that have pedestrian access with names of places and arrows. Color coding or symbols can be used to differentiate different types of landmarks. (e.g., along North and South Street, Depot Street, James, Street, Main Street).

- **Building Facade Signage**: Located at points of interest or historic landmarks. Large enough to be seen by pedestrians as they approach. In some cases, will also have a brief description of the significance and a historic photograph if possible. (e.g., Thrall Library, Paramount Theater, First Congregational Church, Grace Episcopal Church).

- **Open Space Signage**: Located at parks and public open space. Large enough to be seen by pedestrians as they approach the space. The sign will have a map and point out the park’s amenities when possible (Erie Way Park, Festival Square, Jerry’s Park).

- **Trail Designation**: Located along the Heritage Trail and Heritage Trail spur. Scale of sign will give the trail an identity from other streets or paths. Large enough for vehicular and bicycle sighting. The sign or banner will be repeated throughout the trail using the trail’s existing branding.

- **Parking Signage**: Located at all public parking lots in downtown. Large enough for vehicular sighting. Provide a name for each lot to help identify them.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

New and/or increased wayfinding and signage along key corridors can enhance the overall downtown experience, support a greater sense of place and safety, and provide a feeling of cohesiveness across the study area. Enhanced lighting can improve a sense of safety throughout the downtown. Signage can support local businesses and direct visitors toward existing parking, helping to increase parking utilization rates and minimize the negative effects of parking needs on redevelopment potential. These user-friendly improvements can encourage a more walkable environment; increase market demand for space downtown; and thereby promote more private investment, density of uses, and job creation downtown.

Estimated cost

Medium: $200,000 - $1,000,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources

- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York State CFA grants

A general timeframe for implementing the action

Medium Term: 1 year - 3 years

Feasibility

Easy: Relatively low cost, rapid construction timeframe depending on ultimate design. Can be scaled to fit budgets.
Project A-3: Develop a Streetscape Master Plan (Phase I)

**Strategy(ies) addressed:**
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Identify and strengthen downtown gateways from surrounding neighborhoods and regional transportation connections.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

**Brief project description**

The streetscape master plan provides a framework to facilitate capital improvements that will enhance neighborhood identity, pedestrian safety, and economic vitality. The master plan will inventory and analyze streetscape conditions, identify areas of improvement and establish a prioritized program of phased improvements.

Identified recommendations would include improvements that address: complete streets, lighting, green infrastructure, signage and wayfinding, bicycle infrastructure, gateways and parks. Special treatments should be considered for the Heritage Trail Spur within the downtown area. The plan will also look at improvements to open spaces (e.g. Festival Square, Jerry’s Park, Run 4 Downtown Park) and linkages among these, the Heritage Trail and Erie Way Park. The plan will also identify areas where sidewalks are in poor condition and need maintenance.

This project will produce a detailed streetscape master plan, creating a coherent and comprehensive approach to the Downtown’s built environment and protecting its architectural heritage. In order to encourage residential and commercial growth and incentivize private redevelopment and investment, a master plan will make the downtown district more accessible and walkable by shifting to a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. The plan will identify specific areas for a range of streetscape improvements, strengthen Middletown’s identity, and improve the experience of Downtown for residents and visitors alike.

Some important considerations for the master plan include the following:
- Improve pedestrian accessibility and experience throughout downtown with thoughtful circulation, upgraded paving, landscaping, street furniture and lighting.
- Incorporate green infrastructure to maximize impact and work with existing constraints.
- Identify where sidewalk infrastructure needs to be repaired or better maintained (i.e. brick sidewalk buffers).
- Explore opportunities for shared streets to slow traffic and improve pedestrian experience.
- Prepare bike infrastructure analysis, review possible bike lane connections throughout and to the Heritage Trail.
- Ensure plan is complementary to the parking management and wayfinding plans.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

Downtown streetscape improvements can enhance the area’s sense of place and enhance the perception of Downtown to local residents and to regional visitors. Physical improvements that enhance walkability can keep visitors downtown longer and visiting more local businesses, providing an economic development benefit and enhancing market demand and economic feasibility of new private investments downtown. Additionally, sidewalk improvements work to promote non-vehicular access to the Downtown. By leveraging DRI funding to improve the pedestrian experience, this project capitalizes on the health and wellness benefits of walking and encourages people to leave cars behind and enjoy the Downtown on foot, where they can shop at local businesses and attend events.

In addition, strategic sidewalk improvements could connect Downtown parking lots to nearby attractions. For example, improved streetscapes may invite people to park and walk along East and West Main Streets and up North Street after parking in nearby municipal lots. Improved lighting and sidewalk furniture could improve the experience of parking and then walking, encouraging pedestrians to explore on foot.

Estimated cost
Low: <$200,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York CFA grants
- Orange County Planning funding for transportation planning

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Short-term: 1-2 years

Feasibility
Easy: This program is completely feasible and achievable. Streetscape improvements can take many forms and are scalable to some degree so that budgets can be respected. They can be fairly small scale and do not take long to construct, and can be constructed in conjunction with other project elements such as green infrastructure and park improvements.
Project A-4: Implement Streetscape Improvements (Phase II)

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Identify and strengthen downtown gateways from surrounding neighborhoods and regional transportation connections.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

Brief project description
This project is the capital improvements phase of the Streetscape Master Plan, implementing the design and strategies developed in that process. These improvements will be an integral part of promoting pedestrian activity and increasing foot traffic in downtown Middletown. The Downtown is accessed by large-scale, commercial corridors that contain many vacancies along with empty parking lots. This automobile-driven landscape has crepted into the Downtown district, which is unappealing to pedestrians. Recognizing that Downtown will continue to require vehicular access and parking space, the following improvements balance these needs with creating visual interest at the pedestrian level. Streetscape improvements will focus on North/South Street, East/West Main Street, Depot Street, James Street, and Orchard Street, and will include:

- Trees and plantings: Provide new trees and landscape treatment along all main corridors to improve the pedestrian environment. Use landscape buffers along frontages and clearly mark pedestrian access points using landscape elements.
- Green infrastructure: Implement planter boxes, bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavements and rainwater harvesting on appropriate sites.
- Sidewalks improvements and accessibility
- Maintain existing sidewalks. Some of the brick sidewalk buffers are uneven and deteriorated.
- Sidewalk furniture: Add benches at sidewalks and seating options throughout open spaces and plazas.
- Shared streets: Introduce special pavement treatment to clearly demarcate pedestrian pathways and access to the Heritage Trail or Heritage Trail Spur. Remove curbs and use pavement treatment that is pedestrian and vehicle friendly, specifically where there is high-pedestrian activity.
- Multi-purpose parking lots and plazas: Introduce or improve landscaping at parking lots in order to create a better transition into Downtown. Allow for parking to be a flexible event space or plaza during festivals, farmers’ markets, or other events. Use pavement treatment that is suitable for both parking and events.
Middletown Downtown Revitalization Initiative: Action Plan (Draft)

- Bike lanes and bike racks: Designate a network of safe roads for cyclists leading to the Heritage Trail and parks. Demarcate these roads using special pavement treatment or paint. Install more bike racks at parks and other points of interests to encourage bikers to stop in downtown.
- Underground utilities and lighting: To be improved and installed where needed.

As summarized in the Downtown Profile and Assessment, there are some parts of the DRI area where sidewalks are in disrepair, presenting a challenge for pedestrians looking to shop, eat and drink. Improving the sidewalk network will improve pedestrian connectivity for residents, visitors and local business owners. Priority areas include the intersection of North, South, East Main and West Main Streets, which has the potential to be a significant node for retail, restaurants and entertainment, given its proximity to the Paramount Theatre. Additionally, the sidewalk conditions along West Main Street, North Street, South Street in front of the Paramount Theatre, Fulton and Canal Street are important corridors in need of improvements.

**Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.**
Improvements to sidewalks and gateways in the Downtown will benefit visitors, residents and business owners by encouraging people to walk, shop and spend time in the Downtown. Additionally, sidewalk and gateway improvements work to promote non-vehicular access to the Downtown. By leveraging DRI funding to improve the pedestrian experience, this project capitalizes on the health and wellness benefits of walking, and encourages people to leave cars behind and enjoy the Downtown on foot, where they can shop at local businesses and attend events. In addition, strategic sidewalk and gateway improvements could connect the large residential areas that surround the Downtown, offering current residents an affordable, safe and healthy alternative to driving.

**Estimated cost**
High: >$1,000,000

**Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources**
Funding for Orange County Heritage Trail within NYS DOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). DRI funds would fill in gaps in Heritage Trail along with supplemental streetscape, signage, lighting and landscape treatments. A gateway kiosk should be created at the Woolworth’s Building to direct people from the trail to downtown attractions. This can be achieved as part of the project to redevelop the Woolworth’s Building (Project C-1).

Orange County Planning provides funding for transportation planning and improvements.

**A general timeframe for implementing the action**
Medium Term: 1 year - 3 years
Feasibility

Moderate: The streetscape improvements would be undertaken on publicly owned rights-of-way. Key constraints are cost and required coordination with Orange County and/or New York State Department of Transportation as needed.
Project A-5: Redevelop South Street Parking Lot

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support and build on the Paramount Theatre as a cultural destination by increasing activity in its vicinity and by enhancing its connection to the downtown core.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive and accessible.
- Support venues and events for the City’s arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.

Brief project description
The South Street Parking Lot currently serves the historic theater as well as neighboring businesses and residences in the central business district. The lot has previously been considered by the City as a potential location for expanded parking in order to accommodate planned growth in the redevelopment of under utilized and vacant commercial space in the area. The current capacity of the lot is 141 spaces, which includes 57 spaces along South Street, 45 spaces at the former TD Bank building, and 39 spaces in an under utilized lower lot area accessed via Washington Street. The purpose of this project is to:

- Increase the number of parking spaces in the existing facility by adjoining the lot with the adjacent parking lot (owned by the City);
- Improve the aesthetics of the lot to make it more functional and attractive;
- Make the lower lot area more user-friendly with improved landscaping, lighting and accessibility improvements for drivers and pedestrians;
- Help adjacent property owners clean up and improve parking and access in the rear of their buildings; and
- Provide a small open space in front of the Paramount Theatre.

The project is detailed in two phases. In Phase 1, the lots would be combined to make them more functional and user-friendly. Improvements in this phase would also set the stage for two infill development opportunities at the lot, which could happen at a later stage based on the real estate market and the City’s revitalization plans. These opportunities are described in Phase 2.

Phase 1: Combine existing lots and make area more user-friendly
The TD Bank lot used to serve drive-through traffic for the bank, and a large portion of the lot is dedicated to serve this function. The small structure at the center of the lot does not serve an important purpose and can be removed. As shown on the figure on the following page, the upper area could increase from 102 spaces to 123 spaces if both areas were combined into one lot. The
diagram also shows a small open space opposite from the Paramount Theatre, which could serve as a public gathering place before and after events.

Even when the upper lot is full during events, the 31-space lower lot reportedly remains underutilized. This is largely due to the fact that the lower lot is unfriendly for pedestrians. The area is hidden from view due to the steep drop (approximately 10-12 feet) from the upper lot, the landscaping and fencing require maintenance, there is no lighting, and the stairs to the lot are in disrepair. All of these factors contribute to the lower lot being underutilized. Improving the lot to make it feel safer will help to capitalize on the parking resources that are already there. Installing a retaining wall would allow for another row of parking bring the total in the lower lot to 60 spaces. The following investments are needed to make this lot more functional:

- Improve landscaping between upper lot and lower lot, including removal of fence;
- Provide direct vehicular access to the lower lot from Washington Street;
- Provide a wide stairway at lot that is in plain sight of the Paramount Theatre;
- Remove the slope and install a retaining wall; and
- Light the parking lot with overhead lights.
**Phase 2: Infill redevelopment at two sites**

As a longer-term project (potentially 7-10 years depending on market forces), the City should consider infill development along portions of the South Street lot. Strategically, mixed-use development in this location will provide a more vibrant streetscape around the Paramount Theatre, strengthening the district and knitting it to the center of downtown to the north. Infill redevelopment can transform the parking lot into a community and economic asset by physically improving the streetscape and providing for local businesses where residents can shop or dine.

The design of the parking lot improvements in Phase 1 has been structured to provide two potential infill development sites that the City can offer for private development: one along South Street that would extend the street wall from the TD Bank Building, and another at the lower lot which takes advantage of the topography change at that portion of the site. Parking for the building along Washington Street would be provided in a parking structure below the building. As shown in the figure below, this structure would extend north from the building so that the upper level of the structure can connect to the surface lot above.

**South Street Lot**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Lot</th>
<th>Phase 1: Connect lots and improve lower area</th>
<th>Phase 2: Develop two infill areas and 1 level parking structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Area</strong></td>
<td>102 Spaces</td>
<td>123 spaces</td>
<td>136 (includes 30 spaces on top of parking structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Area</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58 in parking structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>145 spaces</td>
<td>183 spaces</td>
<td>196 spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1:
Combine existing lots and make area more user friendly (top)

Phase 2: Infill redevelopment at two sites (bottom)
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Reconfiguring the lots on South Street will enhance the aesthetics, walkability and vehicular efficiency of the area surrounding the Paramount Theatre. This project is expected to have spillover benefits for local businesses within walking distance, and will enhance the built environment around one of the City’s major attractions. As a result, the project is expected to yield many secondary economic, social and environmental benefits. In addition, the potential to later create areas for infill development could increase tax revenue, improve conditions in the adjacent residential neighborhood and create jobs and business opportunities in a critical area of the Downtown.

Estimated cost
    Phase 1: Medium
    Phase 2: High

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- DRI funding
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York State CFA funding
- Private funding for Phase 2 development

A general timeframe for implementing the action
    Phase 1: Medium
    Phase 2: Long term

Feasibility
    Phase 1: Moderate
    Phase 2: Difficult
Project A-6: Complete Stage II improvements at Erie Way Park

**Strategy(ies) addressed:**
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Support venues and events for the City’s arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Improve Downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Expand the availability of convenience retail, restaurants and other amenities that serve neighborhood residents and enhance quality-of-life.
- Promote local agriculture and public health by improving food access and distribution.
- Encourage continuation of and connections to the Heritage Trail which will run through downtown.

**Brief project description**

The project entails the design and development of Erie Way Park, which will transform a derelict lot into a new civic space. Adjacent to Thrall Library and a short walk to retail and restaurant options on West Main and North Streets, the Park is well situated to bring people to Middletown's Downtown, and to provide a well-designed place for them to linger. As the Middletown extension of the Heritage Trail will run through the Park, it can serve both as an entry point for the Trail and a resting spot for those travelling along it. The Park will also bring much needed green space to a downtown that currently has few trees and larger open spaces, opening up new opportunities for downtown events.

Improved streetscape design and designated walks will connect the new Park with existing pocket parks. These existing open spaces are marked by historic elements that play up the significant architecture of the downtown. Erie Way Park can be a contemporary counterpoint, an exciting, engaging space that points toward the future. With a skateboard park, community pavilion and passive green spaces, the Park will appeal to people of all ages. Programming opportunities will seek to activate the park throughout the year, and might include ideas such as a daffodil festival in early spring, berry festival in the summer, harvest festival in the fall, and a winter festival/market.

The Park will include:
- 10,000 sf skateboard park [already funded, currently in design stage].
- 2,000 sf flexible community pavilion to be used for performances, events, and a semi-enclosed farmers market during winter months.
- Design elements will reference the railroad history of the site, including a historic caboose.
- Heritage Trail and link to Heritage Trail Spur.
- Gathering space for community events / open lawn.
- Endemic and climate-adapted plants chosen for multi-season interest, ease of care, and habitat.
- On-street parking along northern edge.
Erie Way Park is located on a former railroad bed and is partially identified as a brownfield site. The City is working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for cleanup and reuse of the site. Funding for cleanup of the skateboard park is already in place, however there are no funds appropriated to clean up the remainder of the site. (More information on this to come)
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Improvements to Erie Way Park will provide green space and a central node for downtown activities, serving as a connection among the Heritage Trail, the future soccer complex and the Downtown. In addition to providing open space, this green area will be an attraction for families and young people, encouraging people to visit and potentially relocate to the DRI area. The project could help rebrand Downtown by tapping into Middletown’s rail history, and advancing the City as a regional hub for families to visit, eat and play. Visitors to this new park could provide support for existing and new small businesses, offering jobs and economic development for downtown and the surrounding area and enhancing tax revenues (potentially including sales, real estate, and income taxes). Additionally, the new Park could enhance healthy choices for active lifestyles in residents across Middletown and the surrounding area, and strengthen the existing farmers’ market.

Estimated cost
High: >$1,000,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- Existing funding for skateboard park
- New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, Green Innovation Grant Program
- New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
- NYSERDA
- USDA

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Medium Term: 1 year - 3 years

Feasibility
Moderate: Feasible but dependent on funds and scale/scope of the project. Requires coordination among multiple institutions.
Project A-7: Implement a Parking Management Plan

**Strategy(ies) addressed:**

- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive and accessible.
- Improve Downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

**Brief project description**

Given the importance of parking for the City’s economic well-being, but also taking into consideration that parking can absorb large areas of valuable space, it is essential to manage the parking resources to guarantee efficient use and encourage user-friendly conditions. This project will advance a parking utilization study to determine a parking management plan that the City can implement in order to maximize parking efficiencies and generate economic, social and environmental benefits. The parking utilization study will outline a strategy to encourage park-and-walk behavior, and account for evolving future parking needs in the Downtown in accordance with the goals of the City’s strategic development plan (see Project C-4). The plan will identify opportunities to improve the current municipally owned parking facilities in the Downtown, addressing potential metering; short- and long-term parking options; and design features including landscaping, connectivity, signage and wayfinding.

Currently, Downtown Middletown offers free public parking on streets and in a number of municipal lots. A utilization study will look at the parking facilities in the downtown area, including parking needs, inventory, and strategies to address key issues such as capacity during events and peak periods. The objective of the study will be to inform a parking management plan that makes the existing parking facilities more efficient and pedestrian-friendly, and to improve the safety and function of vehicular circulation. The Downtown now offers unmetered on-street parking on the west side of North Street between Wickham Avenue and Main Street, and on both sides of East Main Street between East Avenue and Canal Street. There are a number of unmetered municipal lots in the DRI area where redesign projects are being considered (Projects A-5, A-8, A-9), including four located on South Street between Fulton Avenue and Main Street providing 317 spaces, a lot between James Street and Center Street in front of City Hall with 135 spaces, a lot on Henry Street with 52 spaces, and a lot adjacent to Thrall Library providing 61 spaces. All municipal parking lots in the DRI area combine to provide a total of nearly 1,200 parking spaces. There is currently a perceived parking issue in the Downtown, and a parking management plan will address concerns regarding inefficiencies.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

In combination with a streetscape master plan (A-3, A-4) and a strategic development plan (C-4), the City can leverage parking management benefits to increase foot traffic and redefine the perception of safety in Downtown Middletown. A parking management plan will improve the built environment and promote social, environmental and economic benefits by maximizing efficiency in valuable City-owned land that is used for parking. A long-term plan for the parking management system could identify potential infill uses that will generate investment, subsequent tax revenue, potential for new jobs and a greater sense of place in Downtown Middletown.

Estimated cost
Medium

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- DRI funding
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York State CFA funds
- Orange County Planning funds for transportation planning

A general timeframe for implementing the action
1-2 years

Feasibility
Easy: The City can hire a planning/engineering firm to perform a parking utilization study. As the land-owner, the City has the capacity to implement recommendations. Capital from DRI, potential private investment through public-private partnership and other grant funding resources could go toward implementation.

Ongoing operations for parking management will be done by the City.
Project A-8: Redesign James Street Parking Lot

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive and accessible.
- Improve Downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

Brief project description
The James Street parking lot forms an important gateway to the City as it is the primary municipal lot for shoppers that visit Main Street and the southern portion of North Street. In general, there are a number of streetscape enhancements that will improve the convenience and safety of the lot, as well as its attractiveness, security and drainage. The figure on the following page shows recommended streetscape improvements that will make the parking area more functional such as landscaping, lighting, and new green spaces.

The James Street design concept features the construction of a plaza at the northern end opposite Thrall Library. This plaza (dubbed “Thrall Plaza”) will help to denote arrival in (and departure from) this civic area. It also provides for a physical connection for the Heritage Trail spur between Jerry’s Park and Erie Way Park. The James Street design concept also recommends that the retaining wall between the parking lot and Festival Square be terraced to provide for a better pedestrian connection between the two areas. This terraced area connects to a new strip of green space in front of the DMV building between the Square and the King Street pedestrian path.

The redesign concept also includes the following features:
- Landscaping and lighting features that identify entrances, pathways and public spaces, and that separate and screen the parking lot from James Street.
- Planting areas at the end of rows of parking spaces to soften the visual expanse of the lot, provide shade, and absorb and filter stormwater from the parking areas.
- Ornamental parking lot lighting consistent in style with the surrounding lighting in the downtown area. Lighting should not exceed 20 feet in height and should not emit more light than is necessary to ensure the security of the property and the safety and welfare of the public.
- Potential burial of the overhead lines (during the construction process) which negatively impact the visual expanse of the lot.
The existing lot has spaces that are 10 feet wide by at least 17 feet in length. The proposed layout preserves the main access roads and circulation while more efficiently laying out standard parking aisles at 9 feet by 18 feet. The design shown has a net reduction at the James Street lot of 10 spaces, largely due to the addition of Thrall Plaza which connects the Heritage Trail from North
Street (via Jerry’s Park) to Erie Way Park. On the southern end, a small connective open space has been provided to connect King Street pedestrian path to Festival Square. Overall, the loss of parking spaces is minimal in comparison to the gain in green and connective public spaces. The loss of parking spaces will also be recovered by improving the lots on both sides of Henry Street (Project A-9), which together, will add 45 spaces to the downtown area.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Redesigning the James Street Parking lot will provide an improved image of the City to those coming to the Downtown to visit and shop. The projected benefits of the additional green space include additional public open space, improved aesthetics, greater parking efficiency and creation of green infrastructure to improve drainage conditions. This project will provide connectivity through the network of green space to current and future attractions including Festival Square and Erie Way Park, encouraging visitors to explore the City on foot.

Estimated cost
Low

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- DRI funding
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York State CFA grants
- Environmental Facilities Corporation - Green Innovation Grant Program
- Orange County Planning funding for transportation planning and projects

A general timeframe for implementing the action
1-2 years

Feasibility
Easy
Project A-9: Redesign/Connect Henry Street Parking Lots

Strategy(ies) addressed:

- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive and accessible.
- Improve Downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

Brief project description

Off-street parking is provided along both sides of Henry Street. While these lots are centrally located, the areas are not friendly for pedestrians because the lots are poorly defined, there are no sidewalks, and landscaping is sparse. Improving the overall quality of the lots will improve the convenience and safety of the lots, as well as their attractiveness and safety. This will help to encourage park-and-walk behavior, generating the desirable sidewalk activity that is beneficial to downtown businesses.

This project includes the redesign of the lots on both sides of Henry Street to encourage user-friendly conditions. In general, lots should be well defined and have visually reinforced edges to present a clean, orderly appearance. Restriping the lot is a relatively inexpensive way to increase overall safety by providing clearly visible directives to both vehicles and pedestrians. Incorporating landscaping will also soften the visual expanse of the lot and can be designed to collect runoff from the parking areas. Trees and hedges along Henry Street could be installed to help visually and audibly screen the parking areas from view.

One effective parking management strategy is to encourage shared parking among different buildings and facilities in the area to take advantage of different peak periods. Shared parking can also allow parking lots to be used more efficiently. Additionally, having fewer lots minimizes the number of ingress and egress points, which will improve conditions for safety. These improvements would require coordination with private property owners such as the First Federal Savings of Middletown and the owner of 18-20 Henry Street. Equilibrium Brewery should also be consulted to ensure that the parking areas maintain the truck loading areas to their site.

The designs on the following page show potential parking layouts for the two parking areas. The lot on the north side of Henry Street has an increase of 41 spaces (40 existing spaces, 81 proposed). The large increase is partially due to the formalization of the parking area on the southern side of Erie Way Park and parking along a proposed access point to West Main Street. This parking area will serve downtown businesses as well as Erie Way Park and the Heritage Trail.
As described in Project A-6, part of the northern portion of the lot would have a special treatment so that it could be used as a shared space for events such as the farmers market on weekends.

The lot on the south side, which combines the municipal lot with the First Federal Savings Bank, has an increase of four spaces (66 existing spaces, 73 proposed). The drive-through area for the bank is maintained in the circulation network.

**Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.**

Connecting the Henry Street Parking lots will facilitate accessibility to new attractions at Erie Way Park and support existing businesses in the area, including Equilibrium Brewery. This project will work with additional parking and landscaping improvements at James Street to leverage the impact of the future Erie Way Park and Heritage Trail, serving to ensure their success in bringing visitors to the Downtown and enhancing the City’s image in the surrounding region. The economic benefit of having additional and more efficiently laid out parking in this area will be felt by local business owners.

**Estimated cost**

Medium

**Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources**

- DRI funding
- New York Main Street Program (Homes and Community Renewal)
- New York State CFA grants
- Environmental Facilities Corporation - Green Innovation Grant Program
- Orange County Planning funding for transportation planning and projects

**A general timeframe for implementing the action**

1-2 years

**Feasibility**

Easy
Project A-10: Improve Courthouse Parking Lot

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support and build on the Paramount Theatre as a cultural destination by increasing activity in its vicinity and by enhancing its connection to the downtown core.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive and accessible.
- Support venues and events for the City’s arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.

Brief project description
The City has plans and funding to purchase the vacant federal courthouse on South Street and renovate it so that it can be used for the City’s courts. This will clear space for the Police Department to move into the existing court space at City Hall. While the parking lot across South Street is currently vacant, it will be used for the federal courthouse and could be expanded to accommodate planned growth in the area. This could include the development of the Fort Knox Self Storage building across the street, which would need room for parking should it be redeveloped in the future, as well as parcels at the southeast corner of South and Washington Streets.

This project consists of two options. The first is to improve the functionality and accessibility of the lot by connecting it to Washington Street through a parcel owned by the City. The existing lot has spaces that are 10 feet wide by at least 17 feet in length. The proposed layout preserves the circulation while more efficiently laying out standard parking aisles at 9 feet by 18 feet. The layout also adds 11 spaces along the connection to/from Washington Street.

The second option would be to build the roadway connection and a parking structure of up to three levels on the existing lot. This option could be pursued as part of a public-private partnership with potential developers of the Fort Knox or other potential redevelopment sites.

The table below shows the breakdown of the two options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courthouse Lot</th>
<th>Option 1: Connection to Washington Street</th>
<th>Option 2: 3-Level Deck + Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing Lot</td>
<td>65 spaces</td>
<td>180 spaces on 3-level deck (133’ x 229’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83 spaces in existing lot</td>
<td>8 spaces on connection road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 spaces on connection road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total = 94 spaces</td>
<td>Total parking = 188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost: Low</td>
<td>Cost: Low</td>
<td>Cost: High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning Committee Meeting #4
January 11, 2017
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

Estimated cost

Option 1: Low (<$200,000)

Option 2: High (>1,000,000). The cost for a 180-space parking deck would likely be in the range of $5-6 million (average cost of $30,000 per space).

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources

Information to come

A general timeframe for implementing the action

Information to come

Feasibility

Information to come
Goal B: Support outreach and marketing efforts that promote Downtown Middletown as destination of choice for students, small business owners, shoppers and young professionals.

Project B-1: Develop a Downtown Branding Program

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Strengthen the BID’s capacity to market businesses and activities throughout the Downtown.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.

Brief project description

The Downtown Branding Program includes the design of physical, web-based, and social media graphics and strategies, to reflect and communicate Middletown’s retail, architectural and community assets and activities. A dedicated team will develop a clear and recognizable identity and a unified approach across all platforms. The program will include a new brand (i.e. logo and tagline), with a promotional program to change perceptions of the City from an underperforming area to a vital, exciting and dynamic downtown with unique opportunities to live, work and grow a business. It would also include the design of wayfinding and marketing devices such as signage and maps as part of a larger branding strategy for the Downtown.

The following will be completed by the branding and graphics specialists:

- **Graphics**: Graphic designers and brand strategists will update branding and graphic elements that align with character of the City. The program will use arts or historic preservation and a unique signage program for community branding; highlight the town’s railroad past, historic landmarks and vision for its urban future; and use unified graphics throughout the city’s website, signage program, wayfinding strategies, etc.

- **Wayfinding**: Graphic designers will design a comprehensive and detailed wayfinding system for Middletown, focusing on the downtown area, while also providing signage at strategic locations throughout the larger area to direct people downtown. Wayfinding elements will include gateway elements, signage, kiosks, and special event banners.

- **User Demographics**: Graphics and branding elements will be used in marketing materials that speak to young professionals, small business owners and students in order to encourage downtown activity.

- **Multi-lingual**: With a large percentage of minority groups in the city, marketing and outreach programs will be made available in multiple languages that cater to all groups.
This will help promote more diverse community events and programs. Wayfinding and signage programs will also take into account multiple language support.

- **Social Media**: Improve all public platforms and research what platforms are more accessible to specific groups and organizations from different ethnic backgrounds. This will help the city encourage these groups to utilize public facilities to host events or festivals that will attract more visitors to the downtown area.

*Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.*

This project would better amplify Middletown’s assets as a center for both culture and commerce. In coordination with other projects proposed in this DRI plan, an effective branding campaign could additionally create a platform from which institutions and employers in the city might attract better talent from around the region or the state. Changing people’s perceptions of the downtown Middletown experience to a more positive one would increase market demand for that downtown experience, resulting in greater demand for goods, services, real estate, and overall economic output.

*Estimated cost*

Low: <$200,000

*Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources*

- ESD - Market New York

*A general timeframe for implementing the action*

Short Term: <1 year

*Feasibility*

Easy
Project B-2: Improve Operational Capacity of the BID

Strategy(ies) addressed:

- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Support venues and events for the City’s arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Strengthen the Business Improvement District’s (BID) capacity to market businesses and activities throughout the Downtown.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.

Brief project description

The Middletown Business Improvement District (BID) contributes to the success of the Downtown by organizing events, connecting residents and business owners with services and opportunities. As noted in the Downtown Profile and Assessment, the City of Middletown and the BID collaborate to create annual programs in Downtown. However, the BID faces a number of challenges. Taxes from member businesses amount to an annual budget of only $90,000, limiting the organization’s capacity to implement key strategic and marketing services. These include hosting events and activities, cross-promotions with local businesses, outreach to building owners with long-vacant space, and engaging businesses in the north of the BID that cater to the Spanish-speaking population.

This project will expand upon the BID’s capacity by supplementing its budget in order to leverage connections between business owners, potential employees and future entrepreneurs. Funds could be used to support enhanced communications, more effective marketing materials, community events, and staff support (including Spanish-speaking resources). Enhanced BID capacity will help to:

- Leverage social media to connect downtown businesses with potential customers.
- Develop and regularly update contact lists of all business owners in the BID, in addition to building owners.
- Support the growth of culture and entertainment offerings to make the Downtown a center for live, work, and play activities.
- Build capacity and outreach to minority and Spanish speaking communities through institutions and organizations.
- Work with the Orange County IDA to recruit small businesses and start-up companies (i.e. through the Accelerator program)
- Support the development of training programs through connections with local institutions (i.e. SUNY Orange)
- Establish an internship/apprenticeship program to place local high school students in businesses and cultural organizations in the BID

The BID currently employs an Executive Director, clerical assistant and maintenance coordinator, and has a staff of volunteers. Most of this project’s funding would be used to pay consultant
support for two years, in order to support the BID’s current and expanded capacity and put “feet on the street” through programs that enhance beautification, safety, sanitation and promotion. Project funding could also increase the BID’s non-staffing budget to support additional activities, expanded communication and marketing efforts and materials, and maintenance needs.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
This project would increase the BID’s capacity to leverage investment from other funding sources. For example, consultant support could seek grant funding opportunities that the BID does not currently apply for due to limited staff, while improved communication with institutions, cultural organizations and the greater community could open new avenues of funding. The BID’s expanded capacity is anticipated to generate secondary beneficial impacts by increasing the health of existing businesses and attracting new businesses and investment to the downtown, which has the potential to generate new downtown employment and enhance the City’s tax base.

Estimated cost
Low (<$200,000) to fund consultant report and ongoing marketing and maintenance activities.

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- Middletown City budget
- New York State CFA grants
- ESD – Market New York
- Private donations and grants

A general timeframe for implementing the action
2 years.

Feasibility
Easy
Project B-3: Create an Incentive Program for Public Art

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Support venues and events for the City's arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Identify opportunities for outdoor and public art.

Brief project description
This project will create a public art program in which a percentage of bonded City capital programs is allocated for public art. Using Rockland County’s Art in Public Places (AIPP) as a model, the program will coordinate with Orange County Arts Council to publicize opportunities for creation of public art. In the Rockland County model, the program is administered by community volunteers to oversee the commission, selection and placement of artwork in public places. Rockland County’s Percent for Art Law states that 1% of the first $15 million of bonded County capital projects will be allocated for art.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
The arts have proven to be a strong catalyst in economic development for communities throughout the region, such as Beacon, Nyack, Hyde Park and many others. Public art can be leveraged as an important piece of Downtown Middletown’s appeal to students, small business owners, shoppers and young professionals. This project aims to enhance the Downtown’s sense of place, make the area more welcoming and attractive to visitors, and provide an incentive that will bring the creative class to Middletown.

Estimated cost
$50,000 to get the program up and running. Ongoing costs would be borne by the bonding of capital program and potential private funds.

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
- DRI funding to support the initial program design and launch
- The City can partner with the Orange County Arts Council to apply for grant funding through the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). As an eligible applicant, the OCAC can administer funds from the NYSCA Decentralization Program to provide funding for quality arts projects for the Middletown community.
- CDBG grant for operating costs
- Donations from private individuals and organizations

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Up to 1 year to plan and launch the program; installation of individual projects would be ongoing.
Feasibility

Medium: In order to achieve a funding mechanism for public art similar to the AIPP program in Rockland County, the City of Middletown would have to pass a “Percent for Art Law” enabling a percentage of bonded City capital projects to be allocated for art. The City would also need to coordinate with the Orange County Arts Council, as the logical organization to administer the ongoing program, with identified local volunteers.

It is recommended that the City establish a liaison within the Department of Economic and Community Development to coordinate the program with the Orange County Arts Council and local volunteers. This responsibility could be covered with existing staff.
Goal C: Support redevelopment of underutilized properties and the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings with technical and financial resources.

Project C-1: Redevelop the Woolworth’s Building

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Create “move-in ready” sites and building spaces that can be occupied by a mix of stores, restaurants and offices, including repurposing existing buildings to preserve the Downtown character.
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.
- Expand the availability of convenience retail, restaurants and other amenities that serve neighborhood residents and enhance quality-of-life.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.

Brief Project Description
This project envisions the redevelopment of the vacant Woolworth’s Building on North Street. Renamed “Rail Trail Commons,” the center of the building would become a covered corridor that would bring a Heritage Trail Connector (see project E-1) from the Downtown Transportation Center/Orchard Street parking lot directly to North Street. In addition to retail space along North Street, the reconfigured building would feature retail space fronting the corridor as shown in the following conceptual sketches. The City’s initial plan for the building includes space for four retail tenants upon completion of the redevelopment.

The City has already appropriated $466,000 to acquire the site and do preliminary architectural and engineering work, and also received $250,000 in funding from Assemblywoman Gunther through a NYS EDP grant toward acquisition costs, and $24,000 from the Middletown IDA toward engineering fees. The estimated cost to complete the building is $1.6 million. $225,000 for construction costs has been awarded from Senator Bonacic through the State and Municipal Facilities Capital Program, leaving the City to supply the balance of approximately $1,375,000 (without additional funding sources).

In addition to redeveloping the building, the City has acquired the space behind the building as well as a property across Orchard Street. Both areas need funding to develop them as parking areas with landscaping and connections to the heritage trail. The estimated cost for the Woolworth’s lot is $132,000 and the Orchard Street lot is $240,000. While the City has spent $120,000 in funds from the Middletown Industrial Expansion Corp. to acquire these properties, no funds have been committed from the City or elsewhere for redevelopment. The total remaining amount to fund this project is 1,747,000.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

This project will have a direct impact on job generation, and is expected to bring additional retail and office use into the Downtown. The program could potentially leverage other economic development funds and private investment in new businesses, expanding the economic impact of DRI funds. The activity from these new businesses could bring a greater diversity of uses and workers downtown to support other businesses and create market demand for downtown housing. New businesses supported by the competition present an opportunity for medium and long-term tax revenue growth.

Estimated cost

High - >$1,000,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources

- Funds to develop the Orchard Street parking lots will be provided as part of a CFA grant of $1,284,121 with the Orange County Water and Soil Conservation District.
- The Orange Accelerator Program is another potential funding option for this site.
- Project D-2: Race for Space program will provide funds to attract retail tenants at the site.

Timeframe

Redevelopment of the Woolworth’s Building could be accomplished in approximately 12 months once funding is secured.

Feasibility

The estimated cost for the project is approximately $2 Million which includes redevelopment of the Woolworth’s Building, the lot behind the building, the Orchard Street lot, and special Heritage trailway treatments and amenities.
Rail Trail Commons – Former Woolworth’s Building
Orchard Street Parking Lot and connection to Heritage Trail
Project C-2: Create Downtown Historic District and Support Historic Designation of Buildings

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Enhance the appearance of Downtown’s buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets and open spaces.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Create “move-in ready” sites and building spaces that can be occupied by a mix of stores, restaurants and offices, including repurposing existing buildings to preserve the Downtown character.
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.

Brief Project Description
The creation of a Downtown Middletown Historic District and listing on the National Register of Historic Places will allow owners of contributing buildings to take advantage of rehabilitation tax credits that are currently available at the federal level and state levels in qualifying census tracts. In addition to providing financial incentives, the creation of a historic district supports heritage tourism and recreation area enhancement projects, can assist efforts in marketing Middletown for future investment, and creates awareness of and fosters pride in community history.

The DRI area is located primarily in Census Tract 151, with smaller sections along the perimeter of the area in tracts 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16. With the exception of the block on Wickham Avenue that is located in tract 13, the area is located in tracts that are considered eligible for New York State tax credits. Properties that are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Federal Tax Credits only) and those considered to be contributing buildings in a historic district listed on the National Register may obtain tax credits for rehabilitation work that meets the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and a minimum expenditure, and is approved by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NY SHPO) prior to the start of construction. Currently, commercial buildings (including rental residential properties) on the National Register or in a National Register Historic District can obtain Federal Commercial Credits of 20% and State Commercial Credits of 20%, with an adjusted expenditure based on property value less value of land. Homeowner-occupied buildings individually designated or in a historic district are currently eligible for a State Homeowner’s Credit of 20% with a minimum expenditure of $5,000, of which a minimum of 5% must be completed on the exterior.

Process
The most likely vehicle for making tax credits available is the creation of a local and State-certified National Register Historic District which could afford a 40% subsidy (20% federal, 20% State) for qualifying rehabilitation expenses on contributing properties. This would require the following:

- Obtaining Certified Local Government (CLG) certification through New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP), also known as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is highly suggested, preferably prior to developing a local
preservation ordinance. Over 60 communities in the state, including Newburgh, access benefits including: funding for historic resource surveys, planning studies, publications, and training programs; technical assistance from SHPO staff; participation in a network of CLG communities; and a quarterly newsletter. NYS OPRHP/SHPO provides an introductory packet of information, including a model ordinance. See http://nysparks.com/shpo/certified-local-governments/

- Enabling legislation for a local preservation ordinance;
- Creating a Historic District Commission or extending the authority of the Architectural Board of Review; and
- Hiring a qualified preservation consultant to research and complete the National Register Registration Form, in consultation with the NYS OPRHP and the National Park Service (NPS). Research for registration of a district, a multi-property nomination, includes: identifying contributing and non-contributing buildings, sites, structures and objects within the proposed district; providing a description of each contributing building, site, structure or object supplemented with appropriate historical information; providing a narrative description of and historic context for the overall district as well as a statement of significance; and providing bibliographic references, representative photographs, and a plan and verbal descriptions identifying the boundaries of the district.

The existing BID boundary would be recommended for the historic district, since a slightly different boundary would lead to confusion. The designation of contributing and non-contributing within the coterminous existing BID and proposed district boundaries would provide clarity about where proposed changes must be reviewed and where the reviews can be less stringent.

In addition to creating a historic district, it is also suggested that the board or commission in charge of the historic district next proceed to update the Design Review Guidelines to incorporate additional historical context and stylistic information to further assist building owners in identifying appropriate repairs and renovation work, and provide support to the board or commission regarding approvals of applications.

Future endeavors for the board or commission to consider may also include a plaque program to acknowledge building owners that exemplify the preservation ethic in the community and providing educational sessions to inform the public of the historic district and the Design Review Guidelines.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

Creation of a historic district, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will allow all buildings that are considered contributing to the historic significance of the district to be considered “certified historic structures” and eligible for both federal and state tax credits (currently 20% federal, 20% state). Additionally municipal and not-for-profit owners of listed properties may apply for matching state historic preservation grants.
Estimated cost
Low: $30,000 in consultant fee to complete National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
Funding is available from the following resources to assist with historic/cultural resource surveys to support the creation of a historic district:

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP)
– Awards for Certified Local Governments (CLG) typically range from $1,200 to $29,000, with most in the range of $5,000 to $15,000. Communities are encouraged to contribute in-kind services or provide funding equaling at least 40% of the total project cost. See http://nysparks.com/shpo/certified-local-governments/

Preservation League of New York State, Preserve New York Grant Program
– Awards typically range between $3,000 and $10,000 and the program requires that the applicant contribute 20% of the project cost as a cash match. See http://www.preservenys.org/preserve-new-york.html

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Short-term:

• 6-12 months: Obtain certification as a CLG and develop a preservation ordinance
• 6-9 months: Complete research and National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
• 6 months: Commission/Board and NYS OPRHP/NPS reviews and approvals

Feasibility
Approximately 46 buildings in the downtown BID area have already been identified as “eligible” for the National Register. Barring any drastic renovations that may have been completed since properties were identified as “eligible,” these would typically be considered contributing structures within the proposed historic district. In addition to these contributing buildings, the majority of the smaller commercial, multi-use and residential buildings located in the BID also appear to be contributing resources (see Historic Properties map).
Project C-3: Revise Downtown Zoning Code

Strategies addressed:
- Support venues and events for the City’s arts, cultural and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Encourage a diverse and balanced mix of housing types to serve residents of varied ages, incomes and type who are seeking an alternative to traditional suburban living.
- Consider opportunities for student housing and/or other student-focused facilities to serve neighboring higher-education facilities.
- Expand the availability of convenience retail, restaurants and other amenities that serve neighborhood residents and enhance quality-of-life.
- Consider opportunities for creating artist live/work spaces.

Brief Project Description
Currently, downtown Middletown is zoned C-3 (General Business), a broad category of commercial zoning that is also mapped for the City’s auto-oriented business areas along Dolson Avenue and Dolsontown Road. A specialized zoning district is needed for the downtown that permits a wide range of uses appropriate for a central business district, facilitates a 24/7 mixed-use environment with residents as well as workers, and promotes strong design elements that complement Middletown’s historic downtown fabric. The City can also take the opportunities to incorporate elements within the downtown zone that encourage green infrastructure and green building techniques.

Area of New Downtown Zoning District
The proposed Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) district would cover all of the downtown area currently zoned C-3, except for the two parcels south of Fulton Street and east of South Street (currently a supermarket and an office building). The DMU zone would also incorporate three areas not currently included in the C-3 zone: 1) the I-1-zoned parcel bounded by South Street, Fulton Avenue and Canal Street; 2) the I-1-zoned parcel bounded by Fulton Street, Wawayanda Avenue and Mulberry Street; and 3) the I-2-zoned parcel bounded by Cottage Street, Montgomery Street and the former railroad right-of-way.

Permitted Uses in the DMU Zoning District
The C-3 permits few uses as-of-right, requiring a special permit in addition to site plan approval for most allowed uses. Several uses that are either present in downtown Middletown or would be appropriate for the downtown do not appear to be permitted (e.g. houses of worship, outdoor dining and commercial recreation), while some uses that are not appropriate for a downtown setting are allowed (e.g. car washes). The following uses are proposed to be permitted in the new DMU district:

Permitted Uses
- Retail stores, provided that all goods prepared on the premises are sold at retail, and provided that the floor area of the store does not exceed 3,000 square feet.
- Business, professional or medical offices.
- Municipal and educational uses (including dormitories).
- Banks and similar financial institutions, non-drive-up window.
- Bakery whose primary business is retail on the premises but which may also sell and deliver its products wholesale to stores, restaurants or similar businesses.
- Art galleries and artist studios.
- Artisan manufacturing (goods, such as jewelry or ceramics, which are produced using hand-tools only).
- Recreation facilities, commercial or private.
- One-family dwellings, subject to requirements of the R-1 zone, and two-family dwellings, subject to requirements of the R-2 zone, provided that the first floor (Street level) must be a commercial uses unless waived by the Planning Board in its sole discretion.
- Printing shops.
- Funeral homes and undertaking establishments.
- Billiard parlors and bowling alleys.
- Bus terminals and taxi stands.
- Off-street parking facilities.
- Telephone and similar communication facilities stores or offices.

**Special Permit Uses**
- Restaurants and eating and drinking establishments, non-drive-up window.
- Personal service uses, including but not limited to barbershops, beauty shops, shoe repair, tailoring or dry-cleaning service (excluding any dry cleaning on the premises).
- Multiple dwellings or attached housing, provided that ground-floor residential uses shall not be allowed on North Street, South Street north of Fulton Street and Main Street, unless waived by the Planning Board in its sole discretion.
- Places of assembly such as a theater, dance hall, auditorium or similar uses and purposes, including membership clubs where the chief activity or primary purpose is a service customarily carried on as a business or primarily for gain.
- Hotel, motel, inn and/or conference center (no minimum lot area).
- Retail stores whose floor area exceeds 3,000 square feet but does not exceed 15,000 square feet.
- Rectifying of spirits and wines, bottling of beverages, distillery operations and onsite tasting rooms, sales and tours.
- Houses of worship.
- Child day-care facility (subject to current C-3 requirements).
- Wireless telecommunications services facilities, as permitted and regulated in Section 475.43.

**Accessory Uses**
- Uses which are customarily incidental and accessory to the principal use.
- Sidewalk and outdoor cafes, subject to the provisions of Section 475-28. It is suggested that, in addition to sidewalks, accessory outdoor cafes be permitted on other City-owned property, such as pocket parks, subject to the Planning Board’s discretion.
- Home occupations
Parking in the DMU Zoning District

Some of Middletown’s existing required parking ratios, which apply city-wide appear to be problematic, especially in a downtown area. The following changes are recommended:

- Restaurants and eating/drinking establishments: Add a square footage requirement to reflect that some establishments may have few seats but contain standing areas for patrons. Suggest 1 space for every 5 seats (current requirement), or 1 parking space for every 100 square feet of patron area, whichever is greater.
- Stores and service establishments: Reduce requirement from 1 space per 150 square feet of floor area to 1 space per 250 square feet of floor area.

In addition, for the DMU zone, provisions should be added allowing the Planning Board to reduce required parking spaces by up to 50% based on documentation to the Board’s satisfaction outlining the potential for shared parking of complementary uses (either on-site or within 500 feet) and/or proposed demand management techniques.

Area and Bulk Standards in the DMU Zoning District

Currently, the C-3 zone limits building heights at 6 stories, or 90 feet in height and does not require front, rear or side yards. These standards are appropriate for a downtown context, but the City may want to incorporate residential density and floor area ratio (FAR) requirements to help guide the scale of new development in the downtown. Typically, a residential density of 25 units per acre and an FAR of 2.0 would be appropriate for a downtown context like Middletown.

Design Standards and Guidelines

The new DMU zone would incorporate a set of design standards and guidelines, including diagrams and illustrations, as appropriate, to convey desired building siting, massing and scale; streetscaping; design of parking lots; lighting; landscaping, etc. These would supplement and expand upon the existing Design Review Guidelines in Chapter 166 of the City Code to address overall sites in addition to building facades. The City may want to expand the existing Architectural Control District to include areas within the new DMU zoning district. The existing Design Review Guidelines should also be revised to address the current situation of billboards affixed to buildings in the downtown area that advertise off-site businesses.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

Although the downtown zoning revisions would not directly create investment or jobs, this project is critical to jump-starting private investment in downtown Middletown. The current zoning is not conducive to facilitating the location of new uses that are needed to establish the downtown as a destination for working, shopping, living and entertainment. The existing regulations treat the downtown in the same way as Middletown’s highway-oriented business areas in terms of uses allowed and area and bulk standards. Creation of a downtown-focused zoning district can be anticipated to promote activities that are more appropriate for a central business district, and that are designed at a scale and aesthetic that is in keeping with the historic fabric. The new regulations would also provide greater clarity to development applicants.
Estimated cost
Low- <$200,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
In addition to DRI funding, other public funds potentially available include NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) resources and HUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative.

A general timeframe for implementing the action
6-9 months assuming the City completes the zoning revisions in-house.

Feasibility
Easy: The zoning code revisions could be undertaken by City staff, in consultation with the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Architectural Review Board and BID.
Project C-4: Fund a Brownfield Areawide Inventory Study

**Strategy(ies) addressed:**
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.

**Brief Project Description**

There are several properties in and around the DRI area that could qualify for designation as a brownfield due to the presence, or potential presence, of hazardous materials. Contamination, or the perception of contamination, may be acting as a deterrent to future redevelopment of these sites and creating detrimental impacts to neighboring properties as well.

The project would fund a study under the New York State Department of State’s (NYS DOS) Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program to undertake an area-wide assessment of potential brownfield sites in and around downtown Middletown. The suggested study area would be the DRI area and areas within a quarter-mile radius. There are three program steps to the BOA Process:

- **Step 1: Pre-Nomination Study** – A basic and preliminary analysis of the area affected by brownfield sites, including a description and justification of the study area and associated boundaries; a basic description and understanding of current land use and zoning; the delineation and description of existing brownfield sites and other underutilized properties; and a description of the area’s potential for revitalization.

- **Step 2: Nomination** – An in-depth and thorough description and analysis, including an economic and market trends analysis of existing conditions, opportunities and reuse potential for properties located in the proposed BOA with an emphasis on the identification and reuse potential of strategic sites that are catalysts for revitalization. The Nomination concludes with a description of key findings and recommendations to advance redevelopment of strategic sites and to revitalize the area.

- **Step 3: Implementation Strategy** – Description of the techniques and actions that can be undertaken and are necessary to implement the area-wide plan. Site assessments on strategic brownfield sites may be eligible for funding if environmental data is required.

Given the work completed for this DRI study, Middletown may be able to enter the BOA program at Step 2. The focus of the BOA study could be on specific revitalization sites, such as Fort Knox facility on Canal Street, the Acme Bus site at Fulton and Mulberry Street, the AAMCO Transmissions site at Fulton and South Streets (known to be contaminated) and the former O&W railroad station off Wickham Avenue.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Could remove barriers to future redevelopment of challenging sites, generating new investment and improving conditions throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. Also has the potential to generate positive environmental impacts by facilitating cleanup of contaminated areas that may be leaching into groundwater.

Estimated cost
Low: $200,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
NYS DOS BOA grants

A general timeframe for implementing the action
1 year

Feasibility
Easy
Goal D: Bring residents and workers to Downtown Middletown through improved housing and employment opportunities and amenities.

Project D-1: Support the Orange County Accelerator Program

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.
- Consider opportunities for student housing and/or other student-focused facilities to serve neighboring higher education facilities.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.
- Stimulate innovation through business incubators.

Brief project description
Develop office space for the Accelerator Program, powered by Orange County IDA. The Accelerator works to attract manufacturing-based businesses in the areas of fashion design and production, bottling, artisan manufacturing and artisan foods by providing below-market occupancy costs, workforce training, mentoring programs, easy access to experienced professionals and a high-tech plug-and-play environment with SMARTT Pods and a host of other resources. Potential locations for Accelerator office spaces could be the TD Bank Building, the Woolworth’s Building and Touro College.

More information to come.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
More information to come.

Estimated cost
Medium- More information to come.

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
More information to come.

A general timeframe for implementing the action
More information to come.

Feasibility
Moderately difficult
Project D-2: Develop a Race for Space at the Woolworth’s Building

Strategy(ies) addressed:

- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Create “move-in ready” sites and building spaces that can be occupied by a mix of stores, restaurants and offices, including repurposing existing buildings to preserve the Downtown character.
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.
- Stimulate innovation through business incubators.

Brief project description

This project would establish a trial program to quickly fill vacant retail space downtown. Initially, the program would be paired with the Woolworth’s Building Redevelopment project (Project C-2) and focus on getting the four new retail spaces created in this City-owned building occupied as soon as construction is complete. However, if the program is successful, it could be expanded to attract new retail and office uses to fill vacant space in other downtown buildings.

In its preliminary form, the Race for Space program would create a competition encouraging proposals to fill the new storefronts at the rehabilitated Woolworth’s Building on North Street. Successful applicants would be eligible for a 50% reduction in rent for a period of time and matching funds to defray the cost of fitting-up the space for the particular business. Grants amounts will be $25,000 and would be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to selected entries until the grant pool is exhausted. Potential applicants would have access to assistance in developing a business plan in coordination with SUNY Orange. The business plan, which would include a strategy for weaning off the initial rent subsidy, would be one of the criteria used to select winning proposals. Other potential criteria used to evaluate proposals could include:

- Business owned by a Middletown resident,
- Business owner from outside of Middletown but committed to moving to the area,
- Business type identified by the retail market study, and
- Investment of a certain percentage by business owner.

The program could be administered by the City’s Department of Economic and Community Development with guidance from a small ad-hoc committee of existing business owners created to evaluate proposals and oversee implementation. Based on the program’s success over a specified period of time, the City could consider refinements and an expansion of the program to other buildings downtown.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.

The benefit of this approach is that it will provide the immediate impact of filling vacant space and bringing more retail activity to this part of Downtown Middletown. It is also a program that could be scaled-up if it proves impactful. Initially the program would involve a very modest investment of state funds and the resources of City staff and volunteers while leveraging private dollars provided by aspiring local entrepreneurs. By providing business planning assistance, it would also increase the likelihood of successful start-ups.

Estimated cost

Low (<$200,000). An initial investment of $150,000 would be sufficient to fund a two-year trial run of this program at the Woolworth’s Building.

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources

The City of Middletown owns the Woolworth’s Building and nearly $1 million of local and state funds have already been committed to the rehabilitation of the structure (see Project C-2).

A general timeframe for implementing the action

The initial program would run for a two-year period once the building rehabilitation project is completed. However, organization of the program and implementation of the competition could begin immediately.

Feasibility

Moderately Difficult
Project D-3: Install Fiber-Optic Network in Downtown and MCC

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Expand access to traditional and emerging broadband infrastructure.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.
- Support office and light industrial use at the Middletown Community Campus and other locations in close proximity to Downtown.

Brief project description
Access to high-speed internet is a critical need for business operations. Currently, available broadband speeds are too low (1-10 Mb/sec) to attract new businesses to the City. One way to make Middletown more desirable for office use would be to bring fiber-optic capabilities into the downtown area. Fiber-optic internet carries a significant advantage above regular high-speed broadband with increased consistency, speed (between 1Gbps and 10Gbps), and bandwidth.

The City has contacted Lightower, a company that provides “dark fiber” networks for businesses and institutions. Dark fiber refers to unused fiber-optic cable. Telecommunication companies often lay more fiber-optic lines than what is needed. Lightower leases unused fiber for their network. The company currently has a network spur connected to Touro College which can provide broadband speeds between 1Gbps and 10Gbps. This project would connect the Lightower network to three sites in Middletown 1) the former TD Bank building on South Street, 2) the Woolworth’s Building, and 3) Middletown Community Campus.

In the downtown area, the fiber-optic network could be linked to a public Wi-Fi hotspot at the Woolworth’s Building and at the former TD Bank building (see Project D-4).

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Indirect benefits include stimulation of business location and expansion, which could generate new jobs in and around the downtown area, with secondary benefits on existing businesses. The project could also increase affected property values; 2015 research by the Fiber to the Home Council Americas indicates a fiber connection adds an average of 3.1% to a property’s value.

Estimated cost
Medium- $500,000 - $1,000,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
Connect NY Broadband Program

A general timeframe for implementing the action
More information to come

Feasibility
More information to come
Project D-4: Install Public Wi-Fi Hotspots

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.
- Improve downtown Middletown’s image to City residents and the region.
- Expand access to traditional and emerging broadband infrastructure.
- Employ strategies to help small and local businesses thrive, and address issues that cause vacancy rates.
- Expand the availability of convenience retail, restaurants and other amenities that serve neighborhood residents and enhance quality-of-life.

Brief project description
Building on the installation of a high-speed downtown broadband network established as part of Project D-3, this project would establish 3-4 public Wi-Fi hotspots to provide public internet access in key areas of the downtown. The purpose of the hotspots would be two-fold: 1), to support job growth in the downtown from new office uses, and 2), to provide free wireless internet access in key public spaces.

The suggested locations for Wi-Fi hotspots are the former TD Bank building and the Woolworth’s building (both of which are controlled by the City), Erie Way Park and the future transportation center on Railroad Avenue. The hotspots would go through a gateway on the City’s or BID’s website, which would provide information on local businesses and events, which will help drive economic activity.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Indirect benefits

Estimated cost
Low ($<200,000)

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
Connect NY Broadband Program

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Short term- 1-2 years

Feasibility
Moderately difficult
**Goal E:** Build connections to local institutions and regional and neighborhood resources to engage students, faculty and staff as a part of the Downtown’s success

**Project E-1: Create a Middletown Bus Loop**

*Strategy(ies) addressed:*
- *Improve linkages among the Downtown, SUNY Orange, Touro College and Fei Tian College/Academy.*
- *Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.*

*Brief Project Description*

Downtown Middletown is surrounded by three higher education institutions, with a total student body projected to reach over 4,000 by 2018 (*to be verified*). Along with faculty and staff, this group presents an opportunity for additional patronage of Downtown businesses and activities. Creating a bus loop to connect institutions such as Fei Tian College and Academy at the Middletown Community Campus, Touro College and SUNY Orange to the downtown area, supporting local businesses and providing a useful connection for this growing community.

For a localized bus service to be successful, it must provide frequent and reliable service. Without deploying multiple vehicles, this requires that the geographical area served by the loop served be kept relatively small area and that the number of stops be limited, to ensure several runs of the loop per hour. Initially, the bus loop would link the three educational institutions, with interim stops at the new Middletown Transportation Center and Heritage Trail at Roberts Street/Railroad Avenue and Thrall Library/Erie Way Park. Additional stops could be added at the Middletown Community Campus as it is further developed in the future.

*Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.*

The Middletown Bus Loop has the potential to bring students, faculty and staff of institutions bordering the DRI area into the Downtown. The Bus Loop is expected to leverage these existing institutions and provide a service that will benefit the various institutions as well as downtown businesses who will profit from the additional customer base. Connections to the new Middletown Transportation Center and the Heritage Trail would provide linkages to regional transit and recreation opportunities.

Creation of the bus loop could also have environmental benefits by increasing the use of transit rather than private automobile, thus reducing vehicle trips. In addition, selecting an electric or alternative fuel bus could further reduce potential emissions as well as allow eligibility for funding under the New York State Truck Voucher Incentive Program.
**Estimated cost**

The development of a Middletown Bus Loop would require both capital funding and operational funding. Capital funding is required to purchase the vehicle and launch the program, while operational funding covers labor, maintenance and marketing. The initial capital cost depends on the type of vehicle purchased.

**Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources**

DRI funding could be used to cover all or a portion of the initial capital cost of purchasing the vehicle. Grant funding is also available from the Federal Transit Administration’s Buses and Bus Facilities Grants Program and, for eligible vehicles, from the New York State Truck Voucher Incentive Program (funding through the Federal Highway Administration’s Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program). Funds may also be available from the Orange County Planning Department for planning of the bus loop route, marketing and related infrastructure improvements.

It is assumed that ongoing operational costs would be funded through a combination of private sources (the three educational institutions and future tenants at the Middletown Community Campus) and City/BID funding.

**A general timeframe for implementing the action**

Medium; 2 years to plan the program, purchase the vehicle, hire the bus operator and launch the service.

**Feasibility**

Difficult: The project would need initial buy-in from Touro College, SUNY Orange and Fei Tian, with a commitment to share in the funding for operational costs. The optimal route for the bus loop would need to be determined based on coordination with the three educational institutions, City DPW, Orange County Planning and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) as needed. In addition traffic engineering would be necessary to determine optimal route.

Touro College, Fei Tian and SUNY Orange would be responsible for ongoing maintenance costs following the implementation of the route and bus service, potentially with some funding assistance from the City/BID.
Project E-2: Develop a Master Plan for the Middletown Community Campus

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Reclaim vacant and underused sites and buildings to activate spaces and expand the City’s tax base.
- Attract, create and retain jobs for residents and newcomers.
- Support office and light industrial use at the Middletown Community Campus and other locations in close proximity to Downtown.
- Improve linkages among the Downtown, SUNY Orange, Touro College and Fei Tian College/Academy.
- Enhance open spaces and promote access to the region’s natural resources and recreational amenities.
- Encourage continuation of and connections to the Heritage Trail which will run through downtown.

Brief Project Description
The Middletown Community Campus (MCC) is the site of the former state psychiatric center on Monhagen Avenue. With the 2016 annexation of a portion of the campus from the Town of Wallkill, all 232 acres are now located within the City of Middletown. Different entities own portions of the campus and there are a number of projects underway to rehabilitate or redevelop particular sites and buildings on the campus.

For example, the Fei Tian Academy of the Arts and Fei Tian College have recently completed initial building renovations and have extensive plans for growth at the campus. They anticipate an approximately $28 million investment to accommodate as many as 500 secondary students at the Academy of the Arts and 2,700 students at the College in the next five years.
The City of Middletown is utilizing a $500,000 ESD grant to design roadway and infrastructure improvements for the campus, is negotiating with the State Dormitory Authority (DASNY) to acquire an additional 33 acres of land and buildings on the campus, and has applied for funding through Restore NY to remove hazardous debris and rubble from two structures that were destroyed by fire in 2015. The City has also applied to ESD and is in the pre-application phase with U.S. EDA for funding to construct the first phase of infrastructure and roadway improvements.

This project will provide funding to develop a Master Plan for the overall development of the campus. The Master Plan will incorporate the needs and aspirations of current users of the campus, consider the growth plans of the Fei Tian, and create a vision and a strategy for bringing additional office and light industrial development to this key economic development site. Additionally, the Master Plan will explore options for the 10 +/- acres of campus land that will be set aside as a new City Park. Preliminary design of the park, and its connections to other portions of the campus, will be prepared as part of the Master Plan. The plan will also interface with the Heritage Trail Connections and Gateway Enhancements project (E-1) to ensure that the Oliver Avenue connector from the Heritage Trail links up to the campus in a manner that is safe and convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The City has sought ESD Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies Grant funds to create a campus redevelopment shovel-ready master plan, including a guide for campus redevelopment, necessary environmental screenings, SEQRA reviews and permitting sites. ESD Development Grand funds will go toward infrastructure improvements, including the replacement of aged stormwater, sanitary and water utilities, and road construction. Street light installation will cost approximately $100,000, and infrastructure improvements for redundant water storage tank facilities for fire protection and usage are estimated to cost $1.5 million. The City requested $10.9 million for infrastructure and $150,000 for planning in CFA funding; those grant applications were not successful in 2016.

The redevelopment of the former Middletown Psychiatric Center into the Community Campus will produce a significant employment boost in Middletown. Over its three phases, this project is expected to generate approximately 1,935 construction jobs, with 1,062 total net new jobs, 89 retained jobs and 125 ancillary jobs.
Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
Preparation of the Master Plan will leverage current and future local, state, federal and private investment in the Middletown Community Campus. The Master Plan will guide the coordinated redevelopment of this major site for a variety of educational, office, light industrial and public recreational uses, ensuring that it becomes an economic asset to the City and the region.

In addition to existing buildings, as much as 500,000 square feet of new construction could easily be accommodated at the MCC. It is estimated that Fei Tian alone will create 450 permanent jobs on the campus. Just a short walk to Downtown Middletown, the students and workforce from a reactivated campus could become a catalyst for retail and entertainment spending, residential demand, and other spin-off economic activity downtown.

Estimated cost
Low

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
As described above, significant public and private funding is already committed to the Middletown Community Campus. The City is actively pursuing additional sources of funding, and the Master Plan will focus these efforts while making its applications more competitive.

A general timeframe for implementing the action
Short-term: Incorporating stakeholder and public involvement in the process, the Middletown Community Campus Master Plan could be completed in approximately nine months.

Feasibility
Easy
Project E-3: Develop Safe Routes to Downtown Program

Strategy(ies) addressed:
- Identify and strengthen downtown gateways from surrounding neighborhoods and regional transportation connections.
- Encourage continuation of and connections to the Heritage Trail which will run through downtown.
- Develop an affordable, multi-modal transportation network including complete streets and access to public transportation, parking and bicycle infrastructure.

Brief Project Description
This project will build on the concept of the nationwide Safe Routes to School program by improving pedestrian and bicycle connections from schools, community institutions and neighborhoods within a 2-mile radius to downtown Middletown. The City’s public schools are located outside of the DRI area, with the closest public education institutions being Presidential Park Elementary School off Roosevelt Avenue and Twin Towers Middle School, each about 1.5 miles from the DRI area. In addition, Middletown High School and Monhagen Middle School are each about 2 miles away from the downtown. Although the schools are not within close walking distance to the downtown, they could be easily bikeable, especially for middle and high school students. Other community institutions, such as SUNY Orange, Touro College, the YMCA and the Perkins Community Center, as well as several private schools, are within walking or biking distance to downtown.

A “Safe Routes to Downtown” program could be developed to initiate projects and activities that promote safety and accessibility for students and residents walking and bicycling to the downtown area. By improving safety around schools and community institutions, reducing traffic and improving air quality, this program incentivizes an active lifestyle. The program would support improvements such as new or enhanced sidewalks, lighting, bicycle lanes, bike “share the road” signage and wayfinding signage, to direct walkers and cyclists to the downtown via key routes. The Safe Routes to Downtown can also highlight opportunities to improve connectivity from schools and neighborhoods to the Heritage Trail, linking to downtown and beyond.

Projected benefits, such as investment leveraged, jobs created, etc.
The Safe Routes to Downtown program is intended to increase the number of people who can safely walk and bike to downtown Middletown from nearby schools, neighborhoods and community institutions. If successful, the program can be expected to increase the downtown user population, with beneficial impacts to downtown businesses and community spaces. Improving neighborhood connections to the downtown, and overall walking and biking conditions, can also be anticipated to enhance the neighborhoods themselves through better quality-of-life and safety. Increased non-vehicular could also have positive environmental impacts through reduced vehicle trips and emissions.
Estimated cost
Low <$200,000

Potential and committed public and/or private funding sources
For areas, around schools, federal funding is available through the National Center for Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to Downtown activities would also be eligible for funding through the Federal Highway Administration’s Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails and Transportation Alternatives programs, and from Orange County Planning transportation planning programs.

A general timeframe for implementing the action
6-9 months for planning study to identify routes for sidewalk and bicycle transportation improvements.

Feasibility
Easy