



CITY OF BEACON – 2019 DRI Application

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region – Mid-Hudson
- Municipality Name : City of Beacon
- Downtown Name: Downtown Beacon
- County Name: Dutchess
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title: Anthony Ruggiero, City Administrator; Randy Casale, Mayor
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VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

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

The City of Beacon stands at a crossroads, as a community that has experienced positive growth in recent years, but whose residents continue to struggle. Beacon is in need of strategic investment that can ensure an ability to support quality wages, access to healthcare, affordable housing and a reasonable cost of living. In the last fifteen years, the City has welcomed over tens of millions of dollars in transit-oriented development in areas to the south and west of the City's core. Although these investments have served to attract some additional investment throughout the downtown, it is clear by Beacon's \$46M trade surplus outside its Opportunity Zone that regional investment is coming to Beacon as a retail and daily destination, but gaps in quality of life exist in a manner that jeopardizes real long-term revitalization.

In order to fill these gaps, the City seeks to take a strategic approach to ensure that proper focus is given to Beacon's Opportunity Zone along Main Street and throughout surrounding neighborhoods to the north. The improvement of these areas is critical to attracting new commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments that will support the long-term growth of the downtown. Evidence of this need rests in the fact that recent, current and planned developments may increase the City's population by as many as 3,337 individuals. However, as re-development has progressed the City's poverty rate has risen from 11 to 13%, and the community has experienced a growing gap in wages as 30% of households earn incomes over \$100,000 annually, and 43% earn under \$50,000. In fact, more than 80% of residents continue to commute outside the community by car, forcing a major expense upon their daily lives. Moreover, the average home value has risen almost 50% since 2000, exacerbating the Hudson Valley's housing problem where households are spending well over 30% of their income on housing. In fact, it is estimated that over 25% of Beacon residents are severely cost burdened in relation to housing, spending over 50% of their income towards rent. Of concern is also the fact that one in five Beacon residents currently have no healthcare, which is 6.55% higher than the state average. These figures are unsustainable, and threaten the long-term stability of a community which stands to grow by over 20% in the coming years.

If awarded DRI funding, the City will move forward with a strategic investment plan that will support critical commercial, housing, mixed-use, and quality of life improvements in and around the Opportunity Zone.



In preparation for the DRI, the City has drawn upon a recently completed update to its Comprehensive Plan (2017), which was led by a steering committee of staff, stakeholders and the public at large. The vision embedded within that plan seeks to focus reinvestment in the core of the downtown to enhance quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods, including Beacon's Opportunity Zone. The DRI area includes a variety of important assets to the community including public parkland, underutilized parcels, market rate and affordable housing opportunities, educational and workforce development institutions, cultural amenities and Beacon's retail district.

In order to plan and prepare the DRI Target area for investment, the City has completed a variety of crucial traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, a water capacity study, and stormwater management plan. All of these studies have helped mold the City's Vision for long-term development that focuses on benefitting current and future residents of Beacon. Proposed improvements include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, transit improvements, traffic flow adjustments, traffic calming improvements, recreation improvements, market and affordable housing development, parking enhancements, adaptive reuse of underutilized city-owned properties, increased access to healthcare through enhancements at Hudson River Healthcare's Beacon Health Center, investment in workforce development through the improvement of the Howland Public Library, and sustainability improvements. These strategic investments will strengthen Beacon's core, and mitigate many of the quality of life issues currently being experienced. Despite the fact that the City's Main Street currently acts as a regional destination for retail and commercial development, the corridor is not currently supporting an environment that supports universal opportunities to live, work, and play. As such, the City's DRI Vision is to create a downtown that offers residents newfound connectivity within the core to find quality work, affordable housing, access to healthcare, access to an affordable multi-modal transportation network, and an improved ability to seek active and passive recreation all within close proximity to where they live.

JUSTIFICATION

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

The City of Beacon's targeted DRI Area includes roughly one square mile of diverse land uses which offer a combination of developed and undeveloped parcels. There are a variety of factors that have been informing development projects in Beacon, which continue to present an enormous upside for future economic growth.

Geographically, the DRI Area acts as a regional destination within the Hudson Valley. In fact, a December 2018 Retail Market Assessment relative to Beacon's Opportunity Zone, which lies within the DRI Target Area, concluded that over there is an overall \$46 million surplus within the trade area, representing the fact that there is substantial retail spending coming from outside the Opportunity Zone, and that Beacon is attracting a regional customer base. This draw is driven by existing transportation infrastructure which includes major highways, a Metro-North Train Station, and the twin-span, Newburgh-Beacon Bridge (I-84 and NY 52), which serves approximately 67,696 vehicles daily.

The DRI Target Area includes the majority of Main Street from Wolcott Avenue (Route 9D) to Teller Avenue/Route 52. As it is currently configured, this stretch contains a variety of public and private uses, including government, residential, Health Services, Public Library, non-profit, varied services, art galleries, offices, restaurants, grocers and entertainment venues. These institutions have contributed to Beacon's recent growth and reputation as a desirable place to live, work and play. Moreover, strong demographic and cultural trends are also in place that favor new development that is mixed-use and multi-modal. Numerous underutilized properties exist in critical areas which are ripe for redevelopment, and can easily take advantage of many of the benefits the downtown market currently offers.

The City remains in a time of transition, as rapid growth and demographic transition has led to a fear that some are being left behind. In fact, 11% of the City's population continues to live under the federal poverty line, driving the governing body's focus upon future investment that will properly weave together and support all of the community's residents as commercial core of Beacon's footprint continues to grow. Improving the DRI Target Area in a variety of ways will serve to ensure this synergy, and position all of Beacon's residents for long-term stability.

Beacon is ready, and sees a clear path forward that will mobilize and spark new investment on top of reinvestment which has already been taking place in recent years. The City recently completed a Comprehensive Plan (2017) Update that was led by a Steering Committee comprised of City staff, civic representatives, and other stakeholders. The resulting plan incorporates strong community input and advocates for continued revitalization within the heart of the central business district strengthened by multi-modal transportation improvements to fully connect Main Street from all directions. The updated Comprehensive Plan was also informed by various other studies and reports, including traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, and water capacity and stormwater management studies.

The City of Beacon, led by the resurgence of its Main Street as a destination, has been experiencing a social, cultural, and economic renaissance. According to US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, since 2000, the homeowner vacancy rate in the City has remained very low, falling below one percent in 2014. Furthermore, the City has witnessed a steady gain in housing development since 2000. In 2015, Beacon was once again named a "Top Town," and one of the best places to live in the Hudson Valley. Articles in a variety of publications extol the City's many attributes, which include: transportation access, recreational activities, arts and cultural programming, and relative affordability.

However, there remain sections of Main Street and adjacent neighborhoods which connect to the core of the district which can be strengthened in order to ensure unfettered accessibility and high quality of life across the board. Those areas, which are represented by our DRI Target Area and its potentially transformative projects, are essential to provide sustainability for the community in any economic climate. If awarded, our DRI Initiative will usher in a future period of rapid economic growth across the entirety of Beacon in a manner which extends to the many socioeconomic and lifestyle needs of all residents who desire to live here. Beacon's scenic beauty, strong administrative leadership, history of community involvement and support, and prime location in the region define its ability to become a major hub in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

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

The target area for this proposal encompasses the heart of the City's Central Business District and Opportunity Zone, connecting existing and planned centers of place and investment initiatives intended on providing seamless quality of life and connectivity throughout Beacon. East to west, the DRI focus area runs from Wolcott Avenue to Teller Avenue and North to South from Hammond Field (Verplanck Avenue) to South Avenue Park (South Avenue/West Center Street). This area incorporates both the core of Beacon's local economy and its institutions which provide quality of life to residents. It encompasses various areas of the City, which are in the midst of redevelopment or planned redevelopment surrounding City Hall, the County Center, and U.S. Post Office. Moreover, the improvement of the North-South Corridor from Hammond Field to South Avenue Park is crucial to the future of Beacon, as it includes Beacon High School, Howland Public Library, two major recreational facilities, the site of a future Recreation Center and connects to the City's Housing Authority. Combined, the improvement of three targeted areas of Main Street with various safety, multi-modal and recreational improvements will serve to ensure that residents are provided with a multitude of housing, economic and quality of life opportunities in Beacon, truly forming a City where all can live, work and play.

Structurally, Beacon's Main Street is more than one mile long and its character transforms along the corridor. It consists of three (3) sections: 1) lower Main Street, which is the west end between Route 9D and Digger Phelps Court; 2) central Main Street which continues east to Route 52 (Fishkill Avenue); and 3) upper Main Street which is the east end from Route 52 to East Main Street at the Fishkill Creek. This DRI proposal seeks to strengthen the entire downtown's core, as well as the neighborhoods which reside adjacent.

The planned improvements for the target area are consistent with the City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan, which calls for "creating an environment that accommodates the automobile and also improves access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of all abilities and ages." Our goal in focusing upon this area is to maximize the utility of our proposed project area by ensuring that all residents and visitors have easy access to main street and its varied assets. In recent years, the City has elected to adopt a multimodal transportation mindset. This project will allow the City's revitalization to be more transit oriented, thereby enhancing downtown connectivity and reducing vehicular traffic along the Main Street corridor, resulting in a safer and more walkable downtown with direct access to public facilities, schools, healthcare, commercial businesses, and recreational facilities.

The proposed project area encapsulates roughly 15% of the City's total land area, and the most crucial corridors to support future growth and continuity. Specifically, the catchment area has been chosen due to the fact that it includes essential current and future public resources and is dotted by areas which have been targeted for redevelopment. Without these improvements, the Main Street Corridor will continue to lack uniformity, and recent improvements have the potential to lose their value. The catchment area also ensures that Beacon will become a walkable community for both residents and visitors. Most

importantly, it incorporates and connects Beacon's diverse populations to both the commercial center, educational, and recreational facilities. The area is also compact enough to be walkable, but open enough to incorporate varied future development. Likewise, to support Beacon's core, the city's vision seeks to establish more direct links to the many popular shops, galleries, and restaurants on Main Street by designing and implementing accessibility improvements that will better connect residents and visitors with Main Street and Beacon's other attractions. This level of accessibility and connectivity is essential as Beacon embraces its regional identity as a community where everyone can seek to live, work and play.

Overall, the City's focus is to utilize the catchment area as the future heartbeat of the downtown by improving safety to and from public schools, creating access to a new Recreational Center, offering improved parking, enabling more diversified housing opportunities, creating new pedestrian and bicycle pathways, supporting the redevelopment of underutilized properties, and attracting new employers who are leaders in the technology and healthcare sectors. All of these improvements are essential to ensure cohesion with residents and visitors alike as Beacon continues to grow, and to stimulate continued economic development in the downtown.



2) Past investment, future investment potential. Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.

In recent years, the City of Beacon has become a model for transit-oriented redevelopment and the adaptive reuse of vacant structures. Strategic, comprehensive, and balanced investment in Beacon has resulted in new housing, infrastructure improvements, transit-oriented solutions, strong preservation goals, and a diverse variety of new businesses. The City's economic redevelopment strategy has been

based in a distinct collaboration of arts revival, adaptive reuse of abandoned structures, and effective multimodal transportation.

The arrival of Dia: Beacon helped identify the City as an up-and-coming arts community, precipitating the creation of artist studios and the arrival of new galleries on Main Street. In total, the economic impact of Dia: Beacon is estimated to be approximately \$12,460,337 annually. The total impact in terms of local employment is approximately 168 jobs. With further investment focused on making this, and other sites in Beacon more accessible we anticipate an increase in both revenue at Dia:Beacon, and a need for additional jobs.

Over the past two decades, roughly half of Beacon's vacant, underutilized, and abandoned factories and industrial sites, once eyesores in the community and clear symbols of disinterest and disinvestment, have been converted into loft apartments and new shops along Main Street, boosting the local economy. Much of the investment along Main Street has involved the renovation of existing structures, preserving the charm, character, and aesthetic of the surrounding neighborhoods. Among several substantial investments in the revival of the City, investment in transportation has had a transformative impact: i.e., the redevelopment of the commuter rail station and the launch of a new ferry service. As the third most northern stop on the MTA Metro-North Railroad's Hudson Line, for years Beacon was unable to attract residents and visitors. However, in 2004, Metro-North completed a \$20 million project that modernized the rail station and added substantial parking. Serving more than 2,000 rail customers daily, the new station boasts beautifully landscaped walkways and drop-off points, well-lit stairs, and adjoining road improvements. Although these investments have been transformative in various areas of the community, the transformation is still lacking depth throughout the various sections of Main Street and the adjacent neighborhoods, with particular attention needed in the Opportunity Zone to the north.

Trends associated with the City's housing growth can be seen through prior and future redevelopment statistics. There were 30+ significant building permits issued between 2007 and 2017 for Main Street properties alone, all of which were renovations ranging from several thousand dollars of work to approximately one million dollars invested. The Building Department estimates that more than half of the buildings on Main Street have been renovated within the last decade. In recent years, there were an additional eight construction projects completed which resulted in the development of 408 units and an estimated 737 new residents. In fact, there remain another 502 units which are either under construction or in the land use approval process. If approved and built, Beacon's future population will have risen by around 1,800 residents by 2022. Moreover, the City of Beacon's long-term build out analysis estimate highlights another more than 50 underutilized parcels which can be built-out to the tune of 1,613 new units, adding another potential population of 3,337 residents. This would equate to a 33.8 percent population increase since the time of the 2010 United States Census, and poses a significant need to ensure that the community's transportation infrastructure is reorganized in a manner that protects resident safety and structures future development. Recognizing this need, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy in December 2016 to encourage the development of streets that provide safe, comfortable and convenient access for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.

Some of the largest approved developments in or directly adjacent to the DRI Target Area and Beacon's Opportunity Zone include:

- The Lofts at Beacon- a conversion of several former textile mill buildings, adding 143 live/work studio apartments on Front Street between Route 52 and Fishkill Creek.
- The Roundhouse complex in the heart of Beacon's business district includes a restaurant, hotel, events center, and 78 units creek-side.
- Highland Meadows with 68 affordable apartments for seniors
- 1 East Main Street, restoring a former factory building into 19 dwelling units and 5,750 square feet of ground floor commercial space.
- A renovation of the Beacon Theater on Main Street, including 29 apartments, a 200-seat theater, and two commercial storefronts.
- Three other new multi-story, mixed-use buildings along Main Street, collectively containing 60 apartments and over 22,000 square feet of commercial storefronts.
- The Edgewater project, 246 residential units within close walking distance to Transit.
- West End Lofts with 72 affordable units.
- Redevelopment of a former manufacturing building into Industrial Arts Brewing, Café Spice, Inc. food production and entertainment facility.
- Redevelopment of a former highway garage into 20,000 square feet of high-tech space and 8 residential units.

These numbers represent a community which is rapidly changing, and our administration is set to ensure that all new developments are implemented with a support system that will integrate well with Beacon's present and future population.

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

The most recent US Census statistics indicate that from 2000 to the 5-year period from 2010 to 2014, Beacon's labor force expanded by 1,208 workers, an increase of 18.7 percent. This figure continues to rise, with continued investment in Beacon's retail market, showing gains larger than those experienced on the County level. The City's focus has been on increasing job opportunities and the availability of retail goods and services, which was the second-highest ranking issue during public outreach session in connection with the development of Beacon's Comprehensive Plan. This focus on retail remains embedded within the redevelopment proposals for various parcels of land within the DRI Target Areas.

On the whole, Beacon is committed to fostering the continued development of a balanced local economy that provides good jobs and encourages the establishment of more businesses in the City to reduce the municipal tax burden on residences. The City's Central Business District, which runs the length of Main Street, currently consists of approximately 30 acres and 185 properties. On par with the redevelopment efforts cited in the previous section, the City of Beacon has experienced job growth across multiple sectors, buoyed by the highest among higher-income workers. Since 2010, job gains among workers 25 years or older were highest among those with 1-4 years of college (43.6%), followed by workers with a Bachelor's degree or higher education (25.7%), with less than a high school education (16.2%), and those with a high school education (14.5%). These demographic trends among recent hires



suggest that that the City of Beacon’s employment base is becoming increasingly both higher educated and better paid—signs that the City is becoming more oriented toward a service economy. Although Public Administration has remained the largest industry sector in the City with 1,363 jobs, the most recent US Census statistics indicated that the industry lost 33.5% of its workforce from 2007 to 2014, mirroring a trend among government agencies across the nation in response to a reduced tax base following the 2007-2009 recession, a market path which has continued to today. In total, eight of the City’s ten largest industry sectors all experienced job gains.

Additionally, Beacon has attracted many entrepreneurs and artists who have enhanced the character of the City and attracted many new comers to the area. As a result, Beacon has started to become a “commuter City,” with a strong transportation system in place to support daily trips to and from Manhattan. To complement this change, Beacon now seeks to attract the small to mid-size businesses to the central business district, so that residents can find employment in their hometown. Examples of this focus include the emergence of a new technology industry, which Beacon has welcomed through

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress’ Income and Poverty analysis for the City showed that since 2000, Beacon’s median household income has risen over 5%. However, during the same span of time, our community’s poverty rate rose from 11% to 13%, and the share of households receiving SNAP benefits rose from 13% to 18%. More striking is the fact that 30% of households reported incomes higher than \$100,000, while 43% earned less than \$50,000. These facts have driven the administration to become acutely aware of the risks that are posed with a community changing in rapid fashion. As such, the Mayor and Council are interested in implementing projects and enacted policies that will manage development carefully and protect against income inequality. In particular, this DRI proposal focuses upon improving the Howland Public Library to offer pre-employment services, improving critical transportation corridors, enhancing public facilities, and offering new housing and workplace opportunities in the retail and healthcare fields to ensure a seamless community and quality of life for all.

In addition, the City has recognized that while retail trade jobs are important, so is supporting the largest industry background among Beacon residents. In fact, residents who worked in the Educational Services, Healthcare and Social Services industries have experienced an over 25% displacement since 2010. As such, the City is committed to offering these residents close access to job opportunities which fall within their professional experience. This focus, will assist in supporting local employment and help to attain the City’s objective to increase the number of residents who work in Beacon, and reduce the number of residents who utilize an automobile to get to and from work. According to the US Census Bureau’s most recent statistics, only 20% of Beacon residents work in Beacon, and 51% work in Dutchess County. In addition, more than 80% commute by car, while just 8% take public transportation. Our DRI Investment focuses on improving areas of the central business district in a variety of ways which will help to reduce these figures. Far too many residents are unable to work where they live, and forced to limit their method of transportation to and from work by way of an automobile. In order to become a sustainable, smart city, Beacon must continue to make efforts to ensure the availability of a diversified job market which meets the skills and experience of its residents.

4) Attractiveness of physical environment. Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of

the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The Targeted DRI area lies in the heart of Beacon's downtown central business district central area of Beacon is characterized by a mixture of large flat areas and low rolling hills, typically rising up to 50 feet above the surrounding land surface. Elevations range from 510 feet on the slopes of Mount Beacon to near sea level along the Hudson River. The higher elevations on the southeast side of the City offer scenic views and include significant areas of steep slopes. These slopes are important elements within the City viewshed. As a consequence, building heights are limited within certain areas in order to protect established upland views. The City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan calls for the preservation of environmentally, historically and culturally significant buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods that contribute to Beacon's overall character. The preservation of the City's abundance of open space is a key goal, in order to properly merge this characteristic with future development.

Overall in the City of Beacon, the 2017 vacancy rate among market-rate complexes was just 1.4% as of 2017, significantly lower than the county's market-rate apartment vacancy rate of 2.4% and far less than the healthy market standard of 5%. This market is continuing to develop, offering a significant need for additional units. The targeted DRI area's attraction is its lifestyle, as a picturesque small city with a bustling Main Street and nearby recreational amenities, including easy access to transit. As additional market-rate housing is developed in the DRI area there is a concern that affordability will be impacted. To address this issue, the City Council approved an amendment to its inclusionary zoning policy in 2017 requiring new developments of ten units or more to include at least 10% of the units as affordable. This is an issue that the council will continue to monitor, due to the fact that continued growth will demand additional affordable units in order to ensure that Beacon remains a community for all.

Beacon is also a highly navigable community, benefitting from a number of multimodal transportation options. Traditional transit connects residents to work, shopping, recreational and community facilities. However, Beacon's targeted DRI area is in need of variety of multi-modal improvements that will help to synergize the various facilities. The City's Comprehensive plan cited a visioning workshop conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee which stated that Beacon residents valued the walkability and safety of the City, with the majority of their daily needs within either walking distance or a short drive along main Street. At present, the corridor targeted for improvement lacks various multi-modal safety improvements. As planned, the DRI Area is ready for investment in the form of sidewalk, trail, bike and pedestrian safety improvements, and access to a new system of local transportation via shuttle. Such improvements will serve to ensure seamless connectivity between the downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, with particular benefit to Beacon's low-moderate income population. Improved connectivity will increase the walkability and bikeability of the town, and ensure access to food (Beacon's Downtown is not considered a low-access area by the USDA), public parks and gathering spaces.

5) Quality of Life policies. Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination

laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The City of Beacon has multiple policies in place that protect the quality of life in our target area and throughout the City. As previously mentioned, the City recently adopted a Complete Streets Policy to encourage the development of streets that provide safe, comfortable and convenient access for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. This policy has served to increase the public's physical and mental health, and spurred investment through enhanced access to Beacon's commercial core. Specific projects include adding bump outs along Main Street, security cameras, new crosswalks, ADA improvements, and improved lighting. In addition, a new bus loop service has been offered since 2017 in coordination with the Dutchess County Division of Transportation. This service has grown from only 127 riders in 2017 to what has now been 16,836 riders so far in 2019, representing the need for additional transportation services in Beacon. If awarded, these improvements will be complemented by the creation of new bike lanes, park improvements, the construction of a new recreation center, reduce congestion from parking enhancements, increased access to employment services and healthcare.

The creation of new zoning regulations along Main Street has furthered the goals proposed by the City's Comprehensive Plan to allow for sufficient density that supports a transit-oriented community focused toward residents, workers, and visitors who seek the convenience of transportation facilities in a walkable community framework. Through its zoning and other policies, the City has focused upon: 1. Striving to maintain a variety of housing opportunities that are accessible to a wide variety of income levels; 2. Preserving the existing density and settlement pattern of established neighborhoods; 3. Encouraging housing development at relatively greater densities within and adjacent to the central business district; 4. Encouraged residential development of vacant and underutilized former industrial sites; and 5. Ensured continued racial, ethnic, age and economic diversity of the population through encouraging a wide range of housing choices. All of these goals are supported by this DRI proposal.

This commitment is also supported by the City's workforce housing law which was revised by the City Council in 2017. The new law provides below-market-rate housing with priority to volunteer emergency responders and city and school employees. Households earning between 70 percent and 80 percent of the Dutchess County area median income (AMI), which according to the U.S. Census Bureau is \$75,585 annually, are eligible to rent units. Priority is given to volunteer emergency responders who have served at least five years, followed by municipal and Beacon City School District employees. Households earning more than 90 percent of the AMI are ineligible for rentals through the city's affordable program, and households earning between 90 percent and 100 percent of the AMI are eligible to purchase units that are offered for sale. The City has also taken steps to ensure that new developments are balanced in size and type and are affordable to a range of incomes.

6) Public support. Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.

The public participation and engagement process conducted to support the City's DRI Initiative, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization have been well established for three years now. Moreover, the City recently amended its Comprehensive Plan to address existing conditions and needs in an effort to guide appropriate and sustainable land development in and around the DRI focus area. The Comprehensive Plan represents not only a product of much time and effort, but also the beginning of a process which involves continued review and changes to regulations, and procedures within the City.

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan included a wide range of stakeholder input to ensure that the City's goals accurately reflect the diverse needs and interests of its residents. The Plan is also heavily based on the work and public outreach conducted during the drafting of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Outreach for the 2007 Plan included a total of four public visioning workshops held at various locations throughout the City in an effort to solicit the widest possible representation from residents. The effort also included a 22-question survey sent to every household in the City. Surveys asked residents to prioritize planning issues, identify potential recreational and cultural facilities to improve quality of life, and cite strengths and weaknesses of the City. Citizen participation was a critical component of the 2017 planning process to test whether the goals of the 2007 Plan were still accurate and relevant, as well as to gain insight into any changes perceived by residents regarding the City and its services. Two planning workshops were conducted, and both had turnout of more than 100 participants. Feedback was also requested on comment cards distributed at public meetings and by email. Methods implemented to secure the broadest feedback possible include: Spanish translation of relevant documents, updates and minutes posted on the City's website, and consistent outreach.

The 2017 Plan includes recommendations and policies from these prior planning efforts to ensure consistency including:

- City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan, (2007)
- Beacon Transportation Linkages Program (2008)
- Harbor Management Plan, (2012)
- University Settlement Camp Master Plan, City of Beacon (2009)
- Waterfront Redevelopment Traffic Management Study, City of Beacon (2009)
- City of Beacon LWRP, City of Beacon (updated in 2012)
- Fishkill Creek Greenway & Heritage Trail Master Plan, City of Beacon (2013)
- Reservoir Safe Yield Analysis and Groundwater Supply, (2014)
- Beacon Center City Parking Analysis, (2014)
- Annual Water Quality Report, City of Beacon (2015)
- Complete Streets Guidelines (2016)
- Comprehensive Plan Update (2017)
- Comprehensive Water Supply Plan (2018)

Because the Comprehensive Plan was informed by a variety of previous planning efforts and relied so heavily on public input/participation, it is clear that residents were in favor of economic development goals that will continue to preserve and enhance Main Street vitality. Workshop participants stated that they were generally proud of Main Street as the civic center of the City, specifically noting walkability and the prevalence of locally-owned shops and restaurants as important attributes. In order to maintain an open dialogue with local residents and business owners, the City will continue to collaborate with various local organizations advocating for and representing the needs and interest of various groups, such as commuters, business owners, parents, seniors, and artists.

7) Transformative opportunities. Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project). Identify potential development opportunities, such as municipally-owned property that may be appropriate for redevelopment. Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. It should be recognized that if a DRI award is made to the downtown, the projects identified here, along with any others that may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI grants.

The City of Beacon seeks to create a design which is patterned resting upon our resident's desired living experience. It has become clear through the City's recent Comprehensive Planning process that residents desire additional park facilities, pedestrian safety improvements, traffic calming measures, greater access to healthcare, and a desire to have easy access to all centers of place in Beacon. In preparation for this application, the City has identified a number of projects that are would greatly benefit from the aid of DRI funds. These initiatives fall into a variety of critical categories that support quality of life, and have the potential to support Beacon's transformation from a community on the rise to a smart city which offers a wide variety of housing, workforce, recreational and transportation opportunities. Our DRI proposal focuses upon providing easy access to and from public schools, healthcare, jobs, recreational facilities, commercial sites and surrounding neighborhoods, making the downtown area safer through various infrastructure upgrades, and attracting new private investment to benefit all residents by strengthening our core downtown.

Workforce Development: Beacon seeks to increase the percentage of residents who live and work in the City, while simultaneously reducing the percentage of its overall workforce that uses an automobile to get to work. In relation to transportation improvements, the City has outlined the above project. However, the City plans to support the following initiatives through a DRI award in order to increase the number of applicable jobs in Beacon for the local population to pursue:

- The expansion of the Howland Public Library in order to incorporate a new technology center which will support pre-employment job services, literacy and other educational programming for the local population.
- The consolidation/reorganization of parking, and subsequent redevelopment of underutilized city property for the purposes of commercial development within Beacon's Opportunity Zone area.

Healthcare: Despite a considerable demand for affordable primary care services in Beacon, many of the City's residents experience significant financial barriers that challenge access to care. In fact, UDS Mapper data indicates that 20.03% of adults in this community have delayed or not sought care due to high cost, a strong contrast to the statewide rate of 13.45% for this measure. The elevated percentage of adults postponing and/or forgoing needed care in Beacon is indicative of the limited primary care capacity that currently exists in this community, especially with respect to services that are accessible for the City's low-income population. In addition, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics displayed throughout Beacon reveal populations that are at high risk for numerous health problems and marked health disparities, especially related to chronic conditions. In order to mitigate this problem, the City plans to:

- Support a redesign of the Beacon Health Center (Hudson River Healthcare) to add two (2) exam rooms of primary care and one (1) exam room of behavioral health capacity as well other essential services such as a six (6) exam room Urgent Care in order to be responsive to community needs.
- Support the construction of a new medical arts facility and urgent care within a priority area of redevelopment along Main Street, so that residents have easy access to healthcare. (Hudson River Healthcare)
- Support public outreach from local medical institutions and consider public service messaging to ensure that residents are aware of medical institutions which lie in close proximity.

Sustainability: Beacon intends to become a smart city where innovation is a way of life. This will include a host of functional improvements which will reduce energy output and allow the City to absorb an ever-increasing population in a manner which makes it a model of success for other communities. The City recently, hired a Climate Smart Community Coordinator. appointed the CAC as the Climate Smart Community Task Force, purchased and converted all of the City Street Lights to LED for a cost savings of over \$300,000, developed a former land fill into a 2-megawatt solar farm with BQ Energy, and installed Installing 2 Electric Charging Stations. In addition, DRI area projects considered include:

- The construction of green spaces, green roofs and an improved drainage system throughout the downtown, to reduce the impact that Beacon's built downtown has upon the local environment.
- Green street improvements, in order to increase the City's urban canopy.
- Water and sewer improvements that will enhance the efficiency of both systems and provide for the sustainability of Beacon's water supply.
- The installation of additional electric charging stations in order to provide residents comfort that they can move towards these next generation vehicles.
- A pilot project which utilizes an autonomous shuttle that residents and visitors can use to travel to and from centers of place.
- The creation of a Beacon App which supports a 311 System to ensure timely and quality and efficient public service.
- Promotion of solar panels on flat-roofed buildings in the downtown.
- Developing a new broadband network which supports high-speed-internet.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

Transportation: Beacon recognizes that automating individual functions will provide both greater efficiency in the community and drive revenue growth. As such, the City would like to move forward with a number of transportation projects that will improve connectivity, and congestion. In short, the City of Beacon seeks to create a frictionless transportation experience for all different types of users throughout the downtown; focusing on vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Projects include:

- Shuttle Service - The City would like to move forward with a public shuttle service for its downtown. In fact, the City is interested in considering an automated, driverless shuttle system which can provide local transportation for residents and visitors as they move throughout the downtown corridor. Beacon's Main Street is more than a mile long so designated stops that are pleasant places to sit, stay, and wait for a ride, would help improve shuttle ridership. These shuttle stops will be designed as pocket parks (less than a third of an acre) that feature a compact sitting area, greenery, and signage that clearly identifies the shuttle's route, schedule, things to do in the immediate vicinity.
- Parking Improvements – Beacon is interested in constructing one new three-story parking structure to ease congestion in the downtown and support commercial growth in the City's core. A parking structure lined with affordable housing units will help to reduce traffic congestion, and allow for the reuse of existing lots which are ground level and considered underutilized parcels of land in critical areas of the downtown.
- Complete Streets Improvements – The City desires to make a number of pedestrian, safety, traffic calming, lighting and ADA improvements along main corridors in the center of the downtown. In particular, Cliff Street, Dewindt Street, South Elm, Catherine Street, Hubert Street, Church Street, West Church Street, Oak Street, Digger Phelps Court, and Willow Street are in need of significant multi-modal improvements. Specifically, pedestrian and bicycle improvements will be installed from Hammond Field to South Avenue Park, using North Cedar Street as a connecting bicycle boulevard. This section of roadway is highly utilized by students from Beacon High School at present, as they walk across town through the downtown. The proposed improvements will serve to protect their safety, along a corridor which includes the Howland Public Library, and a host of other important public facilities. Bike lanes are also proposed from the Madam Brett Historic Site down Rombout Avenue all the way to the Beacon Train Station.

Housing and Retail: As mentioned, the City of Beacon's long-term build out analysis estimates that there are another 41 underutilized parcels of land which can be built-out to the tune of 1,613 new housing units, adding another population of 3,337 residents. It is the City's intention to ensure that these future developments offer a mix between affordable and market rate units, strategically located in the downtown to support economic growth. As a part of this DRI Proposal, the City has identified three priority redevelopment areas which are focused in areas where underutilized properties that are owned by the city currently exist. These areas include:

- A redevelopment area located adjacent to the Upper Main Street Historic District that will result in a public green with new mixed-use space, new mixed-use residential buildings, a new medical building, and a new parking structure with approximately 340 spots and 22 affordable housing units.
- The redevelopment of a parcel of an underutilized parcel of land adjacent to the Dutchess County Center, including a new pedestrian green and mixed-use infill building.

- The redevelopment of the area adjacent to City Hall to include a new mixed-use infill building, pedestrian green with a river view and other site improvements.

Recreation: The City desires to improve two major parks which lie in close proximity to Main Street. The concept of these improvements is to provide residents of all ages a place to recreation in both a passive and active manner. These improvements include:

- The construction of a new Recreation Center at Hammond Field, in close proximity to Beacon High School.
- The construction of a new inclusive playground at South Avenue Park next to affordable housing.

8) Administrative Capacity. Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.

The City of Beacon has made an impressive recovery in recent years, led by a stable government and committed leadership. In fact, in the last twenty-one (21) years, the City has had only 3 mayors and 3 administrators. City staff has always done more with less, with only twelve (12) department heads and 110 employees to serve a population of over 15,000 residents. Undaunted, Beacon has averaged the successful completion of over five (5) million dollars of public investment within the last four (4) years, and served to keep dept service payments reasonable to benefit taxpayers. As the local economy has grown, so has Beacon's tax base, and the city's ability to implement projects that increase quality of life in the community. Moreover, the City aggressively pursued tens of millions of dollars in grant funding each year, in order to supplement budgetary needs and enable critical projects.

Most importantly, the City of Beacon is ready for DRI implementation, as demonstrated by the completion of our Comprehensive Plan Update and Central Main Street rezoning, which have outlined specific ways to improve the DRI Area we have targeted. Additional plans and studies that support the City's application include: Complete Street Policy, traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, a comprehensive water supply plan, and water capacity and stormwater management studies. This impressive track record, and the completion of these plans in the last 5 years have positioned Beacon to be a unique and prepared DRI Awardee. Our management has shown an ability to take on complex tasks, work closely with the public, and achieve collective objectives.

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

The proposed initiatives embedded within this DRI Application will address remaining deficiencies that the governing body feels will create a uniform and sustainable downtown. Specifically, this proposal focuses upon a combination of economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs that are considered integral to the long-term sustainability of the central business district and health of the community as a whole. The resulting projects will have demonstrated public support and strong stakeholder buy-in, and they will be carefully vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State in accordance with all relevant laws and policies.