



Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Instructions

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC) is accepting Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) applications through May 27, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

Completed applications can be e-mailed to NYS-NORTHCOUNTRY@esd.ny.gov

Answers to each question on the DRI application are limited to 5,000 characters.

If an answer to a DRI application question references an attached document or addendum, please reference the page number in the answer to the question to allow reviewers to consult the material.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: North Country

Municipality Name: Village of Canton

Downtown Name: Downtown Canton Grasse River Corridor

County: St. Lawrence

Downtown Description - Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award:

Canton is a small, rural, economically challenged North Country community comprising a town, two villages, several hamlets, and beautiful open spaces. Canton is the seat of New York's largest county, St. Lawrence, the home of two outstanding universities – St. Lawrence University and the State University of New York at Canton – and an expanding St. Lawrence Healthcare System. The people who choose to live in Canton feel a genuine sense of community and are committed to working together to make it a great place to live, work, and raise their families.

Canton boasts a charming, Victorian-era downtown Main Street district, which is registered on both the national and state historic registries. The mixed-use buildings on our historic Main Street house businesses, residences, a community arts center, an old-time movie theater, and even a spa and a health food store. Main Street is bookended by a picturesque downtown park at one end and the Grasse River with several island parks at the other.

Two NYMS grant awards have previously, and are currently leveraging private investment in revitalization of historic structures on Main Street. Once work has been completed through the 2015 award, we will be well on our way with redevelopment in this area, but current funding does not allow

for all projects to be accomplished. A continued focus on preservation of historic Main Street structures for mixed use remains a priority.

The Grasse River flows perpendicular to Main Street, adjacent to the central business district and alongside commercial areas, thus is critical to the vibrancy of downtown. Due to its industrial heritage and the residual effects thereof, the Grasse River Corridor has been the focus of substantial rehabilitation to date, and planning for further remediation and redevelopment in the future. It is one of our greatest assets and one that is currently being underutilized, representing the greatest opportunities for revitalization. Because our traditional downtown business district is roughly only three blocks, for purposes of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative we have opted to define downtown in a broader sense, including the traditional central business district along with the Grasse River Corridor and adjacent commercial areas in what we are calling the Downtown Canton Grasse River Corridor (DCGRC).

The Town and Village of Canton Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study (BOA) has provided a roadmap for redevelopment of brownfield, vacant, underutilized sites in the DCGRC. Areas include: downtown/Riverside Drive with longstanding vacancy, underutilization, and remnants of former industrial use; former Jubilee plaza, a large portion of which has been vacant since 2000 and has not seen much or any investment; DPW area that is potentially contaminated and inappropriately located; Bend in the River area, which has potential for housing development, pedestrian/bike bridge, and expansion of municipal services; Gouverneur area, which is a commercial corridor along the Grasse River, with many vacant and potentially contaminated sites in need of redevelopment. We have also included an adjacent area known as the Maple Hill subdivision, which presents opportunity for expansion of housing, municipal services, tax base, and jobs.

The Village of Canton must position itself for growth. New development increases the tax base for the Village and reduces the burden on property owners, thus increasing their standard of living). If the Village is to decrease the burden of the 33% who pay 100% of the taxes, we need to encourage new development and private investment. To ensure the Village has capacity to support growth and sustain existing businesses, water resources must be enhanced and extended. This is a priority for the Village.

Local food is also a priority for our community. Agriculture remains one of our largest industries, and we have a community of growers working to provide healthy, local food to our residents. Distribution is through the Canton Farmers Market, Community Supported Agriculture, and North Country Grown Cooperative. In 2014, the Village was fortunate to receive a Local Food, Local Places technical assistance grant from the EPA, USDA, and other federal agencies to explore how local food can spur economic development and assist in place-making. As a result we have an implementation plan for advancing this initiative, and have established a Local Food Advisory Committee through our local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office that meets monthly. The plan can be viewed at: <http://www.cantonnewyork.us/local-foods-local-places/>.

Canton has a unique approach to economic development. A Consortium of community stakeholders contribute financially, and help guide the direction of community and economic development. The Economic Development Steering Committee (EDSC) is made up of representatives of the Consortium, Chamber of Commerce, and residents-at-large. The EDSC meets monthly and is responsible for planning and implementation of the Canton Community Action Plan. See plan at: <http://www.cantonnewyork.us/canton-community-action-plan/>.

Canton has a very engaged citizenship who actively participate on various committees that advise municipal leaders. In addition, the Village and Town have two paid full-time paid positions—the Director of Economic Development and Director of Community Development—demonstrating municipal commitment and investment in these critical initiatives. Because of this, Canton is able to work together as a community to communicate what it is that we want and how to best get it done.

Canton stands poised, ready and eager for revitalization. Responses to the following questions tell our story.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines. Answers to each question on the DRI application are limited to 5,000 characters.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

The Downtown Canton Grasse River Corridor (CDGRC) is the focus of our proposal. The boundary of this area encompasses the Brownfield Opportunity Area as defined on page 10 of the Town and Village of Canton Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study (BOA) with the addition of what is known as the Maple Hill Subdivision and a parcel of Village-owned property immediately adjacent thereto. The BOA can be found at: <http://www.cantonnewyork.us/brownfield-opportunity-area/>

This downtown area encompasses all of the brownfield, abandoned and underutilized sites where industry was historically located in the Village of Canton along the Grasse River, and areas within downtown that are potentially influenced or affected by the current conditions and perceptions of these underutilized properties, including some residential neighborhoods and recreational areas.

The CDGRC Boundary

North of Main Street: Beginning at the intersection of Riverside Dr. and Fairlane Dr., the boundary runs: south along Riverside Dr.; then east along Chapel St.; then south along Hodskin St.; then east behind the row of buildings bordering the north side of Main St.; then south along Court St; then west along Main St. (U.S. Highway Route 11), across the Grasse River including the parcel on the western shore of the river (Cascade Inn) and then downriver along that west bank until just below the middle islands where it travels east to the point of beginning.

South of Main Street: Beginning at the intersection of Main St. (Route 11) and Park St., the boundary runs: south along Park St. to the eastern-most corner of the St. Lawrence County Highway Department-owned property; then follows the southern bounds of that County-owned property to Miner Street Rd.; then south along Miner Street Rd.; then southwest along Lincoln St.; then southeast along Stevens St. to the Grasse River shoreline; from there the boundary diverts from that of the BOA and goes southeast, crossing the Grasse River to the eastern boundary of a parcel owned

by the Village of Canton; then along the Village-owned parcel west then southwest following the boundary of the Village along properties owned by LMS Enterprises of Canton, LLC (LMS); then following the Village boundary northwest along LMS properties to Gouverneur St. (Route 11); then following Gouverneur St. northeast to the northern property line of Community Bank, N.A. (CBNA); then southeast along the property line of CBNA to the property line of Joseph Manory; then following that boundary northeast, then southeast to the Grasse River; then north to the upriver side of the railroad right-of-way connecting back to the BOA boundary; then southwest along the railroad right-of-way and bridge; then north along Gouverneur St. to Law Lane; then encompassing all properties abutting the west side of Gouverneur St., running north to Highway Route 68; then east along Main St. to the point of beginning.

Within the DCGRC six subareas have been identified as focal areas, each with its own characteristics and needs. The sub-area boundaries are depicted on the BOA SubAreas Map at: <http://www.cantonnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Final-Maps-together.pdf>. Please reference the map entitled *Brownfield, Vacant and Underutilized Sites*. Attached is a map of the Maple Hill Subdivision and Village-owned parcel that are also included within the Downtown Canton Grasse River Corridor boundary for purposes of this proposal.

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

St. Lawrence County does not have one major metropolitan area, but five smaller population centers of Canton, Potsdam, Massena, Ogdensburg and Gouverneur. The catchment area for the DCGRC includes residents of the Town of Canton (which encompasses the Villages of Canton and Rensselaer Falls and the Hamlets of Morley and Pyrites), as well as other populations that do not call Canton home but for whom, because of the geographic dispersion, this is their primary downtown destination. According to the U.S. Census, in 2014, the population of the Village of Canton was 6,601, a 4.5% increase from 6,314 in 2010. The Village of Rensselaer Falls had a population of 329 as of 2014 down from 332 in 2010, and the Town of Canton was at 11,233, up from 10,995 in 2010. *Canton is one of the only communities in the North Country region to see population gain during this time period.*

As home to the State University of New York at Canton and St. Lawrence University, Canton also has a student population of approximately 5,800 for ten months of the year that utilizes downtown. These institutions of higher learning are two of the largest employers in our community, with many faculty and staff who come from out of town to work at those campuses five days a week, and who rely on Canton as their primary downtown. These populations are steadily growing as enrollments at both schools are increasing, new programming is being added and additional faculty and staff are being brought onboard.

As the seat of St. Lawrence County, many government offices are located in Canton. St. Lawrence County (roughly 800 employees), as well as various state agencies, employ people who are not residents. These individuals work in Canton, shop and dine in Canton, utilize recreational amenities, and choose Canton as their primary downtown destination.

Neighboring communities such as DeKalb (population 2,434), Hermon (population 1,108), Lisbon (population 4,102), Madrid (population 1,735), Pierrepont (population 2,589), Russell (population

1,856), Colton (population 1,451), Clare (population 105), Parishville (population 2,153), Hopkinton (population 1,077), and even further away communities such as Fine (population 1,512) and Clifton (population 750) do not have central business districts of any significance in their own communities. Because Canton is the seat of St. Lawrence County, folks in these towns often come into Canton to conduct government business and therefore opt to utilize our downtown for their primary needs. This represents an additional population of 20,872 who reasonably can be included in Canton's catchment area.

3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential. Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

Consistent with state, regional, and local strategic planning and priority setting, Canton has made significant investment in the DCGRC in the past decade or so, and has several more projects both underway and in planning. Remediation and redevelopment of several sites has taken place, including Willow Island, Coakley and Falls Islands, former Gray Lanes, and Bell's Garage. Partnership among the Town, Village, County and a local non-profit, Grasse River Heritage Area Development Corporation, and private local developers has been instrumental in the success of these efforts. Private funds were combined with public funds from sources such as Restore-NY, Office of Parks and Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Funds, primarily from the Department of State, have been utilized for extensive planning for a Grasse River Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, a Canton Village Brownfield Opportunity Area Study, and feasibility studies for two pedestrian connector bridges and a white water park. These planning documents have provided a roadmap for development in the DCGRC. Current grants from DOS are enabling the development of a Grasse River Blueway Trail, a marketing plan for the Grasse River Blueway, a trails master plan to identify options and plan for expansion and interconnection of existing trails, and a comprehensive land use plan.

The Village of Canton received two New York Main Street grants in 2006 and 2015, the latter of which is currently being implemented. The results have and will create additional second-story housing units in several historic structures along Main Street, as well as the improvement of the facades and interiors for these buildings. NYMS grants have also offered beautification funding to improve the overall aesthetics of the downtown. These awards require both public and private partnerships to insure that the program is successfully implemented.

As articulated in the REDC's strategic plan, a critical infrastructure issue is "the need for improvement of water and wastewater systems throughout the region, both to protect the region's clean water resources and to support community development." A significant issue and priority for the Village is investment in expansion and replacement of municipal water infrastructure. With several projects currently underway, including expansion of St. Lawrence Health Systems, construction of a new Pizza Hut restaurant, and construction of a 24-unit

housing development, additional demand will be placed on the system. Other projects have also been announced. (See question 4 for more detail about projects). A new groundwater source has been identified, and preliminary engineering reports are underway for four municipal water infrastructure projects. The village intends to prioritize the development of a new source and connection to Maple Hill this year.

Going forward the community is focused on implementation of current plans. We will pursue funding for phase 2 of the white water park study to accomplish engineered design. We will explore funding for our local development corporation to acquire and redevelop a vacant building on Riverside Dr. adjacent and critical to the proposed site for the white water park. We will continue to pursue funding for a pedestrian/bicycle passage that would provide connection under Route 11 to two public parks on Coakley Island and Willow Island. We will partner with GRH on an application to develop a master plan for a sculpture garden and arts park on Willow Island.

Funds for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that would connect Bend in the River Park to the Maple Hill subdivision will continue to be explored. This would enable the expansion of municipal water and sewer infrastructure to Maple Hill. In addition to Community Bank, there are 34 residential building lots in Maple Hill. It is believed that the lack of utility services to this area has deterred construction and is impeding economic growth in that part of the village. Expansion of Village water infrastructure supports job creation at these institutions, and enables the development of professional housing suitable for incoming faculty and staff, and multi-unit housing to accommodate their growing student populations. In a municipality where only 33% of the properties are taxable, it is critical that any obstacles to expanding the tax base be addressed.

The Village also intends to pursue funding to implement a National Main Street America program, which would develop strategy and implementation procedures for revitalization of downtown. (See question 8 for more detail).

The CDGRC has several developable properties, which are outlined in question 5 and elsewhere in this application. Options for affordable housing development exist in the Bend in the River, Gouverneur, and Maple Hill areas.

Growth potential of anchor institutions exists with Community Bank, the universities, St. Lawrence Health Systems, and redevelopment of the former Jubilee Plaza.

The municipality is committed to investing in the downtown. In 2015, the Village created a new position of Director of Economic Development to focus on downtown development. This position enhances the economic development structure already in place, as detailed in question 7.

Infrastructure is key to economic growth, and the village is committed to expanding needed services. Existing water resources can accommodate the current development projects under

normal circumstances, though we are creeping close to capacity. It is anticipated that a new groundwater source will be online within a year, which will ensure ample supply for future development. In a drought, supply is dangerously low even before this new demand comes online, hastening our need to secure a new water source. Sewer capacity is more than adequate.

The community invests in and supports arts and cultural institutions and activities in many ways: GRH's Heritage Park, which includes an interpretive trail showcasing the industrial heritage of the Grasse River corridor and their proposed arts-focused park; annual Frederic Remington Arts Festival and Dairy Princess Festival, which honors our agricultural heritage; annual Rushton Canoe Races; Dwight Church park, named for a renowned local photographer; St. Lawrence International Film Festival, headquartered in Canton; TAUNY.

- 4) Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Growth is happening in Canton. St. Lawrence Health System (SLHS), the parent corporation of Canton-Potsdam Hospital (CPH), Potsdam, NY, and Gouverneur Hospital (GH), Gouverneur, NY, is in the midst of construction of a 54,000 square-foot medical office building on 293 acres recently annexed into the Village of Canton. SLHS purchased the 293-acre parcel to accommodate expansion of services: since 2008, CPH has doubled its medical staff. The hospital's main campus in Potsdam is land-locked in a residential area. Canton is geographically central to the majority of the population in St. Lawrence County and therefore represents the future of health services, particularly specialist health services for which residents currently must travel long distances. This 293-acre parcel is anticipated to be the site of further growth. A total of 137 jobs will service this 54,000 square-foot facility. More job creation is anticipated in the future as services are added. In the short term, construction jobs and economic spin-off from these jobs will positively impact Canton.

Community Bank, N.A. has been in business in Canton for 150 years. In 2010, they showed their continued commitment to Canton by constructing an Operations Center that currently houses 75 employees, and an additional 20 to 25 during times of acquisition. The intent of Community Bank is to expand the Canton location to accommodate growth projected by their strategic acquisition plan. Community Bank is on target for needing to expand in Canton in approximately two years, which would bring an additional 35 to 40 jobs. Back office operations have been identified by the region as a strategic industry to target that is suitable to the North Country.

The St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) has developed the Canton Industrial Park within the Village of Canton. The first building was constructed in 2012. In 2014, municipal water and sewer infrastructure was laid making five shovel-ready sites available for development. This project will support future ventures at the Park, which is heavily marketed by the IDA, particularly to companies in the northeastern US and Canada.

Discussions are underway for the potential construction of a North Country Food Hub and (?) meat processing facility in Canton. The food hub is expected to create 12 jobs in the first year with potential for more. The true goal of the food hub is to provide a resource that can stimulate the economy by creating opportunities for farmers and entrepreneurs. The project will be handled through United Helpers' for-profit management company Sparx, which is based in Canton. In the most optimistic scenario the food hub could be shovel-ready this spring, but no official time frame exists. Agribusiness is a strategic industry that is being targeted for growth in St. Lawrence County and the North Country region.

Higher education brings well-paying jobs and benefits to Canton. Canton is a small, rural college town, and the St. Lawrence County seat. The institutions of higher learning in the rural North Country region of New York State (which also include Clarkson University, the State University of New York in Potsdam, and SUNY ESF in Wanakena) are some of our greatest assets and economic drivers. As identified in the St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2009 (CEDS), the "... five colleges and universities in St. Lawrence County constitute an important competitive attribute that may be effectively leveraged to advance economic development objectives. In addition to being economic engines themselves through their employee and student base, these institutions possess a diverse mix of assets that support the efforts of the County's developers."

As home to St. Lawrence University (SLU) and the State University of New York at Canton (SUNY Canton), the Village of Canton must consider how we can support these economic engines and ensure their continued success. Both campuses are experiencing record enrollments and are growing, investing in infrastructure, and diversifying their program offerings.

In addition, the owner of University Plaza on the east side of the Village recently announced two new projects that are in the works. A drive-through operation, presumably an eatery, will be located in a currently vacant property adjacent to the plaza. Also, a letter of intent for a 96-room hotel has been signed, which would also be located in the vicinity of the plaza. These projects will bring numerous new job opportunities to Canton.

All of the aforementioned jobs are easily accessible from, or included within, the downtown and can be reached by foot, bike or public transit. A diversity in job opportunities is demonstrated by the variety of jobs that are pending in Canton, as well as the existing industry. Between the institutions of higher learning, health care system, banking, government agencies, not-for-profits, and hospitality industry, varying levels of employment opportunities exist within the community with different salary levels and potential for mobility between jobs.

- 5) Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

Canton has a picturesque, Victorian-era Main Street commercial district. The Canton Park Historic District is the core of the downtown and includes mixed-use, commercial and residential units in the

architectural styles primarily of the 19th century. The area is characterized by dense mixed land uses including civic, retail, entertainment, service/commercial, residential, and recreational. There is also open space as Main Street is bookended by parks, including three on the banks of the Grasse River immediately to the west of the central business district. The downtown is part of a Brownfield Opportunity Area and a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Area.

The DCGRC has a host of developable mixed-use properties within its boundaries. Six subareas have been identified as focal areas, each with its own characteristics and needs. The areas are depicted on the BOA SubAreas Map (link provided in question 1, and in the attached map of the Maple Hill area. **Riverside Area (Subarea A)** Gateway to the historic downtown; a key opportunity for waterfront and downtown revitalization; directly connects to the SUNY footbridge which carries foot traffic from campus into downtown. **Jubilee Area (Subarea B)** Former grocery plaza and surrounding vacant lots; plaza and adjacent properties are prime vacant and underutilized land in the heart of downtown, with large parking lot and easy access to Main St.; vacant, now blighted grocery store has impacted downtown for years, a symbol of economic struggle. A plan for a local food market in this space has been researched. **County Highway Department Area (Subarea C)** Combination of industrial and residential space; includes former Kraft Food plant currently in use but not to capacity, the County highway facility, and an infill of residences; County facility has a major impact due to its aesthetic appearance, potential contamination, and truck traffic; relocation elsewhere is considered key to improving this subarea. **Bend in the River Area (Subarea D)** Bend in the River Park (BIRP) on the Grasse River; underutilized and vacant land in this area offers prime opportunities for residential development; Canton's Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan recommended the development of a footbridge across the river at BIRP to create another east-west connection in the Village and to carry needed utilities to the Maple Hill development on the west side of the river. A feasibility study for the bridge was completed. **Gouverneur Area (Subarea E)** Gateway corridor along Gouverneur St. including the west bank of the Grasse River; Gouverneur St. is U.S. Route 11, a major roadway; best suited for commercial development with good transportation access, but currently characterized by a wide mix of uses; area includes low-income housing units, and adjacent vacant property that could be acquired to add additional units; some commercial blight has set the tone for the corridor over the years; improvement or redevelopment of this site is considered important to the overall future of the corridor. **Maple Hill area** Contains 34 residential building lots. Few places remain in the Village that are available for new development, and thus, new tax base. With expanding enrollments and faculty/staff numbers at SLU and SUNY and the SLHS expansion, demand for upscale, professional housing is increasing.

Real estate agents report the need for rental units in the downtown area. The investment from a current New York Main Street (NYMS) grant award will have a significant impact on increasing accessible, affordable housing opportunities with six new residential units.

Canton is a walkable community with amenities and work opportunities easily reachable by foot or bike. A network of trails provides connectivity and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors for walking, running, biking and skiing. Several parks offer opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation such as swimming, kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. Heritage and Dwight Church parks commemorate Canton's history through interpretive signage. The many parks serve as outdoor

gathering spaces for festivals and events throughout the year. Other spaces such as The TAUNY (Traditional Arts in Upstate New York) Center, church community rooms, Recreational Pavilion, fire hall, public library, and fraternal organization halls such as the VFW and Knights of Columbus are available for events and gatherings.

Several healthcare facilities are in, or in close proximity to, the DCGRC. St. Lawrence Health Systems recently expanded a facility on East Main St., and is currently constructing a new medical office building at the far eastern end of the Village. Claxton Hepburn hospital has a medical office building on West Main St. After-hours clinics operate from each of the two existing facilities. Community Health Center of the North Country operates a facility on Gouverneur St. that provides affordable, high-quality health care to people of any age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, and national origin, regardless of their health insurance status or ability to pay, and pride themselves in acting as a safety net for those with insufficient or no health insurance. Several private medical offices are located in the DCGRC.

Cultural and entertainment venues are located in the CDGRC. TAUNY is a nonprofit organization that showcases the folk culture and living traditions of New York's North Country, The American Theater is an historic movie theater that anchors Main Street and welcomes the community with its classic marquee. Downtown establishments host musical performances by local musicians adding to the entertainment options. The colleges offer a multitude of entertainment opportunities for the community to enjoy.

Broadband is widely accessible throughout the CDGRC.

- 6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** 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, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Town and Village of Canton embrace a special and unique multi-stakeholder approach to economic and community development. This approach enables the community to participate in a decision-making process and affords everyone the opportunity to participate and engage in effective dialog for creating the vision for a quality of life that is desired for Canton and its residents. Details of this structure are outlined in question 7.

Canton adopts a Canton Community Action Plan to guide community and economic development efforts over a five-year period. Included in this plan is direction for downtown development. Details of the plan are outlined in question 7. A 2015 CFA award through the New York Main Street Program, which is currently being implemented, will further goals outlined as part of the CCAP.

A 2015 CFA award from the Department of State will enable the Town and Village of Canton to update our comprehensive land use plan. Specific components of the plan will include the development of parking and zoning standards to address problematic areas within the downtown business district. Other segments of the proposed plan will address housing, transportation infrastructure, waterfront

revitalization, energy usage, and the creation of an inclusive environment for all residents. The plan is expected to be completed within one year of receipt of a contract.

In 2014, a grassroots effort of downtown business owners formed the Canton Merchants Association. The intent was to create improved dialog regarding economic development strategies for the growth and enhancement of the downtown business district. This group, working in collaboration with the Village Economic Development Office, has considered the establishment of a Business Improvement District in Canton that would direct funds to improvements downtown. Nothing has been formalized to date.

The Village of Canton adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2016. A committee has been established to advise the municipality and review projects to ensure that Complete Streets principals are incorporated into development plans. Currently, the committee is reviewing plans for the St. Lawrence Health System's project that will include pedestrian/bicycle paths connecting the medical campus into the adjacent commercial district. Canton has demonstrated a consistent pattern of community development coupled with sustainable practices through Complete Street innovations with these proposed pedestrian bridges, bicycle paths, and a network of walking trails. Safe access for all users of the community's transportation network has been the key focus for creation of improved pedestrian crosswalks, expansion of the green space trail network, and improved access to recreation areas along the Grasse River waterfront.

The key to a vibrant downtown corridor includes multi-modal transportation options that provide for all travelers. Canton has demonstrated a consistent interest in providing for increased transportation modes throughout the downtown business district and to the Grasse River waterfront, through grant applications for the creation of pedestrian bridges to remove both walkers and cyclists from the commercial traffic flow and allow increased access to green space and waterfront areas to promote recreation and tourism. The downtown district provides for multiple options for housing, as well as multi-modal transportation options. In 2008, the Village of Canton was awarded a transportation education and implementation grant through NYS Department of Transportation and their Safe Routes to Schools initiative. The project provided for educational outreach to middle school students, encouraging walking and cycling to schools as an alternative to riding school buses. Additionally, the project provided for development of safer crosswalks and traffic calming efforts to make pedestrians safer within school zones.

In 2014, the Village of Canton established a Sustainability Committee to advise the municipality on policies, practices, and projects that could improve the sustainability of our community. The group has three areas of focus in energy, transportation and food. In 2015 the committee assisted the Village in moving forward on a project to install a solar array to offset power costs. The project is currently underway and should be online in late 2016 or early 2017. The Village also partnered with Adirondack North Country Association on a grant through NYSERDA to launch a Solarize Canton campaign. Our campaign received praise from NYSERDA, and saw the most residential solar connections go online in all of the State. We were encouraged to apply for a second round, and have been awarded a grant to promote a second Solarize program focused on community net metering. We are currently reviewing proposals for a developer to implement the project. For more information see: <http://www.solarizecanton.com/>.

In Canton, the community has provided for Smart Cities innovative technologies that include the promotion of the reduction of conventional energy sources and the use of solar power for both residential and commercial energy use. In 2015, Canton embarked on a micro-grid energy project with other key energy consumers, including the county, the two universities, the Canton Potsdam Hospital, and Canton Central School. This application was awarded a NY-Prize grant from NYSERDA to commence planning and eventual development of a micro-grid energy system that would provide for long-term energy availability using alternate energy sources during extended power outages, like the 1998 Ice Storm.

The Town has partnered with the Village to increase waterfront access through the development of grant applications for pedestrian bridges that would increase access to the Heritage and Willow Island Parks in downtown Canton, as well as the connecting of the Bend in the River Park with the Maple Hill Subdivision. The subdivision located along Route 11 South contains both commercial and residential development, and with the inclusion of a pedestrian connector that would cross the Grasse River, this bridge would become a carrier of critical infrastructure that would provide for the increase of jobs and the improvement of the residential tax base. With the increased economic development provided by the growth of the St. Lawrence Health Systems project, this subdivision plays a major role in the long-term development potential of Canton.

7) Local Support. Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The Town and Village of Canton have a unique multi-stakeholder approach to economic development that includes an Economic Development Consortium and Economic Development Steering Committee in addition to two paid staff members. The Consortium is an advisory group that meets once or twice a year, while the Steering Committee is a working group that meets monthly. The Consortium's current members are the Town Supervisor, Village Mayor, President of St. Lawrence University, President of SUNY Canton, Executive Director of United Helpers, Superintendent of Canton Central School, and CEO of St. Lawrence Health System; they provide oversight and contribute financially to economic and community development in Canton.

The Consortium members' commitment to economic and community development efforts in Canton is substantial and unwavering. St. Lawrence University President Bill Fox describes recent growth and community improvements that are "the result of the relentless collaborative work of many stakeholders, all of whom are dedicated to their community, and prior investments by New York State." He adds, "Much more is needed for Canton to achieve its vision as the community that tomorrow's workforce, business starters, and community leaders are drawn to because of a thriving downtown and vibrant community core.... St. Lawrence University remains committed to being a partner to our home community in its revitalization efforts." St. Lawrence Health System CEO David Acker says SLHS "is committed to Canton for the long haul," emphasizing the importance of "projects that draw people and businesses, boost employment, and promote the livability of our community and access to high-quality medical services and providers.

The Steering Committee is made up of designees from each of the Consortium members including two each from the Town and Village Board, the Community Developer, Economic Developer, a representative of the Canton Chamber of Commerce, and two at-large community members. This structure allows for regular communication and collaboration on all community and economic development efforts in Canton.

The Steering Committee is responsible for updating the Canton Community Action Plan every five years, and monitoring progress. The CCAP was updated in 2015 and stakeholder groups in the community are in the process of providing input for a project implementation matrix. Public meetings created a forum for substantial input from the greater community. Feedback was incorporated into the final product that will guide economic and community development for the next five years.

The current plan is the legacy of a process started 15 years ago. Five Pillars focus the energies of every entity in the Village and Town—municipal government, schools and colleges, businesses, healthcare providers, service organizations, as well as individual residents and visitors. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidelines and priorities for the community. The Pillars of the plan are:

- Pillar 1. Ensure Canton is an Attractive, Safe, Convenient, Healthy Place to Live, Learn, Work, and Play
- Pillar 2. Support and Expand Local Business and Increase Available Jobs
- Pillar 3. Enhance Local Government Efficiency and Encourage Civic Engagement
- Pillar 4. Support and Promote Community Resiliency and Smart Growth Practices
- Pillar 5. Support and Promote Tourism

The current plan can be viewed at: <http://www.cantonnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CCAP-2015-Final.pdf>

The proposed DCGRC is within the boundaries of Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan (WRP), which was a collaborative effort of Canton’s Waterfront Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of two appointed representatives of the Village, the Town, and the Grasse River Heritage Area Development Corporation, and includes the community and economic development staff of the Village and Town. The committee advises on projects and priorities that affect Canton’s waterfront areas including the Grasse River, a focal point of the DCGRC. The WRP can be viewed at: http://www.cantonnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Water_Project.pdf

The DCGRC encompasses the boundaries of a brownfield opportunity area according to the Canton Village Brownfield Opportunity Area, Step One: Pre-Nomination Study July 2011, which is also a collaborative product of the Waterfront Advisory Committee. This study outlines the potential for redevelopment of several potentially contaminated sites in the DCGRC. Any revitalization efforts in downtown will encourage redevelopment of these sites that cast a negative light on the community.

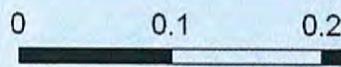
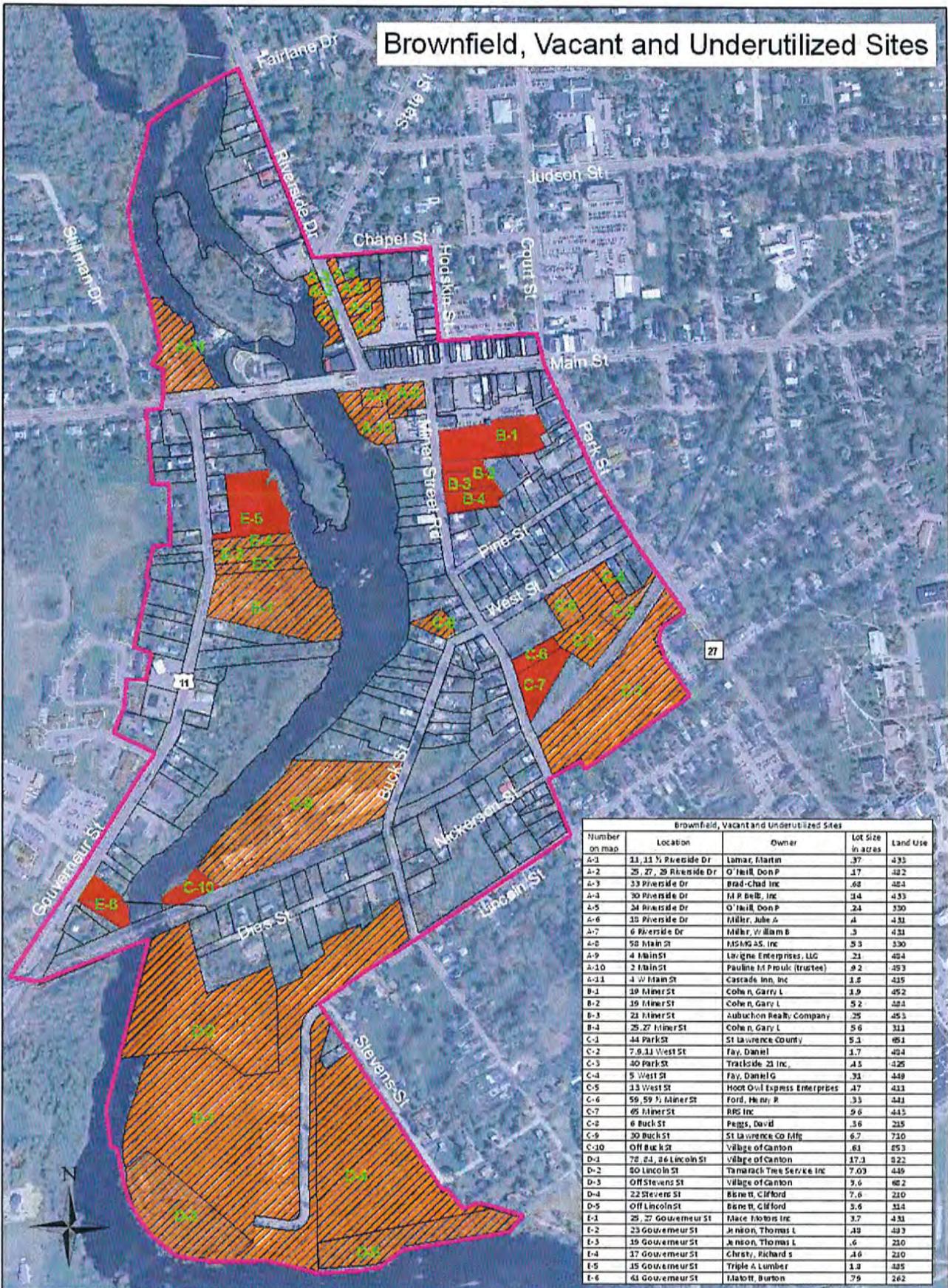
The Director of Economic Development, Leigh Rodriguez, will be the initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

Each member of the Consortium has provided a letter of support for this application; those letters have been attached hereto, along with several others from interested and committed community stakeholders.

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

As demonstrated in the responses above, Canton is a community ripe for development. We are organized, committed, engaged and have support from our leadership and community to carry out a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award. We have a history of investing in our community and stand beside our commitment to continue to do so. We have done extensive planning to prepare us for revitalization and have many projects that are shovel ready. A DRI award would transform our community and the region as a whole. This is the moment we have been waiting for. We are ready.

Brownfield, Vacant and Underutilized Sites



- Brownfield Opportunity Area Boundary
- All other parcels in the boundary
- Brownfield Sites
- Vacant or Underutilized Sites

RIVER STREET
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



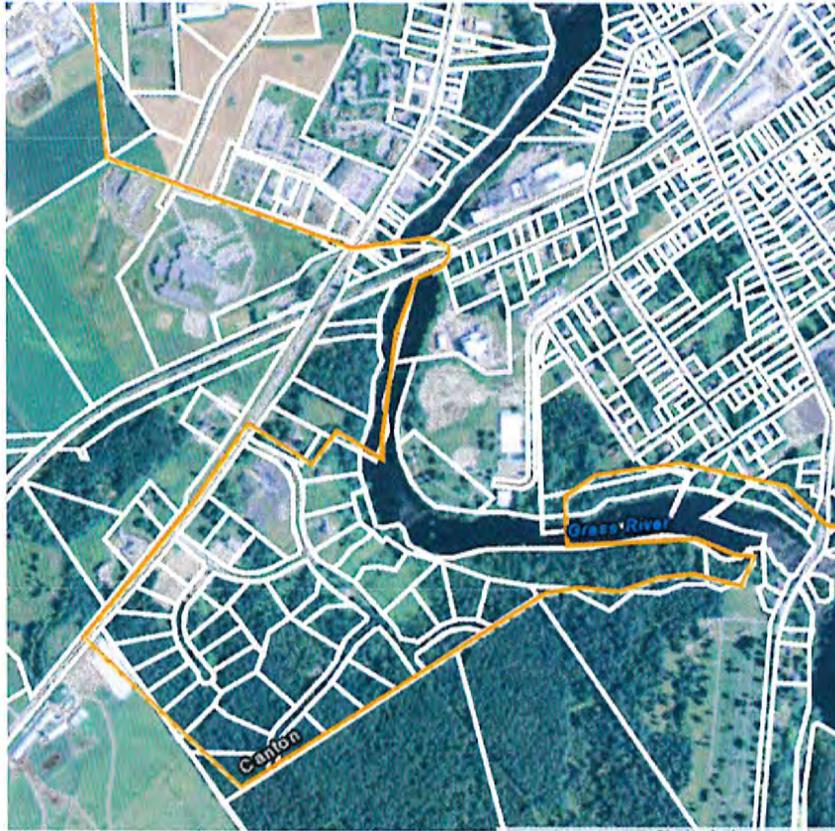
Data Sources: St. Lawrence County

July 2011

This map was prepared for the Town and Village of Canton and the NYS Department of State with state funds provided through the Brownfield Opportunity Areas program.



Maple Hill Subarea





VILLAGE OF CANTON, NEW YORK

60 Main Street, Canton, New York 13617

TELEPHONE (315) 386-2871

FAX (315) 386-1361

May 27, 2016

Anthony G. Collins & Garry Douglas, REDC Co-Chairs
Cesar A. Perales, DRI Chair
and DRI Selection Committee
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Dr. Collins, Mr. Douglas, Secretary Perales, and members of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

Canton, New York, is absolutely ripe and poised for development and transformation; this gem of the North Country has so much potential to be *the* vibrant community that attracts people to our region – and keeps people here – to live, work, and raise their families.

Working collaboratively and constructively, the Village and Town of Canton, along with other key stakeholders – St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton, United Helpers/Sparx, the St. Lawrence Health System, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses – have laid the groundwork over the last several years for thoughtful and concerted economic and community growth.

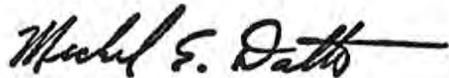
Our planning and work on Main Street enhancements, waterfront revitalization, local food security, sustainable energy development, infrastructure improvements, housing upgrades, transportation efficiency and safety, and community beautification demonstrate our community's readiness and eagerness for development and revitalization. The recent creation of a Canton Community Action Plan, with substantial input from stakeholders and the public, demonstrated our collaborative spirit and focus on public engagement.

Canton is the St. Lawrence County seat and proud location of two outstanding universities, a fine public school system, and an excellent and expanding healthcare delivery system. It is also the home of a diverse population who choose to live and work in the North Country and who are eager to see the community's potential fulfilled – both for the sake of Canton and for the region as a whole.

The Village Board of Trustees enthusiastically supports this application to the North Country Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Funds from the DRI grant would allow Canton to weave together the thinking, planning, and dreaming of the last decade or more to build and sustain a robust and vibrant community that will be a wonderful place to work, live, and play and will attract people from all over to visit.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael S. Dalton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Dalton, Mayor
and
Carol Pynchon, Deputy Mayor and Trustee
Beth Larrabee, Trustee
Sean O'Brien, Trustee
Dwight Stevenson, Trustee



TOWN OF CANTON

www.CantonNewYork.US
Municipal Building
60 Main Street
Canton, New York 13617

David T. Button, Supervisor
Paul J. Backus, Deputy Supervisor
Rosemary R. Phillips, Councilwoman
James T. Smith, Councilman
Robert J. Washo, Councilman

Lisa A. Hammond, Clerk & Tax Collector
Terry L. Billings, Highway Superintendent
Stephen E. Teele, Assessor
Charles B. Nash, Esq., Attorney
Russell B. Lawrence IV, Code Enforcement

May 27, 2016

Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Garry Douglas, *Co-Chairs*
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Chairman Collins & Chairman Douglas:

The Town of Canton enthusiastically supports an application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

The Town, along with the Village of Canton and its various partners, have worked diligently to develop the downtown area so that it is more inviting to business, families and the thousands of college students who call Canton their (temporary) home. One of our greatest assets is the Grasse River, and through a Local Waterfront Revitalization strategy that has been partially funded by NYS DOS we have worked hard to make it the centerpoint for recreational and commercial activity. Census trends indicate that some of the strongest growth (in terms of residents) has taken place in Canton. We believe that we are on the right track.

But with two universities and county government, almost 2/3rd of Canton's assessed value is exempt from taxes. The municipalities will never be able to do all that is needed to develop the downtown area without the cooperation of New York State. Your support for our various initiatives will help push us over the top and help us create the kind of community that we can all be proud of.

Thanks for the great things that you have been able to spark over the past few years in Northern New York. We value your friendship and support.

Sincerely,

David T. Button



May 25, 2016

Anthony G. Collins & Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
and Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Dr. Collins, Mr. Douglas, and members of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

As President of St. Lawrence University and a member of the Canton Economic Development Consortium, I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the application being made to the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program by the community of Canton, New York.

St. Lawrence University shares a critical symbiotic relationship with our host community of Canton. The university is one of the primary economic engines in Canton, as we have approximately 800 employees, more than 2,500 students, and draw thousands of visitors every year. In turn, we look to Canton to be a vibrant and welcoming community for those faculty, staff, students, and visitors. We are therefore committed to working with Canton to enhance its vitality. In fact, St. Lawrence depends on a vital Canton community for recruitment and retention of its students and employees. We applaud local leaders for their efforts; it's clear, though, that downtown revitalization cannot happen without state aid.

In recent years, Canton has seen important growth and community improvements. Unlike much of the region, Canton has had a growth in its overall population. That growth is mirrored by growth at the university in its employee base, student body, visitor base, and campus facilities. In Canton's downtown, the Main Street has been improved, parks, trails, and other recreational resources have been expanded, and commercial properties have been developed. These improvements have been the result of the relentless collaborative work of many stakeholders, all of whom are dedicated to their community, and prior investments by New York State.

Yet much more is needed for Canton to achieve its vision as the community that tomorrow's workforce, business starters, and community leaders are drawn to because of a thriving downtown and vibrant community core. Problematic properties in the heart of the downtown are in dire need of redevelopment. Residential and commercial properties of all types need to be enhanced in both quality and quantity. The waterfront has vast potential for further redevelopment.

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee

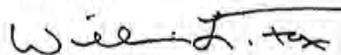
May 25, 2016

Page 2

Canton is perfectly poised to realize this redevelopment vision – if it has the support of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program. Many planning programs have been initiated in Canton. These include the Local Foods, Local Places initiative, the Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plan, plans for Whitewater Parks, Phase I of a Brownfields Opportunity Area program, and the Canton Community Action Plan. The support of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program is what is needed to tie these plans together, provide catalytic co-investment, and bring transformative redevelopment projects to fruition.

St. Lawrence University remains committed to being a partner to our home community in its revitalization efforts, and I enthusiastically endorse a Downtown Revitalization Initiative in Canton.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William L. Fox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

William L. Fox
President

WLF/dbb



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

State University of New York • 34 Cornell Dr. • Canton, NY 13617-1096 • www.canton.edu

DR. ZVI SZAFRAN, *President*

OFFICE: 315-386-7204

FAX: 315-386-7934

president@canton.edu

May 25, 2016

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee
North Country Regional Economic Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Committee Members:

As a member of the Canton Economic Development Consortium, and as the president of SUNY Canton (a key constituency in the Town of Canton), I enthusiastically support Canton's efforts to secure a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Grant.

Canton is a wonderful town and village that I am proud to call home. It has made considerable progress over the past twenty years to develop and showcase its assets to the benefit of our community. Some examples include the development of Heritage Park (with its focus on Canton's industrial heritage), hosting the new St. Lawrence International Film Festival, the redevelopment effort for the Grasse River riverfront, and the robust town-gown relationships with SUNY Canton and St. Lawrence University. As the county seat for St. Lawrence County, the largest county in the state, and due to its central location, its future progress is vital to the economic health of the North Country.

While Canton has enjoyed growth and development over this period, we are also aware that we still have a substantial way to go to improve the livability and vitality of our downtown area. Much of the retail and housing space is quite old and in need of renovation. The growth of the two colleges has created a need for new commercial and retail businesses, especially those that might cater to our increasingly diverse and environmentally aware population. Additional affordable housing and grocery options on the river side of town are also very much needed. Addressing these issues would allow more vigorous growth in the village, the colleges, and help reverse a depopulation trend that is affecting St. Lawrence County.

Securing a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant would lend inestimable assistance in helping Canton address some serious challenges, including that 65% of the assessed value in the downtown district is tax exempt, and that some of the most potentially attractive properties along the Grasse River are also brownfields that require remediation.

For the reasons described above, the return on investment from a DRI grant will be both wide-ranging and significant. SUNY Canton is committed to Canton's success, and we will do everything within our power to assist in this redevelopment effort. With this support, we will be able to successfully complete a critical range of projects that will draw new residents, boost employment and economic opportunities, and enhance the overall livability of our community.

For the record, while I am a member of the NCREDC, the selection of the communities to be nominated for the DRI grant is being decided by a separate and independent subcommittee. I have no role in any procedure that will select which community is recommended for the DRI grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Zvi Szafran', written over a horizontal line.

Zvi Szafran
President, SUNY Canton



United Helpers

Since 1898

United Helpers Management Company, Inc.
732 Ford Street, Ogdensburg, New York 13669
Tel: (315) 393-3074 Fax: (315) 393-3083
www.unitedhelpers.org

May 25, 2016

Mr. Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Mr. Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mr. Collins and Mr. Douglas:

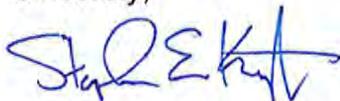
I am a member of the Canton Economic Development Consortium, a long-standing partner with the local municipalities to do community development, and the chief executive officer of a key constituency in the Town of Canton. I enthusiastically support Canton's efforts to secure a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant.

Canton has done a remarkable job of leveraging its historical, cultural, educational and natural assets to create a hospitable work and home environment. As a result, it has shown continued "smart" growth over the past twenty years. This includes increases in the number of students at our two universities and the staff that support them. Despite the growth, the downtown district is less than vibrant, owing to aged retail and residential stock that is neither easily removed nor inexpensively rehabilitated. Canton needs help to get over that hump. 65% of its assessed value is exempt. I believe that the return on investment from a DRI grant will be quick and significant.

United Helpers has seen firsthand what downtown investment can do. In 2012, we purchased and renovated a vacated downtown building. Fifty people now fill the building and we receive calls regularly to rent space.

United Helpers is committed to Canton for the long haul. We hope you will assist us in completing a number of projects that draw people, boost employment and promote the livability of our community.

Sincerely,



Stephen E. Knight
Chief Executive Officer

May 25, 2016

Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mr. Collins and Mr. Douglas:

Canton-Potsdam Hospital, part of the St. Lawrence Health System, is a member of the Canton Economic Development Consortium, a long-standing partner with the local municipalities to do community development. As the System and Hospital's President and Chief Executive Officer, I enthusiastically support Canton's efforts to secure a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant.

Canton has done a remarkable job of leveraging its historical, cultural, educational and natural assets to create a hospitable work and home environment. As a result, it has shown continued "smart" growth over the past twenty years. This includes increases in the number of quality primary and specialized healthcare providers located in Canton and its surrounding areas. Despite the growth, the downtown district is less than vibrant, owing to aged retail and residential stock that is neither easily removed nor inexpensively rehabilitated. Canton needs help to get over that hump. I believe that the return on investment from a DRI grant will be quick and significant.

The St. Lawrence Health System is committed to Canton for the long haul. We hope you will assist us in completing a number of projects that draw people and businesses, boost employment and promote the livability of our community and continued access to high quality medical providers and services.

Sincerely,



David B. Acker, FACHE
President and CEO



Canton Central School District
99 State Street
Canton, New York 13617
(315) 386-8561

May 25, 2016

Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Grant

Dear Dr. Collins and Mr. Douglas:

I write on behalf of the faculty, staff, and thirteen hundred students of the Canton Central School District to express our support for the Village and Town of Canton's application for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant.

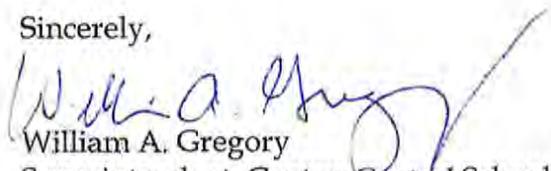
Although Canton has done an extremely credible job of optimizing its historical, educational, cultural, and natural resources to foster a family and business friendly climate and enhance the overall quality of life for our citizens, there remains much work to be done.

Of particular concern is a downtown that is less than vibrant, owing to aged retail and residential stock that is neither easily removed nor inexpensively rehabilitated, as well as to a retail plaza within the village that is largely unoccupied and in serious need of repair. Given the preponderance of education, religious, and government agencies within its boundaries, I think it also important to note that 65% of Canton's property is tax exempt. This has a tremendous impact on our local schools, which receive one-third of its revenues through local taxes.

In my view, the factors described above have collectively limited Canton's capacity to flourish and achieve its potential for transforming itself into the quintessential North Country community. An award of a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant would be a huge step toward realizing this vision.

Thank you for your consideration of this worthy project and for allowing me to express my support for Canton's grant application on behalf of our larger public school community.

Sincerely,


William A. Gregory
Superintendent, Canton Central School District



P.O. Box 722
Canton, New York 13617

May 25, 2016

Anthony Collins and Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mr. Collins and Mr. Douglas,

As President of the Grasse River Heritage Area Development Corporation, I write in strong support of Canton's application for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant.

Grasse River Heritage is a non-profit organization that has been marshalling local energies and resources since 1999 to develop and improve the Grasse River corridor for the benefit of the Canton community. In the process, we built and now manage a heritage park on an island adjacent to downtown Canton, built another nearby at the entry into the village, and converted an abandoned bowling alley at the foot of Main Street into attractive and well-used office and condominium space. We're currently developing an arts park on another island near the central business district, among other projects.

This quick snapshot of one local organization's work reflects the strength and relevance of the larger Canton proposal in several ways. First, this is not a community that sits back and waits for its officials and paid employees to get things done. Year in and year out, GRH has been successful in its initiatives because hundreds of our neighbors have rolled up their sleeves and opened their pockets. Active community participation in projects carried out under a DRI grant is guaranteed. Second, there is already strong momentum in the effort to revitalize and develop Canton's downtown, economically, culturally, and aesthetically. Heritage Park, a unique recreational and educational space only a few steps from the CBD, is a distinctive asset among communities in the region and draws thousands of visitors each year, including longtime residents, young professional families moving into the area, and tourists who write us later to express their hope to return. The arts park under development will add to the distinctive style and appeal with which Canton is growing its downtown. Third, our work is not carried out in a vacuum, but alongside and in collaboration with the Village and Town of Canton, the two local universities, and other organizations like Traditional Arts in Upstate New York and the St. Lawrence Land Trust.

Collaborations such as these are a hallmark of how progress is made in Canton and are responsible for projects that tie the community more closely together and make it a more desirable place to live in and to visit. Emblematic of these connections are feasibility studies and planning for a pedestrian walkway connecting two parks, a pedestrian bridge carrying both residents and infrastructure across the river, a comprehensive walking and biking trail running throughout the village, and a whitewater recreation park that would dramatically increase both the tourist and residential appeal of our community.

This is only a sample of the evidence that convinces me that Canton would be exceptionally fertile soil for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant. I urge your most serious attention to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Louis Tremaine, President
Grasse River Heritage



101 Main Street
Canton, NY 13617
315-386-4000
www.NorthCountryGuide.com

May 25, 2016

Mr. Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Mr. Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mr. Collins and Mr. Douglas:

I enthusiastically support Canton's efforts to secure a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant. The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is a 500 business membership network and serves as the Tourism Promotion Agent in the County in partnership with Empire State Development's I LOVE NY tourism department.

Canton is strategically located as a cross-roads for business and pleasure in St. Lawrence County; the community has substantial traffic through the downtown from the international markets of Ottawa and Kingston from the north and from the Adirondacks in the South. People travel *through* Canton – there is tremendous potential for more people to *STOP* in Canton to enjoy, spend and engage. The plan presented by Canton will do just that.

Projects such as the whitewater park and redevelopment of the commercial corridor (currently a brownfield) along the proposed park location on Riverside Drive would not only spur small business development, increased visitation in the downtown, and provide a destination attraction for surrounding paddling enthusiasts, but it would create an outdoor community space attractive to millennials, helping to retain the existing workforce and new families. The Grasse River runs through the downtown and can be a catalyst for very unique development.

As the County seat, with a number of large employers headquartered in town, and home to two colleges, the population provides a dynamic culture ripe for entrepreneurship and diverse experiences. Canton has been proactive in planning and development, but struggles with several underdeveloped and brownfield sites that hinder the image and opportunities for growth. This grant could be a turning point, not only for the Canton community, but for residents across the County who work, shop and recreate in Canton and for the greater region who can directly access its cultural and natural assets for their enjoyment.

Please support this application, and see how a small town can have a huge impact on a rural and impoverished County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brooke Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brooke Rouse
Executive Director

Rosemary R. Philips

2501 County Route 21
Canton, NY 13617

May 25, 2016

Anthony "Tony" G. Collins & Garry Douglas, Co-Chairs
North Country Regional Development Council
Dulles State Office Building
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mr. Collins and Mr. Douglas:

When I first came to Canton 25 years ago for my first job after law school, and I didn't think I would stay more than a couple of years. However, I quickly fell in love with the area and have lived here ever since. Canton has a wonderful combination of natural beauty, history, and culture. The opportunities for year-round recreational activities are abundant and attract visitors to the area. The two universities also bring students, faculty, and staff to Canton. Additionally, last year was the first year of what we hope will be an annual film festival, which brings people from all over the world.

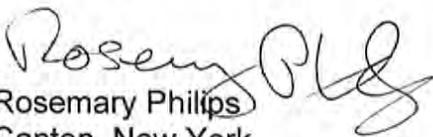
However, one particular part of Canton that very much needs to be developed is the downtown area. The more we develop other parts of Canton, and the more we attract new residents and visitors, the more noticeable the issues with the downtown become. The downtown has a great deal of potential, but a boost is needed to effectively capitalize on that potential.

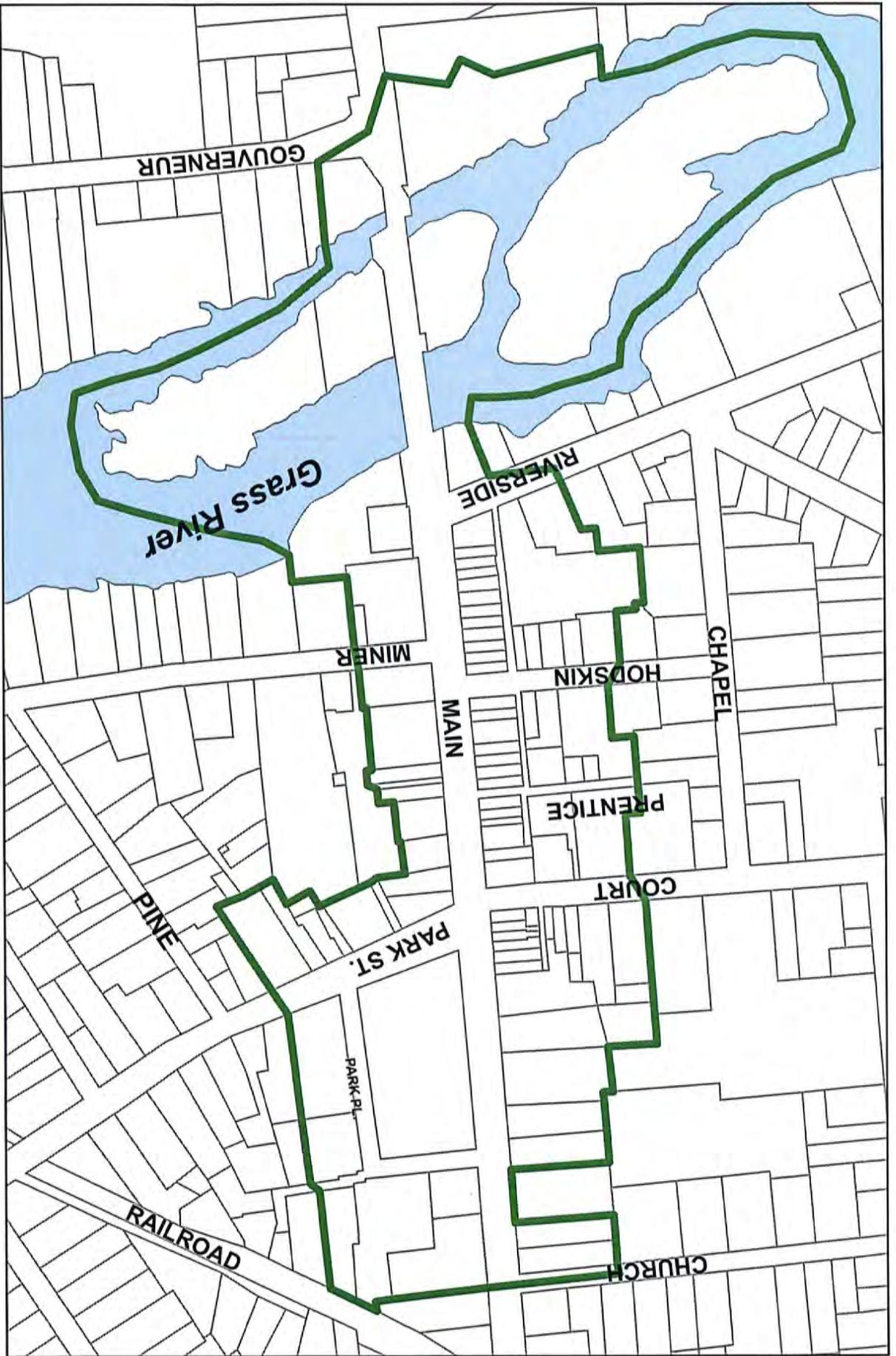
As a member of two committees working to enhance and build Canton's economy, encourage small business development, and attract people to the area, I can't express how exciting the prospect of a downtown revitalization grant is.

Canton's size, diverse population, natural attractiveness, along with the location and size of our downtown area, make it perfectly poised to benefit from the grant.

Thank you for considering helping us in our work of making Canton the best community it can be.

Sincerely,


Rosemary Philips
Canton, New York



Canton Village

Historic District

2009

