



2019 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on May 31, 2019** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

In **New York City**, the Borough Presidents' offices will be the official applicants to the REDC and organizations interested in proposing an area for DRI funding should contact the respective Borough President's office as soon as possible. Based on these proposals, each Borough President's office will develop and submit no more than two formal applications for consideration by the New York City REDC. Applications to the offices of the Borough President must be received by email no later than **4:00 PM on May 10, 2019**. The subject heading on the email must be "Downtown Revitalization Round 4."

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Additional information is available in the 2019 DRI Guidebook, available at www.ny.gov/DRI.

Applicants in the **Mid-Hudson region** must limit their application to a total of 15 pages, and no attachments will be accepted. The map of the DRI Area requested in question number 1 must be part of the 15-page limit.

Applicants should make every effort to engage the community in the development of the application. Prior to submission, applicants must have held a minimum of one meeting or event to solicit public input on the community vision and potential projects and should demonstrate that any input received was considered in the final application.

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region Capital Region
- Municipality Name Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
- Downtown Name Main Street
- County Name Rensselaer
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title Gina Giuliano, Trustee & Grant Writer; Robert Schmidt, Mayor
- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address gina.giuliano@gmail.com; hpanalyst@aol.com

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

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

Three years ago, on Memorial Day weekend, newly elected Village Trustee Dr. Gina Giuliano sat in front of a computer in her tiny third-floor home office. About twenty years prior, she'd been in this same space writing short stories. What came into her mind in 2016 was a story called "For Sale" (1997) about the



quest to sell her circa-1900 Temple House and relocate to a place with a mountain view. That vision was never realized, although House Beautiful *almost* bought the story. Twenty years later, she was trying to write a grant with a ridiculous deadline. It was both ambitious and presumptuous to think the Village could be a contender for the DRI. Still, she gave up her holiday weekend, one month after being sworn in as Trustee, to think about a vision for Main Street. In the two decades since “For Sale” was written, the Village’s downtown had continued its slow, steady decline. Most notably, in 2014 Stewart’s shuttered its 1 South Main Street location. It was a call to action for a small yet committed group of people. Since then, a new culture has grown, one that challenges the dim view of a dying Village. Real estate agents and the media have adopted the nomenclature of “Castleton-on-Hudson” (rather than just the lazy, pedestrian “Castleton” label), regardless of whether the address actually is within Village limits, or is far from the Hudson River, bordering I-90 on the other side of the Town of Schodack. Congressman Paul Tonko has visited the Village twice, most recently on May 24 to hold mobile office hours. Demolition, renovation and construction on Main Street are evident. New small businesses have opened. Grants are being won, including an Estuary access grant. Once Riverfront Park is accessible, a kayak rental kiosk and launch will be added, and a dock and tour boat will be sought. A diverse variety of restaurants on Main Street will open. The W. Curtis Noyes Engine House will be restored, Repair Café will be held there, as will the winter Castleton-on-Hudson Farmers & Artisans Market (COHFAM), and an art gallery and museum will be located there. The Hilton theatre will host plays and cultural events; 9-11 South Main Street will be reclaimed from slumlords, restored and operated as a boutique hotel; and a cadre of unique small retailers will call Castleton-on-Hudson home. Unlike the dreamed of mountain view in “For Sale,” this vision is happening. Instead of gradual decline, the Village is seeing slow but steady *growth*. In this vision, Main Street is bustling with residents and visitors.

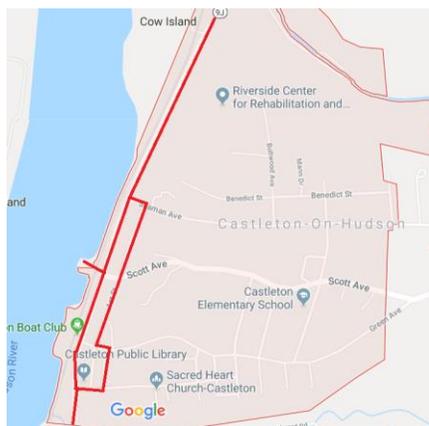
JUSTIFICATION

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.

This proposal is being submitted not because it seems at all likely that the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson will be chosen for the DRI. The Village is participating for a fourth time because it gives the municipality publicity that it would never receive for anything besides bad news, such as a sex offender living in the Village or a fatal accident taking place. Another reason for competing again is that the process of preparing this material is very useful. It helps that after four years, the proposal practically wrote itself and did not require sacrificing the first three-day weekend of the summer. Regardless, visioning, planning, engaging, describing, researching, pitching and showcasing are all extremely valuable exercises. We are so proud of our annual accomplishments. This allows us the chance to brag and update the CREDC. This proposal will focus on what is new in the past year and will not duplicate the achievements shared in the previous three rounds. In answer to “why Castleton-on-Hudson?,” we have proven ourselves worthy of the investment, regardless of the outcome of this annual competition. Once the riverfront is open, Main Street will be ripe for redevelopment, and we are already well on our way.

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 boundaries of the downtown neighborhood are North Main Street to the Village line, South Main Street to the Village line, First Street, Second Street, lower Stimpson Avenue (west of Second street), lower Green Avenue (west of Second Street), lower Scott Avenue (west of First Street), and lower Seaman Avenue (west of First Street). The entire Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is .8 of a square mile, and the downtown stretch of North and South Main Streets, from the northern Village border to the southern Village line, is .8 of a mile in length. The most densely built part of Main Street, from Scott to Stimpson Avenues on South Main Street, is a distance of .3 of a mile.

- 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.

Exciting things continue to happen in Castleton-on-Hudson! Since the last DRI application, Cherrybrook Café, a diner affiliated with Hudson River Foods, opened at 30 South Main Street. 52 Hilton on Main, an innovative arts and business venue located at 52 South Main Street, started “Second Friday on Main,” a monthly event. The Hill, a new locally owned restaurant, opened at 133 Scott Avenue. Riverkeeper screened the Jon Bowermaster Hudson River documentary “Source to Sea” at The Hill. AARP awarded the Village a \$1,500 Community Challenge grant for 2 Green Avenue, the lot next door to the Noyes Engine House at 4 Green Avenue; benches, planters, and a community bulletin board were installed. An application for a Preserve New York grant for the Noyes Engine House is under review (we scored a site visit that went great!); the hope is that Repair Café, now approaching its second anniversary, will find a permanent home at 4 Green Avenue. NYSDEC awarded the Village a \$50,000 Estuary access grant for Riverfront Park; a legal negotiator for River access and landscape architect for universal park design will be hired. High Mowing Organic Seeds made its annual donation of \$400



worth of seeds to the Castleton-on-Hudson Community Garden. The fourth year of the Castleton-on-Hudson Farmers & Artisans Market begins June 7. The future has never been brighter.

- 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.



In 2016, Healthy Brands Collective from Connecticut purchased IBT Hamilton property, which had been vacant since the book printer closed in 2015. The new business operates under the name Hudson River Foods and has renovated the existing 100,000 square-foot building and plans to build another 40,000 square-foot building. Capitalizing on the growing trend for healthy and organic foods, this is an innovative business with tremendous growth potential. They participated in the Start-Up NY program through Hudson Valley Community College. The initial phase provided 80 new jobs at the facility, and a few months ago they were set to expand again with the support of the County IDA. They are also connected to Cherrybrook Café, a new diner on Main Street.

The Hill and Cherrybrook Café opened during the past year, and both have hired contractors and employees.

- 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 Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is beautiful. The Main Street area of the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is a compact downtown that is flat and easily walkable. The remainder of the Village is accessible by foot or bicycle as well, albeit with steep avenues climbing the hills that slope up from the Hudson River. The downtown buildings date from the mid- and late 19th Century. The houses on the hills are early 20th Century Craftsman Bungalows. There are a few newer houses, and modest growth is anticipated (the school is a blue-ribbon school).



An instance where a picture is worth 1000 words

- 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.



This past year, the Village adopted an EEO/MWBE policy, sparked by receiving the Estuary grant. We received a “Trees for Tribs” grant from the Estuary program of NYSDEC in 2017; expanding on this theme, in 2019 we are pursuing the designation of Tree City from the Arbor Day Foundation. The AARP Community Challenge grant was used to install benches, planters and a bulletin board near the Noyes Engine House. Banners honoring veterans were purchased by family members and are now on display on telephone poles on Main Street and throughout the Village. On Flag Day, a nautical flagpole gifted to the Village by the Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association (COHMSA) will be dedicated on North Main Street. Work continues on the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. (The Village was awarded \$1,363,547 in 2017 for a Water Infrastructure Improvement Act grant.) Late last summer the Village installed a driver feedback sign on

North Main Street to raise awareness of the 30 MPH speed limit for drivers traveling south; this summer, a second sign will be installed on South Main Street, targeting motorists going north.

- 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 Village is a growing presence on social media. The Facebook page, founded in April 2016, recently exceeded 2,100 followers. That’s a larger number than the Village’s population (1,500). A companion group to the page has over 500 very active members. The Village also has a website and a newsletter, “The Castletonian,” where information is shared. During the past two years, 500 signatures have been collected on a petition to “Open the Gate” to Riverfront Park. Four years ago, residents were surveyed for their ideas about Main Street. It was found that residents favor The Hudson River and Village History as themes for Main Street. In addition, although the arts were not listed as a choice, they were frequently mentioned in the comments.

A Village table with literature is at every weekly COHFAM. Information is shared, feedback is gathered, questions are answered. Public engagement sessions at COHFAM (and other events) focused on Riverfront Park will be conducted over the course of the next three years as part of the Estuary grant. The AARP Community Challenge grant supported the purchase of an outdoor bulletin board that has been installed near the Engine House. The empty lot has become an inviting public space where information can be shared.



The Board of Trustees meets twice per month. The Mayor, four trustees and Village department heads deliver updates on their individual activities. Trustee and grant writer Giuliano details every grant opportunity, including the DRI, that she is researching, writing, or has submitted. At every meeting, the public is welcomed and freely invited to speak at any time. The charming Village Hall and the services it houses are open, transparent, and friendly.

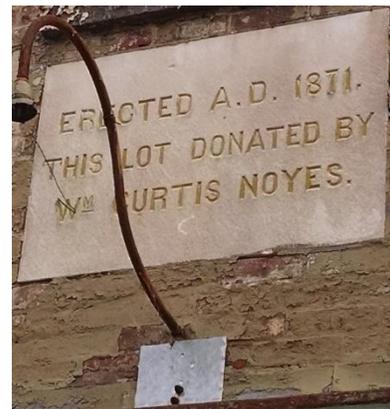


The number of volunteers in the Village is increasing. The fire company, ambulance, Kiwanis, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Friends of the Library and the Village's innovative "foot patrol" (saves postage by delivering "The Castleonian") are vital and have been around for quite some time, but newer efforts include the Castleton-on-Hudson Community Garden committee, COHFAM committee, Repair Café, COHMSA, Arbor Day Tree City committee, and a group of folks who are exploring a dog park. The community is very engaged.

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.

1) **Noyes Engine House**, 4 Green Avenue (Village owned): In 1871, after a severe fire in the Village, a fire company organized and built this small brick engine house in Romanesque Revival style on land donated to the Village by William Curtis Noyes (1805-1864) for educational purposes. Mr. Noyes was an attorney from Schodack who was eulogized by Supreme Court Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase.

- a. AARP grant won and completed 2018, benches, planters, bulletin board installed.
- b. 2019 PNY grant pending for building condition report.



c. Vision: This is well-developed, and it is expected that DRI #5 next year will be trumpeting this as an accomplishment. Restoration with DRI funds is desired. The potential of the Engine House is unlimited, including offering public tours (as in 1977); film festivals (for example, Berkshire County ARC's Sprout

film festival at Berkshire County Community College on March 31, 2019); theatre performances (such as the programs at Sand Lake Center for the Arts); meeting space for community groups; and a location for a mini-First Night to ring in the New Year, in collaboration with the Village’s budding Main Street businesses. It is envisioned as the future home of Repair Café. The first floor would be ideal for increasing both accessibility and visibility. In addition to the current monthly event, several of the Repair Café fixers have expressed interest in holding a one day per week permanent Repair Café in the 4 Green Avenue “storefront.” In December 2017, Village officials (Mayor Schmidt and Trustee Giuliano) attended Riverkeeper’s screening of a Jon Bowermaster short film about the Hudson River, held at Basilica Hudson. Although a much larger facility, the setting was evocative of the Engine House. Similar events could be held at 4 Green Avenue. In January 2019, Riverkeeper did come to the Village to screen another of the Bowermaster Hudson River documentaries. However, the screening had to be held at The Hill, a restaurant on Scott Avenue, rather than downtown at the Engine House. With only minor improvements, the Noyes Engine House could instead host such a gathering. In 2016, the Village started COHFAM. It is held every Friday from June to September. Many of the vendors have asked to have a once or twice a month winter COHFAM; the Engine House and its neighboring lot (2 Green Avenue, where the AARP Community Challenge was completed) would be perfect for this. Another thing the artist vendors desire is a place to display their work; 4 Green Avenue could serve as a gallery for the creative economy.

- 2) **Riverfront Park, 1 North Main Street (Village owned):** The 25-year history of being denied public access to the Hudson River has been regurgitated ad nauseum. If the readers are tired of it, just imagine how residents, Village officials and this writer feel. However, this year there are positive developments to report. Legal public access to the River is in sight!



RENSSELAER COUNTY HUDSON RIVER ACCESS PLAN
 February 2018
 Figure 1-7

- a. 500 signatures gathered to “Open the Gate.”
- b. Presenter, with Columbia County River communities and Magnetic (gate) Autocontrol, at Scenic Hudson’s river access forum.
- c. \$50,000 Hudson River Estuary access grant secured from NYSDEC to gain legal access and design a park.
- d. Chosen by Rensselaer Land Trust as one of three top priority sites in Rensselaer

County for Hudson River access.

- e. Vision: Utilizing DRI funds, purchase Magnetic Gates for crossing; simple park constructed, from Estuary grant-funded plans, that showcases principles of universal design.

- 3) **Village Hall**, 85 South Main Street (Village owned): The Castleton Elementary School was built in 1866, on the site of a prior school building. The land was donated by Catherine Van Buren in 1837. It served as a school until 1924. It is now the Village Hall, housing the Village Office and Castleton Public Library on the first floor. The second floor is used for meeting space and is wonderfully unchanged from its former life as four Common School classrooms.



- a. Building Condition Report completed by Landmark.
- b. Building currently being painted and vault foundation repaired, based on report's recommendations.
- c. Annex room (former court) renovated, using library grant funding.
- d. New air conditioning installed.
- e. Large dying evergreen tree removed from front lawn.
- f. Vision: Restoration with DRI funds. Upstairs becomes ADA compliant and accessible to all.



- 4) **Hilton Theatre**, 34 South Main Street (privately owned): The landlord of 52 Hilton on Main is also the owner of 34 South Main Street, the former Pro Manufacturing.

- a. Vision: Extending the arts theme, Mr. Hilton is dreaming of a theatre in the old garage space. DRI would support renovations.

- 5) **Water infrastructure**, throughout village (Village owned): The water pipes are old. Some date to 1897. Water main breaks are common.

- a. Water rates are being increased, with a portion set aside to replace pipes and reduce breaks.
- b. Vision: Replacement of some infrastructure using DRI funding.



- 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 Village has a DPW staff (of five) who maintains the roads and operates the water system and wastewater treatment plant. It also has a staff in the Village Office, comprised of the Clerk/Treasurer and Deputy Clerk. The library has a director and a few part-time employees. The Village attorney is a contractor. The Mayor and four Trustees are part-time, practically volunteer, positions. Despite this, the Village accomplishes a lot, and is very efficient and productive. Volunteers are plentiful and invaluable. Grant-writing and grant-management are done by Trustee Giuliano, as a volunteer. (The wastewater grant is handled by Delaware Engineering and the water/wastewater superintendent.)

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

At a recent NYCOM conference, the DRI was discussed. Several applicants and a couple of winners were present. Naturally, all wanted to know whether Castleton-on-Hudson would join the competition again. One of the past awardees shared that winning has been unpleasant and stressful, like making a deal with the devil, and they opined that perhaps it has not been worth it. Frankly, this sentiment comes as no surprise. It is similar to the lives of lottery winners being ruined by the prize. In the “Justification” section, it is made clear that the Village has no illusions about the likelihood of being selected. Although 10M is tantalizing, it is intoxicating to think of the impact it would have in this small municipality and to fantasize how thrilling winning would be, the hand-off to consultants, the loss of control, and the intrusion of outsiders are all unappealing. Our rebirth is nascent, and maybe does not need the DRI?

SUBMISSION

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island LIREDC@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

- North Country NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- Southern Tier NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.
 - Bronx: James Rausse at JRausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov
 - Brooklyn: Josh Levin at JoshuaLevin@brooklynbp.nyc.gov
 - Manhattan: Elka Morety at EMorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
 - Queens: Shurn Anderson at SAnderson@queensbp.org
 - Staten Island: Lashay S. Young at LYoung@stateninsula.com