NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – CREDC

The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) is accepting applications from qualified applicants for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

Please refer to the attached Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guide for further information on the DRI program.

Each applicant must complete this application and include the requested Appendices.

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible.

Applications must be **received** by Empire State Development's Capital Region Office **by 4:00 p.m. on June 1, 2016.**

Applications are to be submitted by email to Heidi.Pasos@esd.ny.gov. Files should be named in the following format: "Downtown_Municipality_Date".

If you have questions about the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, contact the ESD Capital Region Office at (518) 270-1130.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Capital Region

Municipality Name: City of Cohoes

Downtown Name: Downtown Cohoes

County: Albany

Point of Contact: Michael Jacobson

Title: Director of Economic and Community Development

Phone: 518-233-2117

Email: mjacobson@ci.cohoes.ny.us

Downtown Description: Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a DRI award:

Please refer to the attached application package for responses.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

3) **Past Investments (past Five (5) years) & 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. Please use the chart to total Past Investments and provide a narrative further describing the investments and future potential.

Leverages Resources:	Public: $	Private: $
Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding:	Amount: $	Amount: $
Please identify use(s) of prior funding:		

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

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.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

8) **Challenges.** Identify current challenges or other impediments facing downtown development initiatives.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

9) **Other.** Provide **WEB LINKS** to any other relevant information. For example: plans, reports, news articles etc.

Please refer to the attached application for responses.

Please complete Appendix A-C on pages 4-6 (below)

Appendix A: Executive Summary (not to exceed 3 pages).

Click here to enter text.

Appendix B: Map of location indicating specific boundaries (color, clearly identify boundaries, surrounding communities, census tract boundaries, key features, etc.).

Appendix C: Current photos of the downtown area. Please clearly label each photo.

Application Package

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application

June 1, 2016

City of Cohoes, New York

Submitted to The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Basic Information 1
1.2 Downtown Description – Why Cohoes? 2
1.3 The Vision for Downtown Cohoes 3
1.4 Revitalization Objectives 3

DRI APPLICATION CRITERIA 5

1) Boundaries of Downtown Cohoes 5
2) Size & Catchment Area for Downtown Cohoes 5
3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential 8
4) Job Growth 12
5) Attractiveness of the Downtown 13
6) Policies that Enhance Quality of Life 14
7) Local Support 15
8) Challenges 15
9) Other (web links) 16
1.5 City of Cohoes 16
1.6 Cohoes Boulevard Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study 16
1.7 News & Media 16

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Summary: “Cohoes at the Confluence”

Appendix B: Map of the Downtown Area

Appendix C: Current Photos of Downtown Cohoes

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BASIC INFORMATION

We are pleased to submit this Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Application and excited to share with the DRI Committee our past successes and future possibilities in Downtown Cohoes.

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Capital Region

Municipality Name: City of Cohoes

Downtown Name: Downtown Cohoes

County: Albany

Point of Contact: Michael Jacobson

Title: Director of Economic and Community Development

Phone: 518-233-2117

Email: mjacobson@ci.cohoes.ny.us

1.2 DOWNTOWN DESCRIPTION – WHY COHOES?

Like many downtowns in Upstate New York, Downtown Cohoes has suffered the effects of economic decline, disinvestment, and abandonment. While the broader Cohoes community has made great strides in revitalizing neighborhoods on our ***borders,*** our downtown core and its contiguous neighborhoods continue to struggle. The construction of almost a 1,000 new residential units throughout the city edges has brought an influx of young professionals, families, and retirees who want to live, shop, and play in Downtown Cohoes. But our Downtown does not yet offer these opportunities, forcing residents and visitors to go elsewhere.

That said, Downtown Cohoes is poised to be a go-to destination for both residents, visitors and those wishing to start or expand their business. Our Downtown offers a uniquely historic, safe and walkable atmosphere, with high quality buildings, a compact and connected street network, civic and cultural amenities, and convenient access to the entire region. All of this adds up to enormous revitalization potential.

A new mindset in City Hall has brought about a cultural shift in our thinking and approach to development and has generated a renewed ambition and enthusiasm to create a first class Downtown. The City's leadership is committed to making Downtown revitalization our highest priority and has dedicated approximately $1 million in local funds to leverage the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and catalyze additional private and public investment. A $10 million investment, strategically managed, will tip the scales in Cohoes and create high impact, highly visible results.

We have created the demand. We have fostered the political will and built local capacity. Now is the time to realize the true potential of our Downtown core. As this application shows, Cohoes is ready to hit the ground running. We look forward to the opportunity to work with our partners and the State of New York through this exciting initiative to achieve our goals for a sustainable and livable Downtown and truly become an All American City.

Downtown Cohoes has the will and the skill. We are ready.

1.3 THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN COHOES

As part of past and more recent planning (we are *currently* updating our Comprehensive Plan) the community has created and is fine tuning a vision for Downtown that is based on significant public input. The following vision statement has been adapted from the Cohoes Boulevard Brownfield Opportunity Area (which was officially designated in 2015). The BOA included all of downtown Cohoes. We are leveraging the extensive work completed as part of the BOA process by carrying forward the vision and goals for Downtown.

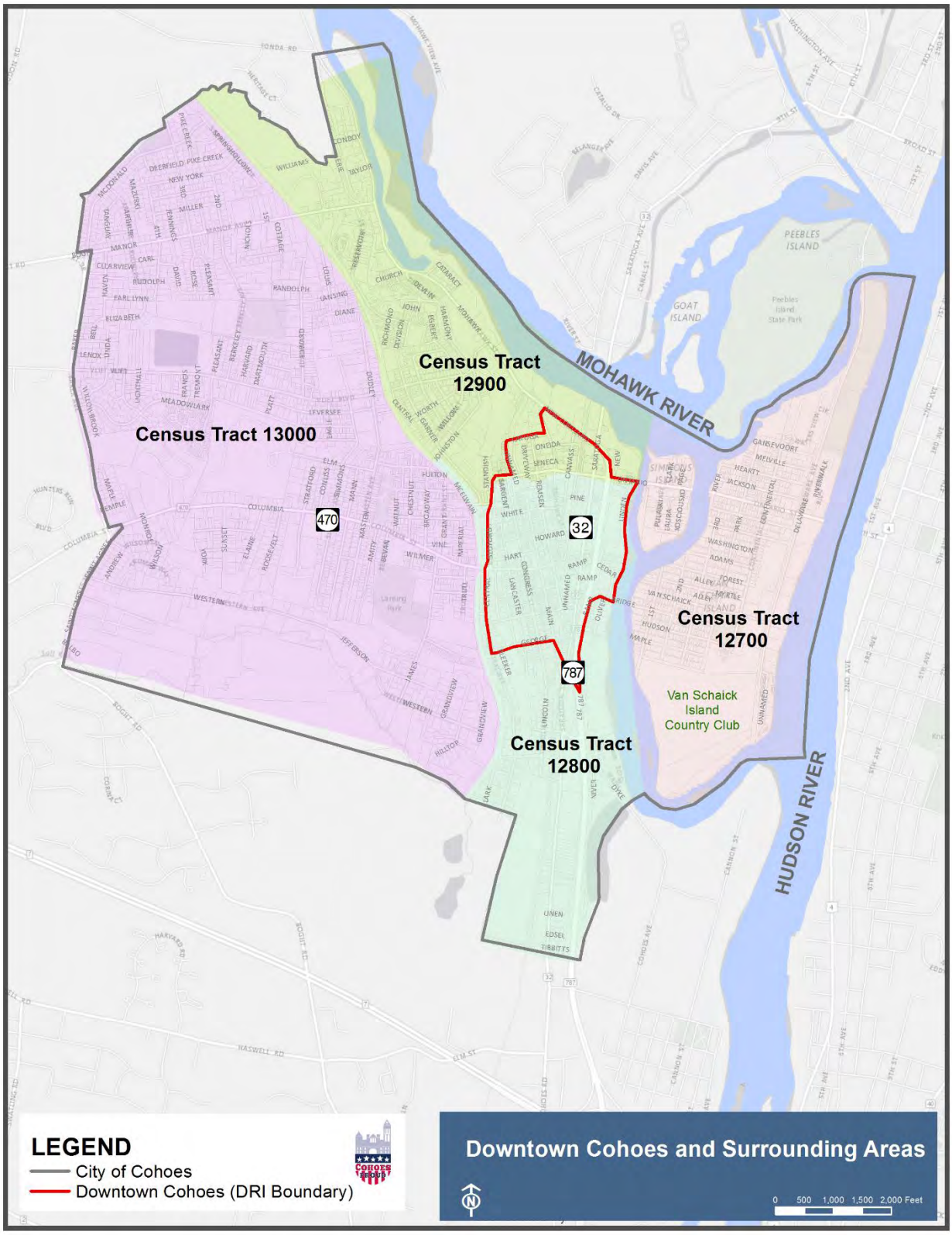
Vision for the future of Downtown Cohoes:

"Downtown Cohoes will be a diverse, safe and desirable place to start a business, raise a family, access first class recreational resources and learn more about our county's industrial heritage. As the Capital District's premiere transit-oriented community, Cohoes will provide an integrated multi-modal network allowing residents and visitors to navigate our downtown and surrounding neighborhoods in a safe and efficient manner. Our waterfront will continue to provide a vibrant mix of residential and commercial uses and become a destination for water based recreation. Our downtown will provide a mix of uses, cultural resources, services, retail shopping, employment opportunities and a pedestrian friendly, safe place to live.

1.4 REVITALIZATION OBJECTIVES

Numerous past planning studies have identified the following revitalization principles and objectives, which are the guiding force behind this DRI application:

- Leverage the City's wealth of historic, natural, cultural and transportation resources to improve the downtown character;
- Identify and attract economic development opportunities and promote a positive image to make the City a unique place to live, work and play;
- Improve public access to, and recreational use of, the City's Mohawk and Hudson River waterfront properties; and
- Promote commercial development in easily accessible areas adjacent to the City's historic downtown business district and major transportation corridors, specifically the Cohoes Boulevard and State Route 470 corridors.
- Improve community perceptions by promoting the City's public safety record (low crime rates) and high graduation rates.


Census Tract 12900
Census Tract 13000
Census Tract 12700
Census Tract 12800
MOHAWK RIVER
HUDSON RIVER
PEEBLES ISLAND
GOAT ISLAND
Van Schaick Island Country Club
470
32
787
LEGEND
City of Cohoes
Downtown Cohoes (DRI Boundary)
Downtown Cohoes and Surrounding Areas
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

DRI APPLICATION CRITERIA

1) BOUNDARIES OF DOWNTOWN COHOES

Downtown Cohoes is a compact, walkable neighborhood.

At approximately 0.27 square miles (173 acres), Downtown Cohoes is a relatively compact and well-defined area bordered by natural and man-made features. In fact, one can walk across Downtown in about 5 minutes. It is bordered on the east by the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, the north by Route 470, the west by Bedford Street, and the south by George Street. Downtown Cohoes is home to 3,000 residents, 1,500 employees and almost 200 businesses.

The Downtown DRI neighborhood is considered Cohoes' traditional/historic downtown. It is focused around Remsen Street (Cohoes' "Main Street") and surrounding blocks. The boundaries of the downtown neighborhood are further defined by major transportation corridors, including State Route 787 (Cohoes Boulevard), which carries over 29,000 cars per day and offers multiple access points to the downtown core and the waterfront[1]. The compact and walkable fabric of downtown Cohoes reflects the City's unique history and growth in the 19th century as a textile manufacturing hub.

The compact and defined nature of our downtown provides opportunities to create a critical mass of residents, employees, and visitors that will ultimately help develop a vibrant downtown with a high quality of life.

2) SIZE & CATCHMENT AREA FOR DOWNTOWN COHOES

Downtown Cohoes is emerging as a sustainable, year-round downtown.

The Cohoes downtown is well-positioned to contribute to the region, attracting residents, visitors, and employees year-round. In recent years, Cohoes has emerged as an attractive residential choice in the Capital District, offering a high quality of life for workers throughout the region. Cohoes is not a resort town or a city with just one defining feature. Rather, Cohoes offers quality of life features that residents and workers seek in their everyday lives: safety, housing choices, good schools, convenient access to the entire region, cultural and recreational opportunities, services, accessibility/walkability, bike paths, waterfront amenities, and an inclusive culture. These are the features that create vibrancy and will ultimately sustain a downtown throughout the year.

Downtown Cohoes is within easy reach of a sizable and growing population.

Downtown Cohoes is located at the confluence of two rivers (Mohawk and Hudson) and three counties (Saratoga, Albany, and Rensselaer). It has direct roads to Latham (via Columbia Street) and Troy (via Ontario Street and the 112th Street Bridge). It is home to a sizable population of approximately 3,000 residents and is projected to grow by 0.75% per year through 2020. This is consistent with population growth in the entire City and within the larger region.[2]

The population of the City of Cohoes was approximately 17,268 in 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, the City of Cohoes grew at an annual rate of 1.26%, which is notable in the context of Upstate New York, where many communities have seen consistent declines in population or growth rates below a half percent. Further, the City is projected to continue growing at a rate of 0.95% through 2020.

[1] New York State Traffic Data Viewer (TDV), 2016

[2] US Census Bureau, ESRI, 2016

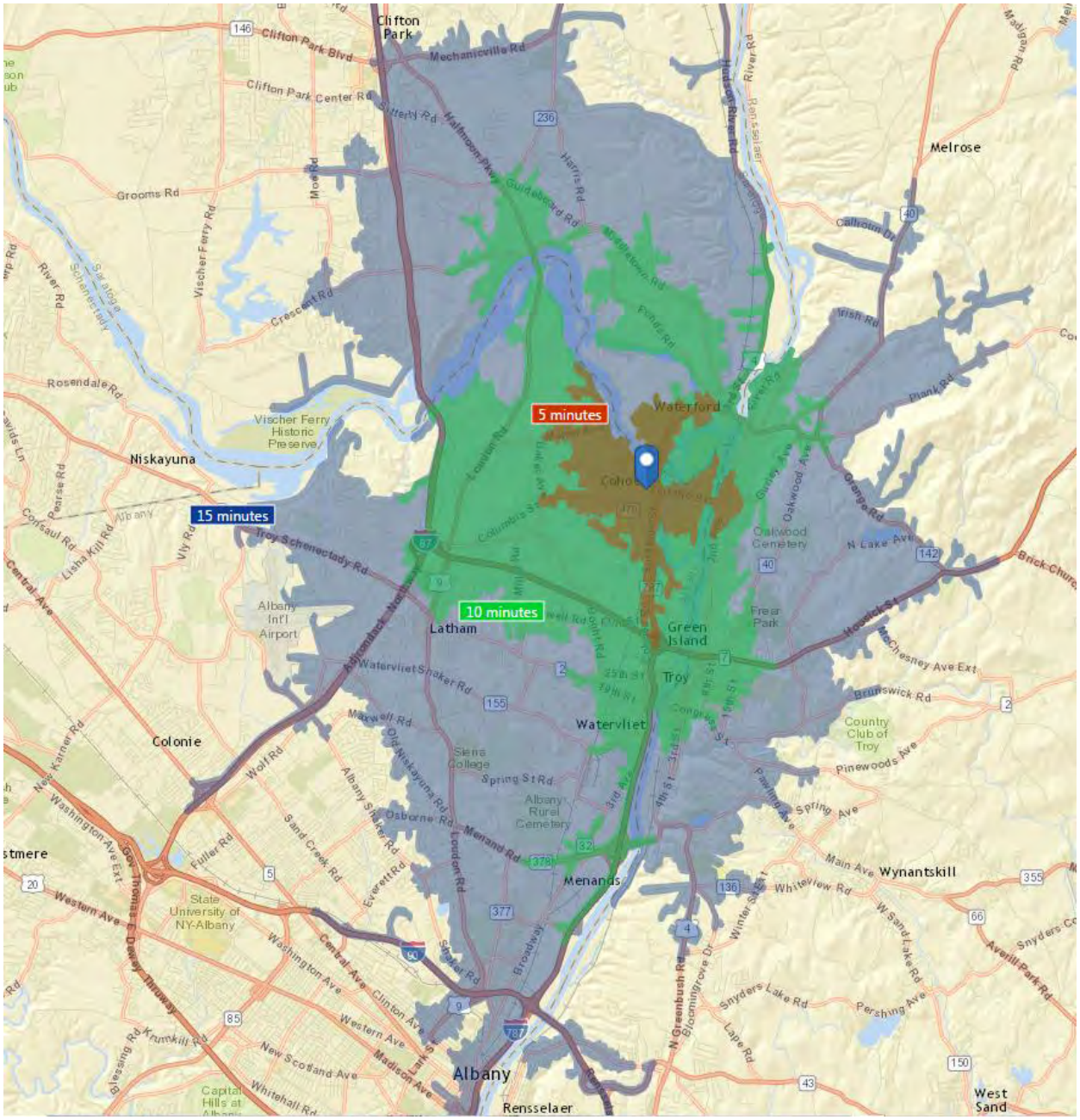
There are approximately 170,000 people living within a 15-minute drive to downtown Cohoes, and 74,000 people within a 10 minute drive. This population is projected to increase through 2020.

Downtown Cohoes is surrounded by business and employment growth.

There are over 7,000 businesses and 115,700 employees within a 15 minute drive of Cohoes. Some of the region's largest businesses are convenient to Downtown Cohoes, including General Electric, RPI, Albany Medical Center, Global Foundries, Price Chopper, and Bechtel.

Downtown Cohoes's central location is well-suited to contribute to the region's growth and benefit from its success.

Over the past 5 to 7 years significant development has taken place in the City of Cohoes along the City's boundaries within adjacent communities and along our waterfront. Close to 1,000 residential units, housing an estimated 2,500 people, have been built, are in the planning stage or are currently under construction. There is significant opportunity to provide a vibrant downtown that will capture the spending potential of these new residents within Cohoes. A recent study which included resident workshops and feedback forums clearly stated that, given the choice, the Cohoes community would rather shop and be entertained in downtown Cohoes, but the absence of these amenities forces them to go elsewhere. Cohoes' geography is one of its major strengths, at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers with some of the most developable waterfront property in the region. With Troy to the east, Albany to the south connected by State Route 787, Clifton Park to the north, Latham to the east, Cohoes is at the crossroads of opportunity.



Drive Times from Downtown Cohoes
Source: ESRI

3) PAST INVESTMENTS & FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

Cohoes has long been a steward of public resources by leveraging grants and other funds to catalyze private sector investment. Cohoes' history and track record handling public investment ensures we will optimize future public investment. Our high level of fiscal and fiduciary responsibility has resulted in a cash positive balance sheet for our city and a leverageable asset to stimulate further development.

Cohoes has capitalized on prior investments.

Over the last 5 years, Cohoes has leveraged over **$5 million** in state and federal dollars to build improvements in the community that have, or will, help attract new private investment. The chart below summarizes these past investments:

Source of Funds	Project	Funds Leveraged
Hudson River Valley Greenway	Downtown Revitalization	$7,500
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor		$7,000
ACCVB		$5,000
Cohoes Savings Foundation		$4,950
IDA Economic Development Support		$60,000
NYS Dormitory Authority/Member Item		$50,000
Spiral Design		$8,500
NYS CFA- Engineering Study	Vliet Street sewer seperation design	$26,000
2015 CFA- DEC WQIP	Middle Vliet Street Sewer Separation	$900,000
NYS CFA- Comprehensive Plan	City Comprehensive Plan update	$51,500
DEC Betterment	Air Polution Improvements- Electric Cars	$50,000
DEC Betterment	Air Polution Improvements- Firemen Equipment	$109,000
NYS DOT	Rail Road Crossings	$1,809,000
CP Rail		$49,000
NYS DOT	Ontario Street Signal Design	$30,800
NYS DOT	Clinton's Ditch	$670,255
NYS Canal Corporation		$180,803
Cohoes IDA		$135,070
NYS Canal Corporation	Heritage Trail	$225,000
NY Department of State	Brownfield Opportunity Area Study	$39,600
NYSDHCR	Home Funds	$400,000
NYS DOT	Green Island Trail Bridge	$845,772
Cohoes IDA	Green Island Trail Bridge	$100,000
	Total	**$5,764,750**

Cohoes has done (and continues to do) the foundational planning work

Past Planning Efforts in Cohoes

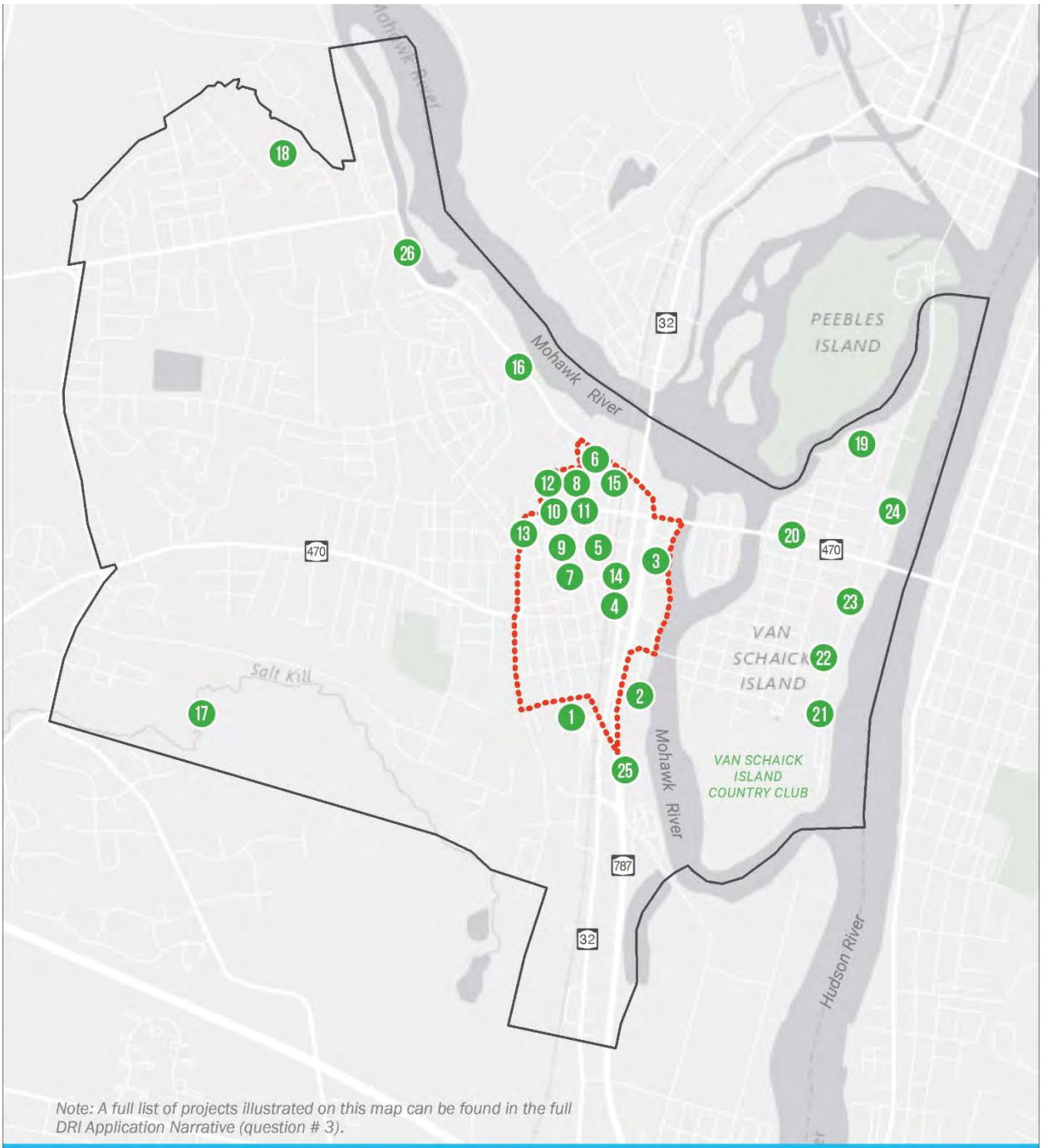
- Van Schaick Island Transportation & Revitalization Plan Final Report May 2008
- Van Schaick Island Transportation & Land Use Study Workshop #1
- Van Schaick Island Transportation and Revitalization Plan Workshop # 2
- Downtown Redevelopment Plan
- 787 BOA Nomination Study (December 2012)
- Downtown Gateway Environmental Review Record (ERR)
- Van Schaick Island Water Quality Improvement Plan - Environmental Review Record
- Delaware Ave BOA DRAFT Pre-Nomination Study (May 2010)
- Delaware Ave BOA DRAFT Nomination Study (July 2011)
- Route 470 Study
- Albany County Rural Housing Alliance Programs
- Urban Waterfront Rediscovery Plan
- State Route 787 Corridor Pre-Nomination Study
- Hudson River Park Draft Management Report
- **Comprehensive Plan Update (2016**)

Cohoes is leveraging past ongoing investment to catalyze future potential.

Recent investments paired with current redevelopment opportunities have the potential to benefit the entire region by providing a high quality place for people to live, work and play. The City's new leadership is committed to making Downtown revitalization its highest priority, dedicating approximately $1 million in local funds that will leverage the Downtown Revitalization Initiative to catalyze additional public and private investment. Below are descriptions of the revitalization highlights shown on the Opportunity & Investment Map. These include examples of recent, ongoing, and future investment in downtown Cohoes. **NOTE: Photos are provided of each of these sites in Appendix C.**

1.	**Existing Price Chopper Property.** The Price Chopper is exploring new sites. The LDC has plans to acquire the existing site for affordable housing. A developer has been identified.
2.	**City owned parcel.** Planning is underway to move the DPW facility from its current location to this site, opening up key waterfront property for a mixed-use development with public access to river. A developer has been identified.
3.	**St. Michaels Site.** A developer is currently assembling parcels to construct a mixed-use project.
4.	**City Lofts Phase I Building 2.** This project includes market rate loft apartments. The project is underway.
5.	**Cohoes Library.** The City is currently negotiating with a local business to acquire historic building to expand their business. The current library will be updated and relocated to a site next to the community center located downtown.
6.	**Cohoes Commons.** This building contains 55,000 square feet of available office/commercial space.
7.	**Sargent/White Street Project (see #13).** The City is finalizing a contract with a developer, in partnership with the LDC. The project will include 100 mixed income rental units with a set-aside for Autistic adults

	ready for independent living and support services provided by Living Resources. White Street is a mixed-use component with first floor commercial space.
8.	**First Niagara Bank.** The property owner is currently in negotiations with a developer to repurpose a building on the site into a mixed-use commercial space.
9.	**Cohoes Hotel.** This property is under contract with developer and our LDC. The project will restore the existing historic structure and construct an addition with 26 units of market rate apartments and first floor commercial space**.**
10.	**Canal Square.** This City owned outdoor music and market venue is in the heart of downtown. The Square is on the same block as our Music Hall. The City is currently requesting proposals to update and landscape the park.
11.	**Bus Rapid Transit.** This site was recently selected for new BRT Station, with associated routes linking Downtown Cohoes' entertainment and business district to key stops in Troy and Albany.
12.	**Cohoes Music Hall.** This is the fourth oldest operating music hall in America. The City has negotiated a new management agreement with the Palace Performing Arts Center to secure a diverse slate of entertainment offerings. Activity is projected to increase from 20 shows to 120 per year and bring an estimated 40,000 people to downtown throughout the season.
13.	**Sargent /White Street Project**. See #7 above **.**
14.	**City Lofts Phase I.** This project includes market rate loft style apartments. 42 units completed 2012.
15.	**Warehouse 71.** This former warehouse was converted into 22 luxury loft style apartments in 2014.
16.	**The Lofts at Harmony Mills Phase I, II, III & IV.** The former Harmony Mills building was converted to 340 loft style apartments and was completed in 2014.
17.	**Lexington Hill Phases I, II& III.** This project includes 420 luxury style apartments located on the Cohoes/Colonie line. Phase I is complete. The developer is breaking ground for Phase II this year.
18.	**Lionheart.** This project includes 72 newly constructed affordable rentals, completed in 2015.
19.	**Waterview Apartments.** This project includes 222 market rate luxury apartments on the Mohawk River, completed in 2012.
20.	**Bus Rapid Transit – Ontario Street.** BRT will provide a critical transit link between Downtown Cohoes and surrounding job markets (linked to #11 above).
21.	**Admirals Walk.** This project includes a mix of high end owner occupied and rental condominiums located on the Hudson River. 74 Units were completed 2015. 40 additional units are underway**.**
22.	**Captain's Lookout.** This project includes 140 market rate apartments on the Hudson River, currently under construction.
23.	**City Lofts Phase II.** This project includes 42 waterfront market rate units, currently under construction.
24.	**Riverwalk Apartments.** This project includes 176 market rate apartments on Hudson River, complete in 1999.
25.	**Juncta Site.** The IDA under contract with a developer to acquire and construct new full service grocery store and three pads for a bank and food service vendors. Property sits along State Route 787 at the City's southern gateway.
26.	**Falls View Park.** The City has taken over management of Cohoes Falls Park and will integrate its offerings into the broader downtown entertainment plan.



Note: A full list of projects illustrated on this map can be found in the full DRI Application Narrative (question # 3).

Opportunity & Investment

Downtown Cohoes and surrounding areas have experienced significant investment in recent years, helping to catalyze future revitalization opportunities.

26
Projects

4) JOB GROWTH

Downtown Cohoes is supported by regional business and employment growth.

The City of Cohoes is home to almost 5,000 employees, with another 115,700 employees within a 15 minute drive of downtown. Average Daily Traffic Volume on Cohoes Boulevard is 29,100 vehicles per day. In addition, Average Daily Traffic on Alternate Route 7, south of Cohoes, is roughly 75,000 vehicles.

The Capital Region as a whole is home to 1.1 million people. The economy is experiencing the fastest growth in decades, with over $30 billion in investment over the last ten years. Total employment is expected to grow by 12% through 2022.[3]Labor force participation rate region wide is more than 66%, higher than the statewide average (64%). The regional unemployment rate in 2014 was 5.2%, continuing the trend of declining unemployment rates. Together, Government (22.2%), Health Care & Social Assistance (14.5%), and Retail Trade (11.6%) account for nearly 50% of the region's jobs. Educational Services saw an employment increase of 46% from 2000 through 2013. In the last 15 years, growth in the number of business establishments occurred in in the entire region.[4]

Downtown Cohoes and its surrounding neighborhoods offer the high quality of life that employees and business owners want.

Building a great downtown with a sense of place is essential to creating a strong and resilient economy. In fact, quality of life has become one of the biggest drivers of local economic growth. Communities that invest in creating a quality downtown are most successful at attracting talented workers and the companies who employ them. Cohoes' downtown has everything necessary to be a vibrant heart of one of the region's most livable cities: historic character, public safety, good schools, walkability, a diversity of housing options, public spaces, cultural attractions, and transit amenities. Cohoes is already attracting new residents. Now we want to provide the opportunity to shop, eat at restaurants, attend concerts and events, and enjoy the waterfront in Cohoes.

Downtown Cohoes is poised to become a vibrant downtown that can contribute to sustainable job growth within the region.

Cohoes is located in a growing region that is evolving and moving towards high technology, health, and education sectors. Workers in these industries are seeking to live in a community with a high quality of life. Cohoes has spent the last decade investing in these quality of life factors and is now attracting young professionals, families and retirees to the region. Residents of the recently renovated Harmony Mills lofts indicate that they commute to work at GE, Global Foundries, Albany Medical Center, and various state agencies. In addition, Cohoes has one of the area's highest high school graduation rates, at 82%. Our goal is to create a Downtown that supports local residents, and generates economic activity by local residents as well as the tens of thousands of people who pass through the community on a daily basis.

[3]New York State Department of Labor, Long-Term Industry Employment Projections, 2012-2022 (Capital Region)

[4]Capital Region Chamber Economic Profile, 2016

5) ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE DOWNTOWN

The Cohoes Downtown has everything needed to catalyze successful revitalization.

Characteristics of Downtown that contribute to livability and attractiveness:

- High residential density within walking distance of Downtown.
- High quality building stock in good condition.
- Among the lowest crime rates in the region.
- High graduation rates.
- Existing mixed use buildings are ready for rehab and re-purposing.
- Vacant land is available for new development, both private and city-owned.
- Diverse housing options exist for all incomes throughout the City. Neighborhoods include a balanced mix of market rate, mid-income, senior housing and affordable housing (lower income, housing authority), with no concentrations of low-income housing.
- A welcoming and supportive diverse resident base and elected leadership that encourages inclusive housing options.
- New BRT station will be located in the heart of our entertainment district.
- Natural amenities, waterfront amenities, regional trails, recreational opportunities
- A walkable and bikeable street network with well-maintained bike paths connects Downtown to various parts of the city.
- There are three active downtown parks and gathering spaces: (1) Canal Square Park (2) Silliman Park and (3) Cohoes Falls Park. Lansing Park (Pool, soccer, skate boarding and a planned dog park) is contiguous to the downtown core.
- The Community Center anchors the northern boundary of Downtown, with the library just blocks away.
- Cohoes Commons offers a wide range of medical services and is accessible/walkable from all points Downtown.
- The planned expansion of the Cohoes Music Hall (under management with the Palace Theatre) and Canal Park offerings will bring thousands of people to Downtown on a regular basis.
- The City is currently in negotiations with a broadband provider to bring us into the 21st century.
- The City has taken over the management of Cohoes Falls Park and will integrate its offerings into the broader downtown entertainment plan.

6) POLICIES THAT ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE

Cohoes has adopted plans and developed partnerships that enhance quality of life.

Quality of life is our strength and area of greatest opportunity. Cohoes is committed to improving quality of life factors within the Downtown and achieving the associated economic benefits. Our goal is to achieve the status of All-American City.

The City of Cohoes has developed numerous plans that contain policies directly targeted at enhancing the quality of life. These plans specifically address business attraction, business retention, and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites as compact, mixed-use projects with access to transit and pedestrian/bicycle amenities. The Downtown Redevelopment Plan and Brownfield Opportunity Area plans specifically identify policies and actions designed to encourage complete streets, transit-oriented development, and parks/trails amenities. We are currently partnering with the Albany County Land Bank and have begun creating a plan to make this a focus area. We are changing the way we think and behave concerning our relationships with development partners. We are beginning to think like our customers and better understand their obstacles and frustrations in dealing with government. The result, we are certain of, will be policies and practices designed to streamline approvals, fast track high impact projects and become a city that's easy to do business with.

Plans and Policies that Enhance Quality of Life

Van Schaick Island Transportation & Revitalization Plan Final Report May 2008
Van Schaick Island Transportation & Land Use Study Workshop #1
Van Schaick Island Transportation and Revitalization Plan Workshop # 2
Downtown Redevelopment Plan
787 BOA Nomination Study (December 2012)
Downtown Gateway Environmental Review Record (ERR)
Van Schaick Island Water Quality Improvement Plan - Environmental Review Record
Delaware Ave BOA DRAFT Pre-Nomination Study (May 2010)
Delaware Ave BOA DRAFT Nomination Study (July 2011)
Route 470 Study
Albany County Rural Housing Alliance Programs
Urban Waterfront Rediscovery Plan
State Route 787 Corridor Pre-Nomination Study
Hudson River Park Draft Management Report
Comprehensive Plan Update (2016)

7) LOCAL SUPPORT

As noted above, our focus on Downtown Cohoes has significant support from the community they have been waiting a long time. Our leadership has changed and so has our commitment to downtown. Our city has successfully managed its finances, allowing us to dedicate approximately $1 million in local funds in anticipation of being able to leverage the Downtown Revitalization Initiative to catalyze additional private and public investment. Further, we are leveraging the State's previous investment in planning for revitalization: goals and objectives for downtown were developed as part of the Brownfield Opportunity Area program with inclusive public engagement programs. These programs included local steering committees, public visioning workshops, design charrettes, outreach to business owners and developers, and other events. For almost two decades, the local community has been involved in creating a well-defined vision and strategic objectives for downtown Cohoes and surrounding neighborhoods.

Local leadership and partners are committed to this initiative. Attached to this application are the following:

- City Council Resolution in support of this application
- Letter of support from the Mayor of Cohoes, Sean Morse
- Letter of support from the Cohoes Common Council
- Letter of support from "Choose Cohoes" our downtown business association
- Letter of support from the Cohoes Local Development Corporation
- Letter of support from the City of Cohoes Industrial Development Agency

The local lead for this initiative is Mike Jacobson, Director of Economic and Community Development. Key partners that offer additional technical and financial support include the Cohoes Industrial Development Agency, the Cohoes Local Development Corporation and the Albany County Land Bank.

8) CHALLENGES

Like many cities in Upstate New York, Cohoes has experienced industrial decline over the last half-century. The resulting challenges include disinvestment and continuing economic decline, manifested in vacant/underutilized property, deteriorating buildings, and a lack of commercial services and amenities.

But our biggest challenge is that our Downtown does not yet offer the kinds of experiences and amenities that people want, forcing residents and visitors to go elsewhere for restaurants, entertainment, and shopping.

Like other communities, Cohoes is subject to the national, state, and regional economic factors that influence future growth and development. We recognize that while local communities cannot control larger economic factors, we can focus our resources on improving the features that make Cohoes a great place to life and work. This, in turn, will attract more residents and businesses, and ultimately contribute to the success of the entire region.

Many a book has been written declaring the biggest obstacles to growth and success. Absence of inspirational and effective leadership and under capitalization are among those obstacles. Our new leadership is now in place and is approaching this challenge with a level of emotional energy not felt in some time. We are ready to economically contribute to our own success. This ten million dollar award puts us over the top to achieve our goal of a downtown worthy of All American City status.

We are ready……

9) OTHER (WEB LINKS)

1.5 CITY OF COHOES

http://www.cohoes.com/

1.6 COHOES BOULEVARD BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA NOMINATION STUDY

http://docs.dos.ny.gov/opd/boa/Cohoes%20Blvd_BOA.pdf

1.7 NEWS & MEDIA

"Historic renovation, addition planned for Hotel Cohoes"
http://www.troyrecord.com/article/TR/20160515/NEWS/160519799

"Cohoes code rewritten to fight blight"
http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Cohoes-code-rewritten-to-fight-blight-7952511.php

Appendix A

Downtown Cohoes
at the Confluence

The *Downtown Revitalization Initiative* comes at a time when Cohoes is on the cusp of transformation.

Cohoes can trace its historic success to a strategic location at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, and the Champlain and Erie Canals. In recent years, a combination of careful planning and redevelopment success has created a new type of confluence in Cohoes that makes our community perfectly suited for the DRI program: the confluence of livability, opportunity, and stewardship.

Achieving LIVABILITY is the new driver of growth & prosperity

Building a great downtown with a sense of place is essential to creating a strong and resilient economy. In fact, quality of life has become one of the biggest drivers of local economic growth. Communities that invest in creating a quality downtown are most successful at attracting talented workers and the companies who employ them. Cohoes' downtown has everything necessary to be a vibrant heart of one of the region's most livable cities: historic character, walkability, a diversity of housing options, public spaces, cultural attractions, and transit amenities.

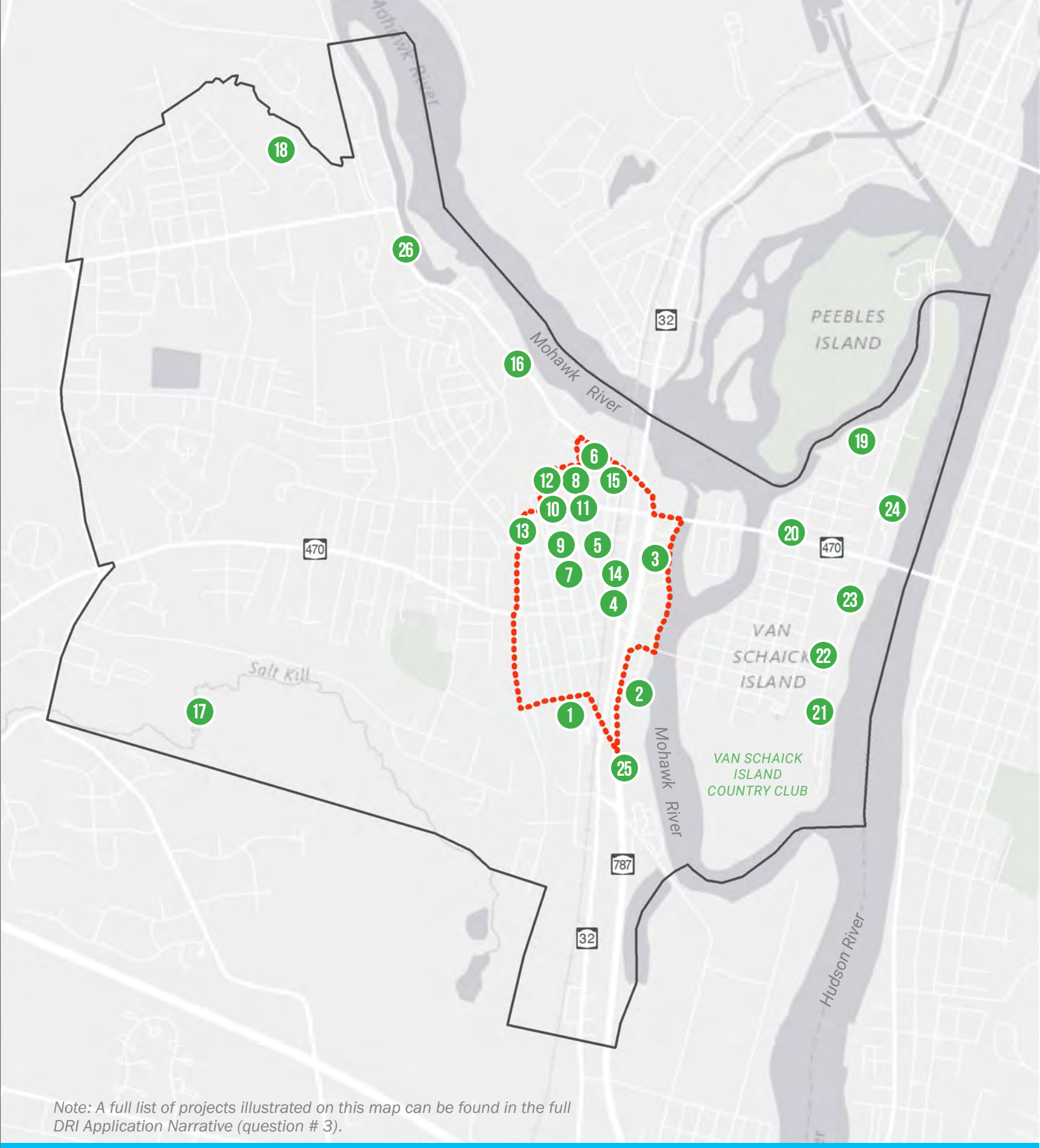
Creating regional economic OPPORTUNITY through downtown revitalization

Cohoes is located in a growing region that is evolving and moving towards high technology, health, and education sectors. Workers in these industries are seeking to live in a community with open space, trails, historic character, shopping opportunities, safety, and housing choice. Cohoes has spent the last decade investing in these quality of life factors and is now attracting young professionals, families and retirees to the region.

Leveraging development through successful STEWARDSHIP of public resources

Cohoes has long been a steward of state and federal grant resources, leveraging grants and other funds to catalyze private sector investment. This initiative will capitalize on almost two decades of planning in Cohoes. Our history and track record handling public investment ensures we will optimize future public investment.

> "Quality-of-life factors can explain roughly a third of new-business formations across the country..."
>
> Dan White
> Senior Economist, Moody's Analytics



Note: A full list of projects illustrated on this map can be found in the full DRI Application Narrative (question # 3).

Opportunity & Investment

Downtown Cohoes and surrounding areas have experienced significant investment in recent years, helping to catalyze future revitalization opportunities.

26
Projects

Recent & Future Investments | Cohoes is Ready

Recent investments paired with current redevelopment opportunities have the potential to benefit the entire region by providing a high quality place for people to live, work and play. The City's new leadership is committed to making Downtown revitalization their highest priority, dedicating approximately $1 million in local funds that will leverage the Downtown Revitalization Initiative to catalyze additional public and private investment. Below are highlights from the Opportunity & Investment Map on Page 2 showing examples of recent, ongoing, and future investment in downtown Cohoes.

5 **Cohoes Library Building |** The City is partnering with a local business owner to modernize and redevelop the building to grow that business.

9 **Cohoes Hotel |** This building is currently undergoing renovation and redevelopment, including the of adjacent parking lot, as 26 market rate apartments and commercial uses on the first floor.

10 **Canal Square |** This city-owned outdoor music and market venue is in the heart of downtown. The Music Hall is on the same block. The City is currently requesting proposals to update and landscape the park.

11 **Bus Rapid Transit Station |** This location was recenty selected for a new BRT station/route, providing key links to Troy and Albany.

12 **Cohoes Music Hall |** In partnership with the Palace Performing Arts Center, the City is supporting a major renovation and upgrade, which will bring more than 40,000 people to downtown Cohoes.

15 **Warehouse 71 |** Former warehouse recently redeveloped with 22 market rate apartments.

26 **Cohoes Falls & Falls View Park |** The City has taken over the management Falls View Park and will integrate its offerings into the broader downtown entertainment plan.

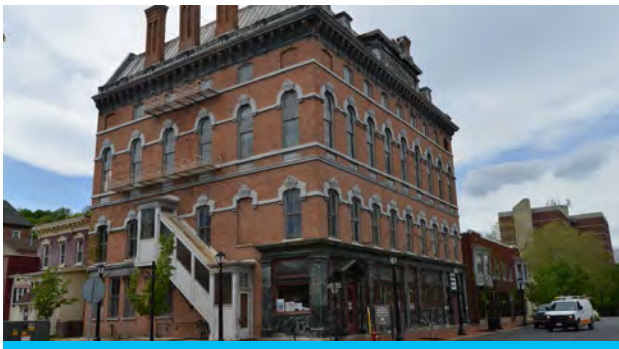
Why Cohoes?

A new mindset in City Hall has brought about a cultural shift in our thinking and approach to development and has generated a renewed ambition and enthusiasm to create a first class Downtown. A $10 million investment, strategically managed, will tip the scales in Cohoes and create high impact, highly visible results.

We have created the demand. We have fostered the political will and build local capacity. Now is the time to realize the true potential of our Downtown core. Cohoes is ready to hit the ground running. We look forward to the opportunity to work with our partners and the State of New York through this exciting initiative to achieve our goals for a sustainable and livable Downtown and truly become an All American City. **Downtown Cohoes has the will and the skill. We are ready.**

9. Cohoes Hotel

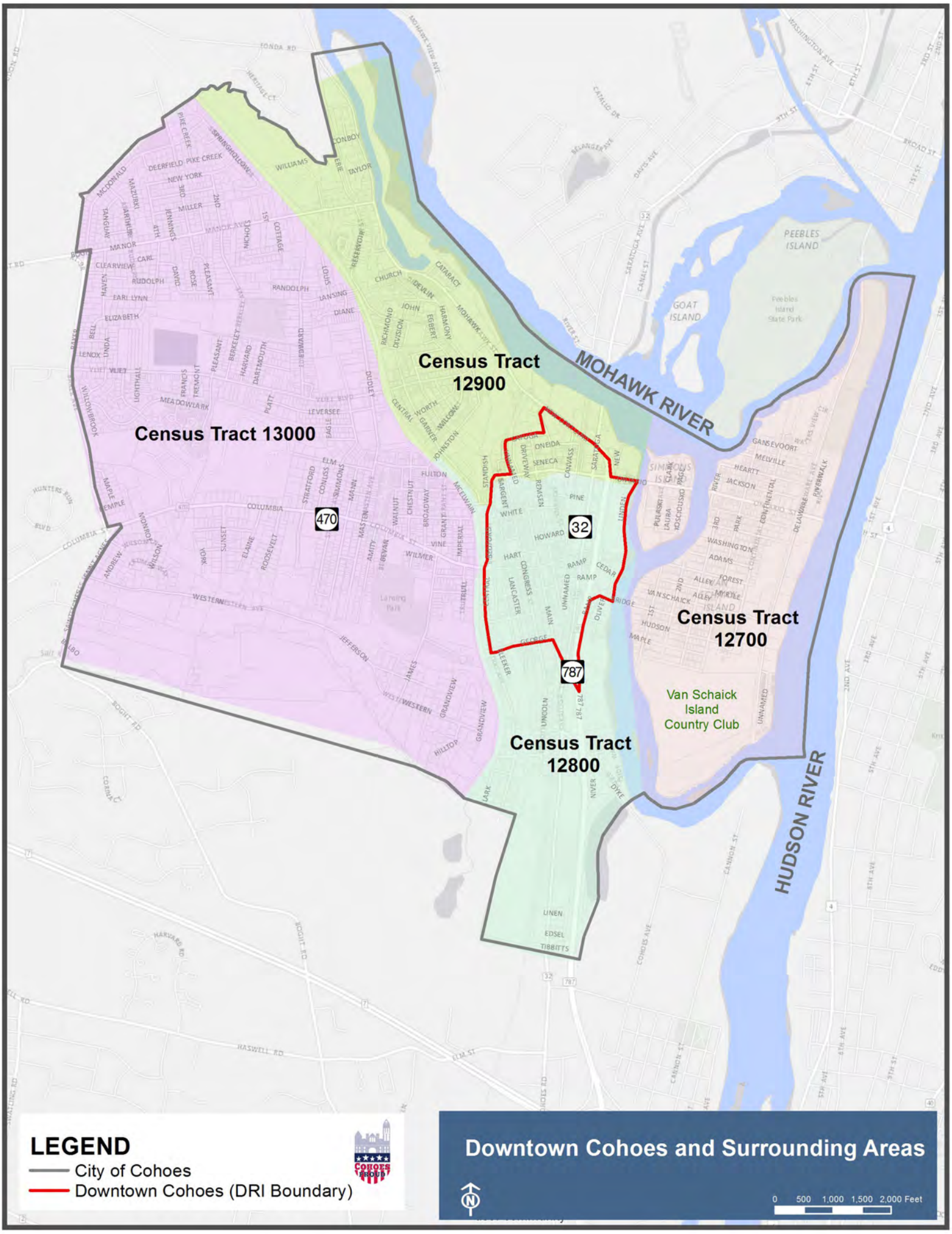
10. Canal Square



12. Cohoes Music Hall

26. Cohoes Falls

Appendix B


Census Tract 13000
Census Tract 12900
Census Tract 12800
Census Tract 12700
MOHAWK RIVER
HUDSON RIVER
PEEBLES ISLAND
GOAT ISLAND
SIMMONS ISLAND
Van Schaick Island Country Club
470
32
787
LEGEND
City of Cohoes
Downtown Cohoes (DRI Boundary)
Downtown Cohoes and Surrounding Areas
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Appendix C

Appendix C: Current Photos

1. Existing Price Chopper

The Price Chopper is exploring new sites. The LDC has plans to acquire the existing site for affordable housing. A developer has been identified

2. City Property/Future DPW Site

Planning is underway to move the DPW facility from its current location to this site, opening up key waterfront property for a mixed-use development with public access to river. A developer has been identified.

3. St. Michaels Site

A developer is currently assembling parcels to construct a mixed-use project

4. City Lofts Phase I Building #2

The site for additional market rate housing adjacent to our downtown core.

5. Cohoes Library

With the modernization and relocation of the library to a more central location, this building provides an excellent opportunity for redevelopment and new downtown business activity and property tax revenue. The City is currently negotiating with a local business to acquire historic building to expand their business.

6. Cohoes Commons

While major renovations have been made to this office facility there is still ample room for additional commercial development on a major thoroughfare in downtown Cohoes. This building contains 55,000 square feet of available office/commercial space.

7. Sargent/White Street

The City is finalizing a contract with a developer, in partnership with the LDC. The project will include 100 mixed income rental units with a set-aside for Autistic adults ready for independent living and support services provided by Living Resources. White Street is a mixed-use component with first floor commercial space.

8. First Niagara

The property owner is currently in negotiations with a developer to repurpose a building on the site into a mixed-use commercial space.

9. Cohoes Hotel

This property is under contract with developer and our LDC. The project will restore the existing historic structure and construct an addition with 26 units of market rate apartments and first floor commercial space.

9. Remsen Street Site

Recently acquired the top three floors will be converted to rental units. Property is next to the Cohoes Hotel.

10. Canal Square

This City owned outdoor music and market venue is in the heart of downtown. The Square is on the same block as our Music Hall. The City is currently requesting proposals to update and landscape the park..

11. Bus Rapid Transit- Remsen Street

This site was recently selected for new BRT Station, with associated routes linking Downtown Cohoes' entertainment and business district to key stops in Troy and Albany.

12. Cohoes Music Hall

This is the fourth oldest operating music hall in America. The City has negotiated a new management agreement with the Palace Performing Arts Center to secure a diverse slate of entertainment offerings. Activity is projected to increase from 20 shows to 120 per year and bring an estimated 40,000 people to downtown throughout the season.

13. Sargent/White Street Project

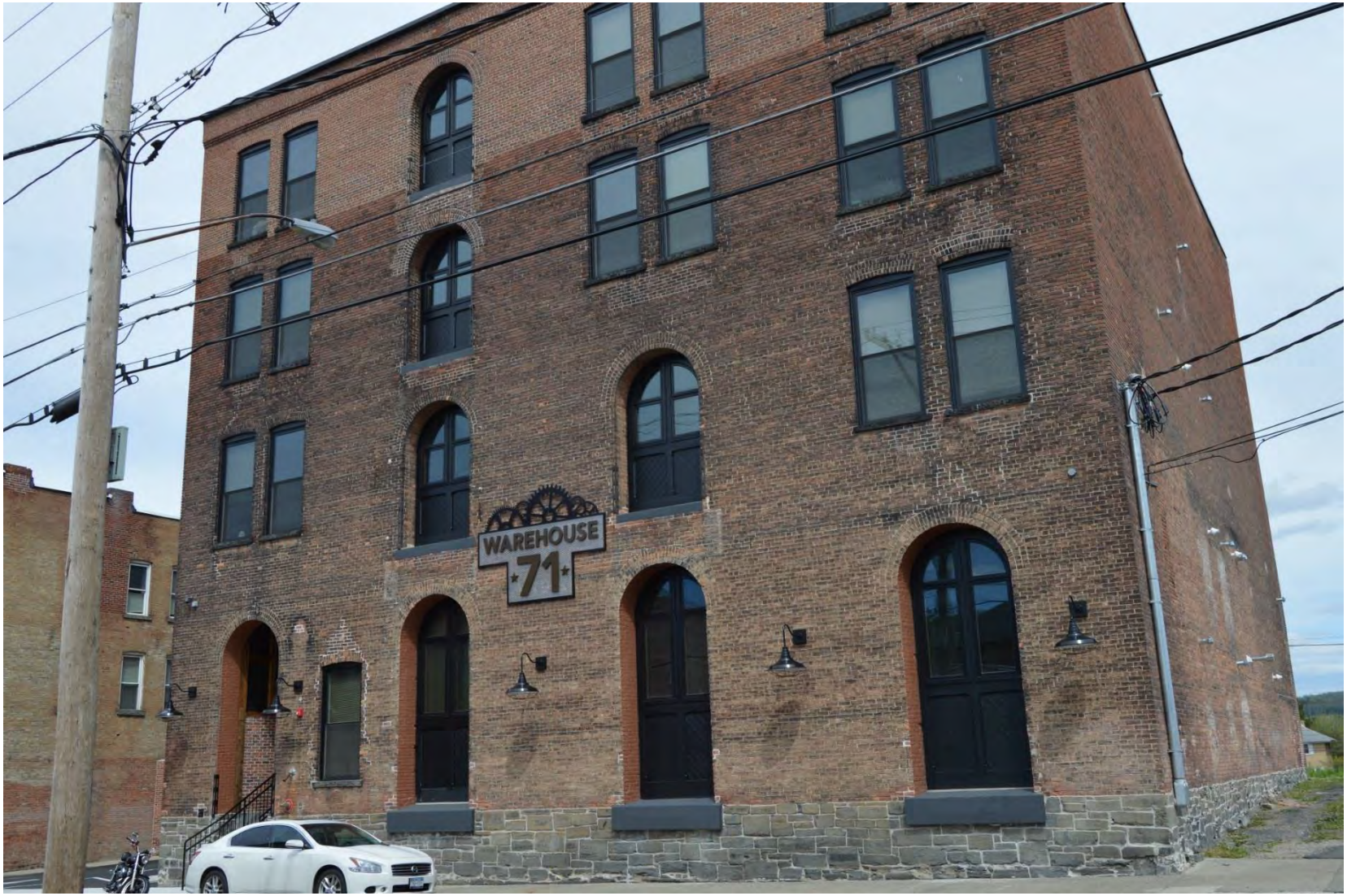
Part of the Sargent Street Project. First floor commercial and three floors of mixed income rentals. Located in downtown core.

14. City Lofts Phase I

New market rate housing adjacent to our downtown core.

15. Warehouse 71

Former warehouse redeveloped into new marked rate housing in our downtown by local developer.



16. Lofts at Harmony Mills (Phases I – IV)

Paving the way for residential development the Harmony mills apartments provide market rate residential units. At the northern gateway to our downtown.

17. Lexington Hills

400 Luxury Apartments underway on the western border of Cohoes. Phase I of III completed.

18. Lionheart

This project includes 72 newly constructed affordable rentals, completed in 2015.

19. Waterview Apartments

This project includes 222 market rate luxury apartments on the Mohawk River, completed in 2012.

20. Bus Rapid Transit- Ontario Street

BRT will provide a critical transit link between Downtown Cohoes and surrounding job markets (linked to #11 above).

21. Admirals Walk

This project includes a mix of high end owner occupied and rental condominiums located on the Hudson River. 74 Units were completed 2015. 40 additional units are underway.

22. Captain’s Lookout

This project includes 140 market rate apartments on the Hudson River, currently under construction.

23. City Lofts Phase II site

This project includes 140 market rate apartments on the Hudson River, currently under construction.

24. Riverwalk Apartments

This project includes 176 market rate apartments on Hudson River, complete in 1999..

25. Juncta Site

The IDA under contract with a developer to acquire and construct new full service grocery store and three pads for a bank and food service vendors. Property sits along State Route 787 at the City's southern gateway.

25. Juncta

Another view of parcel on the southern gateway to the City will be the site of a major redevelopment effort.

26. Falls View Park

The City has taken over management of Cohoes Falls Park and will integrate its offerings into the broader downtown entertainment plan.

Other Projects

Remsen Street

With the assistance of the IDA and the LDC, the City has begun a landscape design initiative.

Mohawk Street

Developable waterfront property on the border of the downtown core.

DPW Site (existing)

Upon relocating the DPW, this valuable waterfront location will be developed as a mixed use project with public access to the river.

DPW Site (existing)

Another view of the current City DPW site, which will be redeveloped.

Letters of Support

CITY OF COHOES

SHAWN M. MORSE
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Ph.: 518-233-2119
Fax: 518-233-2159

97 Mohawk Street
Cohoes, New York 12047

May 27, 2016

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

As Mayor of the great City of Cohoes, New York, but more importantly as a lifelong Cohoesier who bore witness to the rise and fall of our historic mill town, I write this letter of support for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative with a passion not harnessed in many years.

As I write this letter, I can't help but to think back to my childhood growing up in a bustling community. Where the sounds of textile mills echoed throughout the community, merchants lined the busy streets of our downtown and the sense of pride made us an All-American City. Fast forward 40 years, and like most mill towns, Cohoes has seen its share of struggles, the once beautiful landscape has slowly crumbled, the merchants disappeared, and the sense of pride has diminished.

Being a newly elected Mayor, I am committed to the resurgence of our great City. As I examined our community, it became apparent to me that Cohoes did not need to be reinvented, simply, we needed a kick start. With that said, and the help of an excellent community-based team and dedicated staff, we rebranded our slogan and set our goals.

Today, we are known as "Cohoes Proud" and our goal is clear, recapture the pride that once made us an All-American City. With that said, it's with great enthusiasm that I say we are well on the way. We have reenergized our citizens who proudly display "Cohoes Proud" on everything from social media, to shirts, hats, and bumper stickers.

I always say, "Enthusiasm is not taught it is caught and here in Cohoes it is contagious."

In closing, I would like to share my thoughts and a few of our achievements over the first four months of my administration. First, and most importantly, we believe! We believe that an old mill town can rise from the ashes like the great Phoenix, and be the catalyst for all to follow. As proof, we have put our resources where our mouth is and dedicated a million dollars towards the rebirth of our city. We have entered into municipal agreements with three different counties to help with everything from fire protection, drinking water, and DPW services. We have partnered with private investors that will generate over 40 million dollars in development within our community with 15 million dollars in the heart of our downtown. We joined hands with one of the capital region's most respected entertainment venue, the Palace Theater, to operate the Cohoes Music Hall, the fourth oldest active music hall in the country with a projected draw of 40,000 visitors a year to downtown Cohoes. We are currently working with the Albany County Landbank as well as the Local IDA and LDC to transform neighborhoods, and remove blight for our City.

Cohoes is on the rebound. We have a plan, we understand how to execute it, and we are in the best position to capitalize on the 10 million dollars. It is equally important that the winner of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative understands how to build on the funding so that it not only changes the community who receives it but opens opportunities for the entire region. Cohoes is the best City to do that.

Sincerely,

Shawn Morse
Mayor

OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
97 Mohawk Street
Cohoes, New York
12047-2897

Director, Michael Jacobson
Phone: (518) 233-2117
Fax: (518) 233-2168
E-mail: MJacobson@ci.cohoes.ny.us

City of Cohoes

May 18, 2016

Hon. Mayor Morse

Re: Capital Region Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Mayor Morse:

The City of Cohoes has filed its intent to apply for The Downtown Revitalization Initiative which will award $10 million to 10 communities in New York. The program emphasizes using investments to reinforce and secure additional public and private investments in our downtown.

I would ask the Common Council to pass a resolution in support of the City of Cohoes applying for the DRI at the next Council meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Jacobson
Director Economic & Community Development

RESOLUTION NO. 36 FOR THE YEAR 2016

Members of the Common Council William J. Smith, Donald T. Russell, Christopher M. Briggs, William B. McCarthy, Stephen A. Napier, Jr. and Randy S. Koniowka, ask for unanimous consent for the introduction and passage of the following Resolution:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF COHOES TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING PURSUANT TO NEW YORK STATE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS' DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE.

WHEREAS, State funding is available through New York State Regional Economic Development Council for the development of downtown core; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cohoes is eligible to apply for such funding; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has determined that this program supports the City's efforts to revitalize the downtown core;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Common Council supports the City of Cohoes in its application for this funding; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to execute any application, agreements or other documents in connection with the application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved as to form this 24th day of May 2016.

Brian S. Kremer
Corporation Counsel

Engrossed and signed by the President of the Common Council and attested by the Clerk of the Common Council this 24 day of May 2016.

Clerk

President

I hereby approve the foregoing Resolution of the Common Council.

May 24, 2016
Date

Mayor of the City of Cohoes, New York

CHOOSE
COHOES

Donald Russell
President
Spindles on Remsen
241 Remsen Street
Cohoes, NY 12047

Dear Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee,

On behalf of "Choose Cohoes," our downtown business owner's membership association enthusiastically supports our cities application for this transformational award. With our new Mayor and city council coupled with a renewed commitment and energy to our downtown core, the timing has never been better to put this award to visibly good use. Our Cohoes spirit and sense of hope has never been higher as we are beginning to see years of disinvestment turn around as evidenced by our most recent announcements and significant interest from developers and new businesses taking a new look at what our wonderful city has to offer.

With the rehabilitation of the Cohoes Hotel and its expansion to the Palace Theaters management agreement of our Cohoes Music Hall, signs of real life are beginning to take shape. The spirit of our residents is high as indicated by their kind words of support both in person and by way of social media.

There is no question in our minds that a ten million dollar award will leverage tens of millions more of private and public dollars and truly make a visible difference in our goal to be the downtown of choice in the capital district.

Sincerely,

Don Russell
President
Choose Cohoes
Owner
Spindles on Remsen

CITY OF COHOES

May 26, 2016

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

This letter is provided as evidence of our strong support of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative application for funds to assist with the rebirth of the City of Cohoes' historic downtown core.

As a newly elected Council coupled with a newly elected Mayor, our joint goal is to foster an improved economic and residential climate downtown while preserving the area's existing commercial base and character.

The timing of this award has come when Cohoes is on the brink of transformation. With the rehabilitation of the Cohoes Hotel and the partnership with the Palace Theatre to manage our Historic Music Hall, we are just starting to take shape. The enthusiasm around town with just these two achievements alone is truly inspiring and one that drives us to keep moving forward.

There is no doubt that this award can help make our goal a reality and allow us to be the downtown of choice in the capital district.

Sincerely,

Chris Briggs
Common Council President

Ralph Signoracci, Chairman

97 Mohawk Street
Cohoes, New York
12047-2897

Phone: (518) 233-2153
Fax: (518) 237-2168
Email: rsignoracci@ci.cohoes.ny.us

CITY OF COHOES INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

May 31, 2016

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

On behalf of the City of Cohoes' Industrial Development Agency, this letter is provided as evidence of my strong support of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative application for funds to assist with the rebirth of the city's historic downtown.

Seeing that our agency's mission is to encourage economic development and assist in the retention of existing jobs and the creation and attraction of new ones, there is no better time than now to put this award to good use. The synergy that is being put forth from various corporations, agencies and elected officials to revive this City is unyielding.

With a plan in place and our city on the rebound, I urge you to consider the City of Cohoes' application to capitalize on the 10 million dollars to help make our historical downtown the choice for all to work, live and play in the capital district.

Sincerely,

Ralph Signoracci
Chair, Cohoes IDA

Cohoes Local Development Corporation
97 Mohawk Street
P.O. Box 753
Cohoes, NY 12047
Phone: (518) 233-2117
Fax: (518) 233-2168

May 31, 2016

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Downtown Revitalization Initiative Selection Committee:

I am writing to ask you to strongly consider the City of Cohoes' application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

The mission of the Cohoes Local Development Corporation is to stimulate economic development in the City of Cohoes. This award will help us to achieve our commitment by promoting economic sufficiency, retain and build industry and commerce, create jobs and improve economic opportunities for local residents and neighboring communities.

This award comes when our city is just starting to see a resurgence of our historical downtown, with rebirth of the Cohoes Hotel and the Cohoes Music Hall. The spirit and sense of hope is shining through once again not only with the residential climate but also with new investors from near and far.

Your consideration and support of the City of Cohoes' application is truly appreciated in hopes to make Cohoes a great city once again.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Hildreth

Barbara Hildreth
Chair, Local Development Corporation