

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

City of Beacon – Downtown Revitalization Initiative (Round II) Application

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Mid-Hudson Region

Municipality Name: City of Beacon

Downtown Name: Downtown Beacon

County: Dutchess County

Vision for Downtown. Provide a brief statement of the municipality’s vision for downtown revitalization.

The City of Beacon envisions a vibrant waterfront community with an abundance of recreational activities, multimodal transportation, and mixed-use development that links to the City’s Main Street’s commercial district along Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue.

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

The City of Beacon is ideally suited to be nominated for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award for several key reasons. Firstly, the City recently completed a Comprehensive Plan (2017) that was led by a Steering Committee comprised of City staff, civic representatives, and other stakeholders. This plan incorporates strong community input and advocates for continued waterfront and train station area revitalization with multi-modal transportation connectivity to the City’s bustling Main Street commercial district, which is over one mile long.

The City’s vision is threefold: to create a destination that serves as a “gateway” to Beacon, to reclaim the riverfront, and to link the riverfront to Downtown Beacon. This Plan builds upon the City’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan as well as upon the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), the latter of which was amended in 2011 and approved by the Secretary of State as well and by the United States Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The updated Comprehensive Plan has also been informed by various other studies and reports, including traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, and water capacity and stormwater management studies.

Secondly, Beacon is in the midst of a renaissance. According to US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, since 2000, the homeowner vacancy rate in the City has remained very low, falling below one percent in 2014. Furthermore, the City has witnessed a steady gain in housing development since 2000. In 2015, Beacon was once again named a “Top Town,” and one of the best places to live in the Hudson Valley. Articles in a variety of publications extol the City’s many attributes, which include: transportation access, recreational activities, arts and cultural programming, and relative affordability.

Trends in the composition of retailers and revenues mirror the City’s growth and indicate that the City’s Main Street has become reenergized in recent years, with a variety of businesses opening their doors, including restaurants, eclectic shops, and galleries. The City’s Main Street is presently dominated by small, independent businesses. In particular, Beacon is quickly becoming a prime destination for art lovers. This is largely due to the arrival of Dia Center for the Arts, which made a more than \$25-million investment in the adaptive reuse of the

City's defunct Nabisco box factory. The result, Dia: Beacon, is a contemporary art museum that opened in 2003 and attracts thousands of visitors from around the world annually.

Dia: Beacon is located in the City's Harbor Management Area, along with several other key land uses that have played a vital role in Beacon's revitalization, including: Denning's Point State Park, The Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, Newburg-Beacon Ferry, Beacon Sloop Club, the Hudson River Greenway Trail, Long Dock, Riverfront Park, George Traskas' Beacon Point Public Art Work, and Metro-North Railroad Station. In recent year, the focus on the City's waterfront has emphasized preservation, water-dependent and water-enhanced uses, and mixed-use development.

The City of Beacon boasts several other important assets, such as scenic beauty, strong administrative leadership, a history of community support, and an ideal location. A hub on the Metro-North Hudson line, the City's riverfront station also provides connecting service to the restored Beacon-Newburg Ferry, which offers an alternative connection for Orange County commuters, and buses to Stewart International Airport, which is only 5 miles away. Beacon is also only 60 miles north of New York City (NYC), making it accessible to commuters and tourists alike and increasing its appeal to many NYC residents looking to relocate. Combined, environmental upgrades, infrastructure improvements, a variety of new businesses, and solid planning that incorporates responsible policies have positioned Beacon for even greater growth and prosperity.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the DRI program description.

- 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 concentrated 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. Attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood.**

The proposed target neighborhood encompasses the City of Beacon's waterfront to the southern tier on Main Street along Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue. This project is consistent with the City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan, which calls for connecting "the surrounding area to the station and waterfront area by creating an environment that accommodates the automobile and also improves access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of all abilities and ages." Thus, while the project anchor area will be the waterfront and train station, we will maintain a strong focus on enhancing linkages between this area and Main Street. Given that much of the revitalization of the City has been transit-based, connectivity is already a priority, including efforts to reduce vehicular traffic by focusing on various alternative modes of transportation, such as with the revitalization of the greenways along the banks of the Hudson complete with bike paths.

The limits of the Waterfront Revitalization Area reflect boundary criteria established by New York State, in accordance with Federal Coastal Zone Management requirements. The train station and waterfront area has long been seen by local, county, and regional planners as an ideal opportunity for growth that will enhance the quality of life, improve the transportation network, and contribute to the economic health of Beacon and the surrounding region. The City's riverfront is approximately three miles long and extends just north of the Beacon-Newburg Bridge to the southern tip of Denning's Point.

The portion of Beacon within the waterfront revitalization boundary includes three major interrelated areas: The Hudson Riverfront, the Fishkill Creek and Estuary, and the steep hillsides overlooking both the river and the creek. Each of the City's waterfront districts promotes positive development and revitalization in a manner consistent with the City's LWRP. The districts permit types and intensities of uses compatible with each districts' waterfront location as well as surrounding land uses to ensure high environmental, safety, and aesthetic standards.

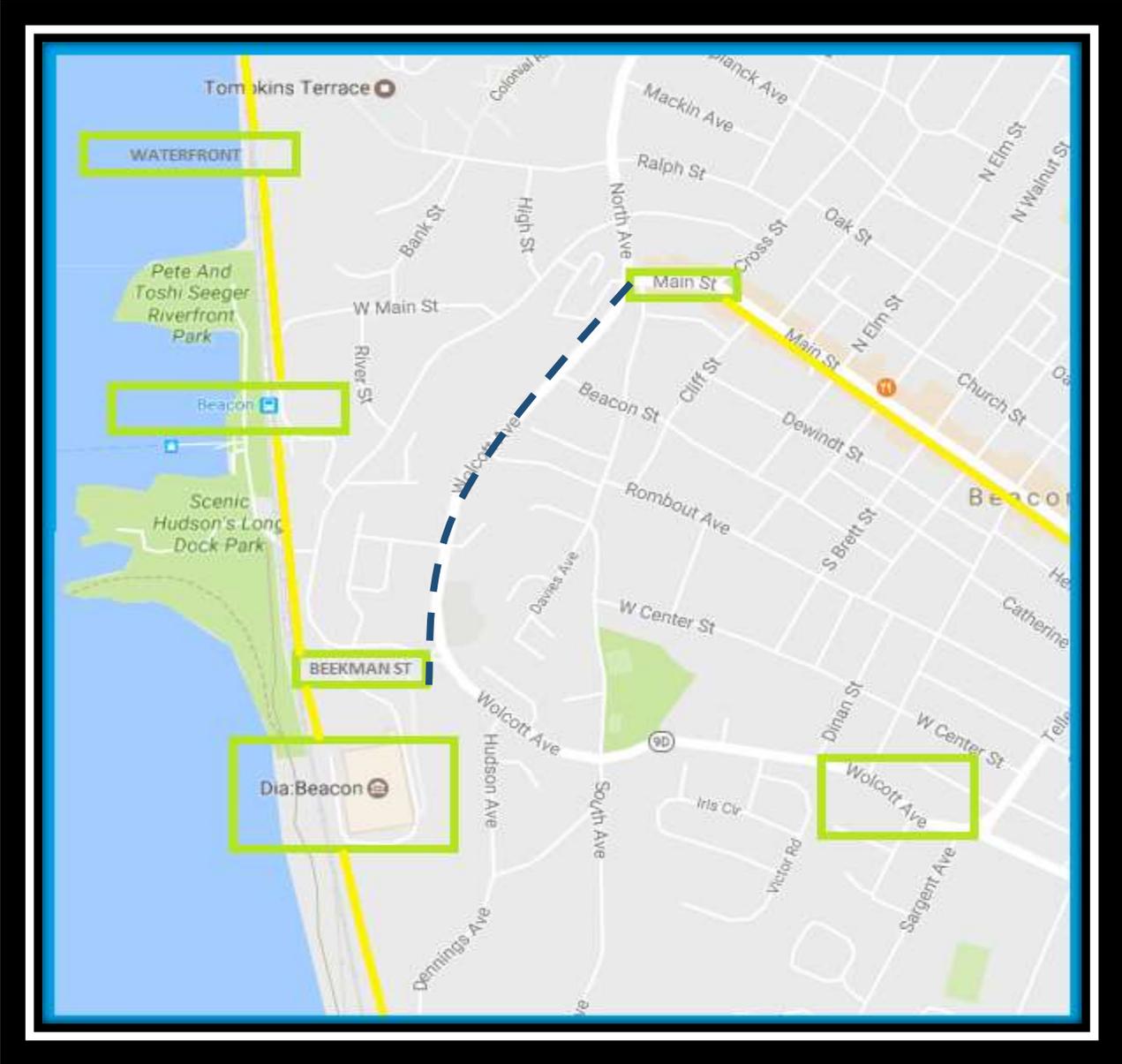
Regulations promote the protection of natural resources at the water's edge, while providing for development commensurate with the public services and facilities in the area. For instance, while the plan advocates for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses consistent with sustainable practices by minimizing development within the City's 100-year floodplain, it also encourages commercial development in a mixed-use environment within designated areas. Throughout, the Plan focuses on preservation, architectural integrity, the incorporation of pedestrian amenities, and retail/services that are related to their unique location near the waterfront—so as not to compete with existing commercial areas in the central business district on Main Street.

A large part of the disconnect between Main Street and the waterfront was created by the restructuring of streets during urban renewal in the 1960s, which resulted in the fragmentation of the City's neighborhoods. The overarching goal of the current project is to establish strong land-use synergies between the waterfront/train station and Main Street through the implementation of transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly solutions. The transitional area between both key locations is known as the "L Linkage District," and it was created in 2013 to implement the general intent of the Linkages Plan developed by the City.

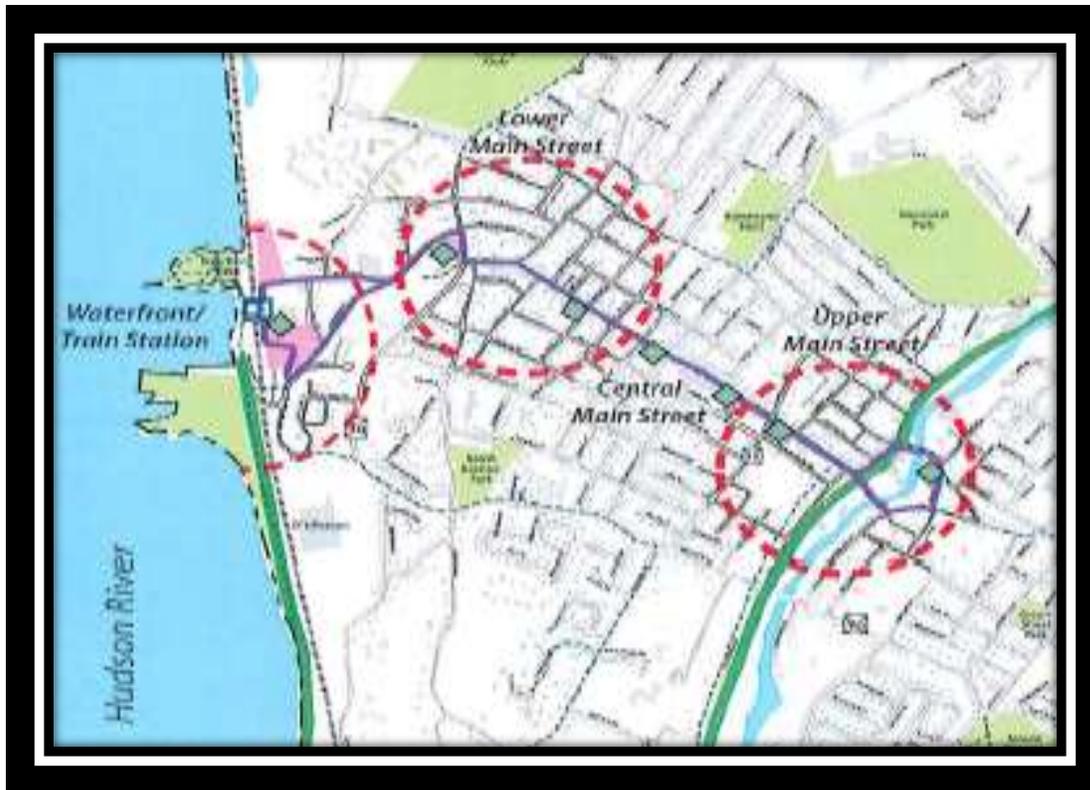
Regulations encourage the creation of "a vibrant, economically successful, walkable, and environmentally sustainable connection between Beacon's Central Business District and the train station and riverfront." Some of the recommendations that address improved accessibility between these two areas of the City include: improving the streetscape between Main Street and the train station; improving connections across train tracks to the waterfront area; supporting development of the Beacon Line as a ped-bike path; and establishing a multi-use bridge that would provide direct access to the Hudson River waterfront, Denning's Point State Park, Madam Brett Park and Trail, Mount Beacon, Hudson Highlands Trail system, the Fishkill Creek Greenway, and the central business district. Presently, pedestrian links from the waterfront to the Main Street corridor and downtown business area are not strong given such challenges as a significant change in elevation.

In addition to encouraging appropriate development which will improve conceptual and physical connections between Main Street and the waterfront/train station along Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue, this project will: enhance the established character of the neighborhood, protect and preserve sensitive ecological areas, improve safety, and promote economic growth.

Below, please see map of project area, linking the waterfront district, including the train station and Dia: Beacon, to the Main Street Commercial District via Beekman Street and Walcott Avenue (as represented by the dotted blue line). Proposed improvements include: wayfinding signage, streetscaping, traffic calming features, lighting, roadway improvements, new public access infrastructure, façade improvements, a jitney service, new bicycle facilities and waterfront recreation improvements and vacant/underutilized site preparation to attract private redevelopment. Together, these elements will greatly benefit all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and those using public transportation. More importantly, it is expected that these improvements will attract new businesses and enhance the City's economy. The second map is a general map of the entire downtown area with the Main Street district and waterfront train station area delineated.



Map Highlighting Intended Areas of DRI Improvements



Map Delineating the Areas of the Downtown (Main Street and Waterfront)

- 2) Catchment area. 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 destination.**

The City of Beacon’s Waterfront Revitalization Area encompasses nearly one-fourth of the City’s total area. The catchment area for this project is diverse and of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown because it is strategically located across residential neighborhoods, a major transportation hub, parks/recreational facilities, and other amenities. The catchment area is compact enough to be walkable, but big enough to incorporate diverse services and attributes. The proposed project seeks to establish broader links to the many popular shops, galleries, and restaurants on Main Street by designing and implementing accessibility improvements that will connect the waterfront to Main Street along Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue and potentially a jitney to and from the two centers of place (i.e., waterfront/train station and Main Street). This level of accessibility reflects Beacon’s evolving identity as a tourist destination and regional center, and it is intended to further enhance the individual character of each respective area by fostering greater connectivity.

In regards to its regional role, The City’s 2017 Comprehensive Plan is in harmony with the Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area, produced by the Regional Plan Association for the New York Metropolitan Area in 1996—particularly in that it promotes local improvements in public transportation and economic development with a focus on reinforcing the link between two vital neighborhoods (i.e., the waterfront and Main Street) that have each contributed in unique ways to Beacon’s revitalization. The

focus of this project is to improve multimodal transportation and pedestrian access between both areas so as to establish greater cohesion and stimulate continued economic development.

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

Once known for its hat-making, brick, and carton factories, Beacon is becoming a model for transit-oriented brownfields redevelopment and adaptive reuse of vacant structures. Strategic and balanced investment in Beacon has resulted in new housing, infrastructure improvements, transit-oriented solutions, strong preservation goals, and a diverse variety of new businesses. The City's economic redevelopment strategy entails a distinct synergy of an arts revival with effective multimodal transportation.

As stated above, the arrival of Dia: Beacon helped identify the City as an up-and-coming arts community, precipitating the creation of artist studios and the arrival of new galleries on Main Street. According to a Center for Creative Community Development study supported by a research grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Service, approximately 95% of visitors who come to Dia: Beacon are from outside Dutchess County. These "nonlocal" visitors (an estimated 65,000 per year) bring money, through their local expenditures, into the Dutchess County economy that most likely would otherwise have been spent in their own county. Estimates of average spending by each nonlocal visitor were based upon an extensive national survey by Americans for the Arts of expenditures made by nonlocal visitors on the day of attendance to a cultural site or event. The total economic impact of Dia: Beacon was estimated to be approximately \$12,460,337 annually. The total impact in terms of local employment is approximately 168 jobs.

Over the past few years, Beacon's unused and abandoned factories, once eyesores in the community and symbols of disinvestment, have been converted into loft apartments, and new shops have opened on Main Street to support the City's economy. Much of the investment along Main Street has involved the renovation of existing structures, preserving the charm and character of the neighborhood. Key to the revival of the City has been investments in transportation: i.e., the redevelopment of the commuter rail station and the launch of a new ferry service. As the third most northern stop on MTA Metro-North Railroad's Hudson Line, for years Beacon was unable to attract residents and visitors. However, in 2004, Metro-North and the City completed a \$20 million project that modernized the rail station and added parking. Serving more than 2,000 rail customers a day, the new station boasts beautifully landscaped walkways and drop off points, well-lit stairs, and adjoining road improvements.

Additionally, a ferry service connecting Newburgh and other west-of-Hudson towns to the Beacon train station now operates on weekdays, offering convenient trips for commuters traveling from west of the Hudson into New York City and easing congestion on the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge. Other multi-modal transportation improvements are underway. For instance, the seasonal weekend trolley, sponsored by the Dutchess County Division of Mass Transit, recently resumed, connecting the train station to the DIA: Beacon and the City's Main Street, and, thereby, further supporting economic revitalization and alleviating congestion on City streets. The service continues through the end of October. In addition, City officials and Metro-North have sponsored a pilot car-sharing program using hybrid vehicles. Located at the station, the Zipcar can be used by visitors to reach locations throughout Beacon and by residents who only occasionally need a vehicle. This improvement has also reduced local road congestion.

This overall focus has turned the station into a gateway to the City for both travelers and residents, and it has helped spawn waterfront development with a focus on creating a safer and more convenient transition between

the waterfront and the City's Main Street commercial district. Scenic Hudson, which is dedicated to preserving land and farms and creating parks that connect people with the Hudson River, has also played a central role in the revitalization of the City's waterfront. Scenic Hudson recognized in Beacon a unique combination of location, scenic beauty, and strong local elected leadership and began investing collaboratively in the City over a decade ago, purchasing more than 2,000 acres of Hudson Highlands land, located in the city and nearby East Fishkill, and creating a trailhead within the city limits to enable people to enjoy recreational and tourist activities in this wilderness.

In the 1990s, Scenic Hudson protected 234 acres on the slope and crest of historic Mount Beacon and created Mount Beacon Park. The land had been the site of an incline railroad in the early part of the 20th century. The creation of a stairway along the route of the railroad and interpretive signs has made this a popular tourist destination. Scenic Hudson also worked with the City to create Madam Brett Park along Fishkill Creek, an important Hudson River tributary.

Scenic Hudson went on to purchase several contaminated waterfront parcels, collectively known as Long Dock Beacon, in order to conduct initial remediation of contamination and lay the groundwork for their redevelopment. This \$8.5-million project turned 16 acres of this former industrial site into Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park. Exciting new amenities include a kayak pavilion, restored wetlands and a renovated historic barn, the home of Scenic Hudson's River Center for arts and environmental programs. The park also provides an "outdoor classroom" for City schools and connects people to Hudson River and Highlands vistas. Scenic Hudson's Peter Jay Sharp Park, located at Long Dock's tip, features Beacon Point, a shoreline installation by renowned artist George Trakas.

Transit and waterfront improvements have impacted development throughout the City. According to the City of Beacon's Building Department, one new building has been constructed—The Inn and Spa at Beacon at 151 Main—and two more have been approved since 2007. There were 30 significant building permits issued between 2007 and 2016 for Main Street properties alone, all of which were renovations ranging from several thousand dollars of work to approximately one million dollars invested. The Building Department estimates that more than half of the buildings on Main Street have been renovated within the last decade.

In total, more than 400 apartments and condominiums overlooking the Hudson River, atop Main Street businesses and filling repurposed industrial buildings have been approved for construction in Beacon, with many more under review by the City's Planning Board. As many as 100 new units, many of them rentals, have been completed.

A summary of the largest approved developments includes:

- The Lofts at Beacon, a conversion of several former textile buildings, adding 114 live/work studio apartments on Front Street between Route 52 and Fishkill Creek.
- 248 Tioronda, including 100 market-rate units along Fishkill Creek, several blocks south of Main Street.
- The Roundhouse complex, which opened in 2012 in the heart of Beacon's business district and includes a restaurant, hotel and events center, will add 78 units creek-side.
- Two new developments adding 70 and 50 units, respectively, on land near the Beacon train station overlooking the Hudson River.
- The former St. Francis Hospital site on Hastings Drive for conversion to 68 affordable senior housing units.

Additionally, several smaller developments, ranging from a handful of apartments to as many as 50 units, are in the City's pipeline. The Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, a nonprofit think tank, released its Annual Housing Report, which indicated that the regional housing market has shown signs of continued improvement.

There is a great deal of future investment potential in Beacon, and we are very confident that we will be able to capitalize on and catalyze on future private and public investment in the City's target project zone. For instance, one possible future partnership for the City includes additional improvements to the station area with shared capital investment by the MTA, including such things as improved station access and linkages, expanded train passenger platforms, improved access to those platforms, and improved integration of the station and the ferry.

4) Recent or impending 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.

Increasing job opportunities and the availability of retail goods and services was the second-highest ranking issue during a public outreach session conducted in 2007, and it continues to be a major goal for the City of Beacon. The City is committed to the development of a balanced local economy that provides good jobs and encourages more businesses in the City, potentially reducing the municipal tax burden on residences. The City's Central Business District, which runs the length of Main Street, consists of approximately 30 acres and 185 properties. On par with the redevelopment efforts cited in the previous section, the City of Beacon has experienced job growth across multiple sectors. During the recent recovery from 2012 to 2014, job gains were highest among higher-income workers. Over this period, job gains among workers 25 years or older were highest among those with 1-4 years of college (43.6%), followed by workers with a Bachelor's degree or higher education (25.7%), with less than a high school education (16.2%), and those with a high school education (14.5%).

These demographic trends among recent hires suggest that that the City of Beacon's employment base is becoming increasingly both higher educated and better paid—signs that the City is becoming more oriented toward a service economy. In 2014, Public Administration remained the largest industry sector in the City with 1,363 jobs, though the industry lost 686 workers from 2007 to 2014, mirroring a trend among government agencies across the nation in response to a reduced tax base following the 2007-2009 recession. In total, eight of the City's 10 largest industry sectors all experienced job gains.

According to the Census Bureau's Economic Census, the City of Beacon saw growth in the retail sector from 2007 to 2012, with the addition of three establishments; growth in revenues from \$128,623,000 to \$144,552,000; and employment increasing from 246 to 250 workers. Estimates of the retail sector by ESRI and InfoGroup provide a more up-to-date and detailed view of the industry. These estimates show that the retail sector is diverse, including a broad selection of convenience and luxury goods.

Additionally, Beacon has attracted many entrepreneurs and artists who have enhanced the character of the City and attracted many new comers to the area. As a result, Beacon has started to become a "commuter city," with a strong transportation system in place to support daily trips to and from Manhattan. However, it is obvious that continued efforts to attract new businesses to the City may further enhance the experience of residents, as they may potentially find employment opportunities locally.

5) Attractiveness of physical environment. Identify the properties or characteristics that the downtown 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.

Beacon has various environmentally significant features, including rare assets, such as the Hudson River, Fishkill Creek, and the Hudson Highlands on the slopes of Mount Beacon. Approximately 13 percent of the City, consisting of about 377 acres, is currently undeveloped land. An additional 298 acres are designated as parkland, representing about 10.5 percent of City lands. Also, approximately 30 acres of wetlands are protected as habitat through NYSDEC regulations (the only wetland protected by the DEC is at the mouth of Fishkill Creek), and approximately 72 acres of wetlands are protected through Army Corps of Engineers regulations. The City of Beacon has a dynamic topography and a variety of important natural resources. Trails and paths allow visitors access to these areas while preserving the environmental integrity of the City's surroundings. Streetscape and architectural design principals continue to be used to guide development in the City in a manner that reflects and honors the character and resources of the area.

The central area of Beacon is characterized by a mixture of large flat areas and low undulating hills, typically rising up to 50 feet above the surrounding land surface. Elevations range from 510 feet on the slopes of Mount Beacon to near sea level along the Hudson River. The higher elevations on the southeast side of the City offer scenic views, and include significant areas of steep slopes. These slopes are important elements within the City viewshed. As a consequence, building heights are limited along the waterfront and train station area to protect established upland views.

Although the upper slopes and the summit and ridgeline of Mount Beacon lie within the Town of Fishkill, Beacon has a significant interest in advocating for the continued protection of the scenic qualities of the undeveloped forested slopes of this area. The City contains habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Primary locations include the areas along the banks and within the Fishkill Creek, the areas along the banks of the Hudson River, and the slopes of Mount Beacon. Continued efforts are required to protect local plants and animals and their habitats and to diminish the presence of invasive species in order to encourage biological diversity.

The City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan calls for the preservation of environmentally, historically and culturally significant buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods that contribute to Beacon's overall character. The preservation of the City's abundance of open space is a key goal. In regards to the waterfront area, the 2017 Comprehensive Plan identifies specific views from different vantage points that have been deemed significant and should be protected from encroachment by development. The Plan also discourages development involving significant land manipulation that alters natural topographic features and creates potential environmental problems. Additionally, the City has created a Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone, which encourages "the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of buildings and structures and appurtenant vistas having historical or aesthetic value which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic political and architectural history."

- 6) 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 plans, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.**

The City of Beacon has multiple policies in place that protect the quality of life in our target area and throughout the City. In December 2016, for instance, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy to encourage the development of streets that provide safe, comfortable and convenient access for all modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. The City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) identified specific views from different vantage points that have been deemed significant and which are now protected under Policy 25 of the LWRP. The LWRP outlines a total of 44 policies in the following areas: Development, Fish and Wildlife, Flooding and Erosion, Public Access, Recreation, Scenic Quality, Agricultural Lands, Energy and Ice Management, and Water and Air Resources.

Additionally, the creation of new zoning districts underscores the goals proposed by the City's Comprehensive Plan to allow for sufficient density that supports a transit-oriented community focused toward residents, workers, and visitors who seek the convenience of transportation facilities in a walkable community framework. Through its zoning and other policies, the City will: 1. Strive to maintain a variety of housing opportunities that are accessible to a wide variety of income levels; 2. Preserve the existing density and settlement pattern of established neighborhoods; 3. Encourage housing development at relatively greater densities within and adjacent to the central business district and the Waterfront/Train Station area; 4. Encourage residential development of vacant and underutilized former industrial sites; and 5. Ensure continued racial, ethnic, age and economic diversity of the population through encouraging a wide range of housing choices.

7) Support for the local vision. Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to support the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing 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 public participation and engagement process conducted to support the City's DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization have been well established, particularly as these coincide with the recent completion of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update. The initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan will be the City's Mayor, Randy Casale, who first took office in January 2012. Mayor Casale is a lifelong resident of the City of Beacon, and he served as a member of the City Council for the Third Ward from 2008 to 2011. Upon being elected, Mayor Casale shifted the City's transit-oriented development focus to examining potential linkages to the Main Street commercial district. Throughout the process of developing the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and all its components, the Mayor, Council, and other City officials worked closely with local residents and business owners to garner feedback and support.

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

The consultant team, led by BFJ Planning, met regularly with the Steering Committee and representatives from the City to gather feedback and ensure that all developed recommendations reflected to the maximum extent possible the interests of residents. Methods implemented to secure the broadest feedback possible include: Spanish translation of relevant documents, updates and minutes posted on the City's website, and consistent outreach. Participants strongly supported promoting housing that maintains the scale and pattern of the existing built environment and were also supportive of developing an urban design plan for Beacon's waterfront and the area around the train station. Participants agreed that developing affordable housing and ensuring affordability for residents is a priority. Furthermore, the Plan affirmed that residents were in favor of economic development goals that will continue to preserve and enhance Main Street vitality. Workshop participants stated that they were generally proud of Main Street as the civic center of the City, specifically noting walkability and the prevalence of locally-owned shops and restaurants as important attributes. A desire for even greater diversity in the variety of goods and services available on Main Street was noted.

In order to maintain an open dialogue with local residents and business owners, the City will continue to collaborate with various local organizations advocating for and representing the needs and interest of various groups, such as commuters, business owners, parents, seniors, and artists. For example, with BeaconArts, the City will look to develop a cultural comprehensive plan to address issues of importance to local artists, such as affordable housing and studio/gallery space and the development of live/work spaces.

8) Readiness: Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above, including a range of transformative projects that will 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) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how the majority of projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

There are many opportunities available in Beacon to build on the strengths described in this application, including a range of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years of grant award and which may leverage DRI funding with a combination of private and public-sector support. Specifically, these projects will result in critical improvements along Beekman Street and Walcott Avenue to enhance connectivity between the City's waterfront district, including the train station and Dia: Beacon, and the Main Street commercial district. Proposed improvements include: wayfinding signage, streetscaping, traffic calming features, lighting, roadway improvements, new public access infrastructure, façade improvements, a jitney service, new bicycle facilities and waterfront recreation improvements and vacant/underutilized site preparation to attract private redevelopment. Together, these elements will greatly benefit all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and those using public transportation. More importantly, it is expected that these improvements will attract new businesses and enhance the City's economy.

Once riddled with crime and drugs along its Main Street, the City of Beacon has made an impressive recovery in recent years, and our projects will continue to address a combination of economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs integral to the overall prosperity of the community. These projects

will have demonstrated public support and strong stakeholder buy-in, and they will be carefully vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State in accordance with all relevant laws and policies.

Ultimately, The City of Beacon will benefit greatly from DRI funding, especially given our readiness for implementation, as demonstrated by the completion of our Comprehensive Plan Update, which outlines a series of specific goals pertaining to waterfront and train station development with a focus on improving linkages to Main Street. Additional plans and studies that support the City's application include: Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Complete Street Policy, traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, and water capacity and stormwater management studies. Furthermore, the City has an established track record of growth and revitalization, especially along its Main Street commercial district. According to LoopNet and Gate House Realty, in September of 2016, there were only four retail properties for rent on Main Street. At the time that the 2017 Comprehensive study was completed, there were no vacant buildings on Main Street. Many of the buildings along this corridor (i.e., more than half) have been renovated within the last decade.

This level of investment in improvements of real property exceeds that of the past several decades and points to the significant strides the City has made in recent years. Over the past few years alone, Beacon's defunct and abandoned factories have been converted into loft apartments; new shops have flourished and DIA: Beacon has welcomed nearing 70,000 visitors annually. This has created an eclectic mixture of commercial, cultural, civic, residential, and recreational uses all within close proximity to a major public transportation hub. A key to the City's revitalization has been a combination of strategic investments in transportation, waterfront development, and improvements along our commercial district. Projects that successfully bind these three critical areas by enhancing infrastructure, preserving natural resources, and developing transportation alternatives will only lead to further economic growth in Beacon. The City is uniquely poised to execute these projects, and, therefore, impact of support from a DRI funding will be immediate, visible, and long-lasting.

9) Administrative Capacity. Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts.

There are many opportunities available in Beacon to build on the strengths described in this application, including a range of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years of grant award and which may leverage DRI funding with a combination of private and public-sector support. Once riddled with crime and drugs along its Main Street, the City of Beacon has made an impressive recovery in recent years, and our projects will continue to address a combination of economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs integral to the overall prosperity of the community. These projects will have demonstrated public support and strong stakeholder buy-in, and they will be carefully vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State in accordance with all relevant laws and policies.

Ultimately, The City of Beacon will benefit greatly from DRI funding, especially given our readiness for implementation, as demonstrated by the completion of our Comprehensive Plan Update, which outlines a series of specific goals pertaining to waterfront and train station development with a focus on improving linkages to Main Street. Additional plans and studies that support the City's application include: Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Complete Street Policy, traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, and water capacity and stormwater management studies. Furthermore, the City has an

established track record of growth and revitalization, especially along its Main Street commercial district. According to LoopNet and Gate House Reality, in September of 2016, there were only four retail properties for rent on Main Street. At the time that the 2017 Comprehensive study was completed, there were no vacant buildings on Main Street. Many of the buildings along this corridor (i.e., more than half) have been renovated within the last decade.

This level of investment in improvements of real property exceeds that of the past several decades and points to the significant strides the City has made in recent years. Over the past few years alone, Beacon's defunct and abandoned factories have been converted into loft apartments; new shops have flourished and DIA: Beacon has welcomed nearing 70,000 visitors annually. This has created an eclectic mixture of commercial, cultural, civic, residential, and recreational uses all within close proximity to a major public transportation hub. A key to the City's revitalization has been a combination of strategic investments in transportation, waterfront development, and improvements along our commercial district. Projects that successfully bind these three critical areas by enhancing infrastructure, preserving natural resources, and developing transportation alternatives will only lead to further economic growth in Beacon. The City is uniquely poised to execute these projects, and, therefore, impact of support from a DRI funding will be immediate, visible, and long-lasting.

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

Beacon's resilience is worth noting. Not only did the City make a tremendous recovery after years of job loss, housing decline and disinvestment, but it weathered the recession that gripped the Country in the last few years. While the recession did lead to several new businesses shutting down and halted plans for a new waterfront hotel, the City has come out ahead with, for instance, the opening of the Roundhouse at Beacon Falls, an upscale boutique hotel and artisanal restaurant, a three-phase \$3 million campaign to transform the 1930s art deco theater that had sat boarded up on Main Street for years, and many other projects. DRI funds will support design and implementation of accessibility improvements that will connect the waterfront to Main Street along Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue, and potentially a jitney to and from the two centers of place. This project will bring the work accomplished in Beacon full circle by strategically linking two major areas of revitalization: the City's waterfront and the Main Street commercial district. As such, the proposed project represents a confluence of the City's major achievements that will serve the community as it moves forward into a new era of growth and prosperity.

*Don't forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood. (See item 1.)