

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Application Template

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: City of Kingston

Downtown Name: Stockade Business District (SBD)

County: Ulster

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

There is a tangible sense of excitement that permeates the City of Kingston these days. You can feel it in the crowd at a Stockade Football Club game. You can feel it strolling in Uptown and looking at the O+ Festival murals. You can even feel it in the passion that brings residents and business owners out to tackle difficult community issues like gentrification and equitable development. All of this excitement is based on a common feeling that Kingston is poised to transform itself from a struggling relic of the 20th century's industrial economy to a shining example of a resilient, sustainable 21st century city.

This application describes our vision for achieving that transformation. With support from the MHREDC and Governor Cuomo's DRI, Uptown Kingston's Stockade Business District (SBD) will become the heart of an economic revitalization that creates new opportunities for the surrounding neighborhoods, towns and counties. This revitalization will incubate innovative solutions to the problems and challenges that contributed to the decline of small cities throughout New York State and beyond for the past 50 years. It will ensure that recent investments in Kingston's future are multiplied and expanded in order to continue to attract the visitors, residents, and jobs that will fuel future growth. By encouraging development models that support equity, it will also preserve and enhance the diversity of our community, ensuring that Kingston continues to be a welcoming home for all who wish to contribute to a better and brighter future.

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 SBD contains a unique National Historic District that was the City's original, fortified settlement bounded by Clinton Avenue, North Front, Green and Main Streets. The SBD was home to the first Dutch Settlers and the site of the first NYS Senate House. The SBD is the gateway to Kingston and to the Catskills, whether people arrive by the NYS Thruway or by bus on Adirondack Trailways. Throughout history the SBD has been the city's economic hub. During Kingston's IBM years it was the preferred place for many to live, work, shop, and play. After IBM's exit and the national economic shift from downtowns to suburbs and malls, like many other business districts in the region, the SBD faltered and storefronts were left vacant. Within the last ten years, the SBD has experienced a renaissance led by an influx of new investments as well as the resurgence of new cafes, restaurants, and boutique shops in the storefronts. It is the location of County office buildings, financial and professional services offices, the City's sole supermarket, and key recreational spaces. Adjacent to this downtown are both mixed-income neighborhoods and two of the county's poorest census tracts (9520 and 9521).

The City is choosing to focus the DRI investment in the SBD in order to solidify its role as the economic engine for the rest of the City, the county, and the region. The district hovers on the cusp of a sustainable revitalization.



Small business owners in the SBD are creating jobs for people in nearby neighborhoods and the broader region, which is driving dramatic increases in real estate prices, which in turn threatens to displace current residents and businesses. While the City has made recent investments in the surrounding areas, public infrastructure in the SBD is in need of further targeted investment to address key constraints - parking availability, multi-modal transportation connectivity and floodplain designation – that are hindering the district’s success.

With DRI assistance from NYS, the City will be able to solve key infrastructure challenges, advance catalytic projects that encourage and support private investment and local business development, and deploy strategies to grow in an equitable way that protects current residents and businesses. The DRI investment in capital projects along with the guided planning assistance will help the City achieve a truly sustainable revitalization.

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 SBD, also known as Uptown Kingston, is a walkable, compact area that includes the Stockade National Historic District and Wall Street, which was recognized in 2012 as one of America’s Great Streets by the American Planning Association. The district also includes the Kingston Plaza, Dietz Stadium, and residential neighborhoods. It encompasses 540 parcels on approximately 267 acres (5% of the City’s 8.6 square miles). It is the central hub for transportation connections within Kingston and to the rest of the county, region, and New York City. The SBD is part of the Heritage Area defined by Kingston’s Urban Cultural Park Plan.

- 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 SBD has historically been the primary downtown for Kingston and the surrounding area. Older residents reminisce about shopping for clothing at the JC Penny or Woolworths or for produce at Gatella’s on Wall Street. Before the Hudson Valley Mall, the Kingston Plaza was the area’s preferred choice for most shopping needs. It still contains the only shopping center within the City limits, houses the only supermarket in Kingston, and provides access to a VA facility, a gym, and healthcare offices.

In comparison with other business districts in the City, the SBD is the only area that currently supports year-round vibrant economic activity and that can provide the variety and livability features that are increasingly desired by young families, professionals and retirees.

The SBD draws regular visits from residents within a half-hour’s drive for food shopping, financial and professional services, specialty shopping, recreation, and events. It also draws visitors and tourists from throughout the Hudson Valley, New York City and many other national and international locations who seek out its charming historic character, its high-profile festivals and events, and its proximity to major tourist destinations such as the Catskill Mountains, the Gunks, and nearby Hudson Valley historic sites. Its proximity to



SUNY New Paltz, Bard College, Marist College, the Culinary Institute of America and Vassar College also draw visitors looking for an alternative to chain hotels in other communities.

In addition to its 23,700 residents, the City is home to the highest density of jobs between Hudson and Poughkeepsie, adding a significant influx of people during working hours. According to the US Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics tool, over 4,242 people work in the SBD. Many of those workers commute from nearby neighborhoods in the City, but the SBD's worker catchment area extends over 25 miles, drawing employees from communities such as Saugerties, Woodstock, Red Hook, Highland, and New Paltz.

Kingston is Ulster County's most diverse community with a resident population that is 16.3% African American or Black, 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.7% Asian, 73.1% Caucasian or White, 6.8% Two or More Races, 1.9% Other, and 15.2% Hispanic or Latino in origin. The median household income is \$41,719, which is lower than the New York State average of \$55,246, and 21.6% of our population and 30.2% of our children live below the poverty level. Adjacent to the SBD are residential neighborhoods where approximately 50% of the population lives in poverty. People in Kingston's neighborhoods largely depend on employment in the SBD.

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.

Kingston has an ideal combination of recent strategic investments, shovel-ready future opportunities, involved anchor institutions and partners, recent infrastructure improvements, and supportive policies and plans to jump-start the DRI planning process and to leverage the State's DRI investment to cement Kingston's status as the region's economic engine. Past MHREDC investments, which have been critical to Kingston's success, are identified in this document with an asterisk (*).

Major public infrastructure investments in the past decade, include: the Uptown Parking Lot Rehabilitation and Green Infrastructure (\$1.2 M); Washington Avenue Signal Improvements (<\$1M); Forsyth Park and Forsyth Nature Center Improvements (<\$1M)*; DEC Fishing and Boat Access (<\$1M); and Washington Avenue Tunnel Remediation (\$7.8M). Current and upcoming projects include: I-587 Interchange Reconstruction (\$5M); Hurley Avenue Pavement and Complete Streets (<\$1M); Midtown Linear Park (\$1.5M); Kingston Rail Trail (\$2M); and Kingston Safe Routes to School Project (<\$1M); Kingston High School and Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster renovation projects (\$148M); Westchester Medical Center Health Alliance of the Hudson Valley Campus (\$122M)*; and transportation infrastructure on the Kingston Greenline and Broadway (\$15.2M)*.

Key to the revitalization of the Stockade Business District will be to leverage recent and potential private investment. The City has already attracted significant private investment, including: the Kingston Plaza Façade and Parking Improvements (\$3M); the Senate Garage event space and wedding venue (\$1M); Keegan Ales microbrewery business development (\$2.5 M); The Kirkland project, a mixed use redevelopment project (\$4.2M); Best Western Hotel renovation (\$3M); Upcoming/future public and private investments include:

- Mixed use commercial and residential project and parking structure on North Front St. As demonstrated in the letter of support, the Bonura Hospitality Group expects to invest \$30-32 million to bring this project to fruition. This is a priority DRI opportunity.
- Kingston Plaza Hannaford Supermarket Redevelopment. This project will include \$10-\$12 million of private investment. This is a priority DRI opportunity.
- Kingston Food Exchange* has spent \$1 million to date and expect to invest an additional \$5 million in the next 1-2 years. This is a priority DRI opportunity.
- Hudson Valley Kingston Development, LLC is concurrently redeveloping two buildings to serve as sister boutique hotels within the DRI target area. This investment is estimated to be up to \$4.7 million.



Future Development Opportunities: The SBD is ripe with potential for further development. There are at least a dozen vacant residential buildings and many other commercial vacant buildings. In addition to completely vacant buildings, there are also many vacant spaces on second and third floors of buildings and partially filled office spaces. Development can also take place on empty land in the SBD. There are 10 acres of developable land in the Plaza. Investors and home buyers are aware of this potential. Kingston’s residential neighborhoods, portions of which are in the DRI project area, have seen a healthy increase in property sales volume over the past 24-36 months, with increases in median sale price as well. Average sale prices in the SBD have increased sharply, days on market are decreasing and sales volume increasing.

High profile potential development opportunities include: the Cioni building, currently the School District’s administrative headquarters. The 22,680 sq ft building on 1.25 acres is being considered for development as a boutique hotel and the School Board just approved a listing for \$2.25 million. In addition, the Daily Freeman building, 26,000 sq ft building with 3 acres of land on Hurley Avenue is for sale for \$1.7 million. The facility that currently houses the County’s Family Court will be vacated in 12 months. The building is 21,000 sq ft and the sale price is \$2.5 million. The former Columbia Beauty Supply, a 7,000 sq ft building is listed for \$743,000.

Growth Potential and Involvement of Anchor Institutions: Our SBD is anchored by a mixture of governmental, cultural, not for profit, and business institutions, all of whom can grow and become further involved in the SBD under the DRI. The Kingston Uptown Business Association (KUBA) is the SBD’s major convening body of most of these anchor institutions and will be deeply involved in the development of the DRI projects and initiatives.

Demonstration of City Commitment: The Pike Plan, a covered walkway on Wall and North Front Streets, includes 44 businesses. It is managed by the Pike Plan Commission. The Commission is tasked with studying, analyzing, and recommending the best methods for maintaining the canopy. The Commission is working collaboratively with the City to seek funding for necessary repairs on damaged parts of the canopy. In addition, the Kingston Local Development Corporation, whose primary purpose is to stimulate investment within Kingston, has invested \$40,000 in facade grants in the SBD within the last six months. Using “gap” financing, facade and micro-enterprise loan programs, the KLDC assists local businesses to invest and stay. The City of Kingston has a strong track record of implementing infrastructure and transportation projects to support the SBD. These infrastructure projects are critical in order for the business district to grow and sustain itself.

Infrastructure & Smart Growth: The infrastructure in the SBD, which is based on a historical street grid alongside a shopping plaza to which all roads lead, is perfect for supporting a classic downtown layout and Smart Growth principles. Development can be concentrated in this small area, and the City’s policies described in our Quality of Life section support mixed-used development, Complete Streets, open-space preservation, green infrastructure, and placemaking. As mentioned previously, the SBD is a transportation hub for the City, county, and region. Future transportation investments listed in our Readiness Section outline improvements the City can build with DRI funding. The City of Kingston is known throughout NYS as a model for its planning efforts related to sustainability and resiliency. Through its commitment to these issues, the City has inspired many community partners, such as RUPCO, the Ulster County Department of the Environment, and the Kingston Food Exchange, to implement their own sustainability projects. We have seen projects incorporating renewable energy and energy efficiency through large solar arrays, geothermal, LED lighting, green infrastructure, electric car charging stations and even living walls. These projects have allowed Kingston to continue to be on the forefront of sustainability and also demonstrate our serious commitment moving forward.

Investments in Arts & Culture: Many not-for-profit partners have invested in making Kingston an arts destination for the region. In the adjacent Midtown neighborhood, the Bardavon/UPAC has invested \$4M* in building improvements. In the last year the Midtown Arts District became its own 501c3, created a brand, and supported arts-related events. In the SBD, O+ Festival will hold its 8th festival in 2017, exchanging art and music for healthcare. The event has doubled in size since its debut, spawning nationwide spinoffs, and leaving a permanent legacy of art with 22 murals throughout the City, with 9 in the SBD at an investment cost of \$93,000



not counting artist time and healthcare provided to the artist. Chronogram, a local magazine about arts, culture, and spirit of the Hudson Valley has its home in the SBD and host two major events on a Wall Street closed to traffic. In their online Kingston section, they call us the “Capital of Culture.” BSP Kingston, set within an early-1900s vaudeville theater/movie house is one of the region’s top sports for live music, dances, and special events.

Consistency with the MHREDC’s Strategy: The City will be able to capitalize in this interest and advance a pipeline of projects listed in our Readiness Section to create a vibrant commercial center that supports the region. In line with the MHREDC’s vision for the region, the SBD and its adjacent neighborhoods can truly be the place to live, work, and play. Our DRI strategy will support the four core strategies of the MHREDC. We will continue to invest in public infrastructure and business supports that will grow the technology job sector in Kingston. The SBD will attract and retain millennials, professionals, and entrepreneurs who want to be in a livable, compact city infused with creativity and welcoming to new ideas. Our potential DRI projects in Dietz Stadium, Frog Alley Park, and on the Kingston Greenline will grow natural resources by connecting residents to nature. As well our efforts to expand the local food and beverage industry will support local, Ulster County, and regional farms. Finally, our DRI will revitalize the region’s infrastructure, by leveraging our existing investments into transportation infrastructure, anchor institutions, and affordable housing projects to create a vital and vibrant economic heart of the region, which in turn will 1) give current residents better access to other parts of the region and job opportunities, and 2) create an attractive destination for people to come visit, work, and live.

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.

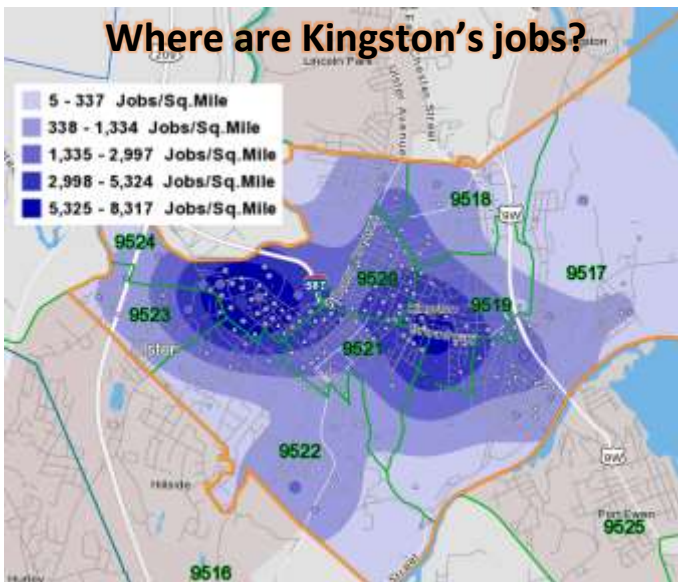
Once home to over 7,000 IBM employees, Kingston has experienced the pain that can come with our modern global economy’s twists and turns. Following IBM’s departure in the mid-1990s, the City and its surrounding region have struggled replace these stable, high-paying jobs. Since 2010, the employed civilian population over age 16 in the Kingston MSA has declined slightly, from nearly 90,000 to just under 86,000 in 2015. Over the same period, median earnings have declined as well, from about \$37,000 to just under \$35,000 in constant 2015 dollars.

These overall trends, however, disguise a much more complex situation. Even as employment and wages in some industries and occupations are declining, the City of Kingston has seen strong growth in industries and occupations with promising prospects for the future, particularly in and around the SBD, where an increasing share of the region’s jobs are located.

While employment in local, state, and federal government has declined since 2010, employment in information, manufacturing, management, and professional services has grown. Employment in high-tech industries has increased

substantially, from 1,587 in 2010 to 2,070 in 2015. In September 2016, a US Census Bureau report identified Kingston as the fastest-growing MSA in the Northeast for start-up job growth.

Unlike in the days of IBM, job creation in Kingston today comes from the cumulative efforts of many businesses – from entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises to small family-owned enterprises to larger institutions such as our



hospitals and schools. It is our expectation that future job creation will come from continued growth of small- to mid-sized businesses in several important local industry clusters.

Media, Film and Technology - With the recent expansion of the Upstate Film Tax Credit program, Kingston enjoys an increasing advantage as a premier location for production and post-production, as evidenced by a significant uptick in film projects in the first half of 2017. Rapid growth also continues at the many tech businesses located in the SBD, including DragonSearch, Exago, Luminary Media, and AnchorID, most of which expect to continue adding jobs in the coming year. In this sector, Kingston's quality of life is also attracting tech-workers who are less attached to physical offices in New York City, and who, over time, often choose to start their own companies here.

Craft Food and Beverage - Within and nearby the SBD, a synergy between growers, processors, and distributors is positioning Kingston as a major player in the Hudson Valley's food and beverage cluster. Key initiatives and important local players include the Local Economies Project and the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, Northeast Farm Access's Esopus Agricultural Center, The Farm Bridge, Hudson Valley Harvest, Keegan Ales, the Kingston Food Exchange and the Arc of Ulster-Greene's food and beverage incubator project in Midtown Kingston.

Tourism, Hospitality & Entertainment - Capitalizing on Ulster County's expanding tourism market, Kingston's restaurants, performance venues, art galleries, museums, and year-round festivals - all within walking distance of each other and the City's residential neighborhoods - are investing in expansion. At UPAC and the Hutton Brickyards, these investments are luring new visitors, whose spending bolsters the City's retail and commercial districts. The addition of one or more hotel projects to the SBD will add to the area's employment, while also helping local businesses capture a greater share of tourism spending.

Boutique Manufacturing - Kingston is home to a growing number of niche manufacturers, including long-time institutions such as R&F Handmade Paints, Bailey Pottery, ColorPage, American Monster Studio. These have been joined more recently by a new vanguard of craft manufacturers, such as Karina Dresses, Catskill Woodworking, Johnny Poux Design, Black Creek Mercantile and Trading Company, Workshop Art Fabricators and, most recently, Lite Brite Neon. The addition of these companies has revitalized the City's manufacturing industry, adding new, high-quality jobs in a variety of occupations.

Eds, Meds and Government - Major facility upgrades and capital projects at the HealthAlliance campuses, the Kingston High School, and the new Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster are creating temporary construction jobs, while also ensuring the continued presence of these key community institutions for the coming decades and contributing to a sense of renewal and re-investment that encourages further development. In total, these institutions are investing over \$300 million in Kingston's future. The location of several County, State and Federal facilities in the SBD draws employees and public services consumers from the broader region, which studies show contributes to a healthy, strong and vibrant downtown

In addition to these industries, future job growth in Kingston will be shaped by larger trends such as demographics, global competition, and increasing automation. Throughout the nation, positions traditionally filled by employees will continue to be replaced by contract workers, freelancers, and temp workers, which will have positive and negative consequences for our region. On one hand, the gig economy means less security and stability, while on the other, it affords workers the freedom that allows them to stay in, or relocate to, low-cost, high-quality locations like Kingston.

If human capital is the most important factor of production in the 21st century, Kingston is well-positioned to continue its transformation to a talent-based economy, and through that transformation, to establish a more resilient and sustainable mix of industries, occupations and employment opportunities. By investing in the revitalization of the SBD, Kingston will augment its key competitive advantage as a low-cost alternative to other locations within the metro NYC, making it easier for existing and future employers to attract and retain the talented workforce that drives innovation and competition in the new economy.



And while highly-skilled workers will play an important role in the City's continued job-growth, it is equally important to note local efforts that will contribute to a more inclusive labor market. The City's recent and impending investments in transportation projects will make it even easier for residents throughout the City and beyond to access employment. The close proximity of key workforce development partners, such as the Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster, the Ulster County Office of Employment and Training, YouthBuild, the Center for Creative Education, and the Kingston High School will continue to help residents acquire the skills they need to access jobs and to increase their earnings.

Kingston knows the price that communities pay when their economy is built around a single employer. While some may still hope for another IBM, the slow and steady growth Kingston has experienced in the past decade, dispersed across a wide range of industries and occupations, has led to a more resilient foundation, better able to weather the inevitable churn of our modern global economy and better positioned to respond as new opportunities for growth arise.

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.

Kingston has approximately **10,000 housing units**, from studio apartments to single- and multi-family homes. Of these units, about 40% are owner-occupied, 50% are rentals and 10% are vacant. Current single family home prices range from \$21,000 to \$675,000 and multi-family homes range from \$72,500 to \$925,000. Rents are between \$700-\$2,000 monthly and the rental vacancy rate is around 3%. The average monthly rent is approximately \$1,000, up between 3-6% from 2015 depending on the source.

The SBD has a **healthy mix of commercial** retail stores, restaurants, and cafes, whereas ten years prior they were plagued with empty storefronts. The SBD is also home to two important affordable food markets for residents and the region - Hannaford and the Kingston Farmers Market. The Farmers Market was founded by KUBA in 2000, and now approximately 2000 customers frequent the market each weekend to visit 37 vendors. Also, a winter market takes place nearby, in the Old Dutch Church.

The SBD is a **multi-modal transportation heart** for the City, the County, and the region. It is connected to several major roadways: Washington Avenue with connection to the NYS Thruway and NYS Route 32, Clinton and Albany Avenues that connect to the Town of Ulster and Broadway that connects to the rest of Kingston and Route 9W. The Adirondack Trailways terminal is located in the area as well as the Ulster County Area Transit and Kingston Citibus exchange in the Kingston Plaza. If a person is using public transit in the region, he/she will inevitably come to the SBD. As well, the SBD is the most walkable area of Kingston with a historic street grid built for walking, and even the streets without bike infrastructure are bicycle friendly as vehicles travel at slow speeds on one-way streets. However, through the projects we recommend for the DRI, there are many opportunities to enhance and improve these multi-modal transportation networks, increase ADA accessibility and better connect with adjacent neighborhoods.

Within and adjacent to the SBD, there are **current and future planned recreation amenities** that are significant to the region. The Kingston Greenline rail trail will run through the SBD in the Kingston Plaza connecting the district to the adjacent lower-income neighborhood and providing a key pedestrian and bicycle link to affordable food stores and shops. It will also connect residents and tourists starting on the Greenline in the SBD to the



future Empire State Trail, which will intersect with the Midtown Linear Park, and to four rail trails extending throughout the County and beyond. The Plaza also hosts the Catskill Mountain Railroad operating on the former Ulster and Delaware Rail line. In 2012, volunteers repaired Bridge C9 in Kingston that allowed the railroad to double its operable mileage. Themed events like The Polar Express™, Peanuts™, Day Out with Thomas™, and hosting real steam locomotives attracted a ridership of 29,148 in 2016 and 27,230 in 2015. Six **city parks/greenspaces** are located within or adjacent to the SBD - Academy Green, Peace Park and Frog Alley are relatively small passive public spaces with historic significance. Dietz Stadium is a major, organized sport facility with capacity to host school, community, and professional sport events. Andretta Pool is the City's only public swimming pool, open in the summer and offering lessons. And Forsyth Park is a community recreational hub that hosts the Forsyth Nature Center and Zoo (a unique regional resource), a Kinderland playground, manicured lawns with a baseball field and forest, tennis courts, and a pavilion.

Within and surrounding the SBD there is a **concentration of doctor's offices and healthcare facilities**. HealthQuest has recently located a Medical Practice with ten providers in the Kingston Plaza. The Kingston Health Pavilion is home to 15 providers. Emergency One, a primary alternative to visiting the Emergency Room in Kingston is in the SBD, as well as the VA Clinic that provides necessary health services to veterans. Furthermore, many alternative healthcare providers such as chiropractors, physical therapists, acupuncturists and massage therapists have chosen to locate in the SBD.

The SBD is a **place that celebrates diversity** as evidenced by a sign that now stands in front of the Old Dutch Church that says in multiple languages, "No matter where you are from, we're glad you are our neighbor." As the oldest continuously existing congregation in the country, starting in 1659, it continues to be a rock for Kingston's community. It hosts multiple events for diverse organizations such as the Winter Farmers' Market, the O+ Festival Healthcare Clinics, music productions and community dinners. People from all walks of life are welcome there as the church is also progressive and involved in social action. Seven other churches with both historical roots and new beginnings are also located in the SBD. Organizations that represent diverse people, promote social justice and provide services to diverse populations are in the SBD - notably the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, Family of Woodstock (social services agency), RUPCO (affordable housing services), Workers Justice Center (services to laborers and immigrants) and the Arc of Ulster-Greene (services to people with disabilities). Furthermore, anchor institutions such as the Ulster County Office Building, the DMV and the Ulster County Courthouse see traffic from diverse people seeking out a variety of public services.

The SBD is a central **location for many significant Kingston events** that draw people from the far corners of the region and beyond. The O+ Festival takes place each fall. The Farmers Market takes place year-round. A bi-annual re-enactment of the 1777 burning of Kingston draws history fans from all over. KUBA sponsors a Snowflake Festival in December that has seen rapid increases in attendance within the last two years. A Children's Day parade ends in the Kingston Plaza with fireworks in June. Wall Street is often closed down for various festivals such as the Jazz Festival, the Woodstock Film Festival and Chronogram block parties.

But activities don't only happen in the streets on special days. Year-round there is **something to do in the SBD for everyone**. Late night concert goers can visit BSP Kingston, the Anchor, or one of many small venues with intimate settings for local and nationally known musicians. Gardeners and farmers can get their agricultural education at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County in the Kingston Plaza. Couples can get married at the recently renovated Senate Garage. Children can fix their sweet tooth and play games under the canopy at the Kingston Candy Bar. Families may join the Friends of Historic Kingston on a walking tour of the largest intact early Dutch settlement in NY and the first capitol of NYS. People of all ages can get fit at the various yoga studios and fitness gyms. Parents may visit the Kingston City School District central offices to plan or discuss their children's education.



Finally, the City of Kingston has been **able to grow “digitally”** based on the commercially available broadband technology and fiber infrastructure that exists in Kingston. However, demand is still rising and the cost of high-speed connections for residential and small business customers, many of whom rely on broadband for their work or education, can be a major barrier. A comprehensive SBD WiFi initiative will help support the SBD as a place to live, work and play and one where technology will keep with the high-paced environment we hope to create in the district.

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.

Throughout the last decade Kingston reinvented itself with sustained community and volunteer engagement in the development of progressive policies and plans that support Smart Growth, New Urbanism, and environmental sustainability. A new **Comprehensive Plan** was adopted in March 2016 that responded to the need for a more connected, urban landscape with vibrant and diverse neighborhoods. Currently, a zoning committee meets monthly to implement the goals of the plan, and they are working on **inclusionary zoning** for housing affordability. Participation in this committee is robust, which is indicative of the tremendous social change that has ensued in Kingston.

Kingston’s “zombie” properties and foreclosures significantly undermine the value and integrity of many business and residential areas of the city. They continue to depress property values and tax ratables, thereby increasing the tax burden for other property owners, and they prevent home and business owners from accessing capital via equity in their properties. In recognition of and in an effort to reverse these effects, Kingston has embarked on the creation of a land bank. An interim board is in the process of applying for its 501(c)(3) and New York State Land Bank designations. Land Banking activities will begin by the end of 2017.

In Fall 2016, in response to public concern and unease, Mayor Noble advocated for a memorializing resolution reaffirming the City of Kingston as a welcoming and inclusive community. At the January 10th Common Council meeting, attended by over 400 community members, over 60 individuals provided comment during the public speaking segment of the Council meeting that lasted over 3 hours. Ultimately, the Council voted in favor of this memorializing resolution. On January 19th, NYS Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman released a **comprehensive guide**, which includes model laws and policies for “Sanctuary” municipalities. Since Kingston adopted this memorializing resolution, at least a half dozen neighboring municipalities have adopted or are in the process of reviewing similar resolutions.

Other recently adopted policies include a 2015 resolution creating the **Kingston Arts Commission** to strengthen the local economy by attracting and promoting arts entrepreneurs, cultural tourism and enhancing amenities that will make Kingston a more attractive city in which to live, work and play. In the beginning of 2017, the **Live Well Kingston Commission** was created by resolution of the Common Council to create a community environment that promotes and supports healthier lifestyle choices. Four active Focus Teams of this Commission implement action plans to facilitate policy, environmental and systems changes that result in a healthy and active community. The **Travel Well Focus Team** consists of the City’s Complete Streets Advisory Council (CSAC), Bike-Friendly Kingston and the Kingston Greenline Committee of the Kingston Land Trust. In 2010, Kingston was one of the first municipalities in New York State to adopt a **Complete Streets** policy and establish a Complete Streets Advisory Council (CSAC). These groups informed the development of the Transportation and Mobility section of the Comprehensive Plan. An ad-hoc CSAC Sidewalk Taskforce recently submitted an updated sidewalk code to the Common Council for consideration and it is expected to pass. Other Focus Teams, **Eat Well, Age**



Well, and Play Well are advancing action plans to create a city that encourages healthy eating, age-friendly living and accessible open spaces with modern play structures.

Kingston became a **Climate Smart Community** in 2009, joining 600 local governments working to make their communities more livable, prosperous, equitable and environmentally sound. The City then conducted a baseline energy assessment and wrote a Climate Action Plan adopted by the Common Council in 2012. The Climate Smart Kingston Commission is active with leadership from a city sustainability coordinator. Several of its many initiatives support Midtown: the 10% Challenge to increase residential energy efficiency, solarize campaigns to provide lower cost renewables, Energize NY PACE (renewables and energy efficiency loan program), Grid Alternatives for low-income, census tract based residential solar installation program, LED Streetlight Consortium to retrofit all city street lights, including all of Broadway, Natural Resources Inventory and Open Space Plan to identify and prioritize open space including community gardens, parkland and recreational space, and Environmental Education at the Everette Hodge Community Center. The City was the first city to become a Climate Smart Certified Bronze Community and was recently named a Clean Energy Community.

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.

Building on our outreach as part of last year’s DRI application and in line with our goal for inclusive development without displacement, the City has made a concerted effort to seek out equitable development strategies for our revitalization. In April 2017, we held an **Equitable Development Workshop** with 40 people attending. This workshop was facilitated with technical assistance from the US EPA Building Blocks program and a report with an action plan generated by community members is forthcoming. Our City, its civic organizations, and community members have embraced new policies and tools for realizing a better quality of life with our community design, but we need more capacity and assistance to implement our new policies. The DRI will help us to realize the vision of our policy by implementing dynamic projects.

One of the strongest assets of the City of Kingston is its diverse business community. Its members are informed, engaged and eager to participate in and lead the City’s development and growth through participation in the Business Alliance of Kingston (BAK), a city-wide business association, the Kingston Waterfront Business Association (KWBA), and KUBA (KUBA). Founded in 2006, KUBA serves as a powerful convening body of local businesses located in the SBD. As part of its strategic planning, the membership of KUBA has identified several key focus areas to promote sustainable economic growth, which are reflected in this application.

Chief among these focus areas has been addressing the parking shortage in this commercial district. This issue has been identified as a barrier to growth among many of the existing businesses, as well as potential investors in the area. In fact, a petition signed by over 1,000 residents and employees in the SBD area was created, which helped form an organic network of citizens committed to collaborating with the City to address the issue. A work group led by the Mayor and made up of residents, business owners and Common Council members is now meeting on a monthly basis to work specifically on this issue. Under Mayor Noble’s leadership, the City of Kingston has sought to empower community members to take an active role in the development of public programs and projects, harnessing this collective energy, expertise and knowledge to prepare and implement successful projects that the public is fully invested in.

The City is one of the few communities in the region to have a full time Director of Communications and Community Engagement, ensuring that the Mayor and Common Council are fully informed on community issues and that the public is deeply engaged and is heard. Under this proposal, Mayor Noble will lead the DRI Planning



Committee, with significant support and engagement from many business and community leaders in and around the SBD. The support of key partners and community groups and their willingness to engage in the DRI process is evidenced by the attached packet of letters of support.

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.

Kingston is ready to implement a range of catalytic projects within one to two years and the biggest challenge will be choosing which ones to implement. The following projects represent our current priorities. While these projects reflect the priorities expressed during past public outreach, we look forward to vetting them together with the State and its recommended planning consultant.

Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential With Parking Structure Development

At the junction of North Front and Wall Street is a City-owned flat parking lot and a vacant warehouse. This property used to be the site of a parking garage and, since it was demolished in 2008, the SBD has struggled to grow due to parking limitations. The City is working with a local developer and architect to design a mixed-used development along with 400+ parking spaces, including 200 dedicated to public access. The concept has attracted the investment of the Bonura Hospitality Group, which is working on construction plans and intends to invest \$30-32M in the immediate future.

Implementation of the Uptown Stockade Transportation Plan

This transportation plan was completed in 2009 by the Ulster County Transportation Council and recommends changes that could be made to improve access to, circulation within and economic vitality in and around the SBD. The plan contains detailed recommendations, many of which are ready for implementation. Construction documents could be completed within one year, and build-out could be completed the next year. Improvements include:

- **Reverse the street directions** of several streets in the area to improve circulation and bicycle, vehicular and pedestrian safety and provide direct access to the Kingston Plaza from Wall Street.
- Implement a **coordinated traffic signal system** and install traffic signals with pedestrian push buttons.
- Complete and implement a **comprehensive parking strategy** for the study area.
- Complete recommended **walkability and bikeability improvements**, such as installing/replacing sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lights, crosswalks and on-street bicycle infrastructure and signage
- Complete **transportation system enhancement plan improvements** such as tree planters, street furniture and decorative pavement.

Implementation of the Kingston Wayfinding Plan in the Stockade

The Kingston Wayfinding Plan was selected for funding in the Ulster County Transportation Council's 2017 Unified Planning Work Program. The goals of this plan are: 1) to enable visitors and residents to navigate safely, efficiently and easily through Kingston, 2) provide a family of wayfinding signage that creates a visual identity for the City and its distinct districts and, 3) encourage and support economic vitality by helping to increase motor vehicle, bicycle and foot traffic to business districts. The planning will begin in October 2017 and within one year the City will have a plan for signage graphics, kiosks and installation locations.

Implementation of a Critical Element in the Kingston Intermodal Facility Plan

The Kingston Intermodal Facility Site Location and Conceptual Design Analysis was completed in 2009 to examine potential sites for an intermodal facility, recommend a single site and develop a preferred plan. It

outlines facility requirements to increase public transit usage, access, and capacity, which are features such as more bus slips, additional parking, a taxi waiting area and dedicated bicycle and zip car parking. The site selected for preferred development is the existing Adirondack Trailways terminal with adjacent properties. DRI funds can be used to acquire adjacent properties and upgrade the terminal to an intermodal facility.

Dietz Stadium Facility Improvements

Dietz Stadium, a 2500 seat venue, is a major organized sports facility adjacent to Forsyth Park, the Adirondack Trailways station and the Andretta Pool. The site serves as both a community and regional destination. Schools use the fields for practice, residents use the oval track for running and walking and many civic events take place here. Most recently it has become the home field for the Kingston Stockade Football Club, which draws an average of 1200 spectators to events. The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends upgrades including benches, water fountains, fencing, lighting, shade tree plantings, bike racks, new lockers rooms and bathrooms and a more modern food vending facility. Recently, the City lost the State Football Sectionals, which Kingston was home to for over a decade, due to the lack of high quality facilities. With DRI support these upgrades, also desired by the Stockade Football Club, could easily be made within two years.

Kingston Food Exchange

The DRI could support the Kingston Food Exchange, a project of BBG Ventures, which plans to open a 35,000 square foot food hall, food manufacturing facility and grocery with an emphasis on locally sourced food. BBG Ventures has invested over \$1,000,000 into the facility at 311 Wall Street with another \$5,000,000 being invested during build-out. The exchange will hire approximately 65 people directly and sub-lease space for four to six additional restaurants and four other businesses in the market itself, creating an additional 20-30 jobs. With the additional rental kitchens being utilized, Hudson Valley brands will be able to grow in Kingston and distribute widely using other Kingston-based businesses such as The Farm Bridge and Hudson Valley Harvest. BBG Ventures plans on using the Kingston location as a flagship store for the growth of its business into a regional market and center for local food.

Public Wifi and Wireless Broadband

The City is interested in a Public WiFi system in the SBD to allow business owners, residents and tourists alike to benefit from on-demand access to information. The City is in the process of upgrading light poles to LED, and has researched a variety of Smart technologies which would allow the City during our light pole replacement to create a network of public WiFi access points in the district.

Creation of a Community Land Trust (CLT)

The City can use the DRI to advance plans to create a Community Land Trust (CLT) with our affordable housing partners and private foundations in and around Kingston and in coordination with the City's existing efforts to establish a Land Bank. According to a report just released by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, the demand for affordable housing throughout the Valley remains high and in Ulster County there is a \$652 gap between monthly rent and monthly income. A CLT will allow Kingston and the SBD to develop true and long-term affordable housing and commercial buildings through the use of this innovative technique of land acquisition that has been proven to be successful in communities like Burlington, VT and Syracuse, NY. We are prepared to move this concept forward immediately, as the displacement pressures being placed on the SBD are presently very intense.

Tourism Promotion and Marketing Program

A key component of the establishment of the SBD as the anchor for commerce for this region is the expansion of a targeted tourism and marketing program specific to the City of Kingston. With its proximity to the Thruway and Trailways bus terminal, the SBD is the gateway into the greater Kingston area and surrounding region. Ulster County Tourism does a great job attracting visitors to Ulster County, an industry that pumps more than \$500 million dollars annually into the local economy. As the only city in the county, with its rich cultural heritage, its burgeoning food scene and its many festivals and events, the City of Kingston has the opportunity to revitalize its marketing strategy and showcase its unparalleled beauty, history, diverse attractions and retail offerings.

The Kingston Uptown Levee



The Kingston Uptown Levee, a 10-12 foot berm and wall between the Kingston Plaza and the Esopus Creek, built with federal funding in the 1970s and designed to prevent flooding in the Kingston Plaza, the Dutch Village apartments and along Schwenk Drive, no longer meets federal standards. As a result, federal flood plain maps have been revised putting about 35 properties into the floodplain. Insurance premiums have increased significantly and property owners cannot develop in the plaza area without a variance. With DRI funds we will be able to fully implement our partnership with FEMA's Levee Analysis and Mapping Procedure for Non-accredited Levees. Funds would be utilized for detailed mapping and structural assessments to determine whether areas of the floodplain could be re-categorized to reduce insurance premiums.

Frog Alley Historic Preservation and Park Project

The Frog Alley property owned by the Friends of Historic Kingston contains the Louw-Bogardus House ruin, which is listed on the state and federal registries of historic places. This ruin could be the earliest existing dwelling in the Hudson Valley or the entire country and it is home to two very rare, Dutch jamless fireplaces. The aim of this project would be to stabilize the ruin, add lighting and park amenities and add interpretive signage. In the heart of the SBD, completion of the project would create a quaint historical greenspace.

Other Potential DRI Projects

There are many other projects in the DRI area that could be considered by the Local Planning Committee and the State for funding. Several willing property owners could use assistance to implement the **adaptive re-use of vacant buildings and spaces** such as the Cioni Building, the Family Court Building, and the Columbia Beauty Supply Building. Recommendations to decommission the I-587 Interstate (the shortest interstate in the nation) could be implemented with a plan to **break up a superblock around the Kingston Plaza**, allowing traffic to flow from Albany Ave. and Broadway along I-587 directly to the plaza and alleviating traffic back-ups on Clinton Ave., allowing for a re-design of the Kingston Plaza geared toward modern shopper preferences. The **Volunteer Firemen's Hall and Museum**, a popular attraction for families, is in need of repairs and upgrades. The **Midtown Linear Park** could benefit from additional funds for amenities and in the Kingston Plaza there is a gap in the Kingston Greenline that could be addressed. In this same gap, the Catskill Mountain Railroad is slated to run short train rides in the plaza and more funding could build the needed infrastructure for a **rail with trail** on this stretch. The **Academy Green Park** could be improved to become a more frequently used event space and recommendations for this park in the Kingston Parks and Recreation Master Plan can be implemented. Several **floodwater and stormwater drainage improvements** have been identified by the City's engineering department. Finally, a program for business development could be expanded to include support for **cooperative business models**.

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

In the past year, our local administration has grown its capacity to manage existing duties as well as new projects. Under the leadership of Mayor Steve Noble, since January 2016, communication between city departments has drastically improved and the pre-existing silos are breaking down. As a result, city staff are working better together and managing projects more efficiently. In particular, the Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) of five staff, Engineering and Planning Departments of six staff, the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Communications and Community Engagement Director are working closely together to co-implement projects. The City also has a new Environmental Education and Sustainability Coordinator to make sure city-led projects continue to prioritize sustainability. All of these departments will have a role in the planning and implementation of the DRI.



Some examples of recent co-implementation success include:

A portion of the Kingston Connectivity Project awarded CFA funds in 2013 that consisted of Complete Streets paintwork was estimated by our consultant engineers to cost \$220,000. Instead of contracting out the work, the OECD worked with the DPW to complete the work at a cost of \$20,000. With this \$200,000 savings, we are able to add additional components to the project, increasing the impact of state dollars.

The IT Department has worked with the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, City Clerk, Communications and Community Engagement and other offices to develop Kingston's new 311 System - a citizen request management program. This cross-departmental program allows city staff to submit work order requests, document complaints and look up work status reports. This tool will soon be available for public use by phone, on the city's website and through a mobile phone app.

The OECD was re-structured to include a grants manager position. A shared grant management system was created this year to streamline grant and project management processes. Each grant is assigned a project manager from the appropriate department, clear roles are set up for each aspect of the grant project/contract so that we are better able to meet deadlines and the OECD provides oversight.

In addition, the City recently received a 2-year grant of \$120,000 from the Novo Foundation to support the coordination and communication for our newly created Live Well Kingston Commission. Live Well Kingston's goal to build a better Kingston in which to walk, bike, eat and play for better public health aligns closely with the DRI goals to create revitalized places where New York families can live, work, and play. With the Novo funds, the City will hire a part-time coordinator and contract for additional communication services. The coordinator will have the high skill-level needed to convene partners focused on improving the environment, culture and opportunities for Kingstonians to lead healthier lives. Upon the DRI award, the City will seek ways to make this a full-time position in order to support the planning and implementation of the DRI. As mentioned previously Mayor Steve Noble, with leaders in the OECD including Brenna Robinson, Director, and Kristen Wilson, M.S., Grants Manager, will create a robust DRI Team. Furthermore, Ulster County Executive Mike Hein has pledged continued support from County staff in the Office of Economic Development, the Planning Department, Tourism, the Health Department and many others.

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

The City of Kingston has a proven track record of financial good health and has demonstrated its ability to deliver top quality services to its residents and businesses without over taxing. The City just recently signed onto another 6-year contract with its Comptroller, John Tuey, who has served in that position since 2007. The City is extremely proud of its AA minus bond rating, the fourth highest on the Standard and Poor's 24 grade scale, and currently has a fund balance of \$5.51 million or 13.3 percent of the current budget's total expenditures. The city's fund balance policy calls for maintaining a reserve between 10 and 13 percent of current budgeted spending. In 2016, a \$1.6 million surplus was documented for the 2016 budget. \$775,000 of that, money tapped from the fund balance to push down last year's tax levy, will be returned to the reserve fund, leaving at total increase of more than \$800,000. The City also for the first time since 2013, kept the 2016 Tax levy stable at the 2015 levels.

The DRI infusion of funds in the SBD will help Kingston along its path to become the shining example of a resilient, sustainable 21st century city by spurring the whole region's economy. First, it will benefit the other business districts and residential neighborhoods in Kingston - Midtown and the Waterfront on the Rondout Creek. Then the surrounding towns that access Kingston for services will benefit - Phoenicia, Stone Ridge, Ellenville, Red Hook, Rhinebeck. Finally, newcomers from NYC and beyond will be welcome to make Kingston their home, where they too can live, work, and play.

