

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Application Template

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications must be received by the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council by **4:00 PM on June 14, 2017**. Submit your application as a Word Document to NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov.

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: City of Port Jervis

Downtown Name: Downtown/City of Port Jervis

County: Orange

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

Located in the westernmost corner of Orange County, bordered by both the Delaware and Neversink Rivers across which are located the neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the 2.5 square mile city of Port Jervis has been quietly moving forward into its future. Over the last eight years, the City of Port Jervis has been busy obtaining grants, attracting private investors and implementing previously adopted plans that unite its rail and road accessibility to the Metro NY and Tri-State (NY, NJ, PA) area with the ecologically sensitive development of its abundant natural river, water and woodland resources. Within the last five years and accelerated within the last 21-months, an influx of private investment totaling some \$10 million in its turn-of-the century downtown is enabling the city to reach for its goal of becoming a major regional four-season international outdoor recreation tourist destination.

Fully walkable and bikeable, with local health facilities including the only emergency room within 18-miles, SUNY Orange re-establishing professional certificate and college courses in the fall of 2017, a small city school district with a 2016 graduation rate of 80% and the lowest priced real estate in Orange County, ambitious residents both old and new are making Port Jervis a place where people may truly "Live, Work and Play." With these investments, Port Jervis is poised on the cusp of a renaissance and is a perfect candidate to become the Mid-Hudson REDC's 2017 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) nominee.

When awarded, DRI funding will provide the additional technical expertise and program funding that would help the city tie its natural and historic properties to the economic development of its downtown. Like fingers to a hand, the city's parks and green spaces are inextricably tied to its core downtown. As natural extensions of the core downtown (see Map), Riverside Park with the proposed White Water Kayak Park, the Delaware & Hudson Canal Trail and the Turntable/Railroad Museum are part of the city's identity and its heritage, which with linkages to one another become powerful co-drivers of future economic development. Once plans are fully implemented, Port Jervis, NY will draw commerce not only from New York State, but also the nearby almost 3,000 square-mile catchment area including neighboring Pennsylvania and New Jersey, benefitting not only the Mid-Hudson REDC area, but New York State overall.

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.

For this grant, Port Jervis' DRI Downtown Neighborhood is defined as an extension of city's 2003 Strategic Downtown Business area. This area encompasses 43 tax parcels that include two private open lots, eight city owned parcels (two municipal parking lots and six park/green areas) and 33 commercial and mixed-use buildings. Primarily located within the city's current Central Business District (CBD), it contains immediate access to the Metro North commuter station, historic railroad turntable museum site and canal trail, parks and public and private event space. This area is the focal point of the city's 2016 Complete Streets objectives and future linkages between the downtown and the city's largest future economic driver, the proposed city-owned 40-acre+ White Water Kayak Park.

- 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.

Port Jervis, with the only walkable downtown with a full combination of municipal services including sewer and water, parks, private businesses and facilities, and public access to unique municipally owned recreational features including the public West End beach on the Delaware River, is the primary downtown destination for the city's 8,828 residents. With the emerging new businesses and expanded trail system, activity is increasing as some of the the 26,356 residents in the immediate Tri-State region, begin to visit downtown Port Jervis once again.

As the third largest westernmost city within Orange County, between the census counts of 2000 and 2010, Port Jervis' experienced a minor population drop of less than 0.5%, thereby remaining relatively stable with 8,828 residents. Downtown Port Jervis is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and may be accessed from anywhere in the city by the local Dial-A-Bus, taxi, personal transportation, bike and foot. City Hall with the local DMV and police station, the full-service post office, four banks, medical facilities including the only hospital with an emergency room other than Orange Regional in Middletown, NY some eighteen miles away, and the Port Jervis Free Library with public computer facilities, are located a few feet away from the DRI downtown.

Beyond the immediate Tri-State region, the city lies within a local catchment area along a 78 east-west mile-long corridor along Interstate 84 between Middletown, NY (18 miles east) to Scranton, PA (60 miles west), and a 38 north-south mile corridor between Monticello, NY along State Route 42 (23 miles north) to Sussex,

NJ along NJ County Route 23 (15 miles south). This local catchment area of 2964 mi.², encompasses approximately 668,851 inhabitants.

As Port Jervis is a 90-minute drive from NYC and as the final stop on Metro North's Port Jervis Line that originates in lower Manhattan and that terminates in Port Jervis' downtown, all points between become part of Port Jervis' regional catchment area. This area encompasses approximately 10 million inhabitants.

Additionally, Port Jervis is the closest point with commuter rail access to Sullivan County's Montreign Casino (Resorts World), is approximately 45 minutes from Stewart International Airport, Woodbury Commons and West Point and 20 minutes from the proposed Legoland project in Goshen, NY. This centrality thereby increases the catchment flow-through potential by domestic and international tourism numbers generated by these internationally known locations.

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.

Within the wholly walkable 2.5-square mile city of Port Jervis, this downtown is capitalizing on prior, current and future public investment with increased private investment and the leveraging of public resources. Between 2012 and 2017, approximately \$6 million of private funding was invested in one large DRI parcel of 8.9 acres at 100 Pike St. Now with a fully rebuilt Burger King and Rite-Aid, the separate 80,230 sq.-ft., 9-space refurbished strip mall is being prepared for occupancy.

Within the last 21-months, the number and rate of investments has quickened with 11 of the 43 DRI parcels having changed hands. These 11 parcels will add some 231,423 active square feet of commercial, office and apartment space to the existing 238,856 square feet, thereby almost doubling possible usage. In this downtown area 12 rental and owner space currently exists with seven allocated to low-to-moderate residents. Another 19-20 single bedroom apartments are slated for one building currently being rehabbed. Given the need for lodging in the city, other options in this area include boutique hotels. Total private investment dollars either completed or planned to be expended in the coming six-twelve months is estimated at \$4.5 million. In total, including parks and green space, the DRI area represents 71.5 acres or 4.5% percent of Port Jervis' total land coverage.

Public projects are addressing the needs of an over 100-year old city that suffered from the loss in the 1970's of its primary employer of the time the Erie Railroad, the flight of residents and businesses to nearby lower-taxed Pennsylvania, and the Great Recession of 2008 which left some 150 of the city's residential dwellings vacant. In response to the glut of vacant buildings and the safety and neighborhood eyesores they became, the city instituted a vacant building fee and began charging owners for landscape maintenance. The vacant building fees begin at \$1,200 for the first year and rise each year until the yearly fee reaches \$10,200 in the tenth year of vacancy. By the most recent count, some 33 of those vacant dwellings have been either turned over to new owners or have been updated and are on the market. Additionally, 20 dwellings have been transferred to the city via the tax system, some of which will be sold. Six of the 20 are beyond repair and with the help of a \$120,000 NYS RESTORE NY 2016 grant are slated for demolition.

With regards to its aging infrastructure, the city is in the process of completing a \$100,000 Inflow and Infiltration study provided by a NYS DEC/Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) grant that will provide

the basis for an estimated \$99 million in repairs of the city's sewer system. In the meantime, talks have been initiated with the NYS EFC regarding a future \$20 million loan to begin the larger sewer rehab project. Upon the recommendation of the NYS DEC, extra monies are being raised with new sewer fees to help meet the upcoming needs of the city's sewer infrastructure.

The city's water lines are in better condition and one-third of that system has already been updated. The city's water is provided by a gravity fed, four-water body reservoir system supported by a 2016 \$4.2 million (USDA loan and grant) clarifier at the city's water plant.

As the city's growth has been constrained by the lack of vacant and developable land, talks are ongoing with the surrounding Town of Deerpark regarding the possible annexation of some 205.4 acres by the city from the surrounding town. These properties would allow for the ready development of currently vacant sites. Proposed development includes an industrial park near the city transfer station and a sorely needed hotel/restaurant complex near the Interstate 84, NYS Exit 1 exchange. This NYS location will draw visitors from the Marriot and Days Inn chain hotels a mile away in PA. Once in operation these facilities will also provide employment to Port Jervis and Town of Deerpark residents. This annexation would allow these unused sites to connect into the city's sewer lines as maintained by the city and the city's sewer plant which is maintained by New York City (NYC).

Though the city had its credit rating downgraded by Moody's Investment Service, first in 2015 from A1 to A3 with an unstable outlook, secondly, in 2016, the service downgraded the city's rating from A3 to Baa1, however this time with a stable outlook. Per Moody's most recent report the "downgrade reflects three years of deficit operations resulting in a narrow fund balance and liquidity. The rating also incorporates the city's limited but stabilizing tax base, below average wealth levels, and a growing debt burden. Credit strengths include the limited but stabilizing tax base and sources of liquidity outside the General Fund. Credit challenges include: multi-year deficits have narrowed reserve and liquidity position, an elevated debt burden and below average wealth indicators. The stable rating outlook reflects our expectation that management will continue to build reserves and liquidity in the medium-term. The outlook further reflects recent tax increases well in excess of state on levy increases which have contributed to improved physical balance."

Whereas the city should maintain a General Fund balance of approximately, \$1 million, the fund balance at the beginning of 2016 was approximately \$250,000. Now the General Fund now maintains a balance of some \$463,000. This improvement resulted from the Common Council having raised the city's taxes over 8% for each of the two previous years. As of Jan. 1, 2018, the city's employee NYS health insurance is expected to rise by 9.1%. Without other contractual increases or special projects, this increase represents a 4.3% tax increase. As it stands, the New York State Comptroller's Office, recognizes Port Jervis as being "fiscally stressed." As such, the city seeks to leverage grants and loans and find savings and external sources of revenue to increase its General Fund and overall liquidity.

For instance, the city is executing a contract with the solar firm Energy in the Bank (EIB) which will provide solar generated rated electricity to municipally owned buildings accompanied by a signing bonus to the city of \$400,000 and a lower usage rate. The company is locating the 1-megawatt array on four-acres of city property and will receive a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) whereas EIB will not pay any city tax for 15

years and will then pay the city \$40,000 for each of five years. At the end of that time, taxes paid will equal taxes owed over that 20-year time period.

In other areas of infrastructure improvements, the city owns approximately 120 of the outdoor decorative light poles and Siemens (a lighting company) is exchanging faulty previously installed induction lighting with LED's. The city is paying for these improvements through the energy savings produced by the new lights. As a result of an order by the Public Service Commission, Orange & Rockland (O&R) Utilities is exchanging a minimum of 2%, or 700 old lighting fixtures, including cobra heads, per year with high efficiency/low cost LEDs. Additionally, any bulb that goes dark and is reported by the police, is also being exchanged.

For health and safety reasons, particularly due to undetectable gas leaks that could lead to explosions, O&R is replacing old low pressure cast iron and steel gas lines with high pressure plastic piping throughout the city. This process will take approximately five years.

Another major city project is the \$12.3 million road widening and Tri-State bridge replacement due to begin in the spring of 2018. This project will take two construction seasons to complete and with the expansion from two to three lanes is expected ease traffic congestion of the 17-18,000 vehicles a day that currently cross this NYS DOT yellow-flagged bridge.

In the DRI downtown, the City is investing a total of \$1.36 million in the Promenade Project and a Front St. sidewalk project. For the Promenade, the city is investing \$90,000 and the balance is being sourced from NYS DOT and Transportation Program (TIP) funding. Indicating the intricacies of this project, within NYS DOT, this project is tracked under one project number and seven project identification numbers (PINS). The Front Street sidewalk improvements are provided by \$100,000 of NYS DOS DASNY funds. Altogether, this project will revamp a dangerous pedestrian crossing and produce a multi-use outdoor space which will encompass pleasant outdoor seating, event space with enhanced electrical and sound equipment and improved on-street parking.

Port Jervis is not an entitlement community and as such, competes for grant funding. Over the last 20-years, grants from various sources, investment of Port Jervis Community Development Agency revolving loan funds in façade updates, small business start-up and expansion and housing rehabs that benefit low-to-moderate income households, and city bonds and municipal contributions have contributed to various projects. As the city experiences a low-to-moderate income ratio of 64%, each project provides a city-wide benefit to residents.

Three of the most recent projects include the NYS Homes and Community Renewal – CDBG projects: Jersey Ave. Sewer Rehab of \$590,867 dollars to address a sewer main break that resulted in a NYS DEC Order on Consent, and the \$200,000 Microenterprise grant which supported six-businesses with equipment and operating expenses. As two of the businesses are managed by low-to-moderate income owners, the other four are in the process of hiring four (full-time equivalent) employees. Within 3-5 years, this group anticipates hiring some 25 full and part-time employees.

A housing rehab project for some 16 homes totaling some \$895,000 is being sourced by NYS Homes and Community Renewal – Affordable Housing Corporation grant of \$350,000 joined with partner RECAP of Middletown's HOME grant of \$380,000 with \$165,000 in Port Jervis Community Development Agency revolving loan funds.

Another source of capital provided by the community is volunteer time and energy. As evidenced by its all-volunteer ambulance and fire departments consisting of approximately 90 active members, the city has strong volunteer culture. Due to the city's location along two rivers, its urban core with manufacturing facilities, the commuter and freight train traffic, parkland with cliffs and heavy woodland and mutual aid responsibilities, the fire department is trained to respond to a wide range of emergencies. Due to the department's commitment to this training, the national ISO rating agency raised the Port Jervis Fire Department's rating from a 4 to a 3 which is consistent with the paid professional fire department in nearby Middletown. In comparison, many other area volunteer fire departments maintain ISO ratings of between 7-10. The Port Jervis ISO rating of 3 resulted in a direct reduction in commercial fire insurance rates. One local business reported a \$6,000 annual reduction as a result of this change.

In 2015, Operation P.J. PRIDE, a local coalition dedicated to substance abuse reduction within the city limits and its fiscal agent, Catholic Charities, received a federal Drug Free Communities grant of \$125,000 a year for each of five years (\$625,000). At the end of the first five-years, the coalition will apply for another five years of funding. Working with partners in all community sectors including law enforcement, health providers and the local school system, the coalition is working with evidence based programming to prevent drug use before it starts.

With the desire to expand outdoor recreational opportunities, in March 2016, Port Jervis re-opened its watershed property in the neighboring Town of Deerpark to the public for non-motorized activities (no horses). A favorite of the West Point Military Cycling Team, the trails received rave reviews from cyclists from a two-hour radius and have been the site of both off-road cycling and runs. Adjoining the city's Elks Brox Park of some 300 acres, the Watershed property of over 2,000 acres now boasts some 21.5 miles of marked trails with another 19 miles planned. Some trails were available due to previous activity but all had to be re-initiated and marked. All of this work was performed by volunteers, many belonging to the recently formed Outdoor Club of Port Jervis, a 501c3 organization. In recognition of its placemaking work, in June 2017, the club received the first-place prize of \$1,000 from the Orange County Citizens Foundation. The club is now working on linkages between the city's downtown and the trails beginning in Elks Brox Park and exploring ways to make some of the trails ADA accessible.

Linkages and wayfinding signage is also being discussed for access from the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal trail which may be accessed from the Heritage Trail soon to arrive in Middletown, NY with a linkage through Howell's NY. These linkages will provide hikers and bikers a path from the Metro North Station in Port Jervis to the Metro North station located in the Town of Wallkill which surrounds the city of Middletown, the 2016 DRI Mid-Hudson REDC awardee. Separately, the D&H Canal walking trail is envisioned by that group's volunteers to become a 108-mile long continuous trail from Eddyville, NY on the Rondout Creek near Kingston, NY to Honesdale, PA.

- 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.

Within walking distance of the downtown, local employers including Kolmar Labs, a custom cosmetic manufacturer, Bon Secours Community Hospital and affiliated medical offices, the local school district, and a number of manufacturing, graphic design and rehabilitation locations employ an estimated 1,700 people.

According to the U.S. Census' 2015 update, Port Jervis' unemployment rate is estimated to be 9.4%, which is twice that of Orange County's at 4.3% (May 2017, NYS DOL). Understanding that the years of the city depending upon manufacturing and transportation to provide its citizens with employment have passed, the city turned its attention to the development of other employment opportunities. The Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) titled the *Port Jervis Delaware River Revitalization Plan (PJ-DRRP)* was originally adopted in 2009 and then was re-adopted in 2015. The plan suggested that the city work to expand its economic base by developing its cultural heritage and access to nature. One suggestion was the installation of a natural White Water Kayak Park (WWKP) in the city-owned section of the Delaware River that abuts the city and the development of a new Waterfront District. As a result of this plan, in 2012 the Orange County Planning Department produced a preliminary economic impact report on the WWKP, estimating that when the WWKP and the supportive city infrastructure were complete, 500,000 to 1.6 million visitors would visit the city thereby generating some 400 jobs and \$10-33 million in annual revenues.

To date, \$198,733.17 in fees made available in grants from NYS DOS, the Orange County IDA, private citizens and the city have been expended for studies and surveys as required by the NYS DEC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ultimately by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), the official permitting agency. On-site evaluation revealed the presence of the state and federally protected dwarf wedge mussel in the project area. This discovery resulted in a severe project slowdown. With scarce resources, from the beginning in late-2000's, the city stepped cautiously through the requirements, hiring multiple engineers and scientists to comply with the agencies' requests as funding was available. In March 2017, an onsite meeting with all active parties gathered in Port Jervis where a go-no go discussion regarding the project was held. After a day of discussion, the consensus was to move forward and gather the final information necessary for permit application to the USACOE. This most recent step is estimated to cost an additional \$100,000 the funding of which will be carried by the city and is expected to be available in July 2017.

With an abundance of natural resources within and surrounding the city and few prospects of large businesses moving to the city, municipal leaders have been using the guidance provided by the PJ-DRRP as the blueprint for activities moving forward. With the expectation that future growth will include a few large employers, more common will be a number of smaller firms employing five-ten-twenty-three persons.

As the question, "Where can I go hiking?" is the number one request of Orange County Tourism and as more outdoor oriented enthusiasts discover Port Jervis and the opportunities its Watershed Park offers with its 21.5 to 40.5 miles of varied hiking and biking experience levels, it is expected that more businesses will open in the city to cater to this interested segment of health minded individuals, Millennials and families.

In the downtown, job growth is pending the completion of building rehabs. Currently, the downtown is full of chain link fence, dumpsters and brown papered windows. In addition to the long existing businesses, the most recent rehab and opening was Foundry 42+, which includes a coffee bar, event space and sales of new and repurposed home furnishings and decorations. With its clean lines and "Salon Saturday's" supported by a \$5,000 grant from Orange County Tourism, top-flight musicians from Nashville and elsewhere are treated

to an Actor Studio like interview while entertaining some 75 attendees in the intimate upstairs event space. Currently assisting the owner are 5 part-time employees.

Two doors away, a new craft brewery is expected to open in the fall of 2017. Supported by an SBA loan, private equity and Port Jervis Community Development Agency (PJEDA) funding, this \$1.2 million rehab and business is projecting the need for 15 employees within a 2-3 year period.

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.

The city and its downtown is wholly walkable and bikeable. The city's health food store is within the target DRI area and the city's affordable grocery store, the Port Jervis Market Place, is located approximately four blocks away. Currently all other large grocery stores and large box stores including the area's Walmart and K Mart are located in nearby PA and NJ.

In a 100-year old city that originated in the horse and buggy days, automobile parking is limited within the downtown. To begin to address this issue, \$100,000 in NYS DOS DASNY funds will widen sidewalks in the downtown and institute diagonal parking. In the future, and as one of the city's desired DRI projects, a primary centralized downtown municipal lot would provide space for a 2-3 story parking garage with 100-150 spaces.

Of particular difficulty, is though the city owns the 40+ Riverside Park location of the proposed WWKP and it is within feet of the city's DRI target area, this parcel is located across the railroad tracks which bisect the city from north to south. A formerly open roadway joining the park with the DRI downtown is barred by a traffic gate controlled by the railroad. With only two official crossings in inconvenient locations, the railroad states this gate is there for safety reasons. However discouraged, instead of detouring through an inconvenient underpass, residents regularly directly crisscross the tracks in multiple spots to more quickly reach their homes on one side and businesses on the other while dragging their bikes and baby carriages with them.

Alternately, pedestrian bridges up and over the railroad tracks, or a full service under the tracks vehicle and pedestrian tunnel would make the Riverside/WWKP area directly accessible to the downtown. Additionally, with a long-term lease with the railroad, parking along the tracks now common during special events could be used regularly by commuters and visitors. Preliminary discussions with the railroad indicated a long-term lease would be made available to the city for with the advent of a pedestrian bridge over the tracks.

Adjacent to this location is where the city's new Promenade with re-vamped ingress and egress will minimize pedestrian accidents with street calming measures, a fountain, new benches and greenery. This project is a joint venture between the city and re-allocated federal earmarks through the NYS DOT totaling over \$1.26 million dollars. It is contained within the DRI downtown area from Fowler to Sussex Street (map)

which is traditionally closed for special events and festivals. One popular event is the September Fall Foliage event which in 2016 drew over 50 vendors and over 10,000 visitors.

The city is extremely accessible. Port Jervis has three senior residences, totaling 272 units. The city's Dial-a-Bus runs five-days a week, shuttling riders through the city on their errands. The senior center at the Farnum House provides hot meals to those who arrive and otherwise, volunteers deliver Meals-on-Wheels to those who are shut in.

Millennials are finding the city to be a place to Live, Work and Play without the need to drive. They are some of the most recent business owners and are investing their ambitions and energy in rehabbing homes for themselves, hiking the trails and volunteering for community activities.

- 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.

Recognizing the need to formalize plans and policies to guide its burgeoning development, in 2015, the City of Port Jervis took the initiative to become Orange County's first municipality to become both a Complete Streets Community and a Greenway Compact Community. Since that time, Port Jervis has received some \$33,000 in funding assistance through the Orange County Planning and Health departments to install wayfinding signs, outdoor benches, dog walker stations, refresh the city's Veteran's Park with re-seeded lawns and greenery and pour a sidewalk along the city's centralized Church Street Park. Additionally, an Orange County Planning Department Complete Streets grant also funded a consultant's report that produced three options for the city's strategic business corridors which encompass the DRI area.

Through a \$7,500 grant from the Hudson Valley Greenway and assistance of Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress which provided the \$7,500 match in kind, a cooperative grant to the city of Port Jervis paid for planning reports for the City of Port Jervis, Village of Haverstraw, and the Village of Wappingers Falls. These reports detailed the capabilities of each municipality and the challenges and opportunities each municipality faces.

With the Neversink and Delaware Rivers bordering the city, Port Jervis is considered wholly waterfront. As the city's last Comprehensive Plan update occurred in the late 1970's and with the natural White Water Kayak Park verging on the final permit plan application, the city was awarded a \$50,000 grant from NYS DOS under Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). Matched in cash by the city, the formal kickoff meeting led by the consultant's will occur the end of June 2017. The update process is expected to take 12-18 months. Using the 2009/2015 LWRP as a base, this update process will include city-wide visioning meetings, the consideration of the establishment of a Waterfront District and institution of form-based codes where applicable. While supporting business and employment, code implementation will encourage the development of rateables for the city while at the same time balancing quality of life items with the

institution of climate smart priorities. This plan will also incorporate a review of water run off issues per a review of the city's codes by the Natural Lands Trust via a grant by the William Penn Foundation and consider transit-oriented development (TOD) as applicable. To address the upcoming need for visitor lodging in and around the city, Bed & Breakfast options as well as Air B&B situations will also be considered.

To both beautify and combat climate change, the city is awaiting the funding decision for the 2016 NYS DEC Community and Urban Forestry Grant for \$50,000 to complete a tree inventory and maintenance plan. The city's Shade Tree Commission is being revived and Climate Smart Communities and Solarize projects are beginning to be discussed. Ahead of these items, rooftop solar displays are becoming more common. Businesses, such as the craft brewery are taking steps to collect and filter rainwater for floor cleaning and other appropriate actions. In particular, this project channels rainwater that would otherwise pool and weaken the surrounding structural walls of multiple buildings.

Though the city does not yet have a formal Business Improvement District (BID), an informal "BID Light" is forming organically among the DRI downtown businesses. One motivator of this movement was the recent MicroEnterprise CDBG project where participants completed a 12-session SCORE entrepreneurial class where strangers became collaborators. Since the class finished in June 2016, businesses have shared resources such as equipment and expertise, co-advertised and referred business to one another.

One new downtown business owner took the Port Jervis Farmer's Market on as a project. The market was moved to a more visible location, monies were invested in advertising, and a fall fundraiser was held garnering over \$2,000. The market is also supported with a \$2,000 grant from the Orange County which pays for the market manager's salary and some county wide advertising. Otherwise, food vouchers are made available to seniors and veterans and the establishment of an EBT system will allow the use of SNAP benefits will continue this year for vulnerable residents. This year, education regarding nutritional benefits of natural foods and preparation and preservation will be added. Last year the market ran with three vendors. In June 2017, the market will open with 11 vendors.

Regarding housing, Port Jervis' home sales and rental markets are minimally 10-15% less than Orange County overall. Purchase price points range from a one-family that is habitable but in need of upgrades from \$70,000, to beautifully maintained homes in the upper \$200k's are common. Rentals in Port Jervis range from studios for \$500-\$650 per month, one bedrooms at \$800-\$900, and two bedrooms from \$900-\$1100. The Port Jervis Section 8 is maintained by the PJCDA and subsidizes housing for some 200 Port Jervis families. Over 75% of the families on the program have either elderly or disabled members. The agency also brought a public first-time homebuyers seminar to the city in 2017.

Port Jervis will not be pursuing a land bank, as vacant buildings in salvageable condition, once they reach the market, are being purchased and rehabbed by current and new residents.

The city supports Fair Housing law, is an EEO employer, has an ADA committee that meets quarterly and has established the City Clerk-Treasurer as the Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) coordinator.

Recognizing the need of students to safely and actively navigate their way to the Middle School, the High School and one of the two elementary schools, the city is in the process of completing an 11,000 linear foot,

\$900,000 NYS DOT Safe Sidewalks to School project of which the city will contribute \$95,000 in CHIPS funding.

In addition to the Watershed Trails, the city holds a 6.5-mile Heritage Trail which travels through the DRI area, a 2.5-mile fitness loop around the core of the city and through the DRI area, a 0.9-mile walk along the D&H Canal which will be filled with water and provide a still water boat/kayak training location in warm weather and skating when heavily iced, and a 1-mile ADA loop around the historic Laurel Grove Cemetery. All totaled, these 10.9 miles of walking trails provide ready access to visitors of all ages and abilities.

- 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.

This DRI application is part of the natural progression of the city's 2003 Downtown Strategic Plan, its 2009 (re-adopted in 2015) Delaware River Revitalization Plan and the 2016 Complete Streets Plan. Public outreach was gathered for each of these projects and will be a sizeable portion of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code update. In the Fall 2016, the mayor called for volunteers to staff the committee dedicated to this project and 19 answered the call. Members include council people, the city recreation and building inspector, economic development, planning board representation, community and business owners.

Though financially stressed, the city's 9-member Common Council is addressing the needs of the city with its depleted General Fund for additional revenues as it supported the stepped increase in yearly city taxes above the NYS tax cap, increased sewer fees to pay for sewer maintenance and rehab as recommended by the NYS DEC, sought additional revenue sources (the sale of city owned properties) and savings (alternate energy usage and conservation). All of these actions encouraged public participation at twice-a-month meetings and during public hearing opportunities.

The city also posts projects and reports on its website for public view and comment. Public meetings are widely advertised through multiple mediums including social media to all segments of the community.

The DRI downtown businesses are working to advertise not only their individual businesses but Port Jervis as a whole. The craft brewery is selling mugs and T-shirts before it has even opened its doors. A new website: *Discover Port Jervis* holds videos and information about businesses and things to do including hiking and biking on the trails.

Mayor Kelly B. Decker will be the local lead to initiate a committee and will be supported by the executive director of the Port Jervis Community Development Agency and applicable city department heads.

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.

As outlined above, transformative projects in Port Jervis' DRI target area include the construction of the natural in-Delaware River White Water Kayak Park (WWKP) with both in-water and landside components (\$5 million-estimated). This project has maintained the support of the community, interested agencies and federal permitting authorities over some 10-years and soon to be almost \$300,000 in initial engineering, reporting and survey costs. In 2012, the Orange County Planning Department produced a preliminary economic impact report on the WWKP, estimating that when the WWKP and the supportive city infrastructure were complete, some 500,000 to 1.6 million visitors would visit the city thereby generating some 400 jobs and \$10-33 million in annual revenues. To a city which currently maintains a 64% low-to-moderate income ratio, this would truly be a transformative project.

By August 2017, the monies necessary to develop the final permitting application are expected to be made available. Concurrently, community members are beginning WWKP fundraising by collecting deposit bottles. A container has been sourced from a local salvage yard and will be placed within view of a police camera. The container will be wrapped in a vinyl cover designed by a volunteer and donated by a local vinyl sign firm that produces signage for major sporting events, including the Super Bowl. Proceeds will be donated to the city and deposited in an account already designated for WWKP costs. With construction funds available, this project conceivably could begin construction the summer of 2018 or 2019.

Unfettered access over or under the railroad tracks that bisect the city and separate vehicle and foot traffic between the DRI downtown from the WWKP location across the tracks next to the river is a necessity. Two pedestrian bridges, one each at Fowler St. and Sussex St. which carry an estimated cost of \$1.5 million have been suggested by the railroad. The alternative preference would be an under the railroad small auto and pedestrian tunnel estimated at \$4.5 million. This construction would occur at the same time as the WWKP.

An additional linkage between East Main St., to North Street, along the riverside railroad track property would add emergency and additional event traffic access directly to the Riverside/WWKP. This project was preliminarily engineered and was estimated at \$1.2 million.

Additionally, DRI funds would be directed to the construction of a three-story, 150 space city-owned parking garage on a city owned lot in the DRI downtown. The structure would add to the limited downtown parking currently available and based on DRI regulations, could provide revenue to the city for the facility's operations and to the benefit of the DRI downtown maintenance needs.

To complete the DRI's downtown transformation, construction of the city's Turntable Train Museum would occur on the city-owned Erie Railroad Turntable site. As the largest working railroad turntable in the

northeast U.S., above ground structures utilizing railroad cars would hold the collections, provide interpretive space and dining car restaurants. The local Tri-States Railway Preservation Society, a 501c3, has been collecting artifacts for years and has been sourcing railroad cars to use in the museum. Preliminary designs estimate costs to range around \$1 million for this project.

Tied by an original tow path, visitors would walk from the Turntable Museum to the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal Trail which by itself is 0.9 miles long. The D&H Canal Trail has been cleared and packed down and the canal basin has been cleared of deadwood and is able to retain water. Ideally, this stretch of trail would be made fully ADA compliant, allowing all visitors to enjoy a walk in the woods next to a working historic piece of transportation history. This project is estimated at \$1 million.

Funds over and above the \$10 million DRI funds would be sourced by the city, primarily through bonding.

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

Port Jervis Mayor Kelly B. Decker will lead this project as supported city staff and by the Port Jervis Community Development Agency (PJCD), the authorized sub-recipient already responsible to administer the city's grants. Established in 1981, the PJCD is a public benefit corporation, responsible by definition and a yearly service contract with the city to administer the city's grants. Experienced in project management processes, the PJCD coordinates activities with the mayor, Common Council, the city's corporation counsel, applicable department heads and consultants. In particular, the PJCD coordinates activities with the City Clerk-Treasurer, chief financial officer and the DPW director.

Through a streamlining process already in motion, internally the PJCD will have additional staff time available to assist with additional work that the DRI award will require. The city, at its discretion, may also hire additional staff to manage the multiple contracts that could result from this grant award. Quite simply, adjustments will be made and priorities will be ordered accordingly.

As evidenced by the work already performed and already in the pipeline, the city's departments, staff and Common Council work together to address the city's needs while balancing the practical everyday realities every city faces.

It is a shared belief among city servants and citizens, that the city can only move forward by making investments in its infrastructure, transportation structures and economic development. The steady continuity of city department heads and staff carry projects through multiple administrations. For instance, the White Water Kayak Park project has been maintained since the late-2000's over the multiple terms of two different mayors and the turnover of a number of Common Council member seats.

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

In the Mid-Hudson region, much attention is paid to its primary waterbody, the Hudson River. However, the Delaware River that borders Port Jervis and the three states of NY, PA and NJ also carries great recreational and tourism opportunities.

Throughout the U.S., there are 150 designated water trails, of which the Delaware is one. At 330 miles, and while supplying fresh water to almost 16 million people including residents of NYC and Philadelphia, the Delaware River is the longest un-dammed river east of the Mississippi. If it were not so clean, being a very particular aquatic bivalve mollusk, the dwarf wedge mussel would not thrive on the banks of Port Jervis. The water trail, which is divided into three segments, covers almost 200 of those 330 miles ranging from Hancock, NY to Morrisville, PA and Trenton, NJ. Of the three segments, Lower, Middle and Upper, Port Jervis, which is the northern bookend to the Middle Delaware is also known as the “Gateway to the Upper Delaware.” Port Jervis’ easy accessibility to the Metro NY area provides a launching pad to economic development of Sullivan and Orange Counties. To the counties’ benefit, relationships have been already built on the common interests of protection of the Delaware while increasing tourism and economic development.

In 2016, the federal government recognized the importance of this waterway as well as evidenced by President Obama’s signature on the Delaware River Conservation Act. This act created the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The act is part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements Act for the Nation Act and it provides for a conduit of federal funds to protect, maintain and restore habitat while advancing balanced economic development.

The unique combination of natural beauty, historic locations and accessibility was also recognized by National Geographic as in 2016 the *NatGeo Scenic, Wild Delaware* website launched. One of only a handful of NatGeo sites around the globe, the objective of the designation is to highlight the multiple unique characteristics of place. One definition used by NatGeo in support of its brand of placemaking there known as geotourism is, “Tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place – its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.”

The City of Port Jervis respects its heritage as a manufacturing and transportation center and seeks to incorporate this heritage into its economic development through the establishment of a Train Museum and formalization of its D&H Canal trail. Another example is Port Jervis’ Laurel Grove Cemetery established in 1856 now on the I Love NY Haunted History Tour. But the past is past. Now the city is actively changing the focus of its economy from one based on the past to one firmly pointed towards the future. This future is now edging into sight and this future is bright. It is a future where Port Jervis is internationally known as a four-season outdoor tourist recreation destination that draws hundreds of thousands of people to Live, Work and Play in Orange County, the wider Mid-Hudson and New York State overall . The impact of this Downtown Revitalization Initiative award would be immediate and positive and result in a sincere change in fortunes for this little city in the country as it would bring this verging future into a concrete reality very, very quickly.

CITY OF PORT JERVIS 2017 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE (DRI) MAP

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