

MID-HUDSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE.

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: Village of Haverstraw

Downtown Name: Historic Downtown Haverstraw a.k.a. The Village

County: Rockland

Downtown Description Summary:

Downtown Haverstraw is as historically rich as it is ethnically and culturally diverse. Known to locals as “the Village,” Downtown Haverstraw is set amidst a breathtaking natural landscape at the widest point of the Hudson River and in the shadow of the Palisades Escarpment’s crowning peak High Tor Mountain. The Village has a growing high-density population of over 12,000 people on a land area of two square miles, much of which is within a 10 minute walk of the Hudson River. Haverstraw is not more than a 20 minute walk from its center to its furthest boundary. Downtown is certainly compact and so is its long and fascinating history.

Haverstraw’s Vaudeville-era Broadway opera houses and stages hosted the theatrical debut of George M. Cohan, who then went on to create Broadway as we now know it. Saving High Tor from quarrying was not only the impetus for Pulitzer Prize winner Maxwell Anderson’s 1936 play named for the mountain, but led to the creation of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the creation of the first made-for-television film of the same name starring Bing Crosby and a budding Julie Andrews in 1956. Babe Ruth came to Haverstraw to star in one of many silent films made in and near the Village at facilities operated by founder of Paramount Adolph Zukor and theatre magnate and MGM creator Marcus Loew. Edward Hopper and the Hudson River School artists painted here. The Village remains a lure for historians, creatives and for those seeking a distinctive respite from mainstream suburban lifestyle.

Haverstraw is now, and was always, a landing point for New Americans since its settlement as an outpost of the surrounding Dutch colony in the seventeenth century. Beginning in the very early part of the nineteenth century and as the founding brickmaking industry took root, Dutch, Italians, migrants of African ancestry, European Jews, Germans, Slavs and Irish made the historic blocks of homes and tenements theirs. When Richard VerValen invented his brickmaking machine in 1852, new workers streamed to Haverstraw by ferries that plied the Hudson and via the newly laid railroads that snaked through and into the heart of Downtown. Haverstraw made billions of brick per year and is chiefly responsible for providing the building material that built New York City and other East Coast metropolises. It is said that by the turn of the century the Village hosted more entertainment venues, public houses and startup businesses per capita than any Hudson River downtown.

A blending of culture, food, religion and politics in tight quarters led to innovations in the arts and business in such a way as to make Haverstraw a microcosm of New York and the booming industrial America itself. African American brickyard workers are said to have inspired Cohan to incorporate Jazz into his first Vaudeville acts. By the post-WWII era, garment manufacturers and other business replaced brickmaking and Caribbean, Central and South American Latinos began to call the Village home.

Today, Downtown Haverstraw citizens represent an ethnically diverse set of New Americans as well as generations of descendants from earlier migrant waves. The Village's commercial corridors are bustling with small and family-owned businesses, light manufacturing, restaurants, entertainment, recreation and places of worship. While Haverstraw has experienced economic difficulty since the decline of its manufacturing base, Downtown is unique in that it has largely escaped the perils of urban renewal, leaving intact significant sections of its historic buildings, a varied housing stock of rental apartments, townhomes and single-family homes all comprising a vibrant, urban fabric. Unlike other northern suburbs, the Village boasts a high density of population and business, a human-scale and walkable street grid, the longest publically accessible waterfront in the mid-Hudson region, and Port Authority direct and local bus service as well as commuter ferry access to the MetroNorth Hudson Line and Grand Central Terminal.

Downtown Haverstraw is the prime candidate for funds from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. For all of its positive attributes and vital underpinnings of its future success, the Village now lacks very basic needs. Residents do not have walking access to a grocery store containing fresh and healthy produce. Downtown is missing connectivity between successful business ventures and local institutions. Significant opportunities exist to leverage Haverstraw's natural assets, its transportation infrastructure and proximity to New York City and the Hudson Valley, its walkability and its flourishing population to create a truly dynamic, interconnected, 24/7 downtown business district that serves visitors and itself simultaneously.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines. **Answers to each question are limited to one page each.**

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

Because of Haverstraw's compact size, the Downtown Neighborhood encompasses a significant portion of the municipal area. More specifically, Downtown is defined as the blocks contained by the Hudson River to the east, Girling Drive to the south, the CSX freight rail corridor to the west and Westside Avenue to the north. Commercial corridors are primarily along Maple Avenue, Broadway, Main Street and New Main Street and are the focus of this application. Contained within the area is the central business district, dense blocks of housing and corner stores, the waterfront, and government, academic and institutional campuses. Please follow this Google link:
<https://www.google.com/maps/@41.1964898,-73.9648735,16z>

- 2) Size.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing, or increasing, population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown.

Downtown contains nearly 8,000 people in less than one square mile. Since 2000, the population increased 20% primarily due to waterfront development as well as various small infill development projects throughout. Several large rental and condominium buildings, as well as townhomes, have been constructed at the existing Haverstraw-Ossining ferry terminal, attracting commuting Millennials and empty-nesters alike. Known as the Harbors, these midrise luxury buildings are the only examples of new development offering NYC-style amenities in Rockland County. As such, absorption rates of new units are on par with new

development in Westchester and Hudson (NJ) Counties proving that strong demand exists for dense, multifamily, transit-oriented development in Haverstraw. Cross-Hudson commuting patterns should be noted; an emerging reverse commute population exists between Ossining and Haverstraw and more study is necessary to determine if this cohort can be expanded via new economic development initiatives.

Haverstraw draws visitors from Orange, Westchester, New Jersey, New York City and internationally. Downtown Inns and Beds & Breakfast host New York City residents and foreign tourists that use Haverstraw as a stepping off point to Hudson Valley points of interest. Often, visitors whose primary destination is New York City use the Village as their home base and commute into Manhattan for sightseeing. This proves a cheaper vacation option than reserving a New York City hotel room.

No other preserved downtown exists in the North Rockland catchment area (including the Towns of Stony Point and Haverstraw), which is bounded by the Palisades Escarpment mountains to the south and Harriman State Park to the north. This area contains nearly 50,000 people while additional residential-only areas to the south in Clarkstown contain over 10,000 people. For all of these residents, Downtown is no more than a 10- to 20-minute drive from home. As a business district and restaurant row, the Village primarily competes with downtown Nyack and New City, which are surrounded by low-density suburban residential neighborhoods of significantly higher area median income than North Rockland.

- 3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential.** Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

While Downtown has struggled to attract large-scale private development of new offices, housing and retail, investments in existing buildings by restaurateurs and retailers improved and restored mixed-use facades significantly reducing the perception of blight. Capitalizing on the success of a recently minted restaurant row, the Village municipal government is moving to invest in streetscape improvements on New Main and Main Streets and core portions of Broadway. Downtown boasts a cluster of restaurants and food vendors so ethnically eclectic and diverse, diners' food choices are more indicative of a large urban restaurant district than a relatively small Hudson Valley downtown. Via state funds from the New York State Department of Transportation, the Village is expanding sidewalks, installing heritage-styled streetlamps and street furniture and making changes to enhance pedestrian safety with modernized crosswalks by borrowing from complete streets design guidelines. Village-wide raised crosswalks and speed humps have significantly reduced the incidence of motorist speeding providing safe haven for thousands of walking children and their families. Additional investments are needed to deliver true complete streets to the downtown and to explore the concept of pedestrian-only plazas and outdoor meeting areas. Options to explore European-style traffic calming measures such as pedestrian/vehicle mixing zones known as "woonerfs" are under consideration.

With over \$1.5 million invested, the State University of New York created an extension of its main campus in the downtown core area adjacent to Village Hall. There SUNY operates an advanced computer tech lab, emerging co-working space, 3D printing smart lab, career center and Business Innovation Mall. In the same building, known locally as the Stone Building, HRHCare non-profit health center has expanded its operations in Downtown Haverstraw trebling its office space, increasing the number of its employees and providing affordable and quality health care options to Village residents. Significant opportunities for

further investment in the academic and healthcare cluster exist, particularly at Village-owned land currently containing surface parking directly adjacent to the Stone Building.

After Hurricane Sandy, the Village made investments in its waterfront parks and boating access facilities. They not only restored that which was destroyed but enhanced landscape, public meeting and recreation areas, and reinforced bulkheads to prepare for the next storm. These investments have attracted an annual arts festival and new waterfront dining. Harbors at Haverstraw developer Ginsburg Development Company worked with the State of New York to create what is the first phase of a waterfront esplanade that is to flank the entire Downtown waterfront and connect nearby residential areas with Main Street and the New York Waterway Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry.

The Village now controls much of the existing shoreline due to a recent agreement with NRG Corporation granting a transfer of riparian rights for land surrounding Bowline Pond. The agreement opens the opportunity for new investments in river-focused recreation and new waterfront development. The land, included as part of the Village's waterfront greenway, is to become a component of the Village's Henry Hudson Quadricentennial Park, the final piece in the Village's shoreline promenade. It is part of a larger effort by the State to create a continuous linear pedestrian pathway from New York Harbor to Albany on both shores of the Hudson River. The Village received a New York State Department of State grant of \$1M to begin the creation of the promenade, and requires another \$1.5-2.0 M for completion. The promenade passes through Emeline Park, jointly created by the Village and Scenic Hudson to expand public access to the riverfront at the foot of Main Street and to secure land for future construction of recreation and transportation piers.

The New York State Department of Transportation made a \$30M investment in Village car and heavy truck access at Short Clove Road to replace an outmoded and very dangerous at-grade freight rail crossing. The project is part of the state and federal quiet zone initiative, which aims to improve rail crossing safety and reduce the need to blow train horns as trains approach at-grade crossings, significantly improving resident quality of life. The Short Clove Road bridge and access ramp connects Route 9W, West Street and Maple Avenue and has unintentionally created a more prominent gateway to Downtown from the south. Future investments are needed to catalyze greater pedestrian access points, safety improvements and mixed-used development at this gateway focal point and along the Maple Avenue corridor connecting to the core business district. The Village is considering constructing a vehicle roundabout at this gateway in order to calm traffic and develop a more prominent entrance to Downtown. Additional opportunities exist to invest in streets in order to create a more vibrant pedestrian retail environment. Bustling, human-scale streetscapes are a promising sign of our times in the most successful urban downtowns in America.

- 4) Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

The Stone Building, in the core of Downtown, is the nexus of current and future job growth. The Village is a potential proving ground for business concepts in hospitality, artisanal food production and craft, agriculture and new technology. The SUNY Rockland 3D printing Smart Lab, Business Innovation Mall and co-work space brings together support services offered by iCAN, Rockland BOCES, the Small Business Development Council, Tomorrow's Workplace, the Workforce Investment Board and the Women's Enterprise Development

Center. Combined with HRHCare healthcare offices and clinic, adjacent Village municipal offices, this incipient campus cluster in the center of Downtown offers the chance encounters between professionals of different sectors now known to be so important to marketplace innovation.

Various underutilized vacant properties throughout and near Downtown and the Stone Building offer significant opportunities for further development of space for light manufacturing, offices and workforce housing. A craft beer brewery is opening at Garner Arts Center in nearby Garnerville, amid a cluster of artist lofts and studios and light manufacturing facilities (such as cabinet makers and Broadway scenic design shops), all housed in an early nineteenth century brick dye mill. Garner Arts is located less than a 25 minute walk or 8 minute bike ride along a route that follows the Minisceongo Creek, a significant potential pedestrian dedicated right of way. A safe, physical connection to Downtown, Garner and the Ferry landing is an important first step in feeding the burgeoning art and craft cluster here. Together, Garner and the Village seek to mimic success witnessed at repurposed industrial space in Brooklyn, Kingston, Beacon and beyond.

A large-scale residential apartment complex at the Harbors development and elsewhere supports a growing maintenance, property management and service staff. The Village is primed for new development at other waterfront locations and in the core business district that supports the growth of similar job opportunities as well as jobs in construction and trades. Because of the closeness between buildings in Downtown, real opportunities exist to explore thermal district energy and smart grid technology as well as distributed energy solutions. The Village is a prime location to take advantage of thermal energy produced by the NRG Bowline Generating Station, which now dumps waste heat into the Hudson River damaging riverine wildlife and contributing to efficiency loss and high carbon emissions.

- 5) Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The Village is best known for its extremely walkable street grid, which supports a large number of car-free households, and its eclectic mix of historic architecture from stately Second Empire mansions on Hudson Avenue and First Street to small Village Colonial homes from the eighteenth century, to grand mixed-use corner bank buildings in the business district. A large number of existing downtown buildings are zoned for mixed-use, but contain residential uses on the ground floor, thus offering the opportunity for new retail in the future. Large parcels exist along commercial business district corridors, particularly Main Street and Broadway, where new development can act to not only activate the street front but further connect the Downtown core to the waterfront and to other nodes of business activity.

A former 5 & 10 Ben Franklin store stands vacant at the center of the Broadway business district. This historic and architecturally significant property is a prime location for a healthy and affordable food market, affordable housing and office space. New development here has the potential to catalyze additional retail development on Broadway by introducing an anchor retailer that creates a critical mass of pedestrians and shoppers.

Haverstraw sits at the terminus of the most-traveled cycling route in the region: Route 9W. A dedicated pedestrian and cycling pathway extends from the Village south to Nyack and along the waterfront. Major prospects exist to make improved connections between important Village focal points and recreational areas and to tie together existing hiking, cycling and pedestrian pathways such as the Hudson Quadricentennial Park, High Tor Mountain, the riverfront esplanade and Town of Haverstraw, West Haverstraw and Rockland County waterfront parks and recreation areas.

- 6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

Village Hall supports a number of policies that enhance quality of life Downtown. Inclusionary housing policies ensure that new development contains a portion of affordable housing. Where possible, the Village acquired acres of land on the waterfront and in the central business district that can host future mixed-use and transit oriented development. Village Hall is submitting a Consolidated Funding Application to New York State in order to fund an update to its existing comprehensive plan, development district rules, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and to make significant improvements to its zoning code.

The Village is open to exploring the implementation of Form Based Codes as well as historic preservation laws to enhance and preserve Downtown's livability and its historic building stock. Village government is willing to rethink or reimagine its zoning to build off of its current urban form, to encourage the vibrancy of its downtown and to attract Millennials that are beginning to raise families in the suburbs but want to preserve a more urban lifestyle. It is very important that the development process is streamlined and clear in order to incentivize the construction of new mixed-use buildings that also meet the collective goals of Downtown residents and reduce gaps left in the urban fabric from past inappropriate development and demolition.

In today's business environment, which is driven more and more by Millennial professionals, walk-to-coffee urbanism is standard in all successful, vibrant and growing business districts and mixed-use enclaves. As an increased share of professionals work from home, they are seeking inspiring workspaces, cafes, bars and meeting places known as the elusive "third place" – a work and leisure space alternative to the living room, home office, or traditional workplace. Workers are conducting business more and more during non-traditional hours. Village Hall hopes to attract businesses that help to transition Downtown toward 24/7 business activity.

With additional guidance, Village Hall is seeking to support progressive, new and improved policies that expand transportation options, foster complete streets redesign, and encourage increased housing, office, hospitality, entertainment and retail options for residents and visitors alike. Haverstraw aims to encourage bike and car share options, co-work space and flexible property uses that encourage business development, creativity and art, and unique restaurant and retail spaces. The Village supports expanded transit service and voted to approve a formal resolution to support off-peak and expanded Haverstraw-Ossining ferry service. Given that the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry is the first cross-Hudson passenger ferry service in the Hudson Valley since World War II, and knowing that the service is a model for

new feeder services to commuter rail, the Village believes State leaders should consider new efforts to expand and enhance the service. The ferry has witnessed steady ridership increases in its 15-year history. Now is the time to plan for the ferry's future including new service destinations, expanded peak and off-peak service, and a more consistent schedule. Village Hall is open to creating new local development entities and partnering with non-profit and for-profit development organizations and businesses to achieve these goals.

- 7) Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implement 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.

With the support of the following organizations, Village of Haverstraw Mayor Michael Kohut will be the local lead of the DRI Planning Committee and will secure commitment from local leaders and stakeholders dedicated to implementing a well-defined strategic investment plan. The Mayor will coordinate the work of outside experts and the Planning Committee.

Scenic Hudson, SUNY Rockland, Historic Hudson River Towns, Ginsburg Development Company, Rockland County Tourism, Haverstraw RiverArts, Garner Arts Center, Rockland Business Association, Pattern for Progress, Town of Haverstraw (Supervisor Howard Philips), County of Rockland (County Executive Ed Day), The Haverstraw Collaborative (containing over 40 social services organizations), the Haverstraw Center, Greenway Conservancy, North Rockland Central School District, Keep Rockland Beautiful, North Rockland Rowing Club, Rockland County Historical Society, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Tilcon, NRG Corp., Haverstraw Brick Museum, and others not listed here.

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

Two-thirds of Downtown residents are of Latino descent, many of whom are New Americans recently arrived to the New York metro region. While rising faster than the State of New York as a whole, area median incomes lag surrounding suburban neighborhoods. Over 60% of Downtown residents are considered low to moderate income earners. The percentage of Haverstraw Village residents that hold a bachelor's degree is well below the state average. Focusing on improving the academic sector Downtown will markedly improve residents' exposure to education opportunity. To say the impact of a \$10M infusion of funds for planning and economic development is significant is an understatement. The DRI has the real potential to meaningfully improve quality of life and raise incomes for Downtown citizens.

The Village's sister rivertown is Ossining, New York. The two downtowns are connected via the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry. Ginsburg Development Companies (GDC) is active building new multifamily and mixed-use buildings in both Ossining and Haverstraw, creating transit oriented development that bookends the ferry service. A collaborative effort to attract tourism and to market significant historic sites between the two Villages and their subsequent catchment areas would yield positive economic impacts. Martin Ginsburg, founder of GDC is not only investing in the Village and Ossining but is also a major proponent of a future Sing Sing Prison historic site and museum. The project has the potential of attracting many thousands of tourists annually in the way that former Alcatraz Penitentiary fascinates visitors on a global scale.

The Village of Haverstraw is one of the only municipalities in the region without a history of shooting down new development proposals and boasts a long history of supporting new ideas in development and housing policy. Unlike other nearby municipalities, Haverstraw is primed to support the progressive change envisioned by the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Village pioneered transit oriented development and inclusionary zoning for incentivizing affordable housing in Rockland County. While most suburban municipalities reject urbanism, affordable housing and enforce automobile dependency, Haverstraw embraces its urban form. Haverstraw is not afraid of growth. The Village welcomes it.

Haverstraw prides itself in maintaining as much public access to the waterfront as possible. The vast majority of the Hudson River shoreline in Haverstraw is public, serving recreation and conservation goals. Downtown is one of the only commercial business districts with direct and continuous connections to its waterfront, not hindered by railroad easements or private property exclusivity. Because the Village was developed initially as a ferry and steamship transportation hub, it is uniquely suited to exploit its Main Street/riverfront connection for expanded Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry Service. Haverstraw needs meaningful support to realize its goal of moving the ferry from a disconnected commuter parking lot to the foot of Main Street in order to properly catalyze transit oriented development in the core area of Downtown.

One of the most unique aspects of Haverstraw is that within the Village's municipal boundaries there is no significant car-oriented highway business district that competes with Downtown. The Village of Haverstraw is largely reliant on its traditional and urban business district to generate tax revenue. The Village has not sought development by large national chains and big box retailers, which are infamous for spoiling the economic ecology of a traditional downtown business district filled with family-owned small businesses. As such, and for good and bad, the Village has insulated itself from the decentralizing and dispersive economic effects of sprawl development. Major opportunities exist to repair the existing street grid by reintroducing streets and alleyways that had been abandoned or de-mapped. Such an effort would reorient traffic patterns, rationalize local and regional bus service and create better opportunities for infill and large scale mixed-use development. Expanding walkability and fostering a human scale streetscape is easier due to the Village's existing historic urban fabric.

Haverstraw is unique in the Hudson Valley. Nowhere is there such a potential for real and sustainable economic growth, improvement of residents' quality of life and availability of developable parcels and properties with local government supportive of the dense mixed-use development advocated by the DRI. The Village municipal government and Downtown stakeholders are hopeful New York State and the Regional Economic Development Council will see the value in Haverstraw's people, unparalleled natural resources, unique sense of place, and most importantly in its potential as a future vibrant, bustling, 24/7 Hudson Valley city known regionally as a real urban living alternative to the big metropolis to its south.