

MID-HUDSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – KINGSTON, NY

BASIC INFORMATION

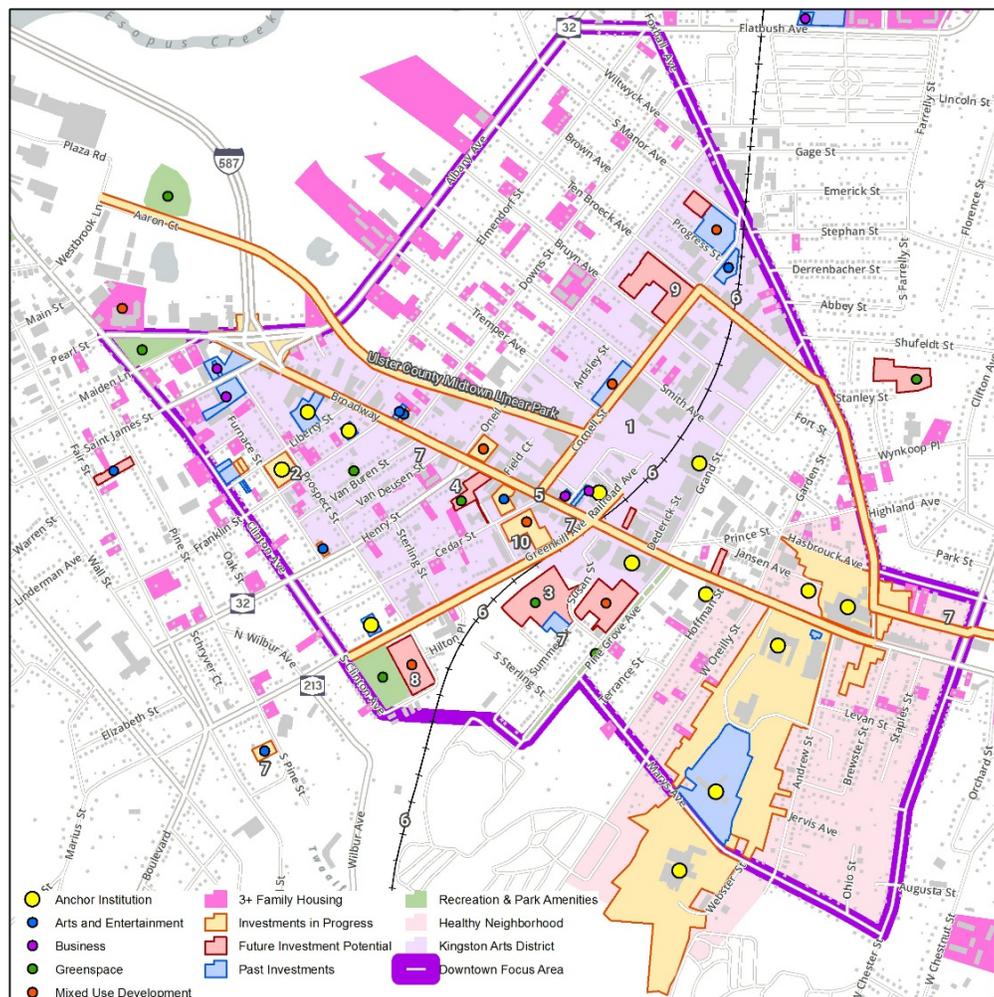
Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Mid-Hudson

Municipality Name: Kingston, NY **Downtown Name:** Midtown **County:** Ulster

A big part of what makes Kingston, and the Midtown neighborhood in particular, unique and attractive is its diversity. Few places in our region - and virtually none in Ulster County - provide the mix of affordability, density, infrastructure and accessibility that combine in urban settings to create vibrant and culturally-rich middle class neighborhoods. Our DRI vision is to preserve and enhance this diversity, while maximizing the potential of Midtown's community assets to build an equitable and sustainable economic future for its current and future residents.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION 1) **Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.**

Our initiative focuses on approximately 0.75 square miles (480 acres) of Midtown Kingston, which lies at the center of our city nestled between residential neighborhoods and two other businesses districts, Uptown and Downtown Waterfront, also known as the Rondout. Within our DRI boundaries, in two defined areas, revitalization efforts have begun: 1) a proposed arts district, 2) a healthy neighborhood district with anchor institutions, a hospital, a high school, a college satellite campus and City Hall. Numbers on the following map of the focus area represent some potential DRI projects described in the narrative.



2) Size. With a population of approximately 23,893 people in the 2010 Census, Kingston, the county's only city, draws visitors and employees from Ulster County, which has a population of 182,494, from the surrounding counties, and from New York City. The following table outlines the population and housing statistics for the DRI focus area.

Year	Population	Housing Units	Occupied Units	Vacant Units	Percent Vacant	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Percent Renters
2000	5338	2357	2114	243	10%	887	1227	58%
2010	5990	2564	2281	283	11%	882	1399	61%

By 2020, we anticipate an affordability gap of over 3,500 housing units in Kingston, according to the Three County Housing Needs Assessment sponsored by the Housing Consortium in 2007. There are approximately 865 parcels classified as vacant in Kingston with approximately 30% of potential retail space vacant. Vacancies are especially evident in Midtown along the Broadway and Cornell Street Corridors. Designated an Environmental Justice Community by the DEC, Midtown includes two of the county's poorest census tracts (9520 and 9521), where approximately 50% of the population lives in poverty. It contains a remarkably heterogeneous ensemble of industrial, residential, and commercial structures and a diverse (24.8% minority) population with need for employment and opportunities.

When Kingston was united into a single city in 1872, Midtown became the city's economic generator. Worker housing grew up around the rail-centered industries, and Midtown's story became one of mass transport linking walkable neighborhoods, commerce, and industry. Midtown experienced economic decline like other small post-industrial cities. Midtown is ripe for investment and has potential to serve as a core business district for a broad catchment area, extending far beyond the city's boundaries. Midtown neighborhoods offer a range of housing stock and amenities that are increasingly attractive to a younger generation of residents who prefer to live in diverse, amenity-rich urbanized areas. Anchor institutions and major employers such as the hospital, City Hall, the Kingston High School, a community college satellite campus, the YMCA, and the Kingston Library are located in Midtown. Several Broadway businesses attract regular customers, such as the Ulster Performing Arts Center (UPAC) – a 1,200 seat theater, the 721 Media Center – a collaborative creative space for media-related businesses, many multicultural restaurants, and bodegas. Every day approximately 22,200 (2014 traffic data) vehicles travel on Broadway carrying people on their way to work, school, and play. A key component of our revitalization is pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access that threads our three business districts together. Three active transportation paths branded as the Kingston Greenline, from points east, west, and south converge in Midtown.

Our Vision: Our city's collective vision is for Midtown to be an affordable neighborhood and destination to live, work, and play without displacing the current families that make up our community. Midtown will boast a full-range of activity in employment, small businesses, arts, entertainment, technology, active living, healthy eating and places for a diverse community to gather. In the past ten years, community energy has been harnessed to bring us to the tipping point for rapid revitalization. The DRI planning process will assist the City to be in the driver's seat for an equitable and sustainable revitalization that might otherwise be simply driven by market forces resulting in gentrification. We are already seeing signs in Midtown as real estate prices are rising and the number of home rehabilitations is increasing. Our community is engaged in a dynamic discussion about how we can revitalize while including people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and these funds will help us bring even more people to the table to create a mid-Hudson model for equitable revitalization.



3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential.

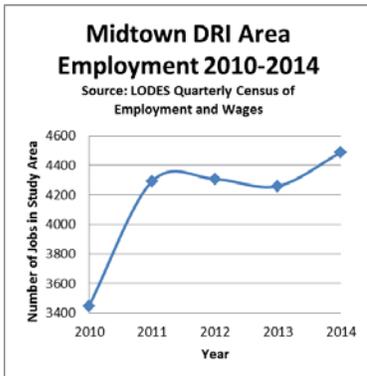
Within the last 10 years, at a minimum, we estimate **\$348M** of major, significant public and private investments within and the immediate vicinity of the Midtown DRI boundaries. These are described here and in question 4. Major past and impending **public** investments within the Midtown DRI boundaries total **of \$259M**. **Education:** The rehabilitation of the Carnegie Library at Kingston High School (\$3.58M), the Kingston High School Reconstruction (\$137.5M), and the rehabilitation of a closed elementary school into a SUNY Ulster satellite campus (\$7.8M). **Healthcare:** The HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley (HAHV) invested \$8M in renovations to one of their hospitals and is now investing \$88.9M into their Medical Village and Healthy Neighborhood. The 5-story, 226,000-square-foot urban healthcare “mall” in the heart of Kingston will provide conventional and integrative health and wellness services, as well as easy access to technology-enhanced active-learning classrooms, public meeting spaces and a host of human-services programs. Open lounges and local retail shops will supplement the service providers. **Transportation:** Impending investments into the Kingston Greenline for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and streetscape improvements on Broadway, Cornell, Foxhall, the Midtown Linear Park, and the Kingston Point Rail Trail equal \$6M. **Community and Economic Development:** Community Development Block Grant investments in housing rehabilitation, education & programming, infrastructure & capital, public facilities, facades, and economic development for the last ten years totaled \$4.5M. Funds were also used to transform a dilapidated historic carriage house into a new teen learning building at the Everette Hodge Community Center. Our Midtown Murphy Center, currently under renovation, houses Parks and Rec office, recreational space, and the city’s only senior programming. Other City grants for Midtown infrastructure, historic preservation, and economic development total \$2.7M.

Some highlighted **public/private** investments in the boundaries within the last 10 years total approximately **\$25.5M**. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation committed \$360,000 environmental, policy, and systems change for active living and healthy eating in Kingston. The New World Foundation invested \$240,000 in bringing healthy, local food to food insecure residents in Midtown as well as \$31.6M to create the Hudson Valley Farm Hub just outside of Kingston, a regional center for farmer training, agricultural research, and farm technology demonstration. Two Midtown urban farms and several community gardens emerged with investments of approximately \$125,000. UPAC is currently running a \$4M capital campaign for building improvements and for their cultural access initiative to provide tickets to quality performances to lower-income individuals with \$2M secured to date. The \$19M 2015 Lace Mill project rehabilitated an historic, blighted industrial property to create affordable, energy-efficient multi-purpose apartment complex with 55 rental units for artists. It features 8,000 square feet of public gallery, studio, and meeting space. The YMCA has secured \$1M for fixed assets. Nearly \$500,000 has been invested into a historic property, where TransArt, plans to create a cultural tourism destination based on African-American art, history, and popular culture of people. Kingston was just selected for a \$400,000 grant from the EPA to conduct environmental site assessments and clean-up planning for private and public properties with the potential for redevelopment, making Midtown brownfields attractive to investors. Just outside the DRI area, Central Hudson is investing \$20M into a waterfront clean-up.

DRI funding will support and guide equitable revitalization in the wake of recent and proposed investments into our Midtown anchor institutions and transportation infrastructure as well as the emergence of small business and freelancers. We look forward to the planning expertise that the DRI will provide to identify the best DRI investments chosen from some potential projects identified with **(#) numbers** on our map and narrative.



4) Job Growth. Last year Kingston outpaced every other NY MSA in private, non-farm job growth (NYSDOL). From 2010-2014, 1,000 jobs were added in the DRI area, a 29% increase (QCEW). That impressive growth takes some by surprise who read about layoffs in the local papers. It's a story playing out across the nation; previously-stable industries are being turned upside down by innovation, global competition, and a changing workforce.



Most new jobs will come from existing small businesses and service industries, will require more education and training, and will be filled by the next generation of workers: Millennials.

These workers are already here, and new ones will come. Their workforce-readiness is supported by UC Office of Employment and Training, YouthBuild, the Center for Creative Education, the Kingston Center of SUNY Ulster and others. Their success is encouraged by the guidance of the Small Business Development Center, the Workers

Justice Center, and by planned incubators. Newcomers are the reason that Kingston gets called “Brooklyn North.” They pack the house at BSP, HV Tech Meetups, and Kingston Stockade Football Club games. They often maintain work or family ties to NYC, but they will transform our community as they put down roots, attracting employers hungry for their skills.

Our food and beverage cluster is an engine of job growth for the region. The Farm Bridge reports 45-60 new jobs in 3 years. Manufacturers Stavo Industries and JBT Wolf-Tec recently reported 30% and 27% job growth, respectively, and have invested >\$12M in facilities upgrades. The Kingston Food Exchange will provide a shared commercial kitchen for small-scale food and beverage ventures. Many established producers (e.g. Pika’s Farm Kitchen, Keegan Ales, Bread Alone, Boice Bros Dairy) thrive in and around the DRI area. The Local Economies Project and Northeast Farm Access are incubating sustainable farm businesses on 1,500 acres <1 mi from the DRI area.

Our vibrant entertainment, arts and culture cluster is bolstered by the County’s expanding tourism market and the unique amenities offered in its only city – an abundance of restaurants, performance venues, art galleries, museums and year-round festivals, all within a walkable urban setting. Several manufacturers in the DRI area are part of the Midtown Arts District, including R&F Handmade Paints and Bailey Pottery, both leaders in their fields. Nearby, Brooklyn Flea owners plan to create an outdoor venue for 70+ food and craft vendors at the site of the former Hutton Brick Works on the Hudson River.

Our emerging media & tech cluster – though still small – has seen rapid growth at firms such as DragonSearch (21 FTEs, +3 FTEs last year), Exago Inc. (15 FTEs, with plans to add 6 FTEs), Anchor ID, 721 Media Center, Manhattan Friday Productions, and Luminary Media (18 FTEs, +3 FTEs last year, +3-5 FTEs next year). Mary Stuart Masterson’s planned Stockade Works will provide media production facilities, education programs and event space, and could spur significant additional job growth. And the BEAHIVE coworking space provides a home for solopreneurs and freelancers in creative-class jobs.

Our eds, meds and governments, including HAHV, Kingston City Schools, Ulster County, the City of Kingston and NYC DEP, provide thousands of jobs at all income and skill levels, and are investing >\$250M in capital projects that will generate significant economic impact for years to come. At NYC DEP, consolidation of operations to Kingston has resulted in over 60 new jobs and acquisition of a new facility just outside the Midtown DRI area. Plans call for 15-20 new jobs next year.

These examples barely scratch the surface. Their potential to provide employment opportunities for current and future residents will help stabilize the Midtown neighborhood and will support a sustainable revitalization throughout Kingston and beyond.



5) Attractiveness of the Downtown. The compact Midtown DRI area is equipped for being a truly walkable and bikeable community where residents could potentially have ready access to jobs, education, healthy food, arts, culture, and recreation without ever getting in their cars. Our map illustrates (in bright pink) the variety of multi- and single-family housing available within the boundaries. The area also includes several artist studios and lofts in the Lace Mill, Shirt Factory, and Pajama Factory, and an affordable senior housing complex. Central to the neighborhood on the west side of Broadway is the **(2) Kingston Library**, which would like to rehabilitate its outdoor property and sidewalks to create a more inviting atmosphere. In addition to its diverse, multicultural community, Kingston is known for its historic architecture, which draws cultural tourism and real estate investment.

In Midtown, we lack greenspace and have abundant lots for development into public squares and recreational amenities. The Ulster County Midtown Linear Park, a part of the Kingston Greenline, will include a pocket park on Cornell Street. The Greenline also connects to the **(3) Jacob's Valley Recreational Area (JVRA)** behind the YMCA. The JVRA is a vision for assembling unused City, CSX, and YMCA properties into park with playing fields, an urban farm hub, amphitheater, jogging circuit, playground, and pavilion with a preliminary cost estimate of \$5.5 M. The Greenline also connects east to the Downtown Waterfront, giving Midtown residents safe non-motorized access to the Hudson River. An exciting opportunity for creating an attractive public square exists at the **(4) Broadway Commons** site. The Arts District Committee and the Mayor have a vision to create an Arts Square right in the center of Broadway. This summer, the City will clean up the property and lease a portion to Spiegeltent Productions, where arts and music events can take place. The DRI could support phase 2, which would include placemaking implementation including landscape architecture, infrastructure, and public art.

The funded Complete Streets improvements on Broadway, Cornell, and Foxhall will create a more enjoyable "urban room" experience for people who would like to recreate on the streets. Additional possible **(5) Transportation Investments** that would continue to enhance the quality of city life are **a) 2nd Phase of the Broadway Streetscape Project and/or the Ulster County Midtown Linear Park, b) a Kingston Parking Management System, c) the Creation of a Kingston Broadway Shuttle, and (6) the Implementation of and FRA "Quiet Zone" in Midtown Kingston.** These projects would include an extension of bike infrastructure and more streetscape amenities along the entire corridor, easy and frequent public transit from the area to other parts of the city and county, the creation of modern parking management system that would better accommodate businesses and increased visitation to the revitalized area, and a better quality of life for current and future residents with respect to locomotive horns disturbances.

Just 0.3 miles from our DRI boundary lies Hannaford and the Kingston Plaza. The Midtown Linear Park will provide connection to this affordable supermarket, plaza with many local shops, and the Uptown business district. Within the DRI boundary there are several small corner stores and bodegas, which recently participated in a Healthy Corner Store initiative. The bodegas on Broadway, such as a MiniMart next to UPAC, sell fresh produce and healthy foods, however they are not locally sourced and are sold at higher prices than found at a supermarket. Additionally, many residents and visitors don't visit these markets due to cultural unfamiliarity and perceived language barriers at the bodegas. With the DRI funds dedicated to the **(9) Healthy Food/Healthy Communities Initiative**, we would like to invest in improving affordable access to healthy foods by supporting our existing urban farms and surrounding local farms to increase sales to residents and to local stores and by financing corner stores and bodegas within the boundary to improve the selection, affordability, and marketing of healthy foods.



6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.

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. A chapter dedicated to Midtown guides development to industry clusters that naturally occur there focused on arts, entertainment, education, and ethnic diversity. It recommends that the city adopt land use policies to facilitate growth in niche industries - a form-based code focused on relationship of buildings to each other, streets, and open space rather than land use. It recommends that the City focus on existing businesses and entrepreneurs coupled with public investments to improve the image of Midtown. A vision for activity centers based on the industry clusters is outlined with the goal of creating a sense of place by encouraging a mix of compatible uses.

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 life amenities that will make Kingston a more attractive city to live, work, and play. In 2014, **Kingston's Urban Agriculture Committee** conducted a study to recommend language for the new Comprehensive Plan and zoning, and they are now conducting a study to evaluate numerous vacant parcels in Kingston for their suitability for community gardens and urban farms, and will work with the anchor institutions and restaurants that source local produce to create a "Buying/Growing Circle."

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). The city's policy is supported by three active volunteer groups that make up the Live Well Kingston Travel Well Team – the CSAC, Bike-Friendly Kingston, and the Kingston Greenline Committee. These groups informed the development of the Transportation and Mobility section of the Comprehensive Plan. An ad-hoc CSAC Sidewalk Taskforce is working to revise the sidewalk code and create a new city sidewalk program, possibly modeled after Ithaca's sidewalk improvement districts. In addition, recent plans, studies, and engineering designs set us on a course for transportation project implementation.

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: 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.

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 assist us to realize the vision of our policy by implementing dynamic projects.



7) Local Support. In May 2016 we held a community meeting to inform potential partners about the DRI, Kingston's intent to apply, and to gather additional input and ideas for revitalizing Midtown. We had a record turnout with 37 attendees, all active and engaged leaders in the community. We also gathered input from more partners and community



members via an online survey and email. The City has made worthy progress in truly engaging members of the community in our planning and policy-forming processes. The DRI planning process will assist us to continue breaking through the barriers that prevent engagement from our many diverse groups. Initially, the DRI project will be led by the City of Kingston Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Director, Brenna Robinson, has eight year's experience managing large development and infrastructure projects with a variety of funding sources for the city. The new Grants Manager, Kristen Wilson, M.S. Environmental Policy, has eight years of experience in Kingston leading coalitions to affect environmental, policy, systems for public health. The following people and organizations have expressed their support for our DRI application and will come to the table for the planning process.

County Executive Michael Hein, Ulster County & Mayor Steve Noble, City of Kingston; Jennifer Schwartz-Berky, Legislator, Urban Planner, Ulster County and Hone Strategic Amanda Bruck-Little, Suzanne Cahill, Megan Weiss-Rowe, City of Kingston Econ. and Comm. Dev., Planning, and Communications Departments; Andi Turco-Levin, President, Kingston Land Trust; Anne Bailey, Artist, Bailey Pottery; Bonnie Landi, Ulster Youth Build; Brooke Pickering-Cole, Communications Director & Julia Farr, Local Economies Project; Bryant "Drew" Andrews, Director, Center for Creative Education; Paul Padalino, Superintendent, Kathleen Collins & Nora Scherer, Board Members, Kingston City School District; Chris Silva, Executive Director & Ruth Ann Devitt-Frank, Dev. Director, Bardavon/UPAC; Chuck Snyder and Guy Kempe, RUPCO; Darlene Kelley, Reverend, Clinton Ave. Methodist Church/Caring Hands Soup Kitchen; Jordan Scruggs, Midtown Rising; Dr. Alan Roberts, Dean, SUNY Ulster - Kingston Campus; Elizabeth Higgins, Agriculture Director & Melinda Herzog, Healthy Communities Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County; Emily Flynn, Leader, Bike Friendly Kingston; Gary Bellows, Development Officer & John McHugh, ED, The Arc of Ulster-Greene; Gerry Harrington, Communications Director, HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley and Mano a Mano (Latino Coalition); Greer Smith, ED, TransArt; Heidi Kirshner, ED, YMCA of Kingston; Joe Concra, Executive Director, O+ Festivals; John Stavros, Entrepreneur, Kingston Pop Museum; Josh Ratner, Chief Strategy Officer, HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley; Julie Noble, Climate Smart Community; Kale Kaposholin, Hudson Valley Tech Meet-Up; Kaycee Wimbish, Urban Farmer and Educator, YMCA Farm Project; Kevin Godbey, Kingston Happenings; Kevin McEvoy, Heritage Commission and Kingston Land Trust; Kitty McCullough, Kingston Preservation; Krystal Bullock, Case Manager & Michael Berg, ED, Family of Woodstock; Leanne Tory Murphy, Workers' Justice Center; Margie Menard, Director, Kingston Library; Micah Blumenthal & Ray Curran, Midtown Arts District Committee; Nancy Donskoj & Pat Courtney Strong, Business Alliance of Kingston; Rose Quinn, Vice Chair - Live Well Kingston (LWK) & SUNY Ulster Health and Safety Institute; Shayna McGeady Russo and Laurie Mozian, Chairs - LWK Eat Well Focus Team; Teryl Mickens; Tim Weideman, Senior Economic Developer, Ulster County Dept. of Econ. Dev.; Tom Hynes, GIS, Ulster County Information Services; Tom Polk, Chair, Complete Streets Advisory Council



8) Other. Key to our DRI strategy will be promoting the redevelopment of vacant and distressed properties, as well as the removal of blight and impediments to revitalization. There are three properties that could potentially be a focus of some portion of the DRI funds. The vacant **(10) Met Life Building** (70k sq. ft.) is the target location for the Stockade Works project. Led by well-known actress Mary Stewart Masterson, this a new Kingston-based initiative dedicated to training a diverse, local workforce, providing access to entertainment and technology jobs. This project will be funded in part by Historic and New Markets Tax Credit programs. The **(11) Arc of Ulster-Green** building is a 10-12k sq. ft. of open warehouse space owned by the largest non-profit in in NYS that supports people with disabilities. They are looking to renovate and rent to tenants who would complement their existing programs for their consumers at the site. **(12) Energy Square** is a RUPCO proposed zero-net energy project for mixed-use housing & civic uses redevelopment on the property of an existing vacant bowling alley. The co-location of a community-based arts education program with a tech incubator and other community-serving enterprises will anchor 10,000-square-feet of commercial-civic space on the first floor, and the upper 5 floors will host 57 units of affordable rental housing. This project will be funded in part by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program. The DRI could support the civic uses integral to this project. Another DRI project could be to develop a comprehensive, robust housing strategy to accelerate the impact of existing projects. For example, a local Main Street revitalization effort could support refurbish vacant apartments on the 2nd floor above Broadway storefronts, rehab the storefronts themselves, and expand programs to improve single family homes to increase lower-income home ownership, and engage such programs as Ulster Youth Build and Habitat for Humanity.

Our DRI Revitalization Strategy will support the four Core Strategies of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council. For #INVEST in technology, our DRI will support the burgeoning information technology job sector in Kingston. The DRI could support the development of **(14) Community-wide Broadband**. For #ATTRACT & RETAIN mature industries with the DRI investments we will create a liveable, walkable community where millennials, professionals, and independent contractors want to be. Likewise, by capitalizing on our existing assets for healthy food access, we can create a local market for local and urban farms and invest in value-added food incubators to stimulate the food and beverage industries. For #GROW natural resources, the DRI will support urban agriculture and Ulster County farms, increase opportunities for arts, culture, and rail trail tourism, and create an arts district destination that will be an economic engine for the gig economy, small businesses, and the region. For #REVITALIZE the region's infrastructure, our DRI will leverage our existing investments into transportation infrastructure, anchor institutions, and affordable housing projects to create a vital and vibrant Midtown urban core center that will connect our other downtowns and the waterfront, which in turn will 1) give current residents better access to other parts of Kingston and job opportunities, and 2) create an attractive destination for people to come visit, work, and live.

Several possible projects are identified here. The greatest strength of Midtown is the people who live and work here. Midtown is a collection of neighborhoods, each with their own story and character, but all filled with individuals and families who desire a safe and thriving community in which to live and work. These stakeholders are what make Midtown the essential core “downtown” and who will benefit the most from the DRI efforts. In harnessing this energy and commitment to our Midtown community through the DRI planning period, we are confident that the DRI funds will assist us to choose the best projects that will achieve this vision of a community where “new arrivals” and current residents enjoy a vibrant, economically dynamic, revitalized Midtown Kingston.

