



## **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – CREDC**

The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) is accepting applications from qualified applicants for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

Please refer to the attached Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guide for further information on the DRI program.

Each applicant must complete this application and include the requested Appendices.

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible.

Applications must be **received** by Empire State Development’s Capital Region Office **by 4:00 p.m. on June 1, 2016.**

Applications are to be submitted by email to [Heidi.Pasos@esd.ny.gov](mailto:Heidi.Pasos@esd.ny.gov). Files should be named in the following format: “Downtown\_Municipality\_Date”.

If you have questions about the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, contact the ESD Capital Region Office at (518) 270-1130.

### **BASIC INFORMATION**

**Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region:** Capital Region

**Municipality Name:** Mechanicville

**Downtown Name:** Main Street

**County:** Saratoga

**Point of Contact:** Michelle Duell

**Title:** Commissioner of Accounts

**Phone:** 518-664-9884 Ext 315

**Email:** michelle.duell@mechanicvilleny.gov

**Downtown Description:** Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a DRI award:

The Main Street downtown encompasses the old school, city hall, fire house, mixed use buildings, apartments, vacant lots and the city docks. This location has seen the height of prosperity and in the past has struggled with the difficult times with keeping up to date in design and luring of businesses and residents. Just recently this downtown has seen an increase in interest to open businesses, and the plans to bring both Zim Smith Trail and Champlain Canal Trail to this downtown have been finalized. Thus resulting in an increase in residents and patrons who will support businesses that desire to locate to our area.

## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

- 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.

The Main Street downtown project is .20 miles on North Main Street. Starting with the corner of Park Avenue & North Main Street, traveling north to the corner of North Main Street & Bridge Road. The potential to move City Hall to Central Avenue in a building which is currently housing DiSiena Furniture is just .10 miles from North Main Street. North Main Street is but a mere .16 mile to the Hudson River offering a picturesque view of the Hudson River. Development of the Main Street downtown will also offer just a .50 mile distance to Talmadge Park, XO Tower and the Train Station Museum all of which are currently restored or in the process of being restored. The recently completed Arts Center on the Hudson is located at the intersection of North Main Street and Park Avenue.

- 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.

The City of Mechanicville is home to 5,172 residents with housing developments just outside of our city borders. The recent development of homes occurring just outside of the City of Mechanicville, in the Town of Halfmoon (2 miles) has included a 310 unit housing development and a 150 unit housing development and the Town of Stillwater (3 miles) 160 unit housing development. With the development of our downtown, we can ensure to make life easier and to offer less travel to the residents that reside within these developments for their everyday needs as well as entertainment and arts. The development of our downtown will also draw the many travelers that pass through our city either on their way to work or on vacation. The City Docks has been a welcome point for many boaters during the spring, summer and fall seasons, a place where they can rest, shower, shop and eat. Local business owner Jaimen McMillian of Spacial Dynamics offers training to teachers from all over the world throughout the year. Our city becomes home to these teachers during their sessions as they visit the local library and shops.

**3) Past Investments (past Five (5) years) & 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. Please use the chart to total Past Investments and provide a narrative further describing the investments and future potential.

<b>Leverages Resources:</b>	Public: \$4.1 M	Private: \$86,000
<b>Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding:</b>	Amount: \$	Amount: \$
<b>Please identify use(s) of prior funding:</b>		

The City of Mechanicville has recently invested with the NYSDOT and Saratoga County in the replacing of the downtown bridges at a cost to date of \$4.1M. We realize that having a strong foundation in our infrastructure will ensure that our downtown will grow and be stable for residents and businesses alike. The local businesses have invested over the years in the City Docks, XO Tower and Train Station in the amount of \$86,000. These investments included lighting, kayak launch, bathrooms, and restoration of the XO Tower and Train Station. The city is also currently working on the Central Avenue Streetscape project with NYSDOT.

**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 job growth occurring outside of Mechanicville is in the fields of health care, professional services and arts and entertainment. Global Foundries is located in the Town of Stillwater just 5 miles from the City of Mechanicville. The recent development of businesses in the Town of Clifton Park and the Town of Halfmoon offers many residents job opportunities. Travel to Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Saratoga Springs is just a 15-30 minute drive. For residents who wish to remain close to home the larger businesses within the city that offer employment are DeCrescente Distributors, Price Chopper, Mechanicville School and Polyset Builders.

**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 City of Mechanicville downtown is etched in history with the architecture of the past. Buildings such as the Churches, Schools and City Hall all built in the 1800's to early 1900's offer a glimpse into the past. The city also has 2 vacant lots that could be developed to offer mixed use for businesses and residents tying in the past with the present. The opportunity to partner with Jaimen McMillian and the Mechanicville Housing Authority to develop the old school for affordable housing. The local Price Chopper is within walking distance to downtown and the City of Mechanicville offers bus transportation to all. The City of Mechanicville has a median rent of \$700 per month as well as the

average mortgage being \$1,000 a month. These affordable prices make Mechanicville an area to reside within, for young families as well as senior residents. The downtown area also offer waterfront on the Hudson River with City Docks. Development of the waterfront to offer events such as concerts, farmers markets and picnic areas will lure and offer residents to enjoy the downtown. With the Zim Smith and the Champlain Canal trails meeting at Hill Street and North Main Street the walkability and bikeability of the downtown area will increase.

- 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.

The current codes for building and development were put into place in the late 60's and have not been updated on a regular basis the city council is working hard with the enforcement officer, planning board members and city attorney to ensure that codes are up to date and offer the best for the residents.

- 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 implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The support in the Main Street Downtown Revitalization is vast with the City of Mechanicville Council, The Mechanicville Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Saratoga County Chamber, the Mechanicville Stillwater Area Community Services Center, The Mechanicville Housing Authority, Jaimen McMillian property owner and business owner of Spacial Dynamics, The Mechanicville Fire Dept., the Mechanicville District Public Library. Each one of the stakeholders has committed to moving forward with a place to revitalize the downtown to offer affordable housing, business and employment opportunities as well as recreation and arts events. The lead for the downtown revitalization will be Michelle Duell, Commissioner of Accounts and Dennis Baker, Mayor, both of which have reached out to all involved stakeholders through meetings to discuss the downtown revitalization.

- 8) Challenges.** Identify current challenges or other impediments facing downtown development initiatives.

Current challenges for the City of Mechanicville's Downtown Revitalization are the lack of updated building codes and policies, a current master plan for downtown and finances.



- 9) **Other.** Provide **WEB LINKS** to any other relevant information. For example: plans, reports, news articles etc.

[www.hudsonhoosicpartnership.org>CityofMechanicville](http://www.hudsonhoosicpartnership.org>CityofMechanicville)

[www.cbs6albany.com/news/features/top-stories/stewarts-shops-makes-donation-help-mechanicville-14012.shtml](http://www.cbs6albany.com/news/features/top-stories/stewarts-shops-makes-donation-help-mechanicville-14012.shtml)

<http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2014/jun/13/barge-delivers-goods-mechanicville/>

<http://www.cascades.com/en/media-centre/press-release-and-news/press-release/2015/5676/solar-salto-commence-historic-first-ever-100-green-delivery-trip-on-the-erie-canal-from-lockport-to-mechanicville>

<https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g48145-d6751162-r212074711>

**\*\*Please complete Appendix A-C on pages 4-6 (below)\*\***

**Appendix A: Executive Summary (not to exceed 3 pages).**

The City of Mechanicville is noted for being the smallest city in the State of New York with the biggest heart. In the past Mechanicville was a bustling community that housed over 10,000 residents, the Westvaco Paper Mill, and the largest railroad hub in the Northeast. More recently referred to as a bedroom community, many residents need to travel outside of the city limits for large amenities for family, recreation, work and home. The .80 square mile size makes Mechanicville the best walkable and bikeable community that one can find.

The Downtown Revitalization plan for the City of Mechanicville will look to develop the old school for affordable housing and business opportunities throughout the North Main Street corridor, an arts district and a park, as well as the offering broadband.

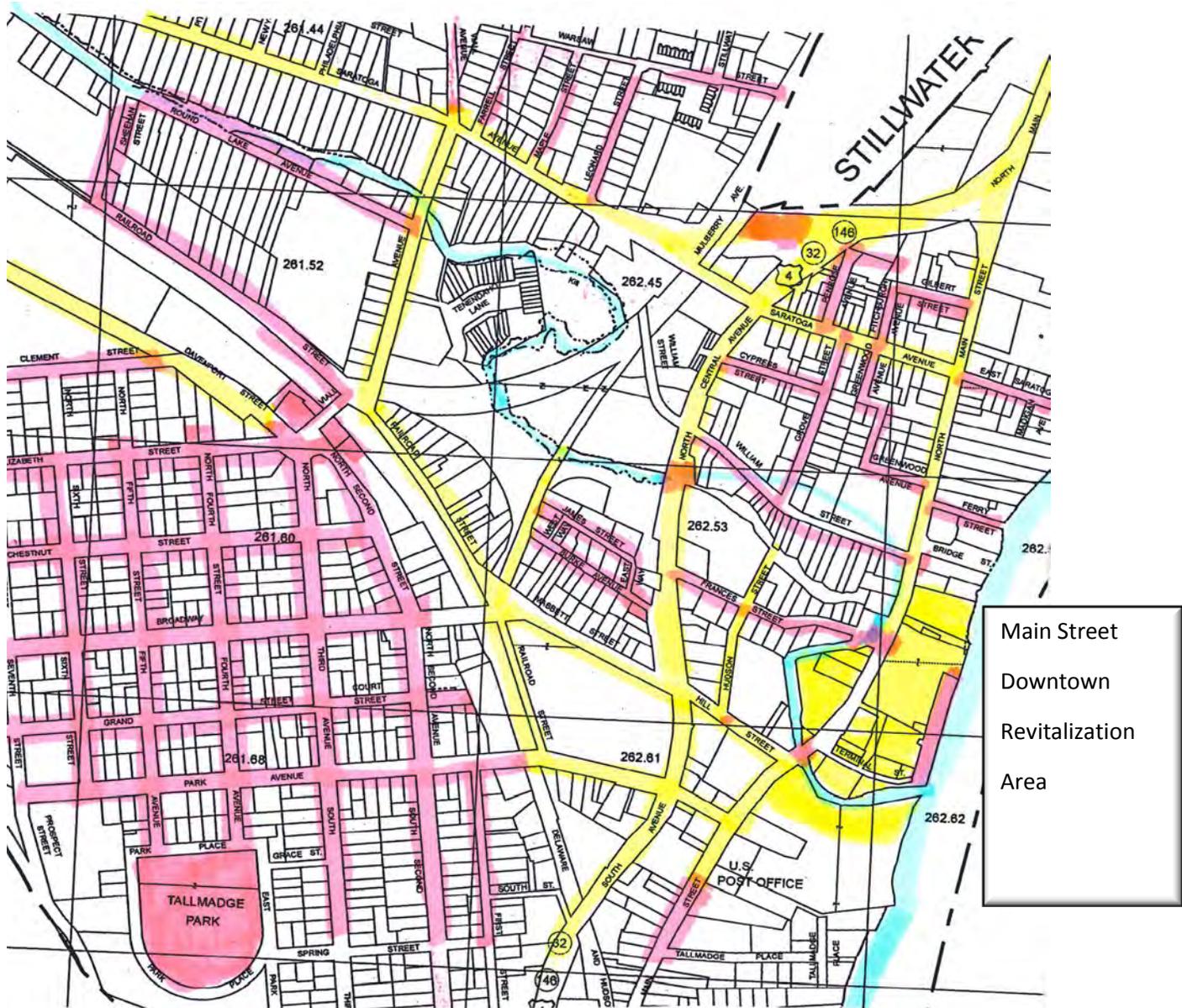
With relocating Mechanicville City Hall the local government will ensure that the new city hall will be in compliance with ADA to ensure that all residents will have safe and easy access to the judicial system, police department and city hall. This move will also open up another opportunity for mixed use space within the revitalization of downtown.

We have recently built bridges between all organizations to work together as one and for the success of our community. The partnership with the local Chambers of Commerce will ensure that our current and new businesses are supported. The partnership with the Housing Authority will ensure that affordable housing is made available to all. The partnership with the Mechanicville Community Center ensures that the needs of our residents are addressed from job training, legal help, financial assistance, and family care needs.

The City of Mechanicville prides ourselves on our strong sense of community, which has carried us through the tough economic times of recent. We know that having a strong foundation to build upon is the only way to success and we have that foundation not just with our community but more recently with the rebuilding of our bridges on North Main Street, Francis Street, Central Avenue and Route 67.

In the downtown revitalization plan we look to incorporate the past with the future to embrace where we were at one time and where we can be in the future. We are still in the very early stages of planning with our vision and will look for the support of the Capital Region Economic Development Council to guide us in our vision to offer the best to the residents and business owners. To say that Mechanicville offers a current blank canvas just waiting to be designed and brought to life is extreme, but we are primed and ready to make the changes that need to be made and the support to revitalize our once thriving downtown of the past to a thriving downtown of the future.

**Appendix B: Map of location indicating specific boundaries (color, clearly identify boundaries, surrounding communities, census tract boundaries, key features, etc.).**



Pink – Residential homes

Yellow – Mixed use of residential and business

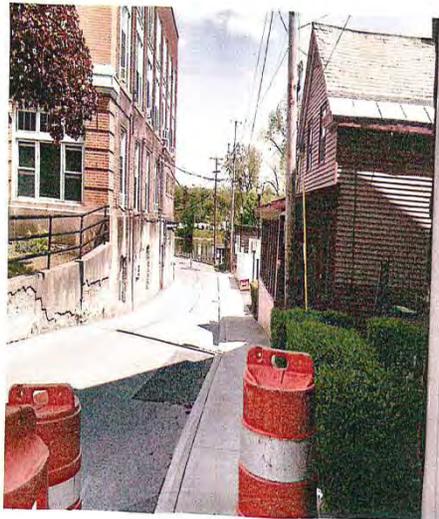
Blue – Water

The area completely shaded in yellow to the left of the Main Street Downtown Revitalization Area is the area in which we will be focusing our efforts. The highlighted areas of residential and commercial are to show the walkability of the City of Mechanicville.



Appendix C: Current photos of the downtown area. Please clearly label each photo.

View from North Main St  
down Terminal St. towards  
the Hudson River and the  
City Docks



Old School, mixed use building



Looking north on North Main Street in front of the  
old school.



Capital Region  
Regional Economic  
Development Council



Mixed use buildings along North Main Street, second picture is looking south with the old school in the background.





View of the Mechanicville City Docks and the waterfront parcel potential for the North Main Street Downtown Revitalization Project. This picture was taken across the Hudson River looking back to the City Docks.

