



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

APPLICATION

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 should be submitted as Word documents and must be received by the appropriate Regional Council by 4:00 PM on June 1, 2018 at the email address provided at the end of this application. Application guidance is provided in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook* found on the DRI website at www.ny.gov/dri.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Western New York

Municipality Name: City of Niagara Falls

Downtown Name: South-End Downtown Neighborhood

County: Niagara

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

With the Niagara Falls South End Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), the municipality's vision for the South End Downtown is that it can and will become a transformed place that it will become that vibrant community where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work and raise families. The South End is the neighborhood closest to the central tourist district, primarily residential, yet is bordered by high-volume commercial streets. Its mix of residents, its compactness, its proximity to many commercial activities and high-amenity environments, and its access to jobs, and/or educational opportunities are all attributes that are important ingredients for revitalizing any urban center—including the South End.

Within ten years, the City generally, and the South End specifically, will be dramatically changed through the successful implementation of many development projects and programs initiated through guidance and good planning by the State of New York and the City of Niagara Falls. The social and economic circumstances of Niagara Falls and its residents have been considerably improved following a targeted and coordinated program of improvements and investments by the municipality, and the successful execution of seven 'Big Moves' by the City and the State—the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway; extensive public realm investments in the Central Tourist District; the establishment of new mixed-use attractions in the Cultural District; and the repositioning of Niagara Street as a high-value mixed-use shopping area; the creation of a new neighborhood adjacent John B. Daly Boulevard (North); and the introduction of a series of innovative heritage preservation and neighborhood housing renewal programs. A thriving residential population, new office and employment uses, and new retail and commercial activity define the heart of Niagara Falls and present a rich range of opportunities for living, working and leisure activities in the South End Downtown.

As it stands now, the South End is struggling to hang on due to many interrelated legacy circumstances. High

among them and somewhat unique to emerging urban centers, is the lack of residential options for those working in and around Downtown. It is a neighborhood that exhibits high levels of extreme-affordability due to an over-supply of low-quality, blighted housing, which has created a cultural and housing mismatch between those people who choose to work here but can't choose to live here. Worker housing does not exist in sufficient supply, and those that live here can't afford to live somewhere else.

Despite successful business development efforts, substantial economic development projects and a growing number of employment opportunities, it is still a place that is suffering from its past social and economic misfortunes. The future vision must put people first. Envisioning more people choosing to work, to recreate, and also to live—in this downtown neighborhood—is where the vision of a transformed place begins—and it is a vision that is already taken hold and is being worked slowly and incrementally, but the effort at transforming this place can be much more robust. It should be dynamic if it is to be transformational for the City and for the prospect of transforming other core city neighborhoods to the east and to the north!

NF is proposing to use the DRI investment to reinforce and secure additional public and private investments within the South End Downtown neighborhoods and commercial corridors and in doing so will build upon growth spurred already by the City and State's aligned efforts at Economic Development in the Central Tourist District. This requires a comprehensive approach to improving the physical, social, and economic environment. Fortunately, the City has a very good planning framework for moving farther faster. Years of planning engagement surrounding the Comprehensive Plan focused heavily on 'Core City' neighborhoods and commercial precincts. USA Niagara Development Corporation, the ESD Niagara Falls based subsidiary also has contributed to the strong planning framework in the South End and central tourist district. The City also spent years on developing an Urban Renewal Plan and two more years developing and vetting a more specific 'South End Gateway Strategy' at the most recent City sponsored 'Developer's Forum,' where the concept generated considerable positive feedback. To that end, the City is ready to solicit for development proposals, in the "gateway" area, in 2018. With the DRI, the City will build a more precise investment strategy and execute a more action-orientated renewal plan, one capable of leveraging private investments in and around identified key commercial projects along Niagara Street that would further raise the demand for modern housing options in the South End Downtown.

New public investments supporting private commercial developments and new residential infill projects, coupled with housing rehabilitation and home-ownership programs that will address the needs of current property owners would contribute to changing the dynamic for the South End. To be sure, "the vision" is for the South End to look and function differently than the South End of 50-years ago, yet in so doing regain its lost vibrancy. With the DRI, this South End Neighborhood will become a transformed place, capable of being the appropriate commercial gateway corridor into downtown and a vibrant neighborhood community where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work and raise families. The South End can be transformed with the right planning and right incentives, and it can be transformational!

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

Downtown South End began to decline in the mid-to-late 1960s as a result of regional economic shifts of jobs and capital out of New York State (NYS), coupled with shifting demographics and increasing suburbanization of housing and retail development locally. Compounding matters, Niagara Falls took on a massive Urban Renewal effort in the 1960s and 1970s, largely focused on widespread razing/clearance of what was considered obsolete and/or blighted properties south of Niagara Street. This clearance was intended to assemble land parcels to facilitate new development of a state-developed convention center along with convention hotels, office buildings, and parking structures to create a “modern” downtown capable of absorbing significant new growth. Along with the blight, countless numbers of “traditional urban” mixed-use buildings were demolished to make way for large-scale, single-purpose land uses. This urban planning fail combined with the automobile-centric land use transportation improvements destroyed the built environment’s intrinsic value, which had accrued over generations. Fortunately, the proposed DRI South End Neighborhood was largely spared the general clearance of those blocks to the south of Niagara Street. Unfortunately, the neighborhood experienced a longer-lasting secondary effect of gradual de-population, dis-investment, and decline in the aftermath of downtown Urban Renewal. We have witnessed great successes and progress made south of Niagara Street. There has also been a significant change for the better along its edges; the Third Street commercial district has seen new investment; the Cultural District is about to become the entrance to the vastly re-envisioned and improved Niagara River Gorge Greenway / Waterfront; the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, the Niagara City Lofts, and the expanding Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Campus anchor the north and western edges, and; just recently Main Street is seeing significant new investor interest particularly as we prepare to implement the City’s second Restore NY project.

It was over fifteen years ago, the City and the State of New York have renewed their commitment to implementing the long-overdue revitalization of the City’s central tourist district. With the establishment of the State’s USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN), and a new Comprehensive Plan by the City of Niagara Falls, a new direction—one which expressly embodies the best principles of Smart Growth, Traditional/New Urbanism, and Context-Sensitive Development —provided both the means and the public policy framework to progressively reverse the scars of the Urban Renewal and those of Robert Moses. In the intervening years, with a focus on “readying the box,” the central tourist district has achieved greater density and diversity of uses, remade streetscapes that are now walk-able and bike-able, strengthened tourist and traditional commercial nodes and is addressing its first and best asset and catalyst —the City’s waterfront. That said, far more public and private actions are necessary to truly restore a vibrant mixed-use downtown neighborhood with safe and active streetscapes. For the first time in a long time, one can say, it is truly “investment ready.” And with continued cooperation from the State, the Downtown South End is ready to reassume its historic Downtown Neighborhood role, contributing to year-round activities, new investments, new uses, and new housing bringing new residents.

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) target area was selected because the South End Neighborhood developed from the end of the 19th century through the early 20th century as a compact, mixed-use neighborhood, and despite recent decades of under-investment and demographic attrition, it remains largely the same, a historic neighborhood with very affordable housing and access to jobs, important community anchors and recreational opportunities close by. The South End is entirely walkable with the maximum walking distance of 1/3 mile. The area has a Walk Score of 70 which, according to the Walk Score website, is “very walkable,” representing “the most walkable zip code in the City of Niagara Falls.”

The South end Downtown Neighborhood exhibits a well-connected grid pattern of streets, mix of uses and density, historic homes, and it is home to significant employment, medical and arts institutions, and significant new job growth with the real opportunity to drive new growth within the neighborhood. Third Street and the

Downtown Business Association are making great strides in encouraging new businesses to open and in bringing residents into the neighborhood with newly renovated apartments. It is an area served by three local bus lines on- and off-road bike routes; it is complete with retail and professional services, and world-class park and open space amenities within walking distance.

It is also highly accessible to multiple Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) bus lines, providing convenient local and regional transit service including the 55 Pine Avenue line and 50 Main/Niagara Line which provide service along all the commercial corridors in the city and across Niagara and Erie Counties. This area also provides easy access to both the 55-T Trolley and the Discover Niagara Shuttle bus services.

And despite its challenges and opportunities, the South End has great bones and many assets with which to strengthen and build. Local necessities such as healthcare, groceries (Tops Supermarket), fresh markets, retail and restaurants are in the target area or within very close proximity. More importantly, this area is at the heart of the City's "Core." The South End Neighborhood includes or straddles the majority of the historic core including the Niagara Falls Central Tourist District, the Gorge and Falls Waterfronts, Park Place Historic District, Memorial Hospital Campus and Memorial Park Neighborhood, as well as, the Main Street and Pine Avenue (Little Italy) Business Corridors. In short, the revitalization of the Downtown South End area will not only directly complement and support redevelopment efforts in these other Core City neighborhoods and business districts, but its strategic location will also provide the spark for a comprehensive City-wide revitalization over the long term.

Niagara Street, Main Street, Pine Avenue, and Third Street are all traditional commercial strips that intersect in the City's downtown and all must be treated as important elements within Niagara Falls' developing tourism offering. However, Niagara Street, as bad as it looks at the moment, is already on its way to becoming that vital urban street capable of catering to year-round residents and visitors. It is just beginning to see new investment and new residents in the neighborhood north of Niagara Street. When taken together with the emerging efforts to build new housing along the new J.B. Daly Boulevard Extension, and the ongoing revitalization of the Third Street Entertainment District, the South End Downtown can be seen as the most appropriate place to implement a more robust economic development program, one that includes broadly applied streetscape improvements, and targeted retail and niche marketing campaigns which would be contemplated under the DRI program.

The South End Downtown Neighborhood clearly has aesthetic issues; less clear are the many important attributes that make it ripe for new development and investment. Attributes that more investors are noticing for themselves. First and foremost, over 8 million tourists visit the South End each year. There is real expressed developer interest in the South End Downtown generally, which has already translated into several successful RFP's resulting in redevelopment of existing buildings on Niagara Street and on Main Street near Third Street. To date, there is interest shown in redeveloping the former St. Mary's Hospital on Sixth Street and interest in renovating structures for vacation rental properties, some interest in new infill vacation rentals and in new student housing to service both NU and NCCC.

An additional RFP is being planned for later in 2018, which will seek proposals for a 'South End Gateway Project.' With DRI funding, a more comprehensive commercial mixed-use urban renewal proposal will be encouraged that could complete the redevelopment of the frontage along Niagara Street.

The South End Downtown Neighborhood also has unique and special adjacencies, such as the world-class landscapes of the Niagara River, the Falls, the Gorge, and the expanding Gorge waterfront. It is adjacent the Seneca Niagara Casino Resort and Spa, Third Street Entertainment District, and the largest cache of developable land in the City, as well as proximity to personal services, health care, public transit, reasonable food options, and convenience shopping.

In other urban places these characteristics would make it ideal for the development of competitive new housing products capable of attracting and holding the workers in the neighborhood and in the surrounding Downtown Core. Combine these facts with the presence of the 8 million visiting tourists every year and the economic driver that that scale of visitation represents, it is clear that this is a neighborhood with great potential to be a driver in its own right or a continued drag on quality and speed of new investment.

Currently, there are very clearly understood needs with respect to both the tourist district to the south, but also with respect to the adjacent South End Downtown Neighborhood, despite being somewhat less well understood. There needs to be a much greater focus on housing generally – but more specifically, on the successful rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures, both residential and commercial, as well as on properly-scaled mixed-use and infill developments. Readyng the box proved successful for the tourist district. Readyng the box in the South End can prove just as successful north of Niagara Street, but only with continued state and local attention to waterfront access, small-business development, and investment in infrastructure —albeit different kinds of streetscaping and parks.

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 *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook*.

1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area. 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. 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 area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.

The project area is bounded by Niagara Street on the south; the alley between 3rd Street and 2th Street on the west; Pine Avenue on the north, east to Portage Road; and the alley between 10th Street and Memorial Parkway on the east to Walnut Avenue and then further east to Portage Road.

The approximate 140-acre target area includes some 50-city blocks. It is bounded on three sides by high-traffic commercial streets: the Third/Whirlpool Street Corridor, the Niagara Street Corridor, and the Pine Ave Corridor. J.B. Daly will be extended northward through the middle of the target neighborhood, which will serve to provide much needed connections east/west with Route 62, all points north of the target neighborhood. Across Niagara Street, is the Seneca Niagara Casino. Farther south and west is the Central Tourist District Downtown, Rainbow International Bridge, Niagara Falls State Park, and the Niagara River Greenway. North adjacent lies: Haeberle and Tops Plazas, the Main Street Business District and the Niagara Gorge Waterfront. East adjacent to the target neighborhood lies: the Pine Ave Business District, the NACC, and the City Market. The Downtown revitalization Area Map for NF Downtown DRI can be found under Section 10.

2) Description of catchment area. Outline why the proposed DRI area, 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.

Downtown Niagara Falls is the largest urban downtown in Niagara County and the primary “downtown” area for western Niagara County. The City of Niagara Falls, which is the Downtown’s primary market or catchment area, is also the largest City in Niagara County with a population of 49,679.

The ‘Resident Market Area’ can be defined as the area whose residents would readily visit as part of a day-trip. For the purposes of this analysis, the Resident Market Area for the revitalized South End Downtown conservatively includes: Erie and Niagara Counties in the U.S., and the Niagara Regional Municipality in Canada. Overall, the total Resident Market Area population is estimated to be between 1.5 and 2.0 million.

Perhaps more importantly the travel and tourism industry is a major industry in New York State, Niagara County and the City of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is one of the most well-known and most-visited landmarks in the United States and Canada. In addition to being the largest urban Center in the County, Downtown Niagara is able to claim a much larger market base. The number of overnight visitors to Niagara Falls, NY is estimated over three million and the number of day trips is an estimated over four million, for approximately 8 million total annual visitation into the Downtown. And while there is likely a high degree of overlap between the visitor estimates to Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, NY, the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario estimates 14 million visitors annually.

- 8,000,000 annual tourists in USA & 14,000,000 annual tourists in CAN;
- 215,000 Niagara County Residents (Niagara Falls “market area”);
- 431,000 residents of the Regional Municipality of Niagara, Canada; and
- 1.1 million regional WNY residents within a half an hour drive.

Specific demographic characteristics of the South End Neighborhood, based on the 2014 ACS Census:

- Estimated Population: 3,500
- Population Density: 3,500 persons/sq. mi. or 5.5/acre (Niagara County’s is 420 persons/sq. mile)
- Median Household Incomes: \$24,885 (Census Tract 211) to \$27,106 (Census Tract 212)

The population is complemented by a workforce population within and near the target area including:

- Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel: 2,000 employees
- Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center: 1,250 employees
- Niagara Falls City-Hall: 400 employees

Again, see Section 10, which provides graphic information on recent and planned development projects as well as community anchors that provide or will provide additional workforce employment in and around the target area.

3) Past Investment, future investment potential. Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investments or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The City of Niagara Falls has a decade-long history of supporting economic development initiatives in the central tourist districts in Downtown Niagara Falls. The City together with Empire State Development have been consistent in their approach to leveraging private investment and encouraging growth and renewal of the tourism industry in the City of Niagara Falls.

It cannot be overstated, and it should not be overlooked, Niagara Falls is one of New York's —and the world's greatest assets. One of the most beautiful natural resources, it attracts millions of visitors to Western New York

State every year. This powerful partnership (CNF and NYS) has proven that working with the same goals using well-vetted strategies is how you can successfully grow the tourism economy.

Over the last ten years, a new chapter in the story of Niagara Falls has unfolded and continues to gain momentum and evolve. Working with state and local elected officials, civic groups, community leaders and the private sector, we are making Niagara stronger economically than it has been in several decades.

We are supporting a variety of projects that are creating jobs, encouraging business investment, improving regional infrastructure and promoting tourism activity in new ways.

One of those ways is by making it easier for the region to showcase its beauty to visitors from all ends of the globe with over 400 new hotel rooms, which include *past downtown hotel investments* within walking distance of the South End Downtown Neighborhood, such as:

- The \$12.8 million Courtyard by Marriott® Hotel, is located on 900 Buffalo Avenue, and opened in August 2017. It is an adaptive reuse project, which converted the vacant, 69,700-square-foot former Moore Business Forms office building into an 82-room hotel.
- The \$37 million DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton, which opened in late December 2016, is the first upscale-grade Hilton property in Niagara Falls. The 192-room hotel boasts 16,000 square feet of meeting and banquet facilities, and a full-service steakhouse.
- The \$7 million Fairfield Inn & Suites hotel, which opened in June 2016, sits on a formerly vacant parcel in the heart of the city's downtown tourist district. Sai Lodging developed the 46,000 square feet, 76-room hotel, which is the first Marriott-branded property in downtown Niagara Falls, NY.
- The \$10.2 million Wingate by Wyndham Hotel, which opened in May 2015, is a 110-room hotel built by Plati Niagara Inc. Its 65,000 square feet features 4,000 square feet of retail space along Rainbow Boulevard.
- The \$3.8 million upgrade and expansion of the Holiday Inn hotel was completed in July 2015. The 189-room major hotel complex on Buffalo Avenue includes interior and site upgrades, as well as the addition of a new retail wing fronting on Rainbow Boulevard near Centennial Circle.
- Sheraton At the Falls (formally the Crowne Plaza), completed an initial phase in 2006, with a \$34 million hotel investment project revitalizing the 400-room hotel property (at that time a Holiday Inn Select) into a Crowne Plaza Hotel. In March 2011, a new owner upgraded the hotel flag again to a Sheraton® Hotel and established additional street-level food and beverage uses in the hotel. In 2015, a third phase of investments added a Rainforest Cafe®.
- The former United Office Building (NR) required approximately \$10 million investment by Ellicott Development Company, to return the building to its original grandeur, now known as the Giacomo Hotel and Residences, it is the premiere luxury boutique hotel in Niagara Falls. The 20-story Giacomo features 38 rooms and a residential component hosting 24 apartments with complete access to the hotel's amenities.
- Hyatt Place Hotel Niagara Falls, opened 2018, it represents \$35 million invested by Hamister Group, LLC. The six-story, 111,000 square feet, 128-room hotel will be the first non-casino new development of this scale in more than 40 years in downtown. It includes 14,500 square feet of meeting and banquet space, and 7,000 square feet of retail space facing Old Falls Street.
- Hotel Niagara, (NR). On July 18, 2017, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced Brine Wells Development LLC as the preferred developer for the restoration of the historic Hotel Niagara (NR). The approximately \$42 million project, now under construction will transform the property into a full-service, 130-room upscale hotel with restaurants, lounges and banquet facilities and is expected to re-open in 2019.
- Rainbow Centre Mall Redevelopment/Wonder Falls Resort is the redevelopment of the remaining 200,000 square feet of the former Rainbow Centre Mall. Uniland Development Company is the developer for the project, which will see a new hotel tower with rooftop dining together with a food and entertainment complex and an indoor waterpark among other attractions.

4) Recent or impending job growth. Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Beginning as early as 2005 with a concerted effort with USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN) to formulate the Downtown Niagara Falls Multi-Modal Access Program, the City of Niagara Falls and USAN have made a number of strategic public investments that uniquely set the stage for the proposed “target” —South End Neighborhood for the DRI. Infrastructure investments made by the City and the State are making it easier for private sector investors to see the area as a tourism marketplace with tangible advantages and profit potential. Leading with infrastructure is “readying the box.” And the box is proving itself ready as investors are demanding entry into the City and scrambling for the few opportunities that have presented themselves to the market.

These have included street infrastructure projects to improve access, improve multi-modal opportunities (pedestrian/bike) and to support new mixed-use infill development such as: Third Street Reconstruction/Streetscape; Rainbow Boulevard/First Street Reconstruction, and the Restoration of Old Falls Street.

To be sure there has been millions of dollars spent over the last ten years on roadway improvements in the Core City and the South End Downtown, but while most of this represents maintenance upgrades to existing streetscapes, there are several new, game-changing, big moves completed or in process as well.

A \$5 million John B. Daly Boulevard Extension Transportation Project will complete final design by next year and be ready to bid for construction in 2018 or 2019. The Extension Project utilizes an abandoned rail corridor through the South End Neighborhood connecting Niagara Street and the Tourist District to other Core City venues in the north end as well as greater accessibility to/from the Pine Avenue Corridor. The John B. Daly Boulevard Extension will be integrated into the neighborhood district allowing for practical parcel re-development adjacent to the roadway, as well as comfortable and safe pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and appropriate intersection design at cross streets. Additional objectives for the new Extension are to:

- Create a neighborhood center and public space that can be connective and multi-functional
- Create a gathering place for residents that visitors will also find interesting and safe
- Provide for new residential opportunities, such as townhouses and condominiums
- Allow greater accessibility that can support a broader mix of land uses

The most significant single development has been the plan put in place by Governor Cuomo to remove the Robert Moses Parkway. Under the Governor’s leadership the City has actively teamed with its State partners at USAN, State Parks, and the Department of Transportation to help realize waterfront access improvements associated with reconfigurations of the Niagara Scenic (Formerly Robert Moses Parkway), which will greatly enhance the resident and visitor experience by increasing access to and better uniting all water features (The Falls, River and Gorge) with the adjoining neighborhoods —including the South End Downtown Neighborhood ultimately creating a single walkable, bike-able place. Following the successful completion of Parkway Removal Phase-1, aka “Riverway,” this summer will see the start to Phase-2, aka “Niagara Gorge Access Project,” the \$42 million physical removal of the parkway from Main Street to Findlay Drive will provide the citizens of Niagara Falls with direct access to the Niagara Gorge for the first time in two generations.

Private sector developers have begun to take notice of this access as evidenced by mixed-use projects at 531 Third Street, 320 Niagara Street and 616 Niagara Street, which will result in approximately 35 new market-rate apartments, and over 20,000 square feet of commercial space. Additionally, many other private sector partners, wishing to take advantage of this natural asset have contacted the city and state to begin development discussions both in and adjacent the South End Neighborhood. And while this multi-phased project, totaling

\$67M for the first two phases, is perhaps the most transformative infrastructure project Niagara Falls will see, it is far from the only significant public investment in infrastructure

- The Niagara Falls International Railway Station & Intermodal Transportation Center saw a \$43M consolidated Border and Amtrak Station, completed in 2016, and capable of serving well into the 21st century as an important link in the rail network connecting New York to the Greater Toronto Area. The station is located adjacent to the Whirlpool-Rapids Bridge Plaza and North Main Street, within the Niagara River Greenway and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, and it is just 1-1/2 miles from the South End Neighborhood and an estimated 8 million annual visitors in the downtown central tourist district. The Project includes the newly opened Underground Railroad Heritage Center's \$1 million "One More River to Cross" Exhibit, the first new purpose-built visitor attraction in Niagara Falls in over thirty years!
- The Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) is a newly constructed 70,000 square feet, \$32M, 2-story terminal that was built by the NFTA using City Casino Revenues. The new terminal is served by one of the longest runways in NYS, and it's just five miles from downtown, now servicing one of the world's most notable tourist attractions. It is a true international gateway to the Buffalo-Niagara Region.
- John B. Daly Boulevard (JBD) Extension represents a significant new transportation improvement, approximately a \$6M of new roadway through the center of the South End Downtown Neighborhood; it extends JBD from its terminus at Niagara Street to Pine Avenue. This will provide much needed congestion relief, create new access to nearby local business districts, and open up vacant land for new development along its edges. It will become a new defining feature of the South End Downtown Neighborhood.
- The Conference & Events Center Niagara Falls (CCNF) opened in 2004, to replace the functions of the former Niagara Falls Convention & Civic Conference Center, which had been converted to house the Seneca Niagara Casino. USAN developed the \$20M award-winning conference facility.
- Old Falls Street Reconstruction. In 2009, USAN and the City of Niagara Falls completed the \$7.9 million Old Falls Street - West Mall Initiative, which saw the full-depth reconstruction of Old Falls Street from Prospect Street to First Street and the restoration of the public right-of-way and re-introduction of vehicular access during off-peak and off-season periods.
- Old Falls Street, USA is a three-block destination connecting Niagara Falls State Park with The Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls and downtown hotels, restaurants and attractions. Serving as a welcome center for residents and visitors alike, Old Falls Street, USA provides exciting spaces for free family-friendly games and activities, seasonal concerts, outdoor movies, festivals and special events. This project aims to turn this area of the city into an active public space through a quality and environmentally sustainable design that provides key pedestrian amenities. Managed by Spectra Venue Management (formerly Global Spectrum), Old Falls Street, USA continues to grow its programming of activities and engaging special events, successfully raising the visibility of the street for both visitors and regional audiences. For more information on Old Falls Street, please visit [Old Falls Street, USA](#).

To complement the infrastructure investments, public investments at major educational, medical, and tourism institutions have the potential to position the South End Neighborhood for revitalization. The 2012 opening of the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute by Niagara County Community College (NCCC) now places a concentration of students and faculty in the center of downtown – driving demand for student housing and support services. Similarly, major investments of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center (NFMMC) are redefining that institution as a driver of an emerging "Memorial Park" neighborhood within the Target Neighborhood. NFMMC has undertaken \$90,000,000 in capital projects since 2006 and employs 1,250 employees, making it one of the largest non-public employers in Niagara County.

NFMMC currently provides healthcare services to 45,600 unique (unduplicated) patients across our Niagara Region market. NFMMC is addressing the chronic diseases that are rampant in Niagara County through innovative community outreach programs that identify and treat the root causes of disease such as cardiovascular disease and the incidences of chronic mental health and other similar disparities.

NFMMC has completely restored Schoellkopf Park. Between 2006 and 2016, NFMMC added \$27 million in new facilities to its campus including a new outpatient cardiac care center and the Golisano Center for Community Health. These new facilities continue to grow new jobs, especially in the areas of primary care and cardiac care. Between 2006 - Year End 2017, NFMMC's capital outlays into its facilities and the surrounding community will have exceeded \$90 million. Unfortunately, this outlay is not enough to match its growing mission in the community. The combination of new facilities and volume increases in patient care has put significant strain on key hospital infrastructure such as parking facilities, HVAC, building systems, and technology infrastructure. NFMMC is looking for funding toward its infrastructure needs, which totals \$8 million.

In September 2012, the Niagara Falls Community Development Department received a competitive Western New York Regional Economic Development Council grant of \$450,000 for a "Downtown Stabilization Project" (DSP) from Empire State Development. Grant funds are dedicated to blight clearance, property acquisition and small business building improvements.

The DSP is a tactical approach to revitalizing one area of the downtown mixed-use commercial district and adjacent residential neighborhood. The small project focused on the intersection of Third Street and Main Street as its epicenter. It is the capital component of a plan to reverse decades of population loss and help our City compete in the modern economy.

Key Accomplishment of the DSP Project include:

- 2012: The City of Niagara Falls created a market-rate apartment renovation program, offering \$10,000 per unit renovated in mixed-use buildings. Within the Third Street Commercial District, 16 apartments have been renovated with assistance from this program. In total, over 25 apartments have been renovated in the same target area between 2012 and 2016. To date, total apartment occupancy is over 95% from Rainbow Blvd to Main Street (including the Jefferson Building).
- 2013: The Niagara Falls Community Development Department executed an 11-building demolition contract surrounding the Third Street Commercial District to provide a better sense of security in the area, especially in the 4th Street Alley.
- 2012-2016: Eight buildings were purchased on Third Street, from Niagara Street to Main Street; all of the new owners--private sector investors--live in Western New York. This is in marked contrast to the past, when out-of-town speculators with no apparent redevelopment plans owned much of the street. Approximate purchase price (total): Over \$900,000.
- June 2014: the Niagara Falls Community Development Department received a \$148,000 grant from National Grid's Urban Center/Commercial District Revitalization Program and Cooperative Business Recruitment Programs for the "Downtown Stabilization Project." The funds are dedicated to lighting, gateway and small business improvements in the Third Street Commercial District.
- 2013-2015: The Downtown Niagara Falls Business Association, LiveNF and Niagara Falls Community Development worked together to host site tours of available building spaces, Third Street marketing campaigns (2015), a 3rd Street Block Party (2015) and Sunday in a Park(ing Lot) - 2014 - to help encourage more people to consider Third Street as a place to invest and live.
- 2016: The Niagara Falls Police Ranger Station relocated to 435 Third Street.

Additional Key Accomplishment in the Neighborhood Include:

- New Residences
 - Over twenty-five completed apartment renovations with thirty-five more in pre-construction, plus forty new units constructed, which account for one hundred additional new-construction units.
 - To date, total apartment occupancy is over 95% from Rainbow Blvd to Main Street (including the Jefferson Building).
 - Niagara City Lofts (2017) The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the vacant and National Register-eligible former South Junior High School, creating 61 mixed-income apartments and

leasable commercial space, with amenities

- New businesses
 - The Third Street Retreat (2016)
 - Power City Eatery (2016)
 - Marino's Sub's (2016)
 - Zaika- Dining Room Expansion (2016)
 - The Craft (2016)
 - Harris' (2017)
 - Escape Niagara (2018)
 - Mackinali's (2018)
 - Ashker's (Coming June 2018)

In addition to NFC small business financing, the Niagara Falls Community Development Department has also executed six matching commercial façade renovation grants within the Third Street Commercial District.

The Art Alley Way (2016), located at 425 Third Street, has connected the middle of the 400-block to free public parking, in the former Niagara Gazette employee parking lot, created via an agreement with the building owner. The walkway includes works by local artists, creating a unique public space that is also functional as a walkway.

A progressive series of private development projects—ranging from new/upgraded hotels, new restaurants/entertainment venues, and the beginnings of some strategic housing investments—have truly set the stage to flow into and connect to the South End Neighborhood north of Niagara Street. In conjunction with a strategic effort under the DRI, the South End Neighborhood is ripe to realize a number of investments that would transform the neighborhood, including, but not limited to:

- Restoration/reuse of key historic properties in the neighborhood, such as traditional mixed-use storefront/apartment buildings on Niagara Street and the venerable former St. Mary's Hospital property;
- Infill residential and mixed-use development to support private student- or workforce-oriented service groups;
- Business incubator uses and additional vocational training efforts, capitalizing on the NCCC Culinary Institute and recently-formed Niagara Global Tourism Institute (a tourism research institute established by Niagara University); and
- Professional service support uses, capitalizing on proximity of NFMCC campus.

5) Attractiveness of physical environment. Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area 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 proposed target area includes many of the key characteristics needed to attract both jobs and residents including:

1. **Mixed Use Neighborhood:** The neighborhood includes a mix of residential and commercial uses including four Traditional commercial corridors (Main Street, Third Street, Pine Avenue and Niagara Street), single family and multi- family homes, community anchors (Post Office, Medical Center, Niagara Arts and Cultural Center) and waterfront and parkland areas.
2. **Affordable Housing:** The Median Housing Value of homes in the area is between \$52,800 and \$55,000 which is less than half of the Median Housing Value in Niagara County according to 2014 ACS Census

estimates. Similarly, the rents range from \$430 to \$440 in the area, which is less than the \$515 median rent in the County.

3. **Commercial and Main Street Businesses:** The neighborhood includes a mix of residential and commercial uses including general retail, restaurants, professional services and banking. Two pharmacies and Tops grocery store are two blocks north of the target area providing food and other essentials for area residents.
4. **Multi-modal transit:** The Target area is three blocks south of NFTA's Portage Road Transit Center, which serves all primary NFTA bus routes in the City including the 55 Pine Avenue and 50 Main/Niagara routes which have stops that are less than a 1/3 mile for all residents in the Target Area. Ferry and Walnut Avenue are NY Bicycle Route 5 and are considered bike friendly according to Google Maps. Downtown Niagara Falls offers multi-modal access to schools (Abate Elementary), community-based social service providers, and infrastructure (public and private utilities/services). And as stated previously the neighborhood is rated as the most walkable in the City.
5. **Accessible Recreation and Cultural Amenities:** The neighborhood has access to parks (Schoellkopf, Niagara Falls State Parks), gathering places (Old Falls Street), farmers' markets (City Market), and arts and cultural opportunities (Niagara Falls Library and the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center, aka NACC) and access to the Niagara River. The neighborhood also contains a large cache of historic 'Register Eligible' buildings and includes the NR Park Place Historic District, set between Main Street and the Gorge Waterfront and a number of National Register buildings such as the former St. Mary's Hospital and Residence (restored —now Carolyn's House), the NR Main Post Office, the former NF School Board Administration Office Building (restored —now housing).
6. **Access to Health Care:** The neighborhood hosts the City's medical campus which includes the Niagara Falls Medical Memorial Medical Center, Emergency Care, Heart Center, the Golisano Center for Community Health and other related or specialized health care providers. In addition, there are a number of medical doctor offices in and near the South End neighborhood.
7. **Broadband Accessibility:** The entire City has access to Time Warner Cable high-speed broadband services and multiple cellular providers.

The South End/Downtown Niagara Falls area has been challenged for decades to hold on to viability and is now experiencing a reversal of fortunes. It is a neighborhood that has seen fewer buildings being demolished in recent years and it is a place where home-ownership auctions are replacing the once more common home abandonments

There is new infill housing being built. There are historic properties being listed on the National Register, restored, and reused. Likewise, there are a significant number of renovated mixed-use storefronts in the Third Street Precinct, most of which have newly renovated apartments that have come on line for rent above, which simply did not exist more than five years ago.

This neighborhood is also benefitting by the newly created "South End Housing Initiative" a program sponsored by Niagara University with Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, the school district, city government and more than 20 other partners to clean up several center city neighborhood blocks.

The aim of the initiative is to bolster housing stock in the city's South End, part of larger effort to attract the staff of major regional employers – Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, the Niagara Falls Central School District, the Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino and Niagara University – to live here.

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 plan, 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.

Often advanced in strong partnerships/coordination with its State agency partners, the City of Niagara Falls has taken significant, pro-active measures to institutionalize its development policies, and more importantly, its associated regulations and economic development programs, to both articulate and facilitate its goals to improve the quality of life downtown and in the City as a whole. Examples of these efforts include, but are not limited to the following:

- **2005 Strategic Plan, 2009 Comprehensive Plan, and Zoning Ordinance Update.** Initiated through a focused Strategic Plan involving a series of “Big Moves” to evolve the perception and potential for revitalization of key areas of the City, a full update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Niagara Falls City Council in 2009. This document sets forth the City’s key policies to improve the quality of life here, including advancing regional efforts for waterfront access, neighborhood/downtown revitalization, improvements to housing stock, and the restoration of the City’s dense, compact, mixed-use development pattern. These policies are being facilitated through a new zoning ordinance that sets forth standards/requirements for mixed-use development; higher-density downtown uses, and design standards for infill development and street-level uses to encourage active urban settings.
- **Memorial Park Plan.** First included as an element of the City’s Strategic Plan, the revitalization plan comprises a large portion of the Target Neighborhood by leveraging its strategic location near NFMCC, the NACC, Niagara City lofts restoration and residential reuse and the planned extension of John B. Daly Boulevard. The scheme involves a combination of rehabilitation and infill development to support a new community anchored by the medical center workforce/professionals.
- **2015 USAN “City in a Park” Illustrative Downtown Master Plan.** Developed in coordination with the City’s Planning Department, this USAN vision document serves to simplify that major tenets of the City/State’s revitalization policies, including connecting the downtown to its waterfront, to create seamless transitions between the parkland along the water to adjoining downtown areas, and facilitating dense, compact downtown development with active, street-level uses.
- **Old Falls Street Programmable Space.** Evolving out of the restoration of Old Falls Street, the City of Niagara Falls continues to partner with USAN to maintain a program of downtown activities on Old Falls Street, managed as an extension of USAN operations of its Conference Center Niagara Falls. Originally focused on major large concert events to grow recognition/visitation by local residents, this program has subsequently evolved to include a number of community and tourist-oriented family activities including summer outdoor movies, games, and various cultural events/activities that has become a staple of downtown living/visits.
- **Robert Moses Parkway Reconfiguration/Removal.** In 2006, the City entered into a landmark memorandum of understanding (MOU) with State Parks, NYSDOT, USAN, and the New York Power Authority to jointly solicit funding and plan for reconfiguring access along the Upper and Lower Niagara River removing obsolete roadways and to reconnecting the City’s neighborhoods to its waterfront. More than a decade later, after extensive planning work, the initial stage of this initiative has been completed; the “Riverway”, an at-grade 20 MPH park road and trail network replaced an one-mile segment of former elevated expressway in the State Park along the Upper Niagara River. In turn, this MOU partnership achieved a major victory when Governor Cuomo recently announced \$42 million to remove a two-mile segment of the RMP from downtown to Findlay Drive, which would not only open access to 400 acres of open space along and in the Niagara Gorge, it would also provide direct access to waterfront recreational opportunities from the Target Neighborhood in the DRI application.
- **Marketing of federal/state historic tax credits.** The City of Niagara Falls has actively inventoried and identified historic resources in and around the City and actively promoting the use of federal/state

historic preservation tax credits amongst the programs in its toolbox to advance revitalization efforts. In fact, within the Target Neighborhood, the City has already sponsored a 2005 Cultural Resource Inventory of all properties in the City's South End to identify those eligible for the State/National Registers of Historic Places (S/NRHP) as well as potential historic districts. The City recently advanced a federal/state tax credit-based reuse of the former South Junior High School on Portage Road (along the eastern edge of the Target Neighborhood), which has been adapted as a mixed-use project known as "Niagara City Lofts". The \$22.4M project opened in the fall of last year. The building hosts 62 apartments, a renovated auditorium and local dance studio and has reached 100 percent occupancy.

7) Public Support. Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop 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 DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The Niagara Falls South End Plans and Initiatives are the result of the efforts of many individuals, members of the community who have shared their thoughts and comments and who have taken an active interest in the planning process over many years. It is unique perhaps that the strategies and proposed projects discussed herein have held widespread support throughout the community over a protracted period of time. The vision for the community has changed very little each time it is re-presented for debate or comment, or as new and expanded elements have been added. It is not the case that the City is in need of a vision or that it is lacking in clear strategies for intervening to improve the physical, social, or economic conditions of the City or more specifically of the South End Neighborhood. The truth is that the successes in the central tourist district and elsewhere in the community, including to some extent our target neighborhood, is proof that the City, its partners, residents, and business leaders not only started from an inspiring and compelling vision, but through their constant attention and continuous engagement the vision was able to adjust and remain relevant to residents and to investors alike.

Over time, it has become apparent that the number of projects, the types of projects, the level of new investments have all expanded considerably over the years. It is also obvious that the pace of project delivery has accelerated, especially within the central tourist district. It should be similarly obvious that the market's demand for new investment locations is also expanding. As this demand for investment locations has grown, so to the geography, such that it make far greater economic sense to look beyond the confines of the central tourist district and into those adjacent areas near the Park/Greenway, and very much including the South End Neighborhood.

Maintaining consistent engagement with residents and business groups has taken many forms and we look forward to working with everyone that wishes to participate with us in the future evolution of this important neighborhood. At this time, we can only thank the hundreds that have already taken interest enough to share their input through meetings and stakeholder interviews, participation in Stakeholder Workshops, Developer's Forum, a public hearing, or simply by taking the time to engage the administration or staff in a conversation about their ideas or their critiques.

South End Housing Initiative: Meeting Schedule (to date)

Date	Time	Location	Attendees
August 30, 2017	12:00-1:30pm	ReNU Niagara	21
September 20, 2017	12:00-2:00pm	Carolyn's House	21
October 12, 2017	12:00-1:30pm	Community Development	18
October 23, 2017	5:30-7:30pm	ReNU Information Session (Walnut-Ferry Main-Ferry)	6
October 24, 2017	5:30-7:30pm	ReNU Information Session (Pine to Walnut)	2
October 30, 2017	5:30-7:30pm	ReNU Information Session (Ferry- Niagara)	3
November 30, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	Neighborhood Housing Services	24
January 3, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	Niagara University- Gallagher Center	30
February 7, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	Community Development	39
February 28, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	NF Memorial Medical Center	36
March 21, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	First UU Church	38
April 25, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	NF Public Library (Main Street)	27
May 9, 2018	12:00-1:30pm	NF Public Library (Main Street)	19

We must also acknowledge the latest engagement with area residents, called the 'South End Initiative' (SEI). It is being carried out by Niagara University, in partnership with the NF Community Development Department and NF Memorial Medical Center. The SEI has maintained a constant engagement with residents since August 2017. The most recent engagement was a "Rock the Block" event that involved hundreds of volunteers.

In 2016, the Planning Office held a series of public meetings regarding additions to the Comprehensive Plan as it related to the Upper Niagara River Waterfront. This engagement included a multi-day 'Developer's Forum,' in which developers were invited to participate in a tour of the downtown ongoing projects and progress being toward the City's identified "big moves." One big move discussed was the coming of the Daly Boulevard Extension. Another big move was discussion of implementing the NF Urban Renewal Agency's plans for the Niagara Street "Gateway Area."

Less formal ongoing engagements also take place every month when the Downtown Business Association gets together with City and Tourism officials and they maintain a lively dialogue about what is needed to improve business climate for local businesses and what can be done, and by who. This group is primarily made up of those in the downtown or on Third Street. The Niagara Street Business Association maintains constant contact with City officials about their concerns and their initiatives to improve the street's attractiveness.

Even the neighborhood's two major institutions — Memorial Hospital and the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center (NACC), periodically engage with residents to keep them current with activities that each may be undertaking typically the City is an active participant or presenter.

As for local leaders and stakeholders, it should be noted that this is the City's third application under the DRI program. Each time we have enjoyed strong and full support of elected representatives at every level of government, most of whom were part of the planning that is responsible for the consensus vision and for the approach we (City and State) are pursuing in downtown revitalization. There are resolutions adopted each year and letters of support from most local leaders and community stakeholders. Each and every one of them would tell you that they are committed to doing what ever it takes and that they are each prepared to implement a strategic investment plan that can deliver on that vision.

The DRI Local Planning Committee would likely be made up of a cross-section of residents, businessmen, academics, among others, and it would be initially convened and lead by Mayor Paul A. Dyster to work with experts overseeing the development and execution of any new investment plan under a DRI-funded South End Downtown Project. The Dyster Administration is committing any relevant and available municipal resource in service of implementing a successful DRI, which also includes resources of the City's Urban Renewal Agency, which can among other things, condemn and acquire land, and the N.F.C. Corporation, which can among other things, make loans and grants.

8) Project List to Demonstrate Readiness: Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list 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 most projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

Downtown Niagara Falls has always been a major employment center, boasting several hundred businesses and nearly 4,000 jobs just in the Downtown Core alone. Over the last ten-plus years Niagara Falls' historic walkable downtown has a revived its' dining, cultural and entertainment scene to constantly attract ever greater numbers of visitors. In addition to the growing hospitality workforce, there are a growing number of college students from NCCC's Culinary Institute, from Niagara University, and from the Global Tourism Institute's Business Incubator, which is under construction and will be open in 2019.

Under the DRI, the City will focus on the rehabilitation of key buildings; establishing new or expanded homeowner rehabilitation assistance programs; extensive streetscape improvements on commercial streets and more modest streetscape maintenance on residential street; adding new housing options, including several hundred units of new student housing, several dozen vacation rental units, and at least that many apartments; expanding retail options that exist in the South End generally, and on Niagara Street specifically; and building entrepreneurship in the downtown area.

To that end, the City is in receipt of a second development proposal —this one unsolicited, from *PennTerra* of Ontario that is proposing mixed-use development projects, which will result in an estimated construction of 100

new market-rate housing units in the South End. This is a priority project. Similarly, there has been verbal interest expressed by another developer who is bringing in a separate development proposal for restoration and conversion of the former St. Mary's Hospital into a Hotel as well as the construction of up to 30 new infill housing units also in the South end. This too, is a priority project.

Hopefully this application has sufficiently described above the beneficial attributes that can be the foundation for nothing less than the creation of an active, desirable downtown neighborhood with a strong new identity. Yet in order to achieve this transformation, there needs to be a prescription as how to proceed and where to start.

The following is an illustrative list of priority projects that can be ready for implementation within the first one to two years and where DRI funding leverages other Non-DRI investment or other funds.

Illustrative Priority Projects:

1. Niagara Experience Center, Cultural Center Attraction - Site Selection Study
\$20,000
2. Niagara Arts and Cultural Center - Grand Theater Restoration (construction)
\$850,000
3. Niagara Street Gateway Mixed-Use Project, including development of public plaza areas
\$3,500,000
4. Aquarium of Niagara - Expansion Feasibility & Preliminary Design
100,000
5. World Weather Center, Science Center Attraction – Feasibility Analysis & Site Selection
\$25,000
6. Cultural District Master Plan
100,000
7. Pine Avenue, Main Street, and Niagara Street, - Streetscape Improvements
\$250,000
8. Niagara Street - Pedestrian and bicyclists Enhancements
\$150,000
9. NF Memorial Medical Center –Campus Multi-modal Parking Expansion and Upgrades
\$2,000,000
10. Ellicott Development Co – Restoration and Reuse of the former Gazette Building, National Register
\$250,000
11. (Former) St. Mary's Hospital, National Register, restoration and hotel conversion.
\$550,000
12. (New) Housing - Request for Proposals & Assistance for the *Penn Terra* Proposal
\$800,000
13. CNF Community Dev. - Homeowner Rehabilitation & Heritage Structures Rehabilitation Programs
\$250,000
14. Third Street Entertainment Precinct Lighting Project – between Niagara Street and Main Street
\$200,000
15. Daly Boulevard Extension - "Mercatino," a parkette for a small street market with on-street parking.
\$500,000

The City also intend to initiate multiple projects from the *Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Gateway Project Study* for Niagara Street. This is a priority project. Proposals will specifically look to address the limitations that currently prevent Niagara Street from being an inviting gateway. To that end, the City will seek a private sector partner for one of two possible redevelopment concepts (shown below). Either of these concepts will be transformative, adding new forms and function for Niagara Street. Either can be catalytic by creating a comfortable mix of uses in an inviting pedestrian environment. The alternatives have different design schemes, but similar goals, which are:

- Creating an interesting and unique (street-level) experience
- Creating an inviting and safe pedestrian environment
- Ensuring high design standards and a prominent design theme
- Include a mix of uses for both visitors and residents
- Create or maintain a contiguity of green public spaces

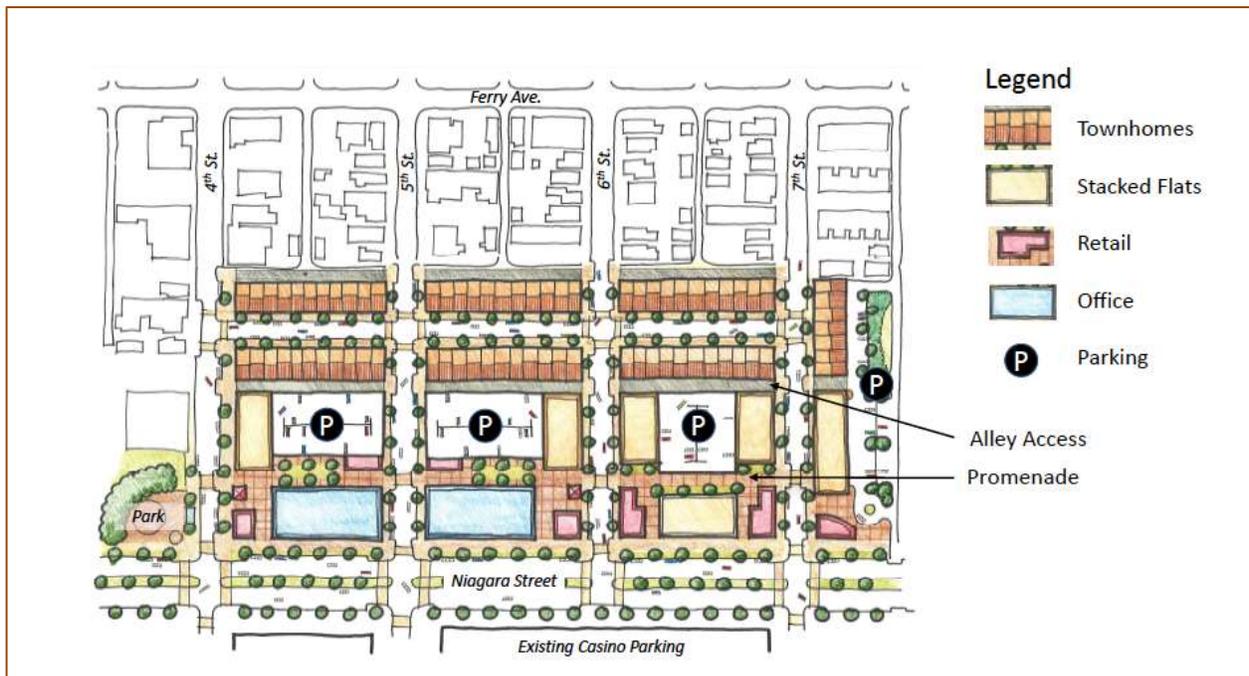
The **Park Concept** provides a mix of retail, office, and residential uses centered on a public plaza. The plaza is intended to host events year-round, such as farmers markets and concerts in the spring and summer, and an ice rink in the winter. The mix of development enveloping the plaza would make it feel secure by providing a reason for people to be there at all times of the day and keeping “eyes on the street.”

The **Promenade Concept** provides a mix of retail, office, and residential uses along a linear pedestrian street or promenade. The narrow pedestrian street creates an intimate, cozy feeling to encourage people to shop and linger. The buildings bordering Niagara Street would have double frontages in order not to present blank walls on either side. Promenade Concept may give a higher degree of confidence to the private development community because they could control the design of both sides of the pedestrian corridor.

Knowing that there is a City-favored development typology for the Niagara Street corridor should frame expectations and provide a level of predictability to developers regarding community receptivity of a potential redevelopment proposal. This should increase investor willingness to spend additional time and effort to develop this or similar proposals.



Niagara Street Frontage – Park Concept



Niagara Street Frontage – Promenade Concept



Restoration of the Former St. Mary's Hospital will re-anchor the neighborhood. Recently purchased, there's a re-development plan announcement expected by Sept. 2018.



Carolyn's House is a supportive housing program for homeless women and children operated by the YWCA of the Niagara Frontier leveraging historic preservation incentives

Existing Projects: These are Projects underway, in and near the target area, that evidence both significant financial investments of more than \$568 million in the area, as well as, the creation of approximately 1,400 jobs.

Investments and jobs within and near the target area in last five years

Name of Project	Date	Project Costs	Funding/ Incentives	Jobs
Infrastructure/Institutional Projects				
Old Falls Street Restoration (East/West Malls & Wintergarden razing)	2011	\$10,000,000	USAN: \$7,000,000 Casino Rev: \$3,000,000	50*
Niagara Falls Culinary Institute & City Parking Ramp	2012	\$35,000,000	USAN: \$14,353,500	
Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel Gaming Floor Upgrades & Site Improvements	2014	\$26,000,000	--	
Niagara Fall Memorial Medical Center Expansions 2006-15	2015	\$85,000,000		200
Niagara Global Tourism Institute	2015	\$415,000	Power Proceeds: \$250,000	3
Robert Moses Parkway South/ Riverway Project	Completed 2018	20, 000,000	ESD: \$12,500,000 NYSDOT: \$7,500,000	100*
Robert Moses Parkway North Removal Main Street to Findlay Drive	Out to Bid	44, 200,000	ESD: \$140,000 FHWA: \$560,000 OPRHP: \$2,000,000 NYPA: 41,500,000	200*
John B. Daly Boulevard Extension Niagara Street to Pine Avenue	Prel. Engineering & Funded for Final Design/Construction	\$5,000,000	FHWA: \$4,000,000 City: \$1,000,000	30*

Name of Project	Date	Project Costs	Funding/ Incentives	Jobs
Development Projects				
421 Third St - Zaika Restaurant	2013	\$95,529	\$20,000	5
333 Rainbow Blvd - Wingate Inn	2015	\$10,160,000	\$980,000	15
Sheraton At The Falls Rainforest Café Retail Project	2015	\$3,500,000	\$425,000	55
305 Prospect St - Flip Burger	2015	\$85,482	\$15,000	6
Holiday Inn Upgrade/Retail Expansion	2015	\$3,800,000	\$550,000	50
Niagara City Lofts	2016	24,100,000	NYSHCR: \$6.400,000 RestoreNY: 5 million	
401 Buffalo Ave - DoubleTree Inn	2016	\$27,000,000	\$2,750,000	55
643 Rainbow Blvd - Fairfield Inn	2016	\$7,000,000	\$125,000	14
900 Rainbow Blvd - Courtyard Inn	2017	\$11,500,000	\$1,250,000	15
310 Rainbow Blvd Hyatt Place/Mixed-Use Development	2018	\$34,000,000	\$3,850,000	128
444 Third Street - Power City Eatery	2017	\$500,000	TBD	7
Rainbow Mall Adaptive Reuse - Wonder Falls	Dev. Agreement	\$150,000,000	TBD	300
Yvonne's Bakery	2012	\$73,000	\$30,000	
Third Street Retreat	2015	\$48,600	\$20,000	5
The Craft	2016	\$626,430	\$175,000	5
The 617	Under Renovation	\$43,000	\$10,000	1.5
Hotel Niagara	In Development	\$42,000,000	Not Disclosed	TBD
Sheraton Hotel	2012	\$800,000	\$75,000	66
Sunoco	2012	\$691,000	\$25,000	3
Mario's Pizza	2013	\$89,000	\$15,000	2.5
Flip Burger	2015	\$66,000	\$15,000	6
ERDCO	2010	\$867,000	\$200,000	8
24 Below	2016	\$32,000	\$10,000	1.5
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	2006-2018	\$90,000,000	Various	100+
TOTAL		\$568,492,041	\$97,343,500	1,432

* Construction Jobs

9) Administrative Capacity. Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award. During the Dyster administration, the City has compiled a robust record of 'economic development' and city-building accomplishments. This past performance proves the city's ability to balance planning, funding, administration, and execution of multiple large development projects concurrently and in sequence. For the DRI, the City will make all necessary staff available from any department that is needed to undertake and complete the projects of the DRI.

The City of Niagara Falls also has its Urban Renewal Agency (URA) available to implement larger scale development and developments that may require eminent domain and site - assembly. The URA adopted the 'Core City Urban Renewal Plan,' which includes the South End and adjacent areas within the Core City. The Plan is intended to build and capitalize on existing core assets while promoting private development and intensification of uses generally. The URA Plan and the city's aforementioned 2009 Comprehensive Plan have already established the policy framework for integrating new projects and, most importantly, in executing DRI projects quickly.

Key Team Members Qualifications:

Mr. Thomas J. DeSantis, AICP, is currently Acting Director of Planning, Environmental Services, and Economic Development for the City of Niagara Falls, New York. In that position he is responsible for overseeing municipal land use and transportation planning, Planning Board, Historic Preservation Commission, NF Urban Renewal Agency, N.F.C. Development Corporation, municipal GIS services, and multiple economic and community development projects. In addition to serving as the City's Policy and Coordinating Committee representative on the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council.

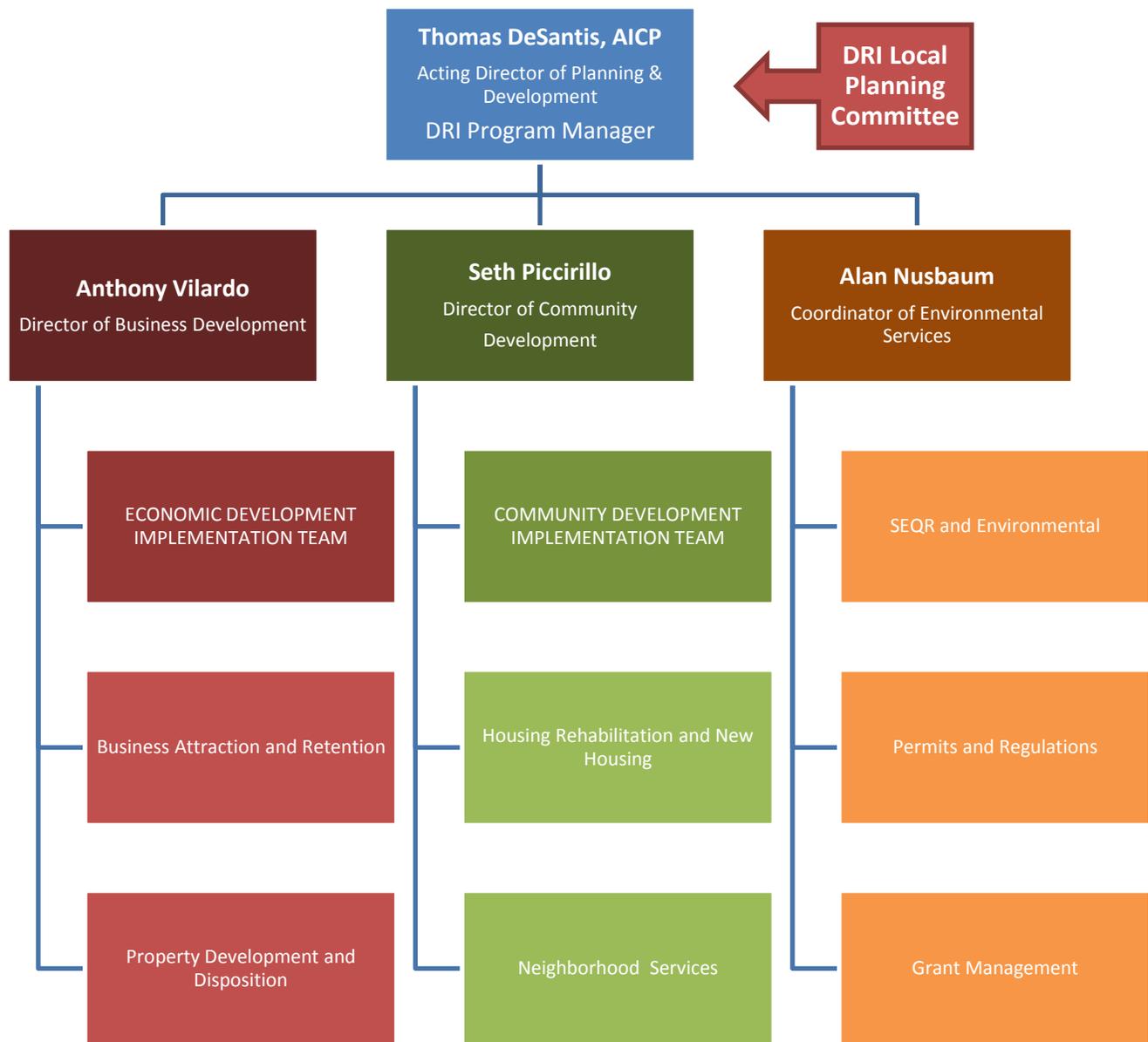
Since coming to the City, the Planning Office has delivered seven award-winning planning projects including completion of the comprehensive plan and full rewrite of the City's zoning ordinance. In addition, Mr. DeSantis manages grants that represent millions in funding for numerous projects, including an International Railway and Intermodal Station (\$43M), the Niagara River Trail, as well as, various planning, park improvement, transportation enhancement, historic preservation, brownfield assessment and brownfield cleanup grants.

Mr. Anthony J. Vilardo is currently the Director of Business Development for the City of Niagara Falls. He is responsible for attraction and retention of businesses in the city. He serves as Executive Director of the N.F.C. Development Corp. which is a not - for - profit corporation. Its mission is to provide programs relieving and reducing unemployment, bettering and maintaining job opportunities, providing aid to attract new business or retain business and industry within the City of Niagara Falls.

Additionally, he serves as Executive Director of the Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Agency. Its original and continued mission is to revitalize, redevelop and eliminate slums and blighted areas of the established Urban Renewal District. The NFURA has recently completed the rehabilitation of a brownfield and creating the Highland Avenue Business Center in its place, which is already occupied by a research and development company —Sandstone Springs LLC, with a potential employment of over 100. It is anticipated that the Agency will become an integral tool in implementing the goals and objectives of the DRI.

Mr. Seth Piccirillo is Director of Niagara Falls Community Development, a department that oversees sustainable neighborhood development strategies for the City of Niagara Falls with a \$2.5M annual budget. The department's primary goal is block by block revitalization, focusing on access to equitable housing opportunities. and driven by public participation. Since taking over as Director of the department Mr. Piccirillo has overseen the market rate apartment renovation program, commercial facade program and the National Grid Urban Center/Commercial District Revitalization Program.

Mr. Alan Nusbaum is the Environmental /GIS Coordinator with the City of Niagara Falls, NY. Alan provides a multitude of services to the City including Environmental Review, GIS Mapping, Brownfield Project Management (\$19M), Grant Application and Administration, SEQRA review, and Flood Zone Administration.



The City of Niagara Falls is committed to implementing the DRI funds with an organized, inclusive and strategic approach based on results. Implementation will be based on the following framework:

- Strategic Management Structure: Thomas DeSantis, AICP will be the overall DRI Program Manager responsible for leadership, allocation of resources, project performance and communications with the NY State DRI staff, steering committee, contractors, and other involved agencies. Mr. DeSantis will oversee three associate managers that will be responsible for implementing specific elements of the DRI as shown in the chart below. The City will also engage consultants as needed to advance projects in the most expeditious manner.

- **Inclusivity:** The DRI Steering Committee will include key individuals from the Business Community, City, State and County as well as representatives from target area. The Steering Committee will provide guidance for evaluating and prioritizing projects while ensuring that projects are meeting the objectives and goals of the DRI Plan.
- **Implementation Teams:** The Program Manager and Project Managers will work with specific “Implementation Teams” that will help to deliver projects the Local Planning/Steering Committee has selected. Members will be made up of key City staff, business leaders, community members and outside professionals that can facilitate implementation of projects.
- **Metrics and Reporting:** The Planning and Development Department will oversee the preparation of regular project tracking reports

During the Dyster administration, the City has compiled a robust record of ‘economic development’ and city-building accomplishments. This past performance proves the city’s ability to balance planning, funding, administration, and execution of multiple large development projects concurrently and in sequence. For the DRI, the City will make all necessary staff available from any department that is needed to undertake and complete the complete transformation of the South End using this proven DRI program.

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



Historic Restoration and reuse of the 7th and Niagara Street Block by TM Montante will bring back this important complex of buildings. It is a \$5M project that will see new housing, commercial space and house the NU Global Tourism Institute offices and Business Incubator. Construction is expected to start by Sept. 2018.

SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



Gibsons Center for Community Health - by NFRMC



Caraly's House Revitalization Project



Third Street Mixed Use Redevelopment



The Heart Center of Niagara - NFRMC



Third Street Art Alley Project

NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE



SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



Old School House Restoration for Housing



BOCES Job Training Center in the Target Area



New Fairfield Hotel in the Central Tourist Area



New Infill Housing



New Doubletree Hotel in the Central Tourist Area

NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



Niagara City Lofts - Restored Junior High School for Housing



Niagara Arts and Cultural Center



New Hyatt Place Hotel in the Central Tourist Area



Niagara Street Microbrewery Project



Adaptive Reuse and New Development

NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

NIAGARA STREET AND JOHN DALY BOULEVARD PROJECTS



Niagara Street Development



Niagara St at Seventh St - Materials Group

Potential John Daly Boulevard Development



NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

SOUTH END DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Central Tourist District Projects and Improvements . . .

NIAGARA FALLS DRI TARGET AREA AND NEARBY

BY THE NUMBERS

8,000,000 visitors annually

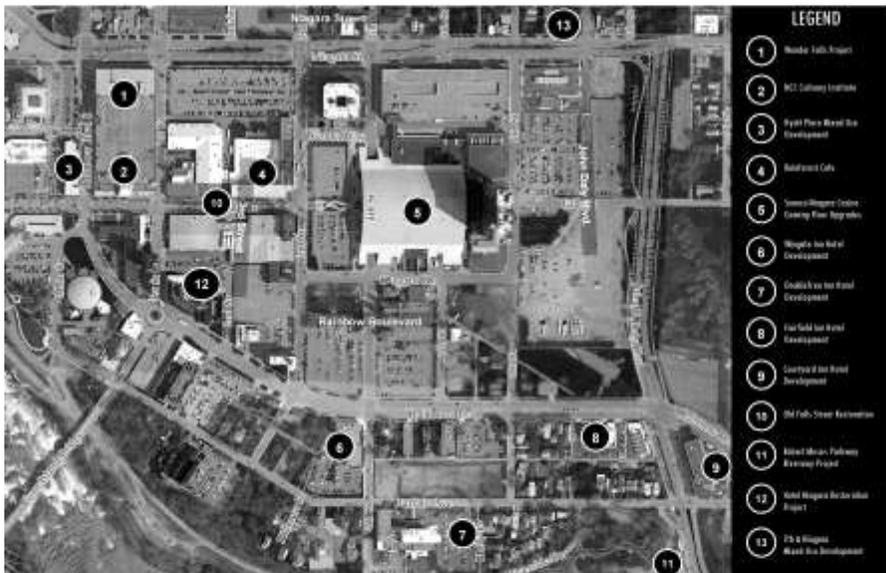
\$568 Million CTD investment

1,400 jobs in 5 years

1.5 Million residents within a 30 minute drive

34 projects in 5 years

3,500 persons per square mile



NIAGARA FALLS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE