



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Application Submission 2019

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: **Village of Nyack**

Downtown Name: **Historic Downtown Nyack**

County: **Rockland**

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

The Nyack Promise: Nyack has a vision for our vibrant downtown that flows from the historic and strategic place our Village has always held in the region. We are the gateway to the Hudson Valley, bordered on our south by the magnificent Mario M. Cuomo Bridge serving as a conduit from the Hudson River to the rest of Rockland County and beyond. Nyack's founders established this Village on the banks of the mighty and ever-changing Hudson with a focus on economic expansion, opportunities, many driven by the Hudson itself, with room for entrepreneurs in search of social mobility. We count among our early residents' renowned writers, artists, ship captains and freed slaves who became millionaires. We built boats and shoes and welcomed ferries full of laborers and visitors. Our less than a mile square Village has always bustled with excitement and innovation and the proud eclectic traditions that have defined Nyack in the past continue today with our commitment to available and affordable housing and residents who are engaged in making Nyack a viable exciting place to live, work and play. We are a place where no child is ignored, the arts flourish, our waterfront continues to grow and become more vibrant, our small businesses are honored and we take care of each other. Continuing to reinforce these principles is the inspiration for our vision of Nyack and the concepts expressed in this proposal for revitalizing our village.

Our vision for Nyack is to renew **The Nyack Promise** and achieve four key pillars:

We believe in viable and affordable housing that is diverse and attainable. New housing options will be available for a wide range of people in every segment of our community. We understand that diversity is complex and maintaining it, even more so. We are proud that in Nyack our diversity includes not only people from different cultures but families from different socioeconomic backgrounds and different world views. We know that this diversity is one of the things that makes our community so beautiful and we are committed to maintaining that. We want all residents, regardless of income, to be able to live in our downtown, to be able to walk to our waterfront and our business district.

We believe in exceptional educational opportunities for all of our residents. Learning opportunities at every level must be available to provide hope, opportunity and a chance for all to live productive and exciting lives. Our public school system is leading the way creating an equity plan that will develop students who are prepared for school and work in a changing world. Rockland Community College is currently training students to enter careers in the region's growing hospitality industry and is exploring other opportunities to provide practical focused education.

We believe that continuing to honor artists, musicians, and writers is essential to our revitalization. As the proud home to a number of art organizations including the Edward Hopper House, Elmwood Playhouse, and to art and musical events throughout the year, we want to enhance our Village as a destination for cultural tourism.

We believe that tourism is a key part to the economic life of the Village and to the entire Hudson Valley. We want to firmly connect the waterfront with the downtown so that when tourists visit they have a wide range of wonderful options. Nyack is a very popular destination in Rockland County, but there is room for enhancing and growing tourism. We want people to take advantage of our excellent restaurants, picturesque shops and galleries. We want them to come back often by boat, bus, car, bicycle, and, hopefully, ferry.

Our vision for Nyack's future is informed by our residents' needs, our business's needs, our desire for more people to know and love our community the way we do, but also by our extensive planning process, engaged and committed partners and a belief in the possibility of accomplishing the Nyack Promise. Investment in infrastructure coupled with the creation of many more public spaces and enhanced connections to our historic downtown and to our riverfront are critical elements of our plan. Investments in these areas will position Nyack to increase tourism, grow the regional economic impact to be developed by our partnerships with key educational institutions and create regional opportunities for business engagement. This is a unique opportunity for New York State to invest in the opportunities that Nyack's revitalization offers to the future of the Hudson Valley.

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.

The Village of Nyack has developed a clear sense of the village's needs and opportunities through an extensive community dialogue informed by considerable thoughtful and technically detailed planning work. This work involved updating the Comprehensive and LWRP Plans, infrastructure assessments, municipal parking lot development, feasibility studies and a new Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan with the neighboring river communities of South Nyack, Upper Nyack and the Nyack School District. This makes the Village well poised with New York State's leadership and catalyst funding support to strengthen Nyack's position as a premier regional destination for distinctive culture, leisure and entertainment, shopping and downtown live, work and play atmosphere. This is summarized in the Village's branding of being the center of "Art and Soul on the Hudson". NYS DRI support would help Nyack to implement multiple transformative projects that will strengthen Nyack's two centers of civic life: its vibrant historic downtown where the Village's asphalt surface municipal parking lot and shuttered River Space theater are awaiting their next life, perhaps as a mixed-use, mixed-income development with a cultural facility anchor, all connected within easy walking distance to the other key Village focus, the Village's beautiful Hudson River waterfront public space that requires new infrastructure investments to achieve its true potential as a world-class civic waterfront destination.

Located less than 30 miles north of New York City, the Village of Nyack's downtown constitutes the majority of the less than one square mile land area of the Village and much of its population, and is home to an ethnically, economically and culturally diverse population. Bounded by the Hudson River on the east and going uphill from the river along Cedar Hill Avenue on the south to NYS Route 9W on the west and Fifth Avenue on the north, Nyack's compact downtown with its mix of 19th-century mixed-use (commercial and residential) 3 and 4-story brick buildings, Victorian homes, town houses, several small apartment complexes, the Government Center and the Carnegie-funded Library has a complementary mix of uses that contributes greatly to the Village's strong image and sense of place and attracts visitors from throughout the region. Eminently walkable, Nyack's downtown with its many restaurants and shops, the YMCA of Rockland, the Nyack Center, the Pride Center and small, legitimate theaters is within a short walk of the Hudson shoreline and the Village's incomparable shoreline park, Memorial Park, making the Village a regional attraction for its scenic beauty, dining, shopping and entertainment. Nyack has

a strong and growing artistic community, offering community-wide art shows, exhibits at Hopper House and small galleries, musical events at various venues, including free concerts in Memorial Park, which attract hundreds of visitors throughout the year. Nyack's branding for its downtown - "*Art and Soul on the Hudson*" - is truly reflective of our vibrant community.

The Village's scenic, cultural and historic assets and its diverse community are the assets upon which the Village of Nyack is implementing extensive revitalization projects and programs. With NY State funding, the Village has updated its *Comprehensive Plan* and its *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)* to identify and plan sustainable strategies related to economic development and protection of the waterfront with a focus on multi-modal transportation, including a public waterfront walkway, a seasonal ferry, transit-oriented development, increased residential density and commercial activity and resiliency measures addressing flooding in the downtown, sea level rise on the waterfront and the impact of climate change on the entire Village. With funding from NYS DOT, the Village is also enhancing the walkability and bikeability of the downtown and use of public transportation with streetscape improvements along the entire length of Broadway, including a bike lane and Hudson Transit Link bus shelters providing bus rapid transit across the new Governor Mario Cuomo Bridge. With funding from the New NY Bridge Community Fund, the Village has completed *The Greater Nyack Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* that assesses streets, sidewalks, intersections, and vehicle traffic patterns in South Nyack, Upper Nyack and the Valley Cottage hamlet in the Nyack School District that serve as the main connectors to the downtown, to the schools and to the new Governor Mario Cuomo Bridge Shared Use Path (SUP). The new Master Plan makes recommendations for improvements including new bicycle routes and sidewalks that will: foster a safe environment for biking as well as walking; connect points of interest; and enhance the experience of visitors to the Nyacks utilizing the SUP. With 20,000 cyclists expected to use the SUP every weekend in good weather, the project will contribute significantly to tourist-related economic development.

At a special press event held in Memorial Park during Earth Week 2019, NYS DEC awarded Nyack a bronze certification in New York State's *Climate Smart Communities* program. The certification recognized Nyack as a model for its green initiatives, becoming the first community in Rockland County to achieve certification. NYSERDA also recognized the Village as a *Clean Energy Community*. The Village is committed to sustainable practices, lowering its greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and alternate energy. The Village is sharing its experience and initiatives, including programs such as bulk energy purchasing with the adjacent riverfront communities. Nyack has integrated these practices into the way that it does business and in its planning processes.

The projects currently underway to plan for a "sustainable" and "walkable" Nyack are attracting new development and promise to attract more. The private sector and the non-profit/academic sectors are partnering with the Village in a number of ways to revitalize Nyack, including the Rockland Community College Hospitality and Culinary Arts Teaching Center, a unique private/public partnership with the Village providing a state-of-the-industry venue for education and workforce development and other food and beverage initiatives supporting growth in this Mid-Hudson Valley priority sector. To support this key linchpin in the heart of downtown, the Village is seeking to establish a municipal parking facility sited on Village and private land next to the RCC Culinary Center with rooftop amenities. This would support the continued growth of the RCC campus and provide additional parking for downtown mixed-use development and visitors to the adjacent waterfront. The Village is also proposing a private underwriting of free trolley service for visitors to Nyack connecting the area's cultural facilities, the waterfront and downtown.

Posed to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the new Governor Mario Cuomo Bridge and related improvements to the NY Thruway in South Nyack and Nyack, Nyack has enormous potential to spark economic development in the region and qualifies as a prime candidate for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. However, due to problems related to drainage issues and flooding as well as lack of parking in the historic downtown area, revitalization may be severely impacted and possibly delayed for many years and opportunities lost without

the infusion of state financial assistance at this key inflection point. Implementation assistance to “kick start” revitalization is needed for crucial infrastructure projects, including improved public spaces, vital to future development, preserving the historic downtown and leveraging additional public and private investment. The DRI will give Nyack the capacity to plan the optimum strategy for implementing a transformative, comprehensive revitalization “package” of projects that have been envisioned for the Village by its residents and stakeholders and will position and strengthen Nyack as a key player in the economic life of the region by addressing problems in the downtown inhibiting development, including persistent flooding caused by heavy rainfall, which is occurring with greater frequency due to climate change, limited parking and lack of an improved public space to serve as a “Village Square” and focal point for the downtown. Funding from the DRI will allow Nyack to optimize the opportunities of the completed new Governor Mario Cuomo Bridge by expediting the planning process and the implementation of a development strategy to become the Gateway to the Hudson Valley, and by constructing urgently-needed projects to catalyze development and insure long-term viability of future development.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1) *Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.* Detail the boundaries of the targeted downtown area or neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the area should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond traditional downtown central business districts are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Include a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.

Nyack’s historic downtown is bounded by NYS Route 9W on the west, the Hudson River and the Village waterfront on the east, Cedar Hill Avenue on the south at the border with South Nyack, and Fifth Avenue on the north.

Nyack’s downtown contains approximately two-thirds of the village’s population of 7,000, almost all of its retail operations, restaurants and office space. The downtown consists primarily of mixed-use, historic commercial/residential buildings of 3-4 stories, several multi-story rental housing complexes, the Clermont Condos with 101 units, almost 30 restaurants, Nyack Hospital with 1,650 employees, three banks, Village Hall, the Nyack Library (built in 1902 with funds from the Carnegie Foundation), the YMCA of Rockland with 225 employees, the United Way of Rockland, Nyack Community Center, the Hopper House Museum, which is visited by hundreds from around the world annually, and the Pride Center. Recently completed and planned residential development to be constructed in 2019-20 in the downtown, which includes a substantial commercial overlay, will bring 271 new units, of which 26 are affordable. Proposed developments in the planning stage will bring an additional 230 units over the next 3-4 years, with approximately 15% affordable. Recent commercial development includes: the 15,000 square-foot RCC Hospitality Center, the new 3,500 square-foot Chase Bank, the 24,250 square-foot remodeled Nyack Hospital ER and its new Medical Village, which will create at least 300 new permanent jobs. For the immediate future, RCC has the opportunity of adding 10,000 square feet to its Center; Nyack Hospital is in the planning stages for constructing a “green” 265 space parking garage, and the 7,500-square-foot former Woolworth Store is under construction as an entertainment center.



In January 2019, Rockland Community College opened its Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center, a 15,000 square foot facility in the heart of the downtown. The new RCC Center renovated with an investment of \$3.5 million has a state-of-the-industry teaching kitchen, classrooms, and a beverage tasting amphitheater, a farm to market retail store and a boutique event and pop-up restaurant venue. The facility will not only train students for employment in the food and hospitality fields, offering a range of courses on the culinary arts and tourism development, themed workshops on food and drink and tastings and a retail market open to the public featuring agricultural products, craft beers, ciders and wine from Rockland County and the Hudson Valley, but will also offer a summer camp for high schoolers focusing on skill-building for employment in the hospitality and tourism industries, and training for the unemployed and underemployed to prepare for entry into the hospitality and tourism industries. The Center’s

programs will grow employment opportunities on a regional scale as well as catalyze small business growth. The Center will make its 200-seat amphitheater (the largest in Rockland County) and other meeting spaces available to community organizations and County businesses, bringing a much-needed resource into the community and attracting thousands of visitors annually.



Additionally, the Hospitality and Culinary Center's facility and operating program have been designed to attract culinary tourism. Its Demonstration Theater will be used to showcase and demonstrate artisanal foods and crafted beverages manufactured in the County of Rockland and the Hudson Valley in a range of programs including tastings and cooking demos. These "edutainment" programs will be marketed to bus charters going to Woodbury Commons, Hudson Valley Bus Tours and to regional and out-of-state visitors to Nyack. The Market will open its doors later this summer offering a wide range of New York retail-ready food products featuring student-made shelf-stable products utilizing

New York ingredients. Whether in the boutique museum display cases boasting examples of vintage NY food and beverage products and kitchen tools or a "Make, Bake and Take" apple pie, 1.5-hour cooking class for international and domestic tourists, Nyack and the Hudson Valley is the message.

What may have once been viewed as the region's best-kept secret, the Hudson Valley's food and beverage industry has been experiencing brisk expansion in size, popularity and esteem over the last decade. The Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation's Food & Beverage Alliance and the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council reports that the number of people employed in the regional economy grew by nearly 20% from 5,037 workers in 2010 to 6,020 workers in 2014, with employment in this industry increasing by 15.3% between 2018 and March 2019 (NYS Labor Department) and this trend continues. Food and beverage wages grew by more than 7.5% over 2010-14. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's enduring focus on the growth of this industry in New York State and the Hudson Valley region is fueling a demand for workforce-ready, skilled professionals in all sectors of the hospitality and food and beverage industry. RCC's new Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center at Nyack will meet the challenge of providing a state-of-the-industry venue for education and workforce development and other food and beverage initiatives that support current and future growth in this Mid-Hudson Valley priority sector. RCC's Center promises to be a "game changer" that will bring hundreds of visitors annually to Nyack's downtown in addition to its student body and staff and provide training for the growth industries of the Mid-Hudson Valley-hospitality and tourism.

RCC's presence in Nyack also connects the Village to the institution's range of educational and training programs and positions the village as a potential partner to develop future opportunities such as in the rapidly expanding health field and other regional growth industries.

The area to the west of NYS Route 9W known as the "Gateway" is adjacent to the Downtown's catchment area and provides additional support to the downtown. It houses several commercial operations-retail, fast-food restaurants, automotive repair and sales, two shopping plazas and the boutique Time Hotel with 132 rooms and several world-class restaurants, employing 200 persons. Additionally, a new Chase Bank has opened on a long-vacant corner property in the Gateway, greatly improving the overall look of the area. Zoning changes recommended by the Comprehensive Plan encourage the development of transit-orient development in close proximity to the new Hudson Link Rapid Transit stations on Route 59.

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

The Village of Nyack is currently implementing extensive revitalization plans and projects for its waterfront with funding from New York State, the New NY Bridge Fund, the New NY Bridge/NYS DOS Waterfront Revitalization Projects 2015 Grant Program and Scenic Hudson. These projects are transformative in scope and intent and will

enhance Nyack’s incomparable waterfront and strengthen connections to its historic downtown. Completed projects include: a Master Plan for Memorial Park located on the shores of the Hudson funded by Scenic Hudson; Improvements and enhancements to Memorial Park funded by NYS Office of Parks, NYS Department of State and the New NY Bridge Community Fund, which include new basketball courts, a skate park, a splash park, a gazebo for performances, a fishing pier and viewing platform. NYS DOS-funded waterfront projects underway include: the Memorial Park Inlet Bridge linking the park and marina, which will allow the Village to remove parking from the park and connect Memorial Park to the Marina and the Waterfront Walkway linking the Village’s waterfront from Memorial Park through the Marina to the privately-developed shoreline walkway at Tidewaters to the north of the Marina to be deeded to the Village. The Waterfront Walkway project will also enhance connectivity between the waterfront and downtown with streetscape improvements and wayfinding signage on the streets leading from the downtown to Memorial Park and the marina.

State-funded projects that will further position Nyack as the Gateway destination to the Hudson Valley include: the updated Comprehensive Plan funded by NYSERDA Cleaner Greener Communities Grant- ***“Update to the Comprehensive Plan-Climate Smart Planning for the 21st Century”***- which integrated planning for a resilient waterfront, multi-modal transportation, transit-oriented development and increased sustainable residential density and commercial activity; the updated Local Waterfront Revitalization Program funded by NYS DOS -***“Waterfront Revitalization Planning in the Post-Sandy World”***- which identified sustainable strategies and projects related to economic development and protection of the waterfront and resiliency measures to insure the future of the Village in the post-Sandy era of sea level rise and climate change. Projects in process include: the NYS DOT-funded Transportation Advancement Program (TAP), ***“New Connectivity for Nyack”***, to install streetscape improvements along the length of Broadway, which will include a designated bike lane and bus shelters; the NYS DOT ***FAST*** grant to install permeable sidewalks along Broadway; With funding from the new NY Bridge Fund, the Village has completed the ***Greater Nyack Bike/Walk Master Plan*** to assess streets, sidewalks, intersections, and vehicle traffic patterns in the Nyacks and the Nyack School District, including the Valley Cottage hamlet - and to the Mario Cuomo Bridge Shared Use Path (SUP). It makes recommendations for improvements that will: foster a safe environment for biking and walking. The Village together with South Nyack and Upper Nyack have adopted a ***Complete Streets Policy*** and lowered speed limits on village streets. The Village has also completed streetscape improvements to Main Street in the central business district with funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) administered by the Rockland County Office of Development. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has awarded the Village of Nyack \$4.3 million for funding the ***“Safe Routes to School Project” for the Nyack Middle School under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – Congestions Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)***. The funding from this grant will allow the Village to create a multi-use ADA-compliant sidewalk system for pedestrians and cyclists on the Village’s major east-west thoroughfares, Depew Avenue and Main Street, in the densely populated southwest section of the Village. Depew Avenue is the main access point for the Nyack Middle School, and Main Street serves the central business district and the waterfront.

An important complement to revitalization plans is the completed NYS DOT-funded project which installed new traffic lights and timing system in Nyack’s downtown as part of the Lower Hudson Valley Transit Link expediting the flow of traffic from the new Mario Cuomo Bridge through the Village, eliminating bottlenecks and tie-ups that inhibit visitors and residents from coming into the downtown. The Village expedited the review and approval process for this crucial infrastructure improvement and was the first municipality in the Lower Hudson Valley Transit Link to move to implementation.

The publicly funded projects listed above have positioned Nyack with the ability to attract extensive private investment that will make the Village the “Gateway” destination to the Hudson Valley and a regional economic

force. Currently, 168 residential units, some with commercial overlay and sustainable amenities, such as daylighting the Nyack Brook, brownfield remediation, green roofs, solar panels, green space and public river access, have already opened. Approximately 200 units approved will be online within 2 - 3 years, and an additional 133 units are in the planning stage. Chase Bank has opened a \$2 million facility at the “Gateway” area at the intersection of NYS Route 9W and Main Street, and the former Woolworth Building in the center of the business district is under redevelopment at a cost of \$5 million as an entertainment center with restaurants, bowling alley and a microbrewery.



Additionally, a range of non-profit organizations have major capital projects either developed or in advanced planning that will transform Nyack’s downtown, greatly enhancing the Village as a tourist destination while providing needed services and programs to our residents and the region, as well as hundreds of permanent jobs. One of these projects - Nyack Point developed by the Rockland Housing Action Coalition (RHAC) - has been completed, with 33 units providing a mix of low- and moderate-income units along with eight special needs units. The Village’s affordable housing legislation has incentivized the production of 59 units of high-quality housing.

Other non-profit organizations include: Rockland Community College, which has opened a Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center with tourism and job training programs at the crossroads of the downtown; Nyack Hospital, which has opened a new Emergency Room facility, is completing construction of a Medical Village and is in planning for a sustainable 265 space parking structure on its existing property. The PRIDE Center has completed the rehab of a long-vacant building for its center with a substantial grant from NY State and donations from across the county, including Rosie O’Donnell; and the Green House Preservation Coalition which is in the process of restoring the oldest residence in the Village as a tourist center. Another partner with the Village is *Visit Nyack*, a non-profit marketing organization, which has secured NYS funding to market the Village to a regional market of 25-30 million persons, and which works closely with County and Village officials and staff to “get the word out” about Nyack. The Village also works with and encourages local artists to identify vacant spaces for pop-up art galleries, as well as seeking out other opportunities for public art. The Village has taken the position that arts and culture function as economic drivers and have actively pursued the development of more arts and cultural opportunities.

Although the Village and its private and non-profit “partners” have positioned Nyack to be a regional economic force, serious problems with infrastructure remain to be addressed that are impeding implementation of both short-term and long-term development plans, and may prohibit some projects from being constructed if these problems are not solved in the very near future. Through an extensive community conversation as part of the planning updates for the Comprehensive Plan and LWRP, the Village has identified a transformative, comprehensive revitalization “package” of projects that will protect existing assets and planned and future development, while enhancing the look of the downtown. But without financial assistance from New York State, these urgently needed projects may not be implemented in the near future, jeopardizing downtown revitalization. Of these projects, the highest priority is given to drainage improvements for the Nyack Brook’s undersized and deteriorated drainage system that runs through the heart of the DRI area and which cannot handle heavy rain events that are occurring with regular frequency due to climate change. Damage claims for privately-owned structures on two blocks of Main Street (the Brook runs adjacent to Main Street in an open culvert in one section and under Main Street in pipes to outfall at the Hudson River) during Hurricane Irene alone totaled more than \$6 million, and the Village’s DPW building had \$60,000 in repairs. Unfortunately, flooding continues to cause damage along Main Street, and must be addressed to allow downtown mixed-use development in the central Village.



DRI funding will allow the Village to move immediately on the following revitalization projects vital to ensuring Nyack's future which are summarized below in priority order:

(A) *Drainage improvements for the Nyack Brook* and daylighting a portion of the brook to create a Village Square- the *Nyack Brook Plaza/aka Village Square Plaza*- in the center of the downtown to prevent flooding in the historic business district, allow for new development and protect existing and proposed commercial and residential structures in areas that are currently flood-prone and create a unique and attractive park (\$4,350,000);

(B) *A 200 space Central Business District Municipal Parking Structure located to the rear of the RCC Center* to accommodate growth at the new Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center and to solve the acute problem of limited parking in the adjacent downtown that is inhibiting development. This municipal garage will also have street front commercial spaces and rooftop amenities (\$5,500,000); and

(C) *the Village Marina Parking Terrace* – a 85 space parking terrace that will allow the Village to move existing parking out of Memorial Park, increase green space in the park, support marina uses and allow for the development of a seasonal and possible future commuter ferry service. The parking structure will be a two-level landscaped parking terrace graded into the existing topography to prevent visual impacts on upland views and views from the river. The frontage facing the marina will have seasonal retail and eating spaces (\$2,125,000).

The Village's transformative package of projects developed for its updated LWRP also include projects that will enhance Nyack as a regional destination, while protecting and enhancing its incomparable scenic and historic assets. The priority projects that the Village is implementing for the waterfront include: **(1)** *the Memorial Park Inlet Bridge and Waterfront Walkway* under development is a continuous waterfront walkway linking Memorial Park through the public marina and key arrival points on the waterfront and extending north through a new waterfront park to be constructed by the private developer of the Tidewaters residential project and deeded to the Village. The waterfront walkway project will also provide direct connection to the downtown streets leading to the waterfront with wayfinding signage and thematic lighting. Additional funding will be required to complete the entire project, and the Village will continue to seek State funding; **(2)** *Waterfront Improvements* to support seasonal recreational ferry service and a future commuter ferry in addition to the Terrace parking listed above to complement Nyack's existing position as a regional destination, and connect day-trippers or overnighters to the village. The planning component of the DRI award will assist the Village in moving its **A,B,C urgent** priority projects and **1,2** waterfront priority projects to implementation.

3) 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.*

With the extensive development projects underway or in the approval process, permanent job growth in Nyack in the immediate future will be substantial with significant regional impact, as will planned growth over the next five-ten years. In 2019 alone, commercial and residential projects completed, or scheduled to be completed before the end of the year, will create approximately 600 permanent jobs. The Time Hotel employs 200 people, and it is estimated that RCC Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center which opened in January 2019 employs approximately 25 faculty and staff and has an initial enrollment of 75 students. This is anticipated to double within the next year increasing to 200 students by 2022, with a concomitant increase in staff. Nyack Hospital's recently opened expanded ER and new Medical Village under construction will create 350 direct jobs. These residential, commercial and institutional facilities have also generated 1,000+ direct and induced jobs in construction and related trades.

Development currently in planning, construction or in approval in the DRI area have and will create more than 3,000 construction jobs - direct and induced- over the period 2019-2025 (NYS DOT estimate of 24 jobs direct and induced created per \$1 million of construction). These projects include: Nyack Hospital's new "green" parking structure, the former Woolworth Building; construction of 230 residential units in addition to the 271 units online to be opened by 2020; and the ADA-compliant sidewalk systems and streetscape amenities to be constructed for

the two NYS DOT TAP grants. These projects, which are online or ready to move to implementation, will create approximately 400 permanent jobs, and hundreds more indirect and induced jobs.

Future job creation in the Village and regionally will also result from recent planning efforts. The updated Comprehensive Plan has planned for increased residential density and infill development, and the updated LWRP has developed a transformative list of projects to enhance and protect the waterfront. The commuter ferry studied as part of the Comprehensive Plan update has an estimated construction of \$5 million with potential tourist seasonal river cruises and increased marina traffic on the waterfront. The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Hudson Link at the thruway interchange has an estimated cost of \$2 million with road/lane improvements and would create approximately 80 direct and indirect permanent jobs. Shuttles may also be used as a transportation alternative for commuters to the Ferry. This alternative has been studied for the Comprehensive Plan update in addition to the Marina Parking Terrace providing parking in closer proximity to the ferry, marina, Memorial Park and public waterfront walkway.

The plans and projects being developed will make Nyack a regional economic driver and result in: An improved tourist economy due to more attractive and diverse transportation options; An increased local demand for goods and services resulting from increased residential density, which will have a balanced mix of affordable and market-rate rental and for sale housing; and Increased commercial activity at the transit nodes on the river and the Thruway Interchange.

4) *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 Village of Nyack's historic downtown is home to an ethnically, economically and culturally diverse population. Nyack's compact, historic downtown with its mix of 19th-century mixed-use (commercial and residential) 3 and 4-story brick buildings with street-level retail/commercial spaces, Victorian homes, town houses and several small apartment complexes that contribute greatly to the Village's strong image and sense of place and attract visitors from throughout the region. In 2009, the Village prohibited residential uses on the ground floor of buildings in the core business district, requiring active uses to maintain the attractive, mixed-use character of the downtown. Included in this mix are two senior housing complexes, two subsidized housing complexes, the recently-opened, 33-unit Nyack Point subsidized veterans complex, which includes eight units of special needs housing, the Nyack Community Center, the Head Start Center, a senior citizens center, the YMCA and the PRIDE Center. Also in the downtown and within short walks of each other on ADA-compliant sidewalks, there are a pharmacy, a small grocery store, three banks, the Nyack Library (a Carnegie building), Village Hall, a bookstore, a bakery, several coffee shops, a cheese shop, a dozen restaurants, two bike shops, several professional offices, including a doctor's office, assorted retail stores and on Thursdays a year-round Green/Farmers Market (outside in the spring and summer, in the Nyack Center in the winter). Entertainment, services and shopping are easily accessible, even for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The major thoroughfares-Broadway and Main Street- are served by local bus lines and the new Hudson Link with modern bus shelters.

Eminently walkable, Nyack's downtown with its many restaurants and shops, the YMCA of Rockland, the Nyack Center, small, legitimate theaters is within a short walk of the Hudson shoreline and the Village's incomparable shoreline park, Memorial Park, making the village a regional attraction for its scenic beauty, dining, shopping and entertainment. The Village's transformative project – the Village Square to be called the Nyack Brook Plaza (formerly River Space), which will daylight the Nyack Brook and create a new Village Square surrounded by a

mixed-use center with affordable and market rate housing, cultural and retail activities. This location of a new vibrant place in the municipal parking lot in center of the downtown will greatly enhance the village for its residents and attract new cultural and retail opportunities for residents as well as serving as a regional destination.



One of Nyack’s key assets is a strong and growing artistic community offering community-wide arts shows, including the Annual Art Walk in June, exhibits at Hopper House and small galleries, musical events at various venues, including Maureen’s Jazz Cellar and free concerts in Memorial Park, which attract hundreds of visitors throughout the year and the newly renovated Elmwood Playhouse in the center of downtown. The Elmwood, a community theatre, has offered award-winning productions since 1948. Plans for the DRI area hold great opportunity for our local artists and cultural organizations and will draw even more visitors to Nyack. The Village’s proposed development of the Nyack Brook Plaza/aka Village Square Plaza will offer a beautiful and unique public space for art installations and performances. Hopper House Museum is also planning a series of murals in the historic business district that will enliven the buildings and further encourage visitors to walk the village. Nyack’s motto for its downtown - “Art and Soul on the Hudson” – is truly reflective of our vibrant community.

Nyack’s bikeability will soon be enhanced by: a new bike lane to be installed as part of the TAP-funded improvements to Broadway-the village’s major north-south street; bike accessibility to be installed on the new sidewalk system to be constructed for the “*Safe Routes to School*” project; and with the recommendations to be developed for the New NY Bridge-funded *Greater Nyack Bike/Walk Master Plan* to make Nyack and its surrounding communities safely bikeable for residents, school children, visitors and the thousands expected on weekends in good weather from the Shared Use Path (SUP) of the new Mario Cuomo Bridge.

5) 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 that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.*

Nyack has worked continuously since the development of its 1992 LWRP and 2002 Comprehensive Plan by updating the LWRP with a 2017 NYS DOS grant, and a 2016 NYSERDA grant to update its Comprehensive Plan. The focus of the LWRP revision was to align NYS DOS coastal policies with recent, and planned public-private sector development, local and regional economic, social and physical changes, including the new Mario Cuomo Bridge, developing proactive resiliency measures to combat the type of devastation brought about by Sandy and Irene and addressing the reality of climate change and sea level rise. The LWRP developed a Project Priority Matrix of 14 projects for the short and medium term to protect and enhance the waterfront, while making it more accessible, with the Nyack Brook Improvements the #1 priority to protect the downtown and waterfront.

Work on the Comprehensive Plan focused on developing plans, projects and policies, including zoning and building codes, to foster sustainable, green development, which includes transit-oriented development, a walkable Nyack that maintains the economically, culturally and ethnically diverse character of the village, protects and enhances its scenic and historic assets, while attracting residential and commercial development that will make Nyack home to the workforce of the future and a regional tourist destination. Comprehensive Plan studies addressed key issues for the revitalization of the village – Transit-Oriented Development and recommended Village Code updates and transportation alternatives - ferry service and landing alternatives, a bus rapid-transit hub and a transportation improvement district, local trolley and shuttle options, and alternatives for bikes and pedestrian access. Planned transit options will offer pedestrian-accessible, affordable transportation for job seekers and the employed who lack

cars to be connected to skilled jobs in New York City and the region, as well provide alternatives to automobile use for all residents and visitors. The updated 2018 Comprehensive Plan created guidelines for an integrated, sustainable planning framework fostering green development, smart land use and growth principles and a “walkable Nyack”. To further a walkable Nyack, the Village plans to implement a trolley service so visitors and residents can enjoy Nyack’s downtown and waterfront without having to drive.

Since Nyack is a compact older urbanized community, the goal of recent planning efforts was to influence the quality of retrofits and redevelopment to maximize opportunities for a vigorous transition to sustainable design, development and maintenance of land and infrastructure. The Village is currently implementing LEED ND principles by promoting walkable streets and sidewalks with street trees and other design strategies to increase pedestrian comfort, requiring or incentivizing green building design and construction, energy efficiency, and alternative energy, and promoting the use of on-site renewable energy and district heating and cooling. Green parking guidelines developed by the Green Parking Council were used to develop the recommendations for surface parking and parking structures that make the most of limited space by incorporating green infrastructure, solar energy and EV charging stations and green building design, integrating appealing street design, and promoting alternative fuel technologies.

Other efforts to achieve a sustainable Nyack include: **(1)** becoming a Climate Smart Community in 2013 and being the first to achieve certification in Rockland County under the direction of the Village’s Sustainability Coordinator, who is charged with keeping the Village focused on improving environmental quality in Nyack and working towards the goal of balancing equity, economy and environment in all decision-making; **(2)** adopting a Complete Streets Policy in December 2018; **(3)** creating the Street Tree Committee in 2013 to inventory Village trees and develop tree planting programs, and creating the Green Parking Council to develop recommendations for surface parking and parking structures that make that the most of limited space by incorporating green infrastructure and green building design, integrating appealing street design, and promoting alternative fuel technologies; **(4)** completing the Sustainable Nyack Action Plan in 2015. The Action Plan was produced to guide on-going action by the Nyack Green Policy Task Force made up of the Village’s Sustainability Coordinator, elected officials, Village staff and members of the community. The Plan outlines goals, targets, and actions related to energy, recycling and waste, landscape and water, and communication and outreach.

As a responsible government with diverse communities, the Village of Nyack is supportive of and in compliance with all laws and policies relating to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination. The Village provides financial support for programs at the Nyack Community Center that serve the disadvantaged and underserved and operates a senior center in the heart of downtown. The Village actively supports programs at the Nyack PRIDE Center. Additionally, the Village Recreation/Events Department offers a wide range of programs in its parks and public spaces for seniors and the youth of its communities.

The Village management structure in place to support its current and planned revitalization efforts includes, besides involved and committed elected officials, the Village Administrator, Attorney, Chief Building Inspector, Village Planner, Engineer, Sustainability Coordinator, Recreation/Events Director. The Village Boards, Commissions and Task Forces form another crucial support network, and consist of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Architectural Review Board, the Green Policy Task Force, Tree Committee and Green Parking Council mentioned above and the Parks Commission. The Village is currently implementing, or has recently completed, capital improvement projects with federal, state and local funding of more than \$16.3 million, with matching funding from the Village totaling approximately \$4.2 million, and has extensive experience in identifying and working with qualified planning firms for these and related projects.

6) 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. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.*

The development of its vision for a sustainable, equitable, diverse Nyack and the planning and implementation processes to realize this vision resulted from a long history of community involvement with the plans and programs undertaken or sponsored by Village government. As noted earlier, committees, boards, task forces of the Village consisting of Village staff, officials and many volunteers representing a broad range of stakeholders have worked continuously since the 1980's to realize this vision, and update it in light of new and compelling issues, such as climate change. A key part of this work has been involving the general public from the initial stages through community-wide surveys, public workshops/charettes on the work of preparing the updates to the Comprehensive Plan and LWRP that invite public input, and regular reporting on a newly revamped Village website on the progress of these projects and related planning and zoning updates/amendments. As noted earlier in the narrative on updating the Comprehensive Plan and the LWRP, the Village of Nyack and its volunteer-run boards, commissions, committees and task forces possess a wealth of experience in planning and have brought this experience to bear on developing the vision for downtown revitalization as outlined in the updated Comprehensive Plan and the LWRP. The Village's long-standing and well-developed community involvement in its planning processes included securing public consensus for the DRI priority projects.

The quality of the Village's Comprehensive Plan was recognized with awards for excellence in 2019 by both the New York Planning Federation and the NY Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association.

For the DRI program, the Village will appoint a DRI Planning/Steering Committee and will involve many of the same stakeholders on its LWRP and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committees. The DRI Planning/Steering Committee will work with the planning team provided to the project by New York State and will be assisted by the Village Planner, who will serve as Project Manager to guide the planning and implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The DRI Planning Committee will be composed of Village staff, Village officials, volunteers on Village boards, such as the Planning Board and the Parks Commission, and key stakeholders from the business and faith communities, the Nyack School District and elders of the community. The Village Planner/Project Manager will serve as the local lead for the project and will be supported by Village staff to administer the project.

7) Transformative Opportunities. *Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could 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). Identify potential development opportunities, such as municipally-owned property that may be appropriate for redevelopment. Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing and community development needs. It should be recognized that if a DRI award is made to the downtown, the projects identified here, along with any others that may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI grants.*

As noted earlier, the Village has completed an updated Comprehensive Plan and LWRP and has identified the three transformative projects that will spur revitalization and provide protection against regular flooding in the downtown due to climate change that is currently inhibiting development. This work has produced a range of plans in place, including design plans and construction estimates for the Nyack Brook drainage improvements, concept plans for the Village Square /Nyack Brook Plaza Daylighting project and for the riverfront walkway and related streetscape improvements. The Central Business District 200-space municipal parking structure is in the planning stage, with

concept drawings and cost estimates completed, and will move quickly forward once the DRI has been approved. Most importantly in terms of readiness, the updating work has secured broad public support for these projects through public workshops/charettes and other information sessions, and as well as public hearings to approve the Comprehensive Plan and the LWRP. The details of the transformative projects are as follows:

A. Nyack Brook Drainage Improvements and Nyack Brook Plaza/Village Square Plaza and Daylighting Project) will enclose part of the creek in a culvert where it runs under and adjacent to commercial and residential structures on Main Street, install correctly-sized piping where Nyack Brook runs under ground to replace the undersized and deteriorating piping, install clean outs to allow the Village to clean out the system regularly to prevent debris from blocking the system and causing street flooding, which is currently the case because there are no clean outs in the existing system, and prevent debris and pollutants from entering the Hudson River into which the Nyack Brook empties. Installation of improved drainage is essential for revitalization of the downtown to mitigate the regular flooding to commercial and residential buildings. The Brook will be daylighted where it runs through the existing municipal parking lot



on Main Street in the heart of the downtown, and placemaking will create a new Village Square that will be created in the lot to be known as the Nyack Brook Plaza/Village Square Plaza. The daylighted portion on municipal land will connect to the Brook on adjacent private property that has been daylighted as part of a 135-unit rental completed in a former factory brownfield site. The public/private daylighting projects will greatly enhance the look and retail attractiveness of the downtown and will provide beautiful public space for cultural attractions making the plaza a destination and the only one of its kind on the west shores of the Hudson.



The Village will look to secure other state funding for the project-such as a NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement grant program for the drainage system and Department of State for the daylighting and NYS Office of Parks and Recreation for the Plaza Park. The DRI will be instrumental in leveraging other grants for the project that is estimated to cost approximately \$4.5-5 million.

B. Central Business District Parking Structure. The 200-space municipal parking structure will mitigate the parking shortage in the downtown- a factor that is inhibiting revitalization along with the drainage issues- and create an attractive structure on an unattractive and deteriorated lot. The structure will be located adjacent to Village Hall and the new RCC Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center. The design will include rooftop amenities such as a restaurant or recreation facility and retail liners along the Main Street frontage to strengthen the connection between downtown and the waterfront. The municipal parking garage is a public/private partnership with the RCC Culinary Center involving Village land and possible donation of the private property required for the facility by the Center developer. The DRI planning component will assist the Village to determine the most advantageous approach to implement the project as quickly as possible. Several options are under consideration - turnkey with the developer and Village ownership, private ownership and Village control of some of the spaces. The Village will need further analysis that the DRI planning team will be able to provide.



The Village will look to secure other state funding for the project-such as a NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement grant program for the drainage system and Department of State for the daylighting and NYS Office of Parks and Recreation for the Plaza Park. The DRI will be instrumental in leveraging other grants for the project that is estimated to cost approximately \$4.5-5 million.

C. Marina Terrace Parking Structure. The 85-space parking terrace located in the Village Marina will allow the Village to move existing parking out of Memorial Park, increase green space in the park, support marina uses and allow for the development of a seasonal and possible future commuter ferry service. The two-level landscaped parking terrace was recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and as a priority project in the LWRP. The parking terrace would be graded into the existing topography to prevent visual impacts on upland views and views from the river. As with the Central Business District parking structure, the Village will look to the DRI program for assistance with additional analysis and



with identifying funding for construction.

8) Administrative Capacity. Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.

As noted earlier, the Village has secured and successfully administered millions in capital grants from New York State for a range of projects and federal dollars from HUD for the Community Block Grant program and Federal Highway dollars administered by NYS DOT for the TAP improvements, as well as CHIP funds for street and sidewalk improvements from NYS and Rockland County. Also noted earlier, the Village has also successfully secured and administered several major planning grants from the state to update its Comprehensive Plan and LWRP. Not mentioned earlier, are several smaller planning grants secured from the Greenway Conservancy to identify sustainability measures. The management structure in place to support its current and planned revitalization efforts and the DRI program includes involved and committed elected officials and staffing by the Village Administrator, Attorney, Chief Building Inspector, Village Planner, Engineer and the Village Sustainability Coordinator. The Village Boards, Commissions and Task Forces listed earlier form another crucial support network.

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

As part of its revitalization planning, the Village is addressing the persistent problems of poverty and unemployment, and the DRI, with its focus on implementation of revitalization projects including affordable housing within two years, will assist the Village to expedite its plans to improve the lives of its citizens, and provide opportunity regionally. Perceived as an affluent enclave near New York City, Nyack's poverty rates have risen since 2000 and are higher than the County's as a whole. Since 2000: median household income has fallen 15%, compared to the county's fall of 9%; 11% of its residents are in poverty-up from 5% in 2000; and unemployment is at 5% and 31% of residents ages 16 and up and those not in the workforce. The Village's median income (\$64,464) is more than \$20,000 less than the County's (\$84,855), and 20% of its households earn less than \$25,000 a year. (*Patterns for Progress Profile of Nyack, Urban Action Agenda 2017*). 63% of residents rent compared to 30% in the County, and of these, 19% of units are unaffordable (rent is 30-50% of income) and 25% are severely unaffordable (>50% of income) (*Profile of Nyack 2017*). The percentage of housing cost-burdened households in Nyack is significantly higher than in Rockland and Westchester Counties; (in 2013, 53% in Nyack compared to 45% in both Counties). The Village has made affordable housing a priority for all residential projects, and the DRI will be a crucial catalyst for revitalizing the Village and creating opportunity for all our citizens as well as for the region. The transformative projects funded in part by the DRI will leverage other funding to bring the needed infrastructure to protect existing residences and businesses, attract new development and create an attractive downtown and riverfront public spaces with features found nowhere else on the west bank of the Hudson River. The DRI will assist the Village in attracting the needed investment-private and public- for affordable housing, affordable transportation to jobs, and employment within the Village.

The historic, urban character of downtown Nyack and the fact that the Village has long been supportive of sustainable, dense, mixed-use development offers the opportunity for extensive economic development while retaining those qualities that make Nyack extremely viable as a key player in the region’s economic growth.

DRI MAP WITH TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

