

## 2019 DRI Application

### **BASIC INFORMATION**

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

Municipality Name: **Village of Ossining**

Downtown Name: **Main Street Corridor**

County Name: **Westchester**

Applicant Contact(s): **Victoria Gearity, Mayor ([gearity@villageofossining.org](mailto:gearity@villageofossining.org)) & Karen D'Attore, Village Manager ([KDattore@villageofossining.org](mailto:KDattore@villageofossining.org))**

### **VISION FOR DOWNTOWN**



*The Village of Ossining's Main Street Corridor*

Ossining is where EVERYONE can live, work, and play. Preserving our community's cultural and socio-economic diversity is core to our approach to economic development. This mighty Village of the Hudson is ready to capitalize on public assets that will catalyze private investment.

Transforming the marquee Ossining Bank for Savings at the top of Main Street after decades of vacancy and neglect will herald a new day for Ossining. This landmark building welcomes visitors entering from points north, south and east. Visitors arriving by water or rail will be drawn to our Waterfront and Downtown business corridor with new wayfinding signage and further enhanced streetscaping. With the [Sing Sing Prison Museum](#) Preview Center opening in 2020, now is the moment to strengthen the Downtown/Waterfront connection for new visitors.

It is time to turn the page on Urban Renewal, which resulted in the Village owning 25% of the land in the Main Street Corridor. The future success of the Village hinges on the ability to leverage these parcels to transform the composition of Downtown and the Waterfront. Under-utilized surface parking and vacant land are poised to become two optimally designed mixed-use mixed-income developments with private investment dollars.

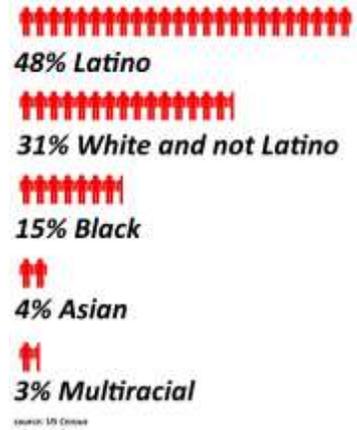
The greatest obstacle to restoring the south side of Main Street will be eliminated with parking structures that consolidate demand. Meanwhile, on the Waterfront, the Village is taking action to repurpose the DPW site, a property positioned in a key location for bridging the steep slope between the Waterfront and Downtown. Just as the introduction of new retail businesses to Main Street signals new local jobs, hundreds of new residents to Water Street bolsters the viability for new retail businesses to thrive at Station Plaza.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Ossining has nearly every piece of the puzzle for the vibrant Live-Work-Play community of the future: a progressive history and social structure, abundant public amenities, engaged residents, a commitment to sustainable and inclusive development, the entrepreneurial business community, and the experience to execute the funding and get things done. What is needed to realize this vision is an investment to remove the repeatedly identified roadblocks and catalyze a transformation far greater than the sum of its parts.

The Village, formerly known as Sing Sing, has a unique sense of place, which developed around the most iconic prison in the world. The Downtown's exceptional, intact historic streetscape of 19th-century Italianate style buildings placed it on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The topography affords beautiful views of the Hudson River and Palisades, and scenic pedestrian trails cross through the Downtown. The walkability is complemented by singular restaurants and ethnic retail, and a growing local craft business focus.

Distinctive to Ossining is the Village's commitment and actions to protect the racial and socio-economic diversity of the tight-knit community. Median Household Income for all Villagers is 71% of Westchester County, renters occupy 54% of housing units, and 46% are owner-occupied. With more people choosing to live in diverse communities (Ossining Village's 15-year population growth is double that of Westchester County as a whole) our project is a near-term intentional, strategic investment with diversity protection as a priority (Retrieved from U.S. Census 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).



Members of Ossining's Black community still often equate "economic revitalization" with "displacement." Ossining's approach to economic development today reflects lessons learned from Urban Renewal. Preserving our cultural and socio-economic diversity is a guiding principle in the Request for Qualifications for a mixed-use mixed-income development on the Village-owned lot at the corner of Water Street and Central Avenue, commonly known as the DPW lot. Our partners in this effort include the NYS Department of Homes and Community Renewal, Rose Noonan of the Housing Action Council, Interfaith Council for Action (IFCA) (our local affordable housing non-profit) and Westchester County.

Ossining's Downtown is built on a ridge plateau 100 feet higher than the Hudson River. Connecting the Downtown and Waterfront destinations will enhance both areas and deliver economic development benefits. DRI investment is needed to strengthen this connection, visually and experientially bridging the barrier of the steep slope, while contributing to the placemaking of a historic industrial-residential section of Ossining to generate economic activity near the train station and celebrate an overlooked history.

The Main Street Corridor is also defined by its transit access with:

- Metro-North train station that boasts express commuting times of 45 minutes
- N.Y. Waterway Ferry connects Ossining and Haverstraw
- Four Bee-Line Bus Service routes connect at the intersection of Spring Street and Waller Avenue with two continuing to the train station
- The Old Croton Aqueduct 25-mile trail bisects the Main Street Corridor providing pedestrian and bicycle access
- Automobile access from neighboring towns is convenient via Route 9A, Route 9 and the Taconic State Parkway
- Amtrak Empire and Adirondack service include stops only 3 miles away at the Croton station for travelers from further afield

The municipality's capacity is enhanced by its unique collaboration with a network of well-established local non-profit and community organizations. This collaboration is integral to the Village's operating style, advancing the government's efficacy. Many of our non-profits boast a long tenure in Ossining, and they are the mainstay in preserving a community where diversity thrives. Village government benefits from their contributions to policy development, planning, and the provision of historical context, as well as program-area expertise, and relationships of trust with residents in demographic groups traditionally tricky for the government to make connections. The financial resources made by high net worth board members and donors to these organizations translates into significant investment concentrated in Ossining's Downtown.

The Village works closely with non-profits and community organizations whose work improves quality of life:

- IFCA which provides safe, quality and affordable places to live
- The Ossining Public Library is a center for lifelong learning that has the most programming for the community than any other library in the county
- Green Ossining's Earth Day celebration is Westchester County's largest community-run earth day festival – with more than 4,000 visitors and 100+ vendors
- Ossining Innovates! teaches entrepreneurial skills to drive economic activity, and is working create a business incubator in the Downtown
- Open Door Medical Center (Open Door) is a federally qualified community health center providing high quality, affordable healthcare
- Ossining Children's Center (OCC) provides infant care, pre-school, pre-K, after-school programs and summer camps
- Neighbors Link integrates immigrants with workforce development, English as a second language classes, parent-child together classes, and community law practice
- Ossining MATTERS, education foundation, fundraises to augment school district programs and enrich learning



Downtown revitalization catalyzed by the DRI will grow the small-business economy of the Village by capturing the tourist market soon to dramatically increase. The Sing Sing Prison Museum will open its Preview Center in 2020. The Museum is proposed to fully open in 2025, the 200th anniversary of Sing Sing Prison. This \$50M project is under the direction of Brent Glass, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. The Museum will be an interpretive learning space, preserving artifacts and conveying individual stories, providing a forum for the examination of historical and contemporary issues in the criminal justice system, and their social, political and cultural impact.

The REDC-funded Lord Cultural Resources Program Plan and Urbanomics Cultural Impacts reports project 130,000 Museum visitors per year, presenting Ossining with an unprecedented opportunity to capture visitor spending. For businesses to realize the full economic development impacts of the project, it is critical to enhancing the connectivity of Ossining's Waterfront and Downtown.

**DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

- 1) **Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** The Main Street corridor connects N.Y. Route 9/Highland Avenue to the Waterfront neighborhood. The DRI area is bordered to the east by N.Y. Route 9/Highland Avenue, to the north by Sing Sing Kill Greenway, to the west by the Hudson River and ferry dock and the south by the proposed Sing Sing Prison Museum and the historic Black community centered on Broad Avenue.

**Village of Ossining Main Street Corridor**



- 2) **Past investment, future investment potential.** Ossining has become a hub for entrepreneurial retail business. Investment in the Downtown within the last three years includes an award-winning coffee shop, highly rated Peruvian, vegan, Turkish and Jamaican restaurants, a craft brewery and taproom in a former manufacturing space, CrossFit gym, toy store, and clothing shop. Plus, a co-working space on Main Street is slated to open in the summer of 2019.

Ossining is attracting luxury and market-rate mixed-use developments. Avalon's 169 units opened on North Highland Avenue in 2013, Ginsburg Development Companies' 188 rental units on the Hudson opened in 2016. Future development ranging in size from 24 units to 189 units are in the pipeline with applicants actively presenting their proposals to land use boards.

### **Public Infrastructure Investment**



The Village proactively invests in public infrastructure. Main Street and the connecting Secor Road and Central Avenue benefit from ADA sidewalks, decorative lighting, tree well improvements, and hanging flower baskets. Historically the Village maximized CDBG funding for infrastructure investments of this nature. Renewed CDBG opportunities are now set to enhance future projects to benefit pedestrians and seniors with an additional \$250K.

In 2017 Ossining invested \$700K in energy efficient LED street lights for the entire community.

In anticipation of future development, the Village has invested in its drinking water supply. \$350K in water transmission upgrades were followed by a \$6.2M rehabilitation of our municipally-owned reservoir and spillway.

#### **Main Street streetscape upgrades**

In July, the Village will bid out construction of a new treatment plant, which will increase capacity to satisfy the anticipated loads projected in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. At an estimated cost of \$40M, the project will increase capacity from 4 MGD to 7 MGD. To limit the plant's areas of disturbance, the treatment facility will boast a green roof.

Visionary leadership transformed a sanitary sewer upgrade into a glorious pedestrian greenway in the heart of Ossining's Downtown. The transformative \$5.3M Sing Sing Kill Greenway project's impressive trail is the setting for scenes in the 2018 Spike Lee movie, *BlackKkKlansman*. With the development of the DPW site, the ADA compliant trail will fully realize its intended purpose as a pedestrian connection between the Waterfront and Downtown.

The next ribbon-cutting for a major Village infrastructure project will be at the Broadway Bridge, the lower section of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail's historic Double Arches. This \$2.8M upgrade restores the historic façade while reconstructing the internal structure with the best of today's engineering technology.



### **Waterfront Investment**

To enhance the recreational, cultural, and economic development of our Waterfront, we are in the design phase of a public dock extension. The expanded pier will open the Ossining Waterfront to day boaters, small tourism vessels, and fishing. The extension design will also accommodate larger boats, including the Clearwater and the Freedom Schooner Amistad which can then include Ossining as a stop on their regional Hudson River tours. The \$115K design phase of the partnership between the Village, Hudson Valley Arts & Science and Ginsburg Development Companies was partially funded by a 2015 Hudson River Estuary Grants for River Access and River Education grant.

Harbor Square's 188 residential units, 175 seat restaurant, and Waterfront public park with sculptures, a RiverWalk trail segment, playground, landscaping, and interpretive signage about Ossining history was garnered from \$67M in private and public investment to create the mixed-use transit-oriented development.



Ossining Waterfront

An additional \$2M , including federal Boating Infrastructure Grant Program funds, upgraded the Shattemuc Yacht Club marina and extended their dock. The Metro-North Train Station, too, was updated with new platforms, stairs and elevators, thru-fair, digital schedules, and electronic ticketing facilities. In summer 2019 the MTA will commence the historic preservation of the train station's roof.

Private landowners along both sides of the train tracks have expressed interest in transforming their industrial properties to capitalize on expanding residential, retail, and recreational enjoyment of the Waterfront.

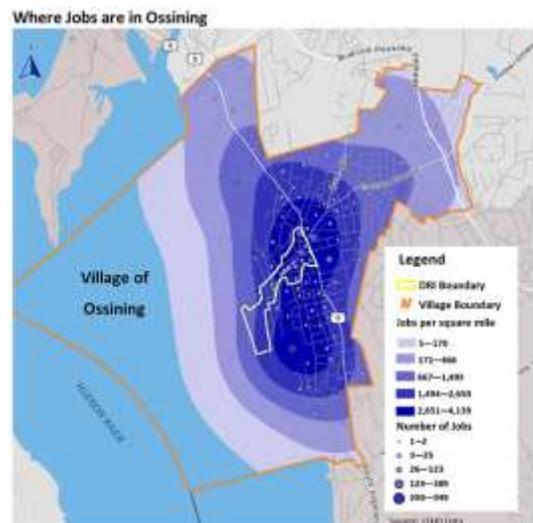
**Social Service Investment**

Emblematic of Ossining’s culture of welcoming all families to live and succeed here, are the service organizations that were born here to serve the people of our community. Two of these institutions are investing heavily in our Downtown as they expand their capabilities to help Ossining families succeed.

The OCC breaks ground this year on its new 27,000 sf facility. This \$16.8M public/private investment will increase enrollment by 50% to meet the growing need for affordable childcare in the community, and unite all of OCC’s programs under one roof resolving logistical challenges for parents. To remove barriers to access for very low-income families, OCC supports parents as they navigate the daunting application process for federal childcare subsidies. They also offer tuition assistance.

Open Door has invested \$5.1M in a second building in the Main Street Corridor. A public and private \$20M investment will build out the 22,500 sf to alleviate their space constraints. Open Door, whose patients are primarily uninsured or under-insured, has long been on the cutting edge of thoughtful healthcare delivery and anticipates incorporating a telehealth practice and focusing on the social determinants of health. The administration for all seven Open Door Medical Centers is headquartered in Ossining, as are their residency training programs in pediatrics, internal medicine, physician assistants and midwife trainees.

- 3) **Recent or impending job growth.** Founded in Ossining and now with seven medical centers in Westchester, Putnam and Ulster counties, Open Door employs 175 people at its Ossining headquarters. While the anticipation of transformative changes in healthcare delivery currently constrains accurate job growth projections, the addition of a second large facility in the Downtown portends significant healthcare growth, an industry that already employs 15% of Ossining workers. The Ossining Extension Center of Westchester Community College (WCC) specializes in workforce development programs with a broad range of courses for those seeking careers in healthcare. WCC also partners with hospitals, nursing homes, and community organizations to provide training and externship opportunities for students within the Greater Ossining area.



Ossining also boasts four nursing and rehabilitation centers, with employment of over 500 people.

The Sing Sing Correctional Facility, the Village’s largest employer, has almost a thousand full time workers.

The OCC projects the addition of 15 jobs with their September 2020 expansion to the new facility at 32 State Street, 0.2 walkable miles from the Main Street Corridor.

One hundred sixty full-time workers are employed on General Electric's campus, 2.5 miles from the Main Street Corridor, 120 of whom live within ten miles of the campus.

Ossining Innovates! and Speak Easy Creative Coworking, which is slated to open in summer 2019, both support the entrepreneurial spirit of our diverse community. Ossining High School also has a very successful entrepreneurship and business program.

Jobs have been created with the opening of several new businesses that have garnered a regional name for themselves. This trend will enjoy a dramatic boost with the restoration of the south side of Main Street, and the increased viability of Station Plaza.

The Sing Sing Prison Museum will create 257 construction jobs in Westchester (value of \$20.8M in labor income) of which 255 workers are projected to live in Ossining. Indirect and induced impacts, given the economic ripple effect of

*The [Sing Sing] Powerhouse presents itself as a near-perfect building for adaptive reuse as an interpretive and education center. The soaring spaces, large light entry points, and proximity to the cell block make this an ideal center from which to view and interpret this site. This is an amazing wealth of building that you possess."*

*Michael Devonshire  
Director of Conservation, Jan Hird Pokorny Associates*

construction, will create an additional 153 jobs. Economic models show that, once it opens, 27 people will be employed by the Museum which, with indirect and induced impacts added, is a benefit of 44 jobs and \$2.8M in labor income to the area, and \$5.9M in total economic activity annually.

- 4) **Attractiveness of physical environment.** Ossining's picturesque Village is comprised of rolling hills, mature trees providing shade and urban greening, and a topography assuring magnificent views of the Hudson River, Palisades and stunning sunsets from every neighborhood. The visual connection to the river reinforces Ossining's strong Hudson Rivertown identity. Recreational trails are a distinguishing Downtown feature intersecting the Main Street Corridor and providing healthy recreation and transportation alternatives in the. The Old Croton Aqueduct is a 25-mile linear park that bisects the heart of Main Street, with decorative pedestrian lighting, benches, trees, and interpretive signage. This park intersects with the new east-west Sing Sing Kill Greenway, an ADA accessible path in the Kill's rocky gorge, with the stream rushing along beneath it and tree canopy shading above. Pedestrians can pass under the iconic Double Arch Bridge and enjoy nature while walking to down to Station Plaza and train station.



*Ossining Waterfront from across the Hudson*

Henry Gourdine Park and Village owned open space at the Waterfront includes two large-scale sculptures by internationally renowned artists, a playground, comfort station, RiverWalk segment, and a pavilion beginning with Ossining's history of the Sint Sinck Indians. The Waterfront parks are flanked by Ossining Boat & Canoe Club, Shattemuc Yacht Club, and the Westerly Marina. They are also a short walk from the future home of the Sing Sing Prison Museum. Ossining Boat & Canoe Club, Ferry Sloops, and a Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail site at Engel Park provide affordable access to the Hudson River for residents of all income levels.

**Walkability and Bikeability:** Many Ossining residents do not own cars, and the walkability of the inner Village has always been a priority. The post office, medical center, police station, public library, Joseph G. Caputo Community Center and other essential services are located either within or proximate to the Main Street Corridor, as is the Ossining High School campus. The Old Croton Aqueduct Trail, with its wide bridge crossing the gorge and pedestrian lighting, connects to residential neighborhoods and beyond. The Village partnered with the Towns of Ossining and New Castle to create the award-winning Millwood-Ossining Go! Trail Plan (MOGO). The MOGO plan identified Route 133 as a priority to connect assets of the Downtown Village of Ossining and the Millwood Business district, to the Empire State Trail at NYS Route 100 with a safe bicycle and pedestrian route. The project is currently being advanced to move the project towards final engineering and construction.

**Housing Types at Different Levels of Affordability:**

To ensure a mix of housing types and cost, the Village works with IFCA, NYS Homes and Community Renewal and, Westchester County to develop and preserve regional affordable housing options. The housing stock bears witness to Ossining's commitment to quality housing for various income levels to maintain sustainable economic growth and

diversity. New construction supports the mix: 2012-2016 more than 450 units of multifamily housing were constructed. The [2017 Housing Needs Assessment](#) reports that more than half of renters are paying between \$1,250 and \$2,000 per month.

IFCA, in partnership with the Village, has overseen the investment of almost \$4.7M in CDBG, NYSHCR's Small Rental Development, Dormitory Authority, and private funding, as well as private financing, to rehabilitate distressed buildings and residential units, including building sustainability improvements to lower operating costs. All 86 housing units are within half a mile of the Main Street Corridor.

The development of higher end housing extends the mix of options while adding to our affordable inventory: Avalon (2013) has 10% of the 169 units in this luxury complex are affordable and Harbor Square (2016) has 10% of its 188 units as affordable.



*Nannie Nelson and her children. Mrs. Nelson was a widow who lived on lower Main Street that supported her family as a housekeeper. This studio portrait was taken around 1920.*

**Diverse Populations & the Physical Environment:** Ossining has been the home of a thriving Black community for many generations. The Village distinguishes itself with its commitment to welcoming each new generation of immigrants. The South American community making Ossining their home today, was preceded by the Portuguese, Italian and Irish communities who have all made indelible marks on the fabric of the Village. Ossining's Downtown businesses appeal to a broad range of cultures. The DRI project will also advance economic inclusion. Creating a meeting space in the walkable Downtown will extend participation in public meetings.

The core value of being an inclusive community is evident in every aspect of local culture. In 2017, the Village became the first municipality in NYS to establish a Gender Neutral Bathroom Signage policy. The idea was born out of a discussion at a screening hosted by the Ossining Documentary & Discussion Series. This volunteer committee, co-founded by Mayor Gearity, is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year of "Bringing our community together one film at a time," to address issues of social justice and environmental activism. Panels of experts engage audience discussion after screening movies including: [I am Not Your Negro](#), [She's Beautiful When She's Angry](#), [The Empowerment Project](#) and [Transmilitary](#).

Vibrant community partners work to ensure a supportive environment.

- REPAIR (Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes Action on Inclusion and Race)
- IFCA's financial literacy and self-sufficiency programs provide lower-income residents with resources and stability to maintain a home and quality of life

*"We have made Downtown Ossining the focus of our Westchester investments because there is a substantial group of discerning buyers and renters for whom authenticity and depth matter. In Ossining, we don't have to worry about "place-making"—200 years of history did that for us."*

*Peter Chernoff*  
*Owner of 11 multifamily and mixed-use properties in the Village*

**Developable Mixed-Use Spaces:** Over 4 acres of under-utilized Village-owned space awaits redevelopment in the Main Street Corridor, as do key privately-owned properties including Olive Opera House. The State's DRI investment in parking consolidation and placemaking will catalyze the development of these assets, including Market Square. In the [2015 Market Square](#) study, the

community once more voiced its desire to rebuild and restore the Village and historic integrity of Main Street. The vision is to preserve a public gathering space alongside infill development compatible with the landmark Historic Downtown District. Upper-floor townhouse style residential units with underground parking and ground floor retail with new uses will draw people the Downtown.

- 5) **Quality of Life policies. Affordability:** Ossining is where EVERYONE can live, work, and play. The Village is committed to providing housing for people of all income levels to guard against the displacement of our residents and maintain the diversity of our population. In the vanguard of affordable housing, Ossining's mandatory, inclusionary housing policy has been in place since 2006, requiring new development to construct 10% of residential units affordable to households

making less than 80% of AMI. As a component of a Comprehensive Plan update, the Village is exploring how to most effectively increase this set-aside.

Building Code enforcement has been strengthened as recommended by the [2017 Housing Needs Assessment](#), with the hire of an additional Code enforcement officer. In 2017 the Landlord-Tenant Relations Council (LTRC) was reestablished with new membership. During its first year, the new LTRC helped to resolve nineteen disputes. Additionally, in September 2018 and revised in February 2019, the Board of Trustees enabled the State's Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA). There are nearly 1000 units in the ETPA program, more than any other Village or Town in Westchester.

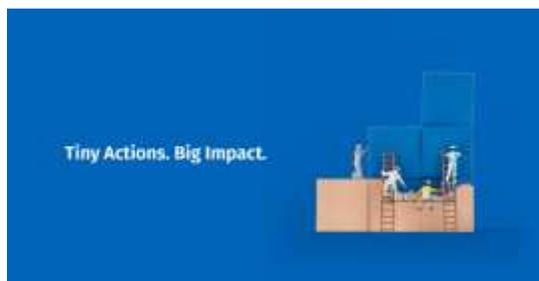
Ossining maintains a Section 8 office in Village Hall. Providing the issuance and oversight of 254 vouchers locally ensures greater access for residents with the greatest financial need.

**Health and Wellness** opportunities include an extensive parks system and a very active Joseph G. Caputo Community Center. Located in Downtown this local gem provides outstanding programming at the center's gymnasium, aquatic center, and numerous full range exercise classes. Open Door offers affordable workout classes, yoga, and nutrition classes in their Main Street building. Down to Earth Farmers Market sells produce and ready-to-eat food in the Downtown, and accepts SNAP, WIC, and FMNP. The centrally-located Ossining Food Pantry and Loaves & Fishes free Saturday dinner provide nutritious food. The Village promotes physical activity through initiatives such as Car Free Day and a recent bike share pop-up program.



**Arts & Culture** are thriving in Ossining, and small-venue music and theater locations attract top-flight artists. To meet the increasing demand for a greater diversity of live entertainment venues, the Village Board updated the Code in 2016, prompting a steep increase in the number of cabaret licenses issued in the Village. Ossining boasts several arts organizations including:

- Westchester Collaborative Theater (WCT) brings original plays to the community. One hundred twenty playwrights, actors, and directors from the Tri-state area participate in their Lab process to nurture new stage works
- The Bethany Arts Community, set on 25 acres, was founded in 2015, offering artist residencies, studio spaces, galleries, and a performance venue. Bethany works to attract global artists to our region
- Theater O received 2018 Best of Westchester award for their classes which teach 150 children ages 2-17 a broad range of theater-arts, including directing, design, puppetry and more
- Logrea Dance Academy has trained dancers in Ossining since 1986, and produces their performances as well as collaborates with the Westchester Ballet Company in the annual Nutcracker production
- Mike Risko Music School has won many awards, attracting students from all over the County
- The annual Waterfront Concert Series organized by the Town of Ossining provides weekly, family-friendly entertainment throughout July and August
- Ossining Arts Project developed and popularized our annual Ossining Jazz Festival. The Village Board appoint this group to forge a cohesive link between the various artists and art groups, enabling them to work together more efficiently and effectively and to use this synergy to nurture the arts
- The Ossining Arts Council fosters arts in the community, promoting and showcasing the talents of artists



The **Downtown Development Fund Council (DDFC)** advises the Village Board on initiatives for investing the dedicated, special-use fund in improving the Downtown and Waterfront. The Fund's goal is increased economic development and sustainability, and the encouragement of public access, and use of the Waterfront. Funded initiatives include an Adopt A Tree Well program, discount cards marketing local businesses, and wrapping street trees in LED lights to create a warm, inviting evening ambiance in the Downtown. The DDFC's [Little Big Picture](#) clean streets campaign was launched in April 2019, using compelling graphics and brief narratives to enroll

residents, business owners and commercial landlords in simple actions which can deliver economic development benefits to all. A contest for a functional art installation to be used as a permanent recycling receptacle extends the campaign.

**Modern Zoning Codes:** The Village amended its Zoning Code in 2016 to expand the area’s cultural richness and increase entrepreneurial activity. The amendments broaden the definition of “artist workspace”, as well as allowable uses for spaces owned by civic organizations. These changes enabled the WCT to establish a permanent space on Water Street, and opened the door for artisanal light manufacturing such as breweries, distilleries, confectionaries, and other burgeoning craft industries.

*On May 9, 2019, Westchester Magazine named Ossining the County's most affordable place to live saying: "We've already crowned the Old Village section of Ossining one of our Best Places to Live for its historic areas and increased focus on redevelopment ... It's also insanely affordable as far as Westchester goes...All-in-all it's a quiet, relaxed little town with low crime rates, perfect for singles, new couples, and retirees alike."*

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan includes Village Center zoning that requires the first floor to be commercial to strengthen the urban character and sense of place. Residential and office space uses are encouraged on upper floors where views of the Hudson River are often possible.

**Planning studies** have benefitted from land use, economic development, planning, and research expertise, as well as the engagement of an enthusiastic community and stakeholder buy-in. Listed below, the plans laud the strength of Ossining's historic, scenic, walkable and socially diverse character, and an abundance of public amenities. They also consistently prioritize the same projects; identifying the need for the resources necessary to breach the barrier of disruption caused by underutilized spaces in the Downtown to take advantage of trends to create and market a Downtown as a unique destination unlike any other in the region:

[1998 Downtown Vision Plan](#)

[2015 Market Square](#)

[2009 Comprehensive Plan](#)

[2017 Downtown Redevelopment Working Committee](#)

[2011 Revised LWRP](#)

[2017 Housing Needs Assessment](#)

[2011 Waterfront Access & Trail Plan](#)

[2018 CONNECTING THE DOTS: Working toward Comprehensive Community Development](#)

The Pattern for Progress 2018 study, CONNECTING THE DOTS: Working toward Comprehensive Community Development, added value by producing a comprehensive community development resource guide of grant programs for municipalities, non-profits, and private developers.

The Village has budgeted \$350K to update the Comprehensive Plan to build upon the recent planning studies. The Village has retained the Pace Land Use Law Center to facilitate a bilingual community engagement process. Mayor Gearity has appointed initial members of the Steering Committee, and the first community engagement meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2019.

Ossining’s 2015 **Complete Streets Policy** seeks the convenience of access and mobility on sidewalks, streets, and highways by users of all ages and abilities through the use of complete streets design features and best practices. The Village Code was revised to require the Village Engineer and Planning Board to apply the policy where context-appropriate in permit issuance, application review, and site development plan review.

The 2011 [Architectural Design Guidelines](#) offer a framework for architectural design, with recommendations to preserve the unique character of Ossining’s districts, and regulations when impacting designated landmarks. The 7-member Historic Preservation Commission reviews proposed exterior alterations to both local and nationally recognized Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks.

The [2009 Comprehensive Plan](#) led to the creation of the Planned Waterfront Transit Oriented Zoning District (PW-b) that encourages the development of attractive uses along the riverfront while preserving and enhancing mixed use of old industrial buildings to bring creative small businesses, artisans and entrepreneurs to the community and support the Village’s economy. The PW-b District also facilitates mixed-use for the Waterfront area near the train station implementing the planning goals and objectives of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

**Non-Discrimination Laws:** In 2017, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution affirming that we are an inclusive Village in response to expressions of growing fear in our large immigrant community. In 2018, the Police Department’s “implicit bias training” followed the recommendations of the President’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing to address stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and distorted perceptions of others. Additionally, the Village is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. It has implemented a policy of protecting and safeguarding the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain, and hold employment in an environment free from harassment.

**Age-Friendly Policies:** Weekdays at the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center are busy with a full range of program and exercise activities for seniors. Ossining’s aquatic center is especially appealing to the senior community. The Town of Ossining supports residents and makes use of the Community Center for the Senior Nutrition Program. The senior bus provides transport to keep seniors actively involved in the community, with discounted taxi coupons for residents 70+.

- 6) **Public support.** Ossining's DRI project and application have received broad community support. A social media campaign kept residents apprised during the process, and surveys were employed to garner feedback from residents. [Over 500 residents responded to the survey](#), with the top three desires for the Downtown identified as increased parking, restoring 200 Main Street, and creating better connections of Downtown businesses to the Waterfront. Also, we solicited feedback on this grant submission from over 30 community leaders for feedback.

In spring and summer of 2018, the Village and IFCA collaborated to create a Comprehensive Community Development approach for revitalization. A series of charrettes and community engagement sessions were held to obtain feedback from community stakeholders to create the Pattern for Progress CONNECTING THE DOTS Working toward Comprehensive Community Development findings with thoughtful recommendations for Downtown.

In 2017 the Board appointed 15 residents to the Downtown Redevelopment Working Committee (DRWC.) This community-led group reimagined the possibilities for the Downtown. They exceeded their mission to produce an actionable plan and framework for continued Downtown redevelopment by winning a Westchester Municipal Planning Federation Award for their work. A five sub-committee model framed their comprehensive research, analysis and debate: Placemaking, open space and the built environment; Transportation and parking; Innovative ideas; Outside groups and consulting; and Comprehensive Plan review. In addition to recommending the opening of a multi-use space Downtown, building a parking garage on the Brandreth Street lot, and creating a connection between the Waterfront and the center of Downtown, the final page of the study advises "Ossining is standing on an important precipice – our community is engaged and reinvigorated. The DRWC believes we should seize this moment to propel our Village forward."

- 7) **Transformative opportunities.** The proposed projects are targeted to open up the possibilities for private investment, helping us to leverage our assets for economic development. These are the catalytic projects which will open the door to both private and public investment in the Market Square properties, the former-DPW site, the historic Station Plaza industrial-residential neighborhood, the Waterfront, and a broader mix of entrepreneurial retail establishments. The DRI investment is high-impact support to the Ossining community's investment in placemaking.

### **200 Main Street Adaptive Reuse**



*Ossining Bank for Savings @ 200 Main Street, built in 1908*

The Bank for Savings, built in 1908, is prominent on the triangular point between Main Street, Church Street and Route 9. One of the best examples of Beaux-Art architecture in the County, the Bank's location, and classic detailing provides a marquee gateway to the Downtown. No longer a bank, the Village acquired the building in 2004 and repaired the roof, readying it for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse to a commercially functioning, historically-appropriate gateway to Ossining's Downtown. Cost estimates indicate that \$900K will remediate the site to return it to productive use. The transformative power of a renovated building would address both community development and economic development needs.

Creating a cultural destination that attracts residents and visitors to Main Street will benefit from and support the restaurant cluster in the Downtown. Ossining's ready for a showcase space for the growing local craft businesses in both the region and the state. Established in Ossining, Down to Earth Farmer's Market has been drawing farms and independent food producers to Main Street since 1991 for community-scale trade, which has created a connection between the consumer and our agricultural community. A Taste of New York store in 200 Main Street would be an extension of this heritage; an adaptive space that includes a market to provide a "storefront" for our local craft businesses. Facilities for job training and a teaching kitchen would advance residents' career development while supporting the small businesses whose contribution to Ossining's economic development continues to increase steadily. The building's upper floors will include meeting spaces customizable in size, opening the door to an incubator to foster entrepreneurship as well as a gallery space to exhibit the work of local and regional artists.

**Parking Restructuring**

*Brandreth & Broadway Parking lots bisected by the Croton Aqueduct Trail*

The parking essential to our continued retail growth and 200 Main Street's success will be developed through the expansion of the Village-owned Brandreth Street and Broadway parking lots (currently 107 spaces). Two hundred parking spaces will be added to the Downtown with the installation of a multi-level parking structure with a cost of \$5.5M, where the topography can accommodate a parking facility without creating a visually dominant structure. Located directly behind the storefronts, Brandreth/Broadway parking will provide convenient access to Main Street. Wayfinding signage will direct shoppers from the parking facilities along attractive, landscaped, well-lighted pedestrian walkways onto Main Street. The top of the parking garage will provide the opportunity to create a Downtown gathering space incorporating the views of the Croton Aqueduct trail and the Double Arch Bridge. The parking structure's strategic location will present the opportunity to further enhance the pedestrian link between the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail, Downtown and the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center.

Restructuring parking options will unlock the development potential of the surface lots and improve the Downtown pedestrian experience in Market Square. It will also spur the restoration of the privately-owned vacant Olive Opera House (historic performance space) which has been hindered by parking shortages.

**Station Plaza Placemaking**

*Station Plaza - Adjacent to the Metro-North Ossining Station and the soon to be developed DPW site*

Station Plaza, on lower Main Street, is an historically Black business district which has been disenfranchised. This industrial and residential neighborhood, with its quaint business section, requires improvements to the built environment to invite

residents, visitors, and commuters to spend time in the historic meeting place. DRI investment in placemaking, including new sidewalks, streetscaping, decorative pedestrian lighting, and wayfinding with interpretive signage, will catalyze private and public investment in building restoration and creative adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial buildings. Wayfinding signage will be extended the length of the Main Street Corridor, from upper Main Street to the Sing Sing Prison Museum, connecting all destinations. With the development of the new mixed-use mixed-income DPW site, those residents will feel at home from the inviting, tree-lined streets near an active transportation network and fuel the Station Plaza Business District. The rehabilitation will restore visibility to this neighborhood, creating a still-authentic, desirable destination, while breaching the topographic constraints of the connection between the two critical anchors, Waterfront, and Downtown. The incurred expenditures of \$3M for improvements will be on Village-owned property.

**8) Administrative Capacity.**

**Mayor Victoria Gearity** was recently re-elected to her third term. During her administration, Mayor Gearity has championed investment in major infrastructure improvements, and transformed the way Village government engages the public. Thanks to her dedication to environmentalism, Ossining became an early adopter of LED streetlights, and immediately began saving over \$100K annually. Mayor Gearity is committed to learning about the public works infrastructure essential for the growing economy she envisions. This understanding guides her leadership on investing in projects like the \$5.3M Sing Sing Kill Greenway, the \$6.2M earthen dam upgrade, and the upcoming \$40M water treatment facility. Ossining residents are connecting with local government in new ways thanks to outreach initiatives like her Weekly Office Hours, Monday Mayor's Message email, a journey of Weekly Walks that took her to every Village block, and her continually improving Spanish language skills.

**Karen D'Attore, Village Manager**, will be the local lead. She has overseen \$6.5M in housing and revitalization projects during her five-year tenure as the Director of IFCA, Ossining's affordable housing agency. Six discrete, affordable housing development plans involved over 30 community stakeholders, including government and private funders. Her prior experience encompasses strategic development, project management, and communications. Particularly relevant to the DRI is her expertise in public, private partnerships. From 2006 through 2013, she worked as a consultant for the United Nations World Food Program and U.N. Women and was responsible for establishing their US-based public/private partnership divisions resulting in funding and resources totaling over \$65M through partnerships with global, Fortune 500 corporations, as well as the implementation of nearly a dozen operational partnership initiatives ranging from emergency response logistics to school feeding programs and women's entrepreneurship, in developing world countries.

**Tracey Corbitt AICP, Director of Planning and Development**, has over 30 years of experience in NYS municipal and regional planning and urban design. She has successfully managed multiple award-winning local and regional planning projects. Her experience includes comprehensive, land use, site planning, tourism-focused economic development, zoning, grant management, natural resources management, and GIS. She is active in the American Planning Association leadership and a member of the APA National Social Equity Task Force.

**Paul Fraioli, P.E., Director of Public Works/Village Engineer**, has overseen \$80M in capital projects and \$3M in annual infrastructure upgrades during his 18-year tenure. He brings valuable private sector experience, including eight years as Project Engineer for one of the largest area environmental consulting firms, and two years with a private developer as Construction Manager. Mr. Fraioli holds degrees in both civil and environmental engineering.

**Jaimie Hoffman, Project Manager**, brings robust project implementation, program planning, and transition management experience from 20 years in the financial, publishing, and conference industries. Since joining the Village in 2016, she has spearheaded the creation of the new website and implemented iCompass to streamline the Village's communications and Board management.

**9) Other.** Revitalization of the Main Street Corridor closely aligns with the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council's (MHREDC) strategic vision for the region. Specifically, the project advances the expansion of a healthcare hub and will stimulate growth in our restaurant sector, already the subject of regional acclaim, which are priority industry sectors for the MHREDC. Diverse food and beverage offerings will be in formats people are looking for, including intimate ethnic restaurants, craft breweries, and neighborhood coffee shops. Infill buildings will support a critical mass of businesses

which, together with the scenic and historic advantage of the high-quality Downtown, will capture Sing Sing Prison Museum visitors, converting them to multi-day tourists, also a strategic priority identified by the Council. The effect will be to catalyze the development of a local lodging sector to support the boutique hotel opening in nearby Sleepy Hollow in 2021. Ossining's Museum, Downtown, riverfront, trails, and heterogeneous character will position the region as a true tourist destination, drawing a share of New York City visitors up the river for a "Hudson Valley break from the city" tourist product. New York City attracted a record 65.2M tourists in 2018, its ninth straight increase.

Ossining's Smart Growth-based strategy of infrastructure improvements and Complete Streets connection enhancements advances all three initiatives of the MHREDC's vision, moving the region forward.

- **Live:** The project will revitalize a scenic, diverse, affordable Downtown for the pedestrian lifestyle sought by many groups, including young professionals, and facilitate a convenient 45-minute train ride into Grand Central Station.
- **Work:** The project will promote entrepreneurship while retaining jobs in new start-up businesses, and providing amenities attractive to those working in nearby financial and biotech, including General Electric and Regeneron.
- **Play:** The project will revitalize and connect many of Ossining's abundant historic, scenic, recreational, art, and food & beverage assets which, leveraged by the planned Sing Sing Prison Museum, will position the region as a tourist destination, and support a local lodging industry. The economic development impact will be regional with a convenient pedestrian, bicycle, train, ferry, and automobile connection, inviting tourists to explore adjacent river towns.

The project area is one of many neighborhoods in Ossining designated as Potential Environmental Justice areas. Ossining's project aligns with the State's Opportunity Agenda and supports a solution to Childcare Needs.



*Kickoff event for the Waterfront Concert Series at the July 4th 2018 Celebration*