MID-HUDSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: Village of Pelham

Downtown Name: Downtown Pelham

County: Westchester County

Downtown Description - Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award):

A DRI award would enable the Village of Pelham (VOP) to boost vitality in the downtown and leverage a broad offering that exists in the community as well as attract new development. This zone would include the adaptive reuse of an existing historical firehouse to include retail and residential space as well as a new firehouse that would include municipal and community space. Along this corridor there is the opportunity for further development utilizing underdeveloped sites.

The VOP was developed in the 1920s as a result of two railways serving NYC. It is a compact and historic village (application pending with SHPO) accessible by pedestrians as well as people traveling by car and train. Located within walking distance of this zone are the Pelham Art Center, Pelham Picture House, MTA train station, 3 parks, small businesses, restaurants and municipal offices. It is close to the Hutchinson River Parkway as well at I95. Our sister village of Pelham Manor is immediately to the south. They are reliant on this downtown as well.

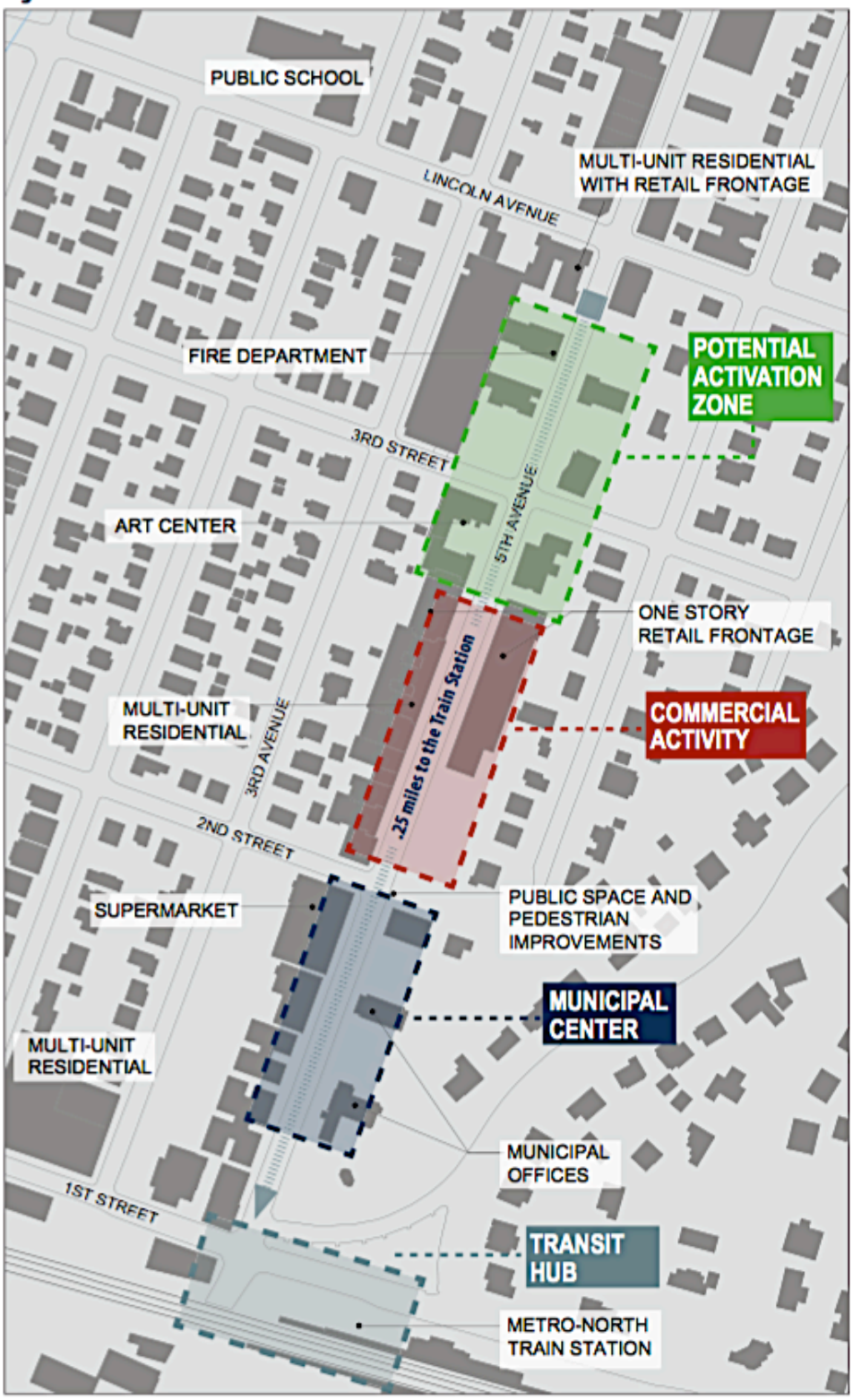
DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines. **Answers to each question are limited to one page each.**

1) **Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

   The entire downtown of Pelham extends along a single corridor of one mile, crossing the train line approximately two thirds of the way from north to south. It begins as Fifth Ave at 7th St and becomes Wolfs Lane under the train overpass extending to Boulevard. The proposed zone is located midway, about a block long, just south of Lincoln Ave. The downtown is bordered by residential areas on all sides including homes and apartments. On the next page there is a graphic of the proposed DRI zone in green, the Potential Activation Zone.

5th Avenue Mixed-Use Corridor
Village of Pelham



2) **Size.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing, or increasing, population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown.

The downtown currently functions for the community it serves but some of the businesses struggle. A DRI zone would increase foot traffic and attract new businesses that would facilitate additional development; it would add an extra level of support to enable existing businesses to thrive. We currently have a great foundation layer of businesses including a hardware store, bike shop, appliance store, bakeries, restaurants, banks, dry cleaners, spas, beauty shops, technology shops, grocery store and some specialty shops. We also have a number of services including medical and dental.

The downtown is served by Pelham, Pelham Manor and neighboring towns. Pelham is also a walking school district; there is no busing. Our downtown has significant student foot traffic.

3) **Past Investments & Future Investment Potential**. Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

Pelham's downtown is unique in that there has been very little development since it was created in the 1920s. The community is committed to its success by demonstrated efforts to support it as well as a desire to protect it.

The support includes an active Chamber of Commerce as well as the recent addition of a Pelham Business Club to help support small businesses (many owned by Pelham residents). These groups have hosted street fairs and other events. Several local community groups have contributed beatification efforts including hanging flower baskets and a new children's playground in addition to hosting downtown events. Municipal contributions include a recently renovated pocket park with chess tables as well as a major park renovation project planned for this fall to include courtyards with seating; memorial, sculpture and native plant gardens; bocce courts and ping pong tables. We have seasonal decorations including flags, banners and wreaths. Our Public Works Department maintains the downtown on a daily basis.

Relative to protecting the downtown, residents have been vocal in their efforts to oppose large-scale development that would diminish the downtown. There are no big box stores and very few chain stores. We need a DRI zone to shore up our downtown so that it can flourish in a manner that enhances and compliments it.

4) **Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

The DRI zone would contribute a modest number of additional jobs with the inclusion of new mixed-use development. Given the proximity to mass transit, the downtown would be used by professionals commuting to NYC and elsewhere as well as residents working locally in addition to our students.

5) **Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

   Pelham has a charming and beautiful downtown that would be a great setting for additional residential space. There has been significant interest in creating senior housing, which does not currently exist in any form. There are few options for empty nesters downsizing and they often move from Pelham. The downtown is flat and easily navigated. We have a vibrant senior community that meets regularly in municipal space downtown. Also, see #3 for more detail.

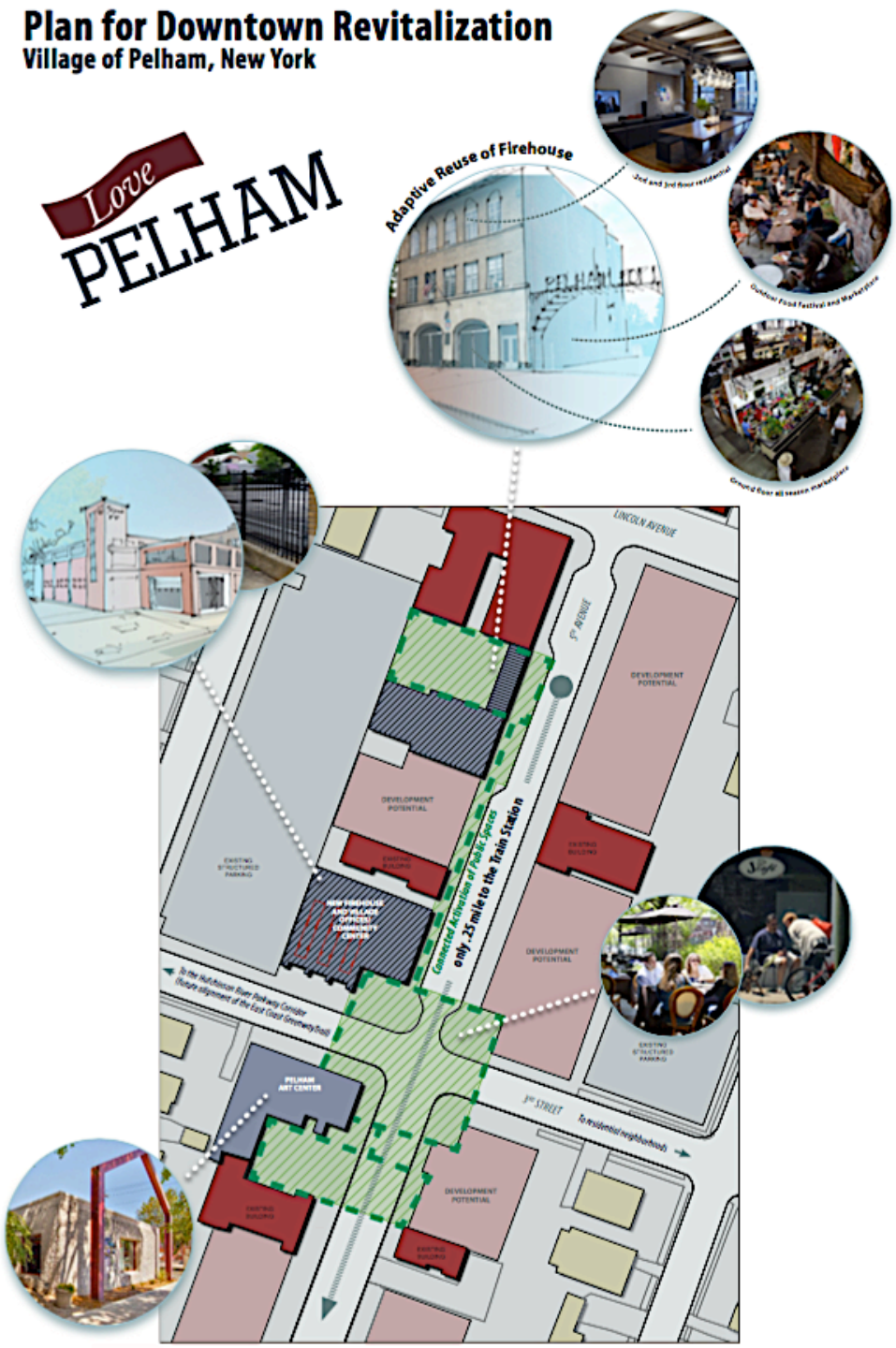
6) **Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

   The Village of Pelham board is reviewing changes to its zoning code including new floating zoning legislation that would be conducive to new development. The Village board recently declared two parcels from an abandoned railway as parkland for a highline style park within walking distance to the downtown. This property was declared eligible for historic listing by Governor Cuomo in April 2016.

7) **Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

   The Village of Pelham comprises one half of the Town of Pelham. The Village of Pelham Manor is the other half of this two square mile community. Along with the Board of Education, these four entities are part of the Counsel of Governing Boards. This board works together to address the needs of the community. The Village of Pelham would be the lead for this initiative. We work closely with our county and state representatives as well as community organizations including the Junior League of Pelham, Pelham Preservation and Garden Society, Pelham Civics, Pelham Rotary, Pelham Children's Center, houses of worship as well as other groups previously mentioned in this application.

8) **Other.** Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

   Traditional downtowns are at a disadvantage given large-scale big box stores and shopping mall development. Additionally, downtowns created in the 1920s do not offer modern facilities for their citizens. Pelham would benefit from a DRI award to modernize its firehouse, create much needed community space for its residents (we do not have a community center or teen center), attract new businesses that would increase foot traffic that would boost existing business as well as introduce age restricted housing.

We believe Pelham could successfully execute a Downtown Revitalization Initiative that would benefit residents, the greater community and businesses; collaboratively working together with our community organizations and our local/county/state level elected officials. We have included an overview graphic below. We are grateful to be considered.