



## 2019 DRI Application

### **BASIC INFORMATION**

- REDC Region: Mid-Hudson
- Municipality Name: City of Port Jervis
- Downtown Name: Activate Port Jervis – Waterfront 2 Downtown – The Catalyst
- County Name: Orange
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title: Mayor Kelly B. Decker
- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address: Mayor Kelly B. Decker, [PortJervisMayor@gmail.com](mailto:PortJervisMayor@gmail.com), Secondary: Valerie Maginsky, [PJCDA@frontiernet.net](mailto:PJCDA@frontiernet.net)

### **VISION FOR DOWNTOWN**

Situated at the western portal of Interstate 84 as it enters New York, the 112-year old City of Port Jervis lies at the confluence of the Delaware and Neversink Rivers. Over the last five years a resurgence of the city's downtown gained momentum. Derelict buildings are being refurbished, new construction is planned, cars fill the parking spots and visitors enjoy outdoor dining and strolling the recently widened sidewalks. Initial downtown advancements were accomplished through a mobilized city government working with interested investors in pursuit of the public good. Combined with careful review and preliminary implementation of the city's 2009/2015 Delaware River Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP), scarce public resources and in-kind matches were leveraged by \$8.5 million state and federal grants and loans to improve infrastructure, public spaces and support entrepreneurialism. Concurrently, over \$12 million in private investment is turning ten underutilized and uninhabitable downtown mixed-use and commercial properties into viable spaces for retail, office, hotels, apartments and eateries. When finished, over 161,000 square feet of property will be returned to active use.

Through 14,000-hours of volunteer sweat equity, members of the Outdoor Club of Port Jervis, a 501(c)3, developed over 40-miles of trails on the city's immediately adjacent 2,000 acre watershed. Now, after visiting the city and parks and trails, day-trippers are returning to buy and occupy homes and local businesses and employers are vying for available employees.

These changes are encouraging. However, as identified in multiple public input and planning sessions over the years cumulating recently in the interactive 2019 Port Jervis Public DRI Workshop, the ultimate success of the city's downtown CBD depends on access to and usage of one of the city's primary features, its 40-acre waterfront property. This access and the promise of full utilization is prevented by the active railroad tracks that bifurcate the city and separate the downtown/CBD from the adjacent 40-acre waterfront. The plan to awaken the latent possibilities of Port Jervis' up-and-coming downtown/CBD connected to an improved Delaware River waterfront is contained within this DRI application titled: **Activate Port Jervis – Waterfront 2 Downtown – The Catalyst.**

This proposed **Activate Port Jervis** project envisions 1) multiple recreational improvements to the city-owned 40-acre waterfront, currently known as Riverside Park, 2) the construction of a pedestrian bridge at 4<sup>th</sup> and Fowler St. over railroad tracks owned by Norfolk-Southern and operated by Metro North and the MTA, that will provide safe and legal crossings between the waterfront and the downtown, and 3) streetscape improvements and wayfinding signage in the city's downtown Central Business District and waterfront. These changes are the catalyst for the downtown/CBD's full and sustained resurgence.



From public input, waterfront improvements will include parking for 200 cars (needed for the downtown businesses, events and access to the 40-acre waterfront), an amphitheater with splash park, a pavilion for ice skating and event venue, small and medium gathering pavilions, a playground with a miniature town, a miniature golf course and a multi-age and ability adventure park with zip lines. Additional features include a community garden, interactive educational stations/center and walking trails around the entire waterfront. The waterfront features would be open to the public, ADA accessible, with fees charged for some features such as event space rentals, or the miniature golf and adventure park operated and maintained by certified private operators.

Based on progress to date and the solidification of suggested and desired development, the City of Port Jervis believes its vision presented in this DRI application directly meets the intentions of the Mid-Hudson REDC's "LIVE, WORK, PLAY" initiative. **LIVE:** As a walkable city with public commuter options to New York City and multiple employment, entertainment and recreational opportunities, people of all ages from youth to seniors are enticed to remain. Tying the waterfront to the downtown/CBD will increase retail and recreational options for visitors and residents alike, support the pursuit of healthy lifestyles and encourage new employers with high all-around expectations to locate within the city. **WORK:** The proposed improvement and connections between recreational features and the downtown/CBD will encourage additional visitor flow within the Activate Port Jervis area which will lead to new job creation. As the city currently maintains an 18% poverty rate and in the school district 57% of students partake in the free-lunch program, these job opportunities will reach into to the nearby neighborhoods with low-to-moderate incomes in ratios up to 73.3% and offer fertile ground to the increased numbers of artists and niche technology companies currently making their way to Port Jervis. **PLAY:** the improved 40-acre recreational area will provide a wide variety of primarily free features and ADA accessibility for all ages and provide a foundation for future recreational features and revenue generation for long-term facility maintenance.

When combined, these aspects and improvements add a solid economic base to the city's realization of becoming an international four-season outdoor recreation tourist destination.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

With a unique combination of accessibility, urban amenities and waterfront recreational opportunities, Port Jervis, at the juncture of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, is distinctively positioned to draw business and visitors from the NY City metro area and regionally draw others into New York State. After Scranton, PA some 60 miles to the west, upon arriving in New York State via Interstate 84, Port Jervis is the first major urban center between the border and Middletown, NY located 15 miles away. The Activate Port Jervis project area may be reached either from the I-84 Exit 53 in Pennsylvania or Exit 1 in New York. This DRI area was chosen because of its regional accessibility, desirable waterfront characteristics and continuing private investment. For example, a 6-story hotel with ground floor restaurant, 27 guest rooms and rooftop bar is due to break ground in the Activate Port Jervis project area in the coming three months. City government and residents realize that additional stimulus is necessary to support long-term downtown sustainability. Careful recreational development of the largely unimproved city owned 40-acre waterfront and connection to the resurging downtown/CBD will provide the necessary impetus. When complete, the project will entice area residents and visitors to spend more time and money within the city. Increased sales tax collection will benefit the city and its increasingly diverse residents, Orange County and New York State. The Activate Port Jervis project area is also located within the city's two federal Opportunity Zones and within a potential NYS DEC Environmental Justice area. Both designations offer future investment possibilities.



On the banks of the scenic Delaware River, the city is rich in history ranging from the settlements of Native Americans to the Revolutionary War activities and through the Delaware & Hudson Canal and Erie railroad steam engine eras to the present. The city and the surrounding area offer a multitude of non-motorized and water based recreational opportunities and may be reached from NY City by bus and rail. A solid public school system attuned to the needs of its students along with a SUNY Orange satellite within the CBD offers advanced educational opportunities. The local Bon Secours Community Hospital now aligned with Westchester Medical Center, is undertaking a \$40-million dollar renovation.

By the 2017 American Community Survey estimate of 8,670 residents, Port Jervis, with a 2.5 mi.<sup>2</sup> landmass, is Orange County's smallest city. It has the lowest city property taxes and real estate costs in Orange County. So much so, that the current available real estate inventory is half of normal for this time of year. New residents include those who maintain their current jobs and businesses but move to Port Jervis for the reduced costs and recreational opportunities. More minorities and Latinos/Hispanics are making the city their home and are opening businesses including new restaurants.

The city already draws residents and visitors from a wide area. Within the immediate 7-mile radius which includes the Town of Deerpark, NY, and portions of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, live an additional 15,238 residents. From a 7-15 miles radius, there are another 42,054. Within the entire 15-mile radius, there are approximately 66,120 residents who are be drawn to Port Jervis for events, restaurants and recreation.

International visitors, including many from Asia drawn to the Falun Dafa Dragon Springs center in Cuddebackville in the Town of Deerpark, are also attracted to local, unique American experiences found in Port Jervis. Falun Dafa has spread to over 70-countries and its hundreds of thousands of its practitioners will be welcomed to the Cuddebackville center. Dragon Springs is interested in eventually hosting bus tours which will then make additional stops. The planned 200-vehicle parking area in the Activate Port Jervis project area will be designed to hold private cars and tour buses.

With the Metro North train line that originates in lower Manhattan terminating in Port Jervis' downtown/CBD, the NYC Metro area and any portion of its millions of residents and tourists will find the trip to Port Jervis very straight forward. For those interested in other regional attractions such as Legoland in Goshen, West Point, Storm King Art Center or Sullivan County's Resorts World Catskill, Port Jervis is less than a 45-minute drive to the furthest point. This distance also includes access to Stewart International Airport and Norwegian Airlines with routes to Ireland and Norway.

As businesses and their events grow along with lodging options within the Activate Port Jervis area and at the nearby I-84 NY Exit 1 exchange, domestic and international advertising through I Love NY and outreach through social media will draw additional overnight visitors to the city. Per Orange County Tourism, one overnight stay produces four-times the revenue of a day trip.

Learning from New Rochelle's successful 90-day permitting process, the city's Comprehensive Plan and land use zoning code updates to be finalized and adopted before the end of 2019, encourage form based codes, affordable housing options, continued advancement of non-motorized transportation, streamlined planning and zoning processes and consideration of generic SEQR/EIS activities where appropriate. With limited buildable city owned property available, the consideration of a master developer will be reviewed when applicable.

With the initial time-consuming foundational work of planning nearing completion and infrastructure repair and rehabilitation in process (wastewater line rehabilitation/\$750,000, NYS HCR CDBG, protection of the city's watershed/1.8 million, NYS DEC-WQIP and the Neversink Bridge replacement and Tri-State road widening/\$19+

million), with the award of the this year’s Mid-Hudson DRI funds, the city which is very experienced in successful grant administration, would quickly complete planning for the pedestrian bridge and approved recreational features in the current Riverside Park and initiate construction.

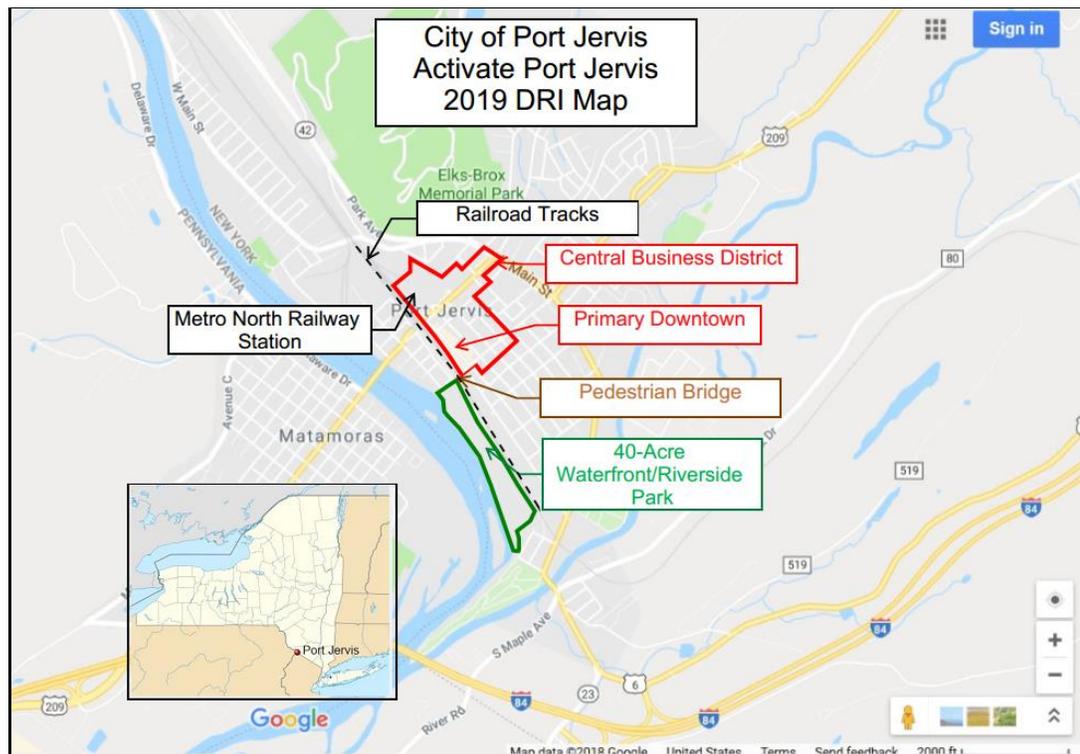
At the train track crossover between the 40-acre waterfront to the city’s primary downtown/CBD at 4<sup>th</sup> and Fowler St., there exists an emergency at-grade and vehicle crossing. During unique events two-three times a year, crossing gates are manually unlocked and pedestrian flows are overseen by railroad personnel. Otherwise, though used hundreds of times of day, this is an illegal pedestrian crossing. Further at-grade enhancements and open usage desired by the city has been refused by the railroads and NY State. However, the construction of a pedestrian bridge has been agreed to as an acceptable compromise.

The ingredients of an improved recreational waterfront combined with safe secure pedestrian conductivity to the blossoming adjacent downtown/CBD will provide the catalyst that will accelerate and stabilize downtown revitalization and will make Port Jervis’ current less-than-optimal economic condition a historical footnote.

**DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

**1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area**

The proposed DRI area encompasses the current city-owned 40-acre waterfront property (known as Riverside Park on the banks of the Delaware River), the connection of a pedestrian bridge between 4<sup>th</sup> St. and Fowler St. over the active railroad tracks and the city’s Central Business District (CBD), as approved by the Port Jervis Common Council. The CBD contains the city’s primary downtown and is contained within the following area: (roughly from the intersection of Fowler and 4<sup>th</sup>, east on Fowler St., left on Franklin St., right on Sussex St., left on North Broome, right on Pike St. left on East Main St., left on Canal St, north of the city owned turntable property to the east side of the railroad tracks, back to the intersection of Fowler and 4<sup>th</sup> St.).



## **2) Past investment, future investment potential**

In the Riverside Park waterfront area, the city has already invested in a concession stand, restrooms, two large pavilions, ball fields, a skate park, and playgrounds. The area is maintained daily by the Parks Department, patrolled by the Port Jervis Police Department and utilized year round by groups and activities ranging from National Night Out Against Crime, summer concerts and movie nights hosted by a local churches and seasonal activities like Easter Egg hunts.

New to this area is a \$90,000 pump track open to the public for use with bikes, scooters and skateboards. Built wholly with donations gathered by the Port Jervis Outdoor Club, which is contracted as the steward of the Port Jervis Watershed Trails and recreational areas including the 40-acre waterfront area, with helmets donated by the local Police Benevolent Association, the club donated to the city at its opening on May 25, 2019. Good for exercise, instead of pedaling, bikers move their bodies forward, backward, and side to the side to ride over high rolls and corner the berms, gaining momentum from the roller coaster-like ups and downs. Currently, this track is the largest pump track in the domestic United States and expected to draw riders and events from the region.

For future consideration but not currently part of this application, at the southern-most portion of the 40-acres is the location of the City's proposed White Water Kayak Park (WWKP), a Mid-Hudson REDC Priority Project. This project is currently in the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At hand is the completion of a requested bat survey and development of a mitigation plan to off-set the WWKP impact on 1.2 acres of water.

Per the initial 2012 Orange County Planning department's economic impact review of the WWKP project, when fully completed, the WWKP is projected to draw 500,000 to 1.6 million visitors to the area thereby producing \$10-\$33 million in annual revenue and some 400-jobs. This project was originally delayed due to the discovery of the state and federally protected dwarf wedge mussel. Once federal permits are obtained, a capital funding campaign will be launched, and this project will be added to the 40-acre waterfront collection. Site planning for the DRI improvements of the 40-acres allows for the WWKP location and construction.

Currently in negotiation, future investments also include a proposed annexation with the Town of Deerpark which provides for a new flag-ship hotel, conference center and multiple restaurants off the I-84 NY Exit 1 interchange. In the downtown, a new 6-story 27-guest room boutique hotel with a first-floor restaurant and rooftop bar will break ground in the coming months. Also, within the downtown is the city's eponymous downtown Metro North commuter station which is now ADA accessible. Metro North trains, Coach USA buses and planes from Stewart Intl' Airport a 40-minute drive away, provide transportation to New York City and the world at large.

Within the city's downtown, \$12 million in recent investments include the establishment of a variety of projects. A craft brewery, the Fox N Hare is now at home in a recovered building. A four story 22,800 sq. ft. building slated for demo now contains four active commercial units and within the coming year, 21 apartments. Otherwise, private investments developed retail and exhibition space, a variety of retailers, restaurants, exercise and yoga providers and a commercial restaurant supply which is open to the public. Not yet open to the public, "The Beast" a 21,000 sq. foot building is being developed as artist studios and shops. Originally a JCPenney's (6,534 sq. ft.) and then a medical center, vacant for years, it is now slated to be a senior citizen day-care. Nearby, another 15,000 sq. ft. mixed-use building is currently in development. Initial planning calls for 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor flex office space, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor corporate offices, 4<sup>th</sup> floor 14-16 hotel rooms, and 5<sup>th</sup> floor penthouse suites/roof top bar. All tolled only two buildings in the Front St. primary downtown are awaiting development.

Planning for this DRI area has extended over many years from the city's Strategic Downtown Plan of 2002, to the 2009/2015 Delaware River Waterfront Revitalization Plan and the 13 committee meetings and four public input sessions to date regarding the city's update of its Comprehensive Plan and land use zoning codes. A public on-line survey garnered 132 responses which are incorporated into the body of the draft Comprehensive Plan and specifically added as an appendix. For the recent 2019 DRI public workshop, outreach was made to the public at large, advertised on-line, through Mid-Hudson News, the Port Jervis Gazette and on the city website. Observations and suggestions gathered by city residents and business leaders, private citizens, government and agency staffers are included in this application.

### **3) Recent or impending job growth**

All the afore mentioned projects either have employees or will be seeking employees. Three previous CDBG microenterprise participants (Fox N Hare Brewery, Foundry 42, Gio's Gelato) are located in the downtown/CBD. Some three years ago these three businesses represented less than 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Together they now employ 33 FTE's.

With an 18% poverty rate, the city strives to diversify its economic base through expanded education, higher level technical jobs and better than minimum wage positions. Traditional manufacturing jobs continue to be available through kdc/one Kolmar Laboratories (650 permanent/400 temporary employees and seeking more), Skydyne Industries (20-30 employees), and Gillinder Glass (70 employees). Each entity hires office and administrative, engineers, chemists and warehousing professionals. Additionally, a new employer seeking a location in the city is interested in hiring 75-150 employees and renting housing for executive staff. The hospital, school district and city also continue to employ some 1,160 full and part-time positions. With workforce needs expanding, outreach continues with SUNY Orange college to provide college classes as well as certification training at its new satellite location within the CBD.

The city is also seeking to expand suitable home occupation options through its updated Comprehensive Plan and zoning codes. Telecommuting, service professionals and artisans all benefit from flexible home/work laws. Fiber optic communication lines run through the city and small cell telecommunication ordinances are under consideration by city personnel.

In the Activate Port Jervis project area, by and large the buildings and businesses surveyed for last year's DRI application are on track with regards to occupancy and employment numbers goals though overall open store hours were adjusted to meet owner schedules and peak needs. As expected, some start-up businesses did not progress beyond their first-year and commercial space is now available for rent. Other businesses adjusted business hours to match evening and weekend flows.

### **4) Attractiveness of physical environment**

As a city with a 2.5 sq. mile landmass, with rivers, parks and sidewalks throughout, the city is wholly walkable, bikeable and livable. It maintains a variety of services, shopping, medical facilities, educational opportunities, a full service public library, public school system, places of worship and a responsive and available government. Within city limits, in addition to the 40-acre waterfront Riverside Park parcel, the city maintains a number of smaller parks including West End Beach with lifeguards and swimming, Orange Square with fountain and Civil War monument,



Church St. with basketball and tennis courts, Mother's Park with grassy lawn and benches, and a two other small neighborhood parks with swings and slides.

Within the downtown/CBD just over the railroad tracks and the Riverside Park the two block Front St. area between Fowler St. and Pike St. may be securely closed for street fairs. Providing a safe location for pedestrians and vendors with immediate access to local businesses, this area contains the city's new Josef Kutcher Promenade with benches, a large fountain, professional landscaping, and upgraded electrical for concerts and outdoor speakers. On weekends, music plays over the speakers giving the downtown a festive feel even on gray days.

Anchored at Fowler St., the site of the proposed pedestrian bridge, is the grand red-brick National Register Erie Railroad Station. The other end of the festival area at Pike St. boasts the Metro North commuter station, a recently rebuilt commercial center that includes a Burger King, Rite Aid (Walgreens) and 100 Pike Plaza. Previously vacant for four years, the Plaza contains a number of businesses including the city's supermarket and is soon to be home to an expanded Veterans Administration's clinic. Next to the Plaza is the city's historic Erie Railroad Turntable. This area is slated to hold the city's future train car museum and dog play yard.

In the municipal lot at the corner of Pike and Hammond, is the Farmer's Market Square where the city's seasonal farmers' market is located. Supported by Orange County funding, the market is opened Saturday's from June into October. Accepting EBT transactions, the market provides fresh vegetables, flowers, hand-made soaps, live music and more, making a stop a favorite for people of all ages and economic levels.

The two block Front St. area between Fowler and Pike maintains a concentration of the city's turn of the century three-story red brick mixed-use building and the city encourages façade projects that return storefronts to original views. For example, the upcoming senior day care center is planning to replace its modern glass and concrete façade to one more in keeping with the neighborhood.

In this area, through NYS SAM grants, the city installed widened stamped concrete sidewalks that mimic gray slate making the two block area code compliant for outdoor dining. This additional sidewalk is used by the Fox N Hare Brewery, Foundry 42+, Gio's Gelato, Fogwood & Fig (plant based food), and Taste of Sicily for outdoor seating.

The downtown/CBD is also home to the National Register Port Jervis Post Office, City Hall with NYS DMV, police and municipal offices, the Port Jervis Free Library (a Carnegie gift), four banks, and various professional offices.

Along with the development and addition of branded wayfinding signage, the city's streetscapes and gateways are in need of improvement. As noted in the public DRI workshop, visitors disembarking Metro North currently have no easy way to determine the location of the downtown business area, library, post office, city hall or farmers' market. To make transit easier for local visitors and those needing assistance, the city is also researching the establishment of a circulating trolley that would carry people around the CBD and eventually to the city's trail heads.

The entire city and the DRI area in particular, is wholly walkable and bikeable. However, as originally outlined, there is not always direct access for visitors, bikers and walkers between the downtown/CBD and the waterfront. Outside a special festival day with open gates over the railroad tracks, if a pedestrian chooses to walk legally from the Erie Depot to the waterfront at Riverside Park, instead of crossing a 30-foot at-grade crossing, they must instead walk a circuitous "U" almost three quarters of a mile long, to reach the other side of the tracks. Instead, many people choose to look both ways for an oncoming train and cross the tracks carrying bikes, groceries, laundry and children in strollers.

From the rooftop bar of the soon to be constructed 70' high hotel near the Erie Depot, visitors would be able to see the lovely green space of the city's 40-acre park and the Delaware River, but at street level, would not be able to directly make their way across.

With DRI funding, the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the train tracks would provide safe and legal access between the downtown and the waterfront while providing additional ADA access for parking.

The downtown and the CBD provide for apartment, loft and single-to multiple dwelling options for approximately 820 dwellings (20% of the city's residences). The rental rates for the majority of units are at fair market rate ranging from \$900 for a one bedroom to two bedrooms at approximately \$1,300 per month. The variety of housing available is conducive to all ages and abilities, all within the CBD and reach of the waterfront or within near proximity. Should the park be directly instead of circuitously accessible from the downtown, park usage is expected to increase thereby increasing physical activity and improving the general health of the population and inversely decreasing vandalism and petty crime in and around the waterfront park.

Additionally, outside the CBD but within walking distance or a short drive of the Activate Port Jervis area, are five apartment complexes. Two complexes with sliding scale rentals with a total of 25 family units and 50 senior/disabled units are maintained by the Port Jervis Housing Authority. Two other private complexes (one is a LHITC) offer a combined 223 one-bedroom units for persons over 55 years-of-age. The fifth location is a USDA Rural Development 515 zero-site subsidized complex with 34 one-bedroom and 6 two-bedroom townhouse units. Through its local Dial-a-Bus service city offers affordable transportation within three-miles of the city's border. The bus will not travel outside of NYS to the neighboring states of NJ and PA where the majority of grocery and big box stores are located. Many residents without private transportation take taxis to Walmart, Home Depot, Price Chopper and the movies in PA. Shop Rite is located in NJ. Port Jervis does maintain a new Super Save-a-Lot in the downtown/CBD.

## **5) Quality of Life policies**

The City of Port Jervis is a forward looking community which reviews and implements best practices, plans, ordinances and laws to advance municipal improvements. The most cost effective way for the city to proceed is to follow the work already performed by larger entities that have the expertise and resources. These areas include but are not limited to infrastructure, energy efficiency improvements, alternate energy/green initiatives, housing, planning initiatives, and public events and gatherings. The Activate Port Jervis project area benefits from the adopted plans to date and will benefit from the upcoming Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Zoning Code updates and others under consideration. These policies and implementation include the following aspects.

Port Jervis became the first Complete Streets Community in Orange County in April 2015, affirming the vision and mission of designing roadways that consider "comprehensive, integrated roads that provide for safe and convenient travel along and across the street network by all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers of all types of vehicle and writers of public transportation, of all ages and abilities, including children and youth, older adults, and people with disabilities."

As a result of the Complete Streets designation, Port Jervis participated in an Orange County Planning project with Alta Planning that resulted in suggested plans for Pike St., Jersey Ave. and Front Street, all of which are represented in the Activate Port Jervis project area. Also, traffic calming elements were included in the recent realignment of Front St. in the downtown, including the reduction in width, increased sidewalk visibility, designed curb cuts and bubble pads. To make the downtown even more pedestrian friendly, one-way traffic patterns are under consideration by the Common Council.

Composed of municipal, Common Council and residents, the Port Jervis' ADA Committee meets quarterly reviewing continuing curb cut and bubble pad installations, notice of needed improvements including public building enhancements.

In August 2015, with the adoption of the Orange County Greenway Compact, Port Jervis became Orange County's first Greenway Compact Community. It then amended its Zoning Laws and Subdivision Law and is adding definition to the current draft Comprehensive Plan. The city then went on to be awarded two \$10,000 Hudson River Valley Greenway grants which were used for a downtown planning project with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress and Code Gap Analysis for the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

Interested in advancing improvements to city residential and commercial properties, currently 26 residential properties are enrolled in the city's 421f Residential Improvement program which provides for reduced 8-year stepped property tax increases on major capital improvements on eligible properties. A 485-b business exemption which is applied to County, City and school taxes only on the business portion of a building is used by 19 participants.

To fight blight, under a \$120,000 Restore NY grant, the city's is preparing to demo six city owned properties and is seeking to demo three others in dangerous condition. After the Great Recession of 2008, the city counted a high of 200 vacant/abandoned properties. With banks releasing the properties for sale, finances improving and the onset of individual and large-quantity purchasers, the city lists 56 with no plans or permits. Currently a separate 37 vacant properties hold active building permits. Though a land bank was considered, the city decided it would not be cost effective and that the markets would eventually absorb the available stock.

Within the Activate Port Jervis project area, almost every commercial property is in need of some level of energy efficiency improvements. Under current consideration by the Port Jervis Common Council, is the adoption of the Energize NY PACE program that would provide a funding source and repayment avenue for weatherization and alternative energy improvements to existing commercial properties.

Having successfully installed small solar panel arrays on a DPW building and at the city's water plant, the city looked to expand its solar production capacity. As a result, the city worked with the company Energy in the Bank (EIB) which develops, builds and operates commercial renewable energy systems to install a 15 acre, 1.3104 MW system on city-owned hillside property. The array is expected to start generating power in June of 2019 and save the city some \$240,000 a year in electrical costs. NYSERDA was so impressed with the city's advanced solar program that the agency asked if the city would be a model example for other communities.

As the city has made steady strides in energy improvement/green infrastructure installations, the city is considering pursuance of a Climate Smart certification.

To the city's entire benefit and providing proof its good land stewardship, the city is preparing to sign a contract with The Nature Conservancy to join its Working Woodlands carbon-sequestration project covering its 2,000+ acre watershed property located in the nearby Town of Deerpark. Over a ten-year period, carbon credits covering this property will be sold on a voluntary market and are expected to garner the city an estimated \$540,000.

Initiated with the receipt of a NYS DOS grant of \$50,000, matched by \$50,000 cash match from the city and a \$10,000 Hudson River Valley Greenway grant for a Code Gap Analysis, the city will be completing its update of its Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Zoning Codes by the end of 2019. The final draft of the Comprehensive Plan will be presented by the committee to the Common Council within the coming two months. Concurrently, review and update of the city's land use codes are in process and will follow by the end of the year. Regarding the codes, the committee is streamlining the type and number of zones throughout the city, equalizing uses across zones, adding a Mountain Residence zone for recreational features, conference/lodging and festivals. In this area the city and the Port

Jervis Outdoor Club are refurbishing a former picnic/camp site with up to 40 sleeping platforms and tent sites with picnic tables within the City's mountain side Elks Brox Park in the adjacent Town of Deerpark.

The draft Comprehensive Plan details the vision for the city's future and list four primary goals with objectives including the city have 1) A Downtown with vibrant business activity and quality housing choices, 2) To be a small, urban community that connects its unique natural environment to its strong sense of community, 3) Stabilized and strengthened neighborhoods that insure safe, diverse, and affordable housing with walkable access to parks, schools, neighborhood commercial establishments, and services as well as connection to Downtown, and 4) Efficiently and effectively maintained civic infrastructure that provides quality services, encourages economic development, and mitigates the effects of natural disasters.

The plan then goes into Plan Recommendations detailing suggested short, medium and long-term goals to address each of the afore listed goals which are followed by Implementation strategies for each objective.

Objective 2.2, Action 2.2c is a short term priority to "Construct a pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks at Fowler St."

With four action items of varying priority levels, Objective 2.4 states, "Activate the City's Delaware River waterfront with public, recreational uses and improve connections between the waterfront, downtown, and other adjoining neighborhoods. Supplement waterfront recreational uses with appropriate commercial establishments."

The draft plan also supports development and usage of form-based codes where appropriate, proposes the adoption of Dark Skies ordinance to reduce light pollution and a set-back tree planting program beyond the ROW to improve the city's tree canopy and reduce summer cooling costs.

Though the city has adopted Fair Housing Plan, in light of recent concerns and increased needs for affordable housing, the committee strongly supports the initiation of a housing survey to provide the basis for a revised city housing plan.

In conjunction with the Historic Downtown Merchants Association which coordinates events among the downtown Front St. businesses, many city events are led by the city's busy Tourism Committee. Events such as the Fall Foliage Festival bring in 15,000 visitors a weekend. Building from year to year, other events include the local Soap Box Derby, Dinner Along the Delaware with fireworks, the Family Fun Fair, Monsters on the Mountain (a haunted Watershed Trails event) Christkindlmarkt, and St. Patrick's Day parade. Other previous events included the well-received Whoville Comes to Port Jervis, Ladies Night Out, and Cinco de Mayo.

Local businesses hold their own events ranging from story time to book signings, open mic nights, concerts and talent shows. The local comic bookstore, Haven for Heroes, recently held a special weekend event that brought 2,500 through their store in one weekend. Local groups such as Empowering Port Jervis provide craft time for adults and children. The Hub at the local library provides free computer training and free adult education classes.

Year-round, the Port Jervis Recreation Department maintains activities at the Pike St. center as well as special trips to baseball. The department also maintains all five parks which remain open through out the year. In addition to special summer activities, the department provides lunches prepared and delivered via the school lunch program.

For the third year running, in June 2019 the NYS Sportsmen's Expo will be held in Riverside Park. With a membership of 50,000, the NYS Rifle and Pistol Assn. will also hold its annual meeting there in the morning. In the first year over 100-vendors and 4,000 visitors attended the NYS Sportsman Expo. This year vendors will include local police departments who are recruiting new officers, archery demonstrations, canine demonstrations, a 5,000 gallon fishing tank and Jonathan Wood, "The American Birdman" will be on-site with 30 raptors.

## 6) Public support

In June 2017, the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code Update committee held its first meeting. Comprised of elected officials, local business and property owners, planning officials, the local community development agency and residents, the process to collect documentation, determine needs and goals and determine the future direction of growth for the city commenced.

To the present, led by the program consultant, the committee has met 13 times, held four public sessions and one online survey that garnered 132 responses. The resulting draft will be presented to the Common Council in the coming months with the draft land use codes to immediately follow. Through various newspaper articles, the project website and updates at the Common Council meetings, the public has been invited to participate and comment.

From the public survey, it was determined that there was a strong preference for the following types of communities that Port Jervis “should be”: Tourist Destination (72%), Family-oriented Community (89%), Hometown [Live-work-play] Community (87%), Pedestrian and Bicycle-friendly Community (79%), and Environmentally friendly Community (85%) and that, “There is a strong appreciation for the City’s topography and geographic beauty as well as how outdoor pursuits can be experienced so conveniently. A number of respondents mentioned the City’s shopping and downtown activity combined with close proximity to outdoor activities. Other comments posted multiple times included “safe place to live” and “quality municipal services” among others.”

The idea that the city was blessed with natural resources and that those assets should be used wisely to the future benefit of the city was a constant thread throughout the multi-year conversation. Additionally, discussion as to how best to increase parking for the turn-of-the-century downtown has been going on for even longer. With the resurgence of the downtown, the issues of access and parking have gained even more attention.

Into this continuing conversation, the DRI public workshop became a focus group discussion on the needs of the city and the merits of the DRI application and the offer of transformative opportunities in the Activate Port Jervis project area. After an initial discussion, attendees who included local and nearby residents, business owners, elected officials and city department heads, school board members, not-for-profit agencies, and local reporters, foresaw improvements in wayfinding signage, amenities such as a welcome center/rest rooms, additional ADA features, interactive educational options/center and activity features for the waterfront. New and now included in the transformative opportunities was a suggestion of a miniature town where youngsters would have a chance to learn about municipal services and safe street passage. The full discussion of inclusive transformative opportunities is found in the following Section 7.

Considering the commitment to the production of a new Comprehensive Plan and land use zoning codes, the continuing commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to see the successful utilization of a DRI award through to completion is high. The mayor and Common Council, department heads, the Port Jervis Community Development Agency, the Port Jervis Outdoor Club and business owners and residents attend the planning and production meetings and produce the intended results.

## 7) Transformative opportunities

Within the first one to two years after the award, the city is prepared to Activate Port Jervis though transformative projects to connect and improve its 40-acre waterfront with its resurging downtown/CBD. This entire plan is currently estimated at some \$15 million (Table 1, pg. 14). After the DRI award, the additional funding will be sourced by the

city, bonds, loans, grants, in-kind contributions from the city and not-for-profits and private-public agreements. While aesthetically pleasing and functionally useful with features designed to reflect the innate characteristics of the historic downtown, the real beauty of the plan comes from its flexibility and inclusiveness.

Culminating with the public DRI workshop, the assembly discussed the needs of the city and the merits of the DRI application. The features of ascetically improved gateways, accessibility for all ages and needs including ADA and special needs, wayfinding signage, additional streetscape improvements, splash pads, places to congregate, event space, playgrounds, picnicking spots, ice skating, and interactive educational opportunities and recreational facilities were brought up by the assembly. As this has been an ongoing conversation, many of these ideas were already contained in suggested features which also included miniature golf and a zip-line adventure park.

Upon notice of the DRI award, should NYS determine it necessary, the city will formally designate the 40-acre waterfront parcel a park. Currently though referred to as the Riverside Park this area does not yet carry a formal park designation. Cost: Port Jervis Match

It is a fact that 25% of land area within the city is within the 100-year flood plain. This includes the city’s 40-acre waterfront and a small section of the CDB nearest the train station. Other sections of the downtown/CBD are within the 500-year floodplain. The Activate Port Jervis area is located behind a raised berm which does mitigate lower flood levels. Considering the entire City of Port Jervis is deemed to be waterfront, in particular, the city recognizes the need to design the Activate Port Jervis components to be water-resilient and accommodate possible flooding to the highest degree possible.



Planning for the pedestrian bridge over the active railroad tracks at 4<sup>th</sup> St. and Fowler St. would move forward into construction. The pedestrian bridge would be a structural and civil engineering design that would support a new 185-ft. long custom weathering steel truss pedestrian bridge over the Norfolk Southern / MTA / Metro-North tracks. The distinctive design would feature an ADA-accessible 12-ft wide walkway spanning between new weathering steel and glass elevator towers with galvanized steel stair structures accessing the bridge from the side. As an alternative to riding the elevators, bicyclists would be able to walk their bikes on the specially designed steel staircases. Cost: 3.9 million

In the meantime, 200 parking spots along the western side of the tracks, south of the pedestrian bridge would be installed. In combination with the pedestrian bridge this parking would service both the park and the downtown/CBD.

Cost: \$1.5 million



An amphitheater with 50’ x 35’ stage and an interior daytime splash pad would accommodate day and evening recreation, concerts, outdoor movies, farmers’ market, fitness classes, and gathering space. Criss-crossing sidewalks will provide ADA access and green space for concerts, picnics and performances. Cost \$2.5 million

A 150' x 125' multi-use pavilion with movable side walls, ice skating rink, commercial kitchen and full service bathrooms with a welcome center would be built closest to the Delaware River. The multi-use pavilion would be also be available for hockey nights, ice sculpture events and weddings and fundraisers. This feature may be a revenue generator to the city. Cost: \$5.9 million



Picnic and gathering pavilions of varied stone, metal and wood components, two with seating for 120 and ten small pavilions that seat 30 would be scattered throughout the park. Some rental revenue may be made by the city. Cost: \$153,400.

A child's 100' by 100' playground with a nearby miniature town with streets and stop signs for safety training. Cost: \$75,000.

An 18 hole miniature golf course will be set on two acres of landscaped trees and trails with two mini-mountains forming the center of the course. Six waterfalls and streams will meander over and under the greens. Concession revenue from a private operator to the city is planned. Cost: \$230,000

In the southeast wooded portion of the park will be an adventure park with ziplines with a minimum of two inclusively designed height/age levels. Typically built in multiple sections of 10 or more elements with varying degrees of "challenge" difficulty. Difficulty levels are color coded: easiest – green; moderate – blue; difficult – red; very difficult – black. Concession revenue from a private operator to the city is planned. Cost: \$300,000



Also, within the park will be a community garden (Cost: Port Jervis match), walking trails developed by the Outdoor Club of Port Jervis (contribution to the city), and available room for the projected in-river White Water Kayak Park (estimated construction cost: \$2.5 million in a following phase).



Park lighting will be professionally designed to be appropriate for the feature and location thereby minimizing light pollution and maximizing the safety and security of visitors. Comfort stations, water fountains, picnic areas, horseshoe pits, interactive educational stations and other amenities will also be added to the park by the city.

As noted in the DRI public workshop, visitors who reach the city via train, bus or car, have difficulty ascertaining various points of interest in the CBD or the existence of the 40-acre Riverside Park itself. Wayfinding signage to areas of interest is a top DRI priority. In the entire Activate Port Jervis area, branded wayfinding signs, streetscape improvements to the gateways and byways will be designed and installed. Cost: \$150,000

It is understood that DRI monies will be set aside for planning consultants hired by NYS: Cost \$300,000

Revenues generated would be used to 1) maintain Activate Port Jervis features, 2) be used to advance other city economic priorities, 3) build the city’s General Fund, and 4) offset future city property tax increases.

Table 1 Feature	Investment
Activate Port Jervis Planning	\$ 300,000
Pedestrian Bridge	\$ 3,900,000
Surface Parking	\$ 1,500,000
Amphitheatre with Splash Park	\$ 2,500,000
Pavilion with Ice Skating Rink	\$ 5,900,000
(2) Large Pavilions	\$ 70,000
(10) Small Pavilions	\$ 83,400
Playground with Little Town	\$ 75,000
Miniature Golf	\$ 230,000
Adventure Park with Ziplines	\$ 300,000
Wayfinding/Streetscape	\$ 150,000
<b>Total Estimated Investment</b>	<b>\$ 15,008,400</b>

## **8) Administrative Capacity**

Port Jervis Mayor Kelly B. Decker, with five-years in office will lead this project as supported by the nine-member Common Council, legal counsel William Bavoso with over 40-years in municipal law, seasoned city department heads including DPW Director John (Jack) Farr with over 33-years of experience, City Clerk-Treasurer Rob Waizengger with over 15- years with the city, Recreation Director John Faggione with over 23-years and by Valerie Maginsky, Executive Director of Port Jervis Community Development Agency (PJCDA), over the last five-years.

The PJCDA is the authorized sub-recipient already responsible for the administration of many of the City's grants. Established in 1981, the PJCDA is a public benefit corporation, responsible by definition and a yearly service contract with the City to administer the City's grants. Experienced in project management processes, the PJCDA coordinates activities with the mayor, Common Council, the City's corporation counsel, applicable department heads and consultants. In particular, the PJCDA coordinates activities with the City Clerk-Treasurer, chief financial officer and the DPW director.

Due to advanced streamlined measures and the hiring of staff, internally the PJCDA will have the capacity to assist with additional work that the DRI award will require. The City, at its discretion, may also hire additional staff to manage the multiple contracts that could result from this grant award. Quite simply, adjustments will be made, and priorities will be ordered accordingly.

As evidenced by the work already performed and already in the pipeline, the City's departments, staff and Common Council work together to address the City's needs while balancing the practical everyday realities every city faces. It is a shared belief among city servants and citizens, that the city can only move forward by making investments in its infrastructure, transportation structures and economic development. The steady continuity of City department heads and staff carry projects through multiple administrations. and the turnover of a number of Common Council member seats. This DRI application is the latest approved by the Common Council.

## **9) Other**

Port Jervis is a small city with big plans. The vast improvements accomplished over the last five years have been made possible through the public, private and not-for-profit sectors working together to leverage the tools available in the most cost effective manner possible. The city leans on the deep experience of its DPW professionals to perform cost effective in-kind work. The Port Jervis Outdoor Club contributed 14,000 hours of labor built over 40-miles of trails with hand tools. These trails are a regular draw throughout the region and a favorite of the West Point Military Academy Bike Club.

Living on two rivers at the westernmost portion of Orange County fifteen miles away from the next nearest city has taught the government and residents that an improved future is available to those who work for it. With the award of the 2019 Round Four Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the City of Port Jervis and its community residents, business owners, club members would move immediately into the implementation of the Activate Port Jervis – Waterfront 2 Downtown – The Catalyst project footing.

The City of Port Jervis is agile, ready, persistent, willing and able to carry out the plan as written. Becoming a four-season international tourist destination is the city's goal and with the proven tenacity of this motivated community it will obtain that goal.