



2019 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on May 31, 2019** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

In **New York City**, the Borough Presidents' offices will be the official applicants to the REDC and organizations interested in proposing an area for DRI funding should contact the respective Borough President's office as soon as possible. Based on these proposals, each Borough President's office will develop and submit no more than two formal applications for consideration by the New York City REDC. Applications to the offices of the Borough President must be received by email no later than **4:00 PM on May 10, 2019**. The subject heading on the email must be "Downtown Revitalization Round 4."

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Additional information is available in the 2019 DRI Guidebook, available at www.ny.gov/DRI.

Applicants in the **Mid-Hudson region** must limit their application to a total of 15 pages, and no attachments will be accepted. The map of the DRI Area requested in question number 1 must be part of the 15-page limit.

Applicants should make every effort to engage the community in the development of the application. Prior to submission, applicants must have held a minimum of one meeting or event to solicit public input on the community vision and potential projects and should demonstrate that any input received was considered in the final application.

BASIC INFORMATION

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

Municipality Name: Town of Ripley

Downtown Name: Known Hamlet of Ripley

County Name: Chautauqua

- Michael Rowe, Deputy Town Supervisor
- anmr@fairpoint.net ripleys@fairpoint.net

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Main Street will be renowned for its vibrant and dynamic small-town atmosphere. An inviting and traditional tree-lined street will encourage walking, biking, and neighborly interactions. There will be a unique blend of businesses to accommodate shopping and entertainment for both residents and visitors.

JUSTIFICATION

The downtown area selected for inclusion in the DRI program includes the area identified in our Ripley Main Street Plan plus residential areas one block south to the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. The goal is to implement the ideas developed in that plan and to address additional challenges to development in the Hamlet of Ripley. The area identified contains Ripley businesses, Post Office, Bank, Elementary School, and Public Library, and Churches. The area also includes numerous lovely residential homes plus many houses in dire need of basic maintenance or demolition. There are also properties owned by the Town of Ripley and vacant lots in need of development.

The Town has made many investments in the past few years. We have expanded our Water lines to Route Five (Lake Road) thus spurring lakeshore housing development. Additional water and sewer projects are on the board or under way. We have taken part in the development of the Northern Chautauqua LWRP and receive funding for the development of Ripley Beach Town Park under its auspices.

Chautauqua County has contracted with Clark, Patterson, and Lee to conduct a feasibility study for development of a Gateway Project for Shortman Road. The water and sewer services currently being installed from Stateline through Shortman Rd. (NYS Thruway Entrance) and connecting with the Town water and sewer service was certainly a catalyst for this County project. The water and sewer projects have also attracted Love's Travel Stops to acquire an option to buy 10 acres on Shortman Road and have presented their plan to construct a service facility on the site complete with a restaurant.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.

The boundaries of the project run along Main Street from Shaver St. to the east and to Loomis Street to the west. It includes side streets Shaver, South State, Goodrich, Maple and Loomis South to the south side of the railroad tracks.



dri map 2019.zip

2) Past investment, future investment potential. Recent investments in the DRI area include:

- Water and sewer investment at the Gateway Site connecting to the Hamlet will stimulate growth at the Thruway exit and encourage travelers to stop and travel in Chautauqua County.
- Prior expansion of water service to the Lake Road (NYS Route 5) has resulted in an increase in upscale housing development on the Lake.

- The town has invested in planning efforts with a just completed and adopted Main Street Revitalization Plan. WE have also been involved in the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP process that also includes projects in the Hamlet. Downtown plan can be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PcOuAZKLVwCg7zPIPM_VY8UoPQkF0NKv/view?usp=sharing
- The Town is planning a solar energy field (located in the proposed LWRP area on North State Street) to supply electricity to the Fire Department, Ripley Central School District, Ripley Town Library, Water and Sewer Department, Highway Department and the Town Hall.
- A Shared-services agreement with neighboring Townships allowed us to demolish a derelict building at the center of town and replace it with a new Town Park. Town staff and Board members were certified in asbestos abatement in order to make the project affordable.
- Tuitioning our Junior High and Senior High School to Chautauqua Lake Central School has saved tax payer money and made our community more attractive to families with children.
- We have received a \$240k grant from DOS for the development of our 14.5 acre Town Park on Lake Erie through LWRP funds.
- An additional water project has been approved and we are awaiting funding extend town water to additional homes on NYS Route 5. This project will enable the Town to interconnect with the Town of Westfield through an intermunicipal agreement. There are numerous lots awaiting development along East Lake Road.
- Private individuals are trying to develop properties in the project area. The owner of the old feed mill on South State Street wishes to open a brew pub in the historic building. The owner of the old Post Office on Main Street would like to develop it as a community arts center. Both owners are slowly building the projects out-of-pocket.
- The County is conducting a feasibility study for the development of a commercial Gateway Center at the NYS Thruway entrance to NYS.
- Love's Travel Shops has acquired an option to purchase 10 acres at the Shortman Road entrance to the NYS Thruway.

3) Recent or impending job growth.

The extension of Town water lines to the Lake Erie shore has led to the construction of many homes on the Lake. The families attracted to this area are more likely to be professionals than the average Ripley resident. Technology has allowed many of the new residents to live on the Lake while working for firms located elsewhere. Most of the families who have built in this area are from outside the County. This construction boom has reduced the tax load on the residents of the Hamlet.

Young families now are more likely to consider Ripley as our Junior High and Senior High School students now attend Chautauqua Lake High School. This has improved both the quantity and quality of options for our students and also improved the range of social interactions for our students. We have also retained our small elementary school which has also been a draw for young families.

The craft beverage industry has also had a positive impact on the economy of Ripley. These facilities also serve as event venues. It is our plan that an attractive and welcoming gateway to New York State will encourage travelers to exit the Thruway at the tolls and travel through the Chautauqua to experience all the Town and County have to offer.

Love's Travel Stops has just acquired an option to purchase a ten acre lot on Shortman Road to build a new full service truck Stop with a restaurant and gas station. They plan to employ 20 people per shift. This initiative addresses a concern facing the counties exploration of the development of a Gateway Center.

4) Attractiveness of physical environment.

Ripley is the Western Gateway to New York State. The fact that Thruway Tolls begin at this point is a small incentive for travelers to exit and explore at that point. We plan to provide more incentives. The more that through traffic can be encouraged the better it is for all Chautauqua County Businesses.

The Town of Ripley borders on Lake Erie to the North. Peek n Peek Ski Resort is located South of the Township. Vineyards dot the landscape. The Ripley Gorge has been included in the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP for future development.

In the Hamlet we have a former Convenience Store that is proposed to be developed as a venue for small shops. Interested investors include a Butcher shop, a local produce shop, a bakery shop, a veteran's crafting shop, and other craft and antique vendors. The surrounding communities have grocery stores with meat/produce/bakery departments, but no "boutique" shops providing these services exist are locally available.

Recent population trends have shown a larger than expected growth from residents who are newly retired. This is a result of former residents who have returned after completing careers elsewhere. These returning residents have provided a rich pool of volunteers for community activities. Young families are choosing Ripley because we have improved our educational opportunities through a contract with Chautauqua Lake Central School. Housing in the Hamlet remains affordable and upscale homes are being constructed on the Lake.

Wineries and Breweries, vineyards and hops abound. Travelers are often quite curious about the sudden appearance of acres of vineyards. There are three wineries within one mile of the Thruway exit. After visiting these businesses, travelers may continue on Route 20 to visit many more.

The historic Hamilton Mansion provides an upscale Air BNB in the Main Street Revitalization area.

The Main Street plan includes provisions to promote cycling along Route 20. The Plan will make downtown bikeable and walkable and surrounding areas are already heavily used by cyclists. Route Five is on the Seaway Trail that is known as the "Northern Tier" for cyclists traveling across the country in the summer.

The owner of the old post office building wants the building to be used as a community center and a venue for art and theater.

Ripley Beach Town Park is being revitalized with a \$240k grant through the CFA from the LWRP project.

5) Quality of Life policies.

A new Zoning map has been developed with assistance from the county planning department.

We have developed a Main Street Revitalization Plan and we are participating in the Northern Chautauqua LWRP process that also includes Main Street and the South State Street corridor.

We are in the process of installing a solar energy field that will serve all taxing entities in the Town of Ripley. These include the Public Library, Ripley Central School, The Town of Ripley, and the Fire Department.

The members of the Main Street Revitalization Steering Committee will form the core of a volunteer downtown management structure.

The Ripley Town Board makes a priority of remaining current in all non-discrimination and age friendly policies.

The Town has adopted a Complete Streets policy.

6) Public support.

The Town of Ripley has just completed a Main Street Revitalization Plan funded through the CFA.

The Main Street Plan Steering committee remains active and is anxious to put plans into action. The Town Board has endorsed this application. A description of this proposal was presented and discussed at the May 9, 2019 Board Meeting.

The Town of Ripley will be the Lead Agency for this project and the Deputy Town Supervisor, Michael Rowe, will be the contact person.

The Town Supervisor and the Deputy Supervisor remain involved in the development of the Northern Chautauqua County LWRP planning process.

The Ripley Town Supervisor is chairman of the Chautauqua County Planning Board.

7) Transformative opportunities.

Pictures of the properties in the designated area are included in a powerpoint file attached to this application. The file shows buildings in need of improvements and also buildings that are quite impressive. Often the most beautiful homes are adjacent to homes in distress.

The aging sewer line along Main Street is in dire need of replacement. Photos of the inside of this line indicate that it is being held together by the clay in which it lies. This line will be fed by the new Stateline/Shortman Road/Route 5 sewer line for which the Town has already received funding. We have unsuccessfully requested funding through CDBG the past two years for Main Street sewer replacement and will again apply this year, it is essential that this line be replaced.

The Old Historic Feed Mill is owned privately by an individual with plans to develop it as a Brew Pub. A new roof, siding and windows have been installed. Architectural plans and funding assistance would help this project move forward.

The old Post Office is privately owned. The owner would like to use the completed project as a community center for use as a theater and arts venue as well as public meeting space. As with the Feed Mill, surface work has been completed but assistance with architectural plans and funding is necessary for progress.

The Ripley Public Library has received a construction grant for internal redesign. Funding of \$217,500 has been approved for Phase One of a Three phase project estimated at \$750K. The Town proposes to seek funding for external repairs to the building.

The Town owns the remains of the Odd Fellows Hall. This building has one of the few remaining traditional downtown facades in the Hamlet. We proposed maintaining the front and demolishing the rest of the building and replacing it with a commercial space on the first floor and three Residential apartments on the second floor.

Next door to the Odd Fellows Hall is the Hardware Store. This building could also use some upgrades. The hammered tin siding needs to be replaced in order to maintain the original look of the building and to improve on its deteriorating appearance. The current owner has put the building up for sale recently.

Meeder's Restaurant is Ripley's best known business, renowned for its pies. It is the hub of community activity. The business needs improved parking facilities. When NYS Route 20 was closed on East Main Street for construction two years ago, the restaurant lost considerable business during their usually profitable summer. This has affected the maintenance schedule for the building, as well.

The Main Street Plan laid out suggestions and standards for designing a streetscape for the business section of the Hamlet. We would like to implement this plan as proposed. The Streetscape is outlined in the Plan identified above.

The Town has recently suffered a sewer line collapse on Shaver Street under the Norfolk Southern Railway. Due to the location of the break, the cost of repair is estimated at \$265K instead of \$200K. We have sought and are continuing to seek funding for this repair and have secured an interest free bridge loan for \$265K to allow us to repair the line while seeking out funding.

The Town owns a property at 135 West Main Street. This property has long been an eyesore and a nuisance for the West Main Street residents. The current occupants will be evicted on July 15. The property will require a massive amount of cleanup and will likely require demolition before the land can be reused.

Many homes in the designated area are slowly deteriorating. They need new roofs, windows, and other repairs so numerous that the cost of repairs would far exceed the value of the home. Some were owned by elderly residents, some have gone up for tax auction and bought unseen by investors, some are owned by a bank. Once a property reaches this state, we have seen that, in a matter of a few years, the house must be condemned. We would like to bring these homes up to livable and presentable condition, find buyers and improve the quality of the entire Hamlet. Photos of these properties are included in the powerpoint along with some of their neighboring homes that are well maintained.

8) Administrative Capacity.

Despite being a very small low-income community with a part time Town Board and Town Supervisor, we have been successful in acquiring and administering grants for Water and Sewer Projects, LWPR projects, and planning projects. The town residents are quick to volunteer for planning and for actual hands on labor. Even though we are succeeding in these efforts the engineering and planning support NYS has built into this project would be welcome.

9) Other.

The size and socio-economic status of our community makes it difficult to raise the cash match necessary to support many of the generous grants available through the CFA. Our budget is not flexible enough and emergencies like the sewer line collapse under the Norfolk Southern Railway are back breakers for the Town.

An investment of this size in the Town of Ripley would truly be transformative. Its location at the western entrance to NYS would provide a boost to Chautauqua County and all of WNY's tourist economy. Once families have been encouraged to exit the Thruway they will be enchanted by the beauty of our vineyards and beaches, wineries and the cultural offerings of Chautauqua.

SUBMISSION

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates

- Long Island LIREDC@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Nassau, Suffolk

- Mid-Hudson NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester

- Mohawk Valley NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

- North Country NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence

- Southern Tier NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins

- Western New York NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov

Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.

- Bronx: James Rausse at JRausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov
- Brooklyn: Josh Levin at JoshuaLevin@brooklynbp.nyc.gov
- Manhattan: Elka Morety at EMorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
- Queens: Shurn Anderson at SAnderson@queensbp.org
- Staten Island: Lashay S. Young at LYoung@statenilandusa.com

