



Schenectady Strategic Investment Plan

CAPITAL REGION REDC
NEW YORK STATE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE



December 2020

City of Schenectady Downtown Revitalization Initiative

December 2020

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This document was developed by the Schenectady Local Planning Committee as part of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and was supported by the NYS Department of State and NYS Homes and Community Renewal. The document was prepared by the following Consulting Team:



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Foreword

Downtowns define our cities and regions. With their energy and diversity as well as their artistic, cultural and historical assets, vibrant downtowns serve as anchors and catalysts for local and regional growth. These enduring qualities attract businesses, jobs, residents and visitors, and provide the critical infrastructure and diverse tax base necessary for broader and more inclusive growth.

Despite their tremendous value to our society and economy, downtowns suffered decades of disinvestment, economic decline and community malaise with the advent of sprawl and de-industrialization. But people and businesses once again recognize and appreciate what downtowns have to offer. And with that, downtowns are beginning to revamp and re-invent themselves, in many cases using their proud heritage not as a whimsical look backward to a bygone era, but as a catalyst for a brighter future. Yes, downtowns and cities are on the comeback trail, but obstacles remain and the DRI serves as that critical launch pad.

Recognizing both the potential and the challenges of our urban centers, Governor Andrew Cuomo launched a major new initiative in 2016 — the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Through the DRI, the Governor moved to aggressively accelerate and expand the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood centers to serve as centers of activity and catalysts for investment in all ten regions of the state. The DRI represents an unprecedented and innovative plan-to-act strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation.

In the first four years of the DRI, the State has committed \$400 million to invest in downtowns that are ripe for revitalization and have the potential to become magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, greater economic and housing diversity, and opportunity. Each year, the Regional Economic Development Councils select ten downtowns to receive \$10 million each to refine a vision and strategy for revitalization and to implement projects that show the greatest potential to improve the economic and social vitality of their downtown areas. The projects realized through DRI grant funds in turn catalyze multifold additional investments and projects, which creates the momentum and progress necessary to sustain a long-term successful revitalization effort. The excitement and community pride generated by the DRI are clear and palpable.

The ten communities selected in round four of the DRI are confronting a serious challenge—the COVID-19 pandemic. But in uncertain times, one thing is certain —cities are resilient; they adapt

DRI Round Four Communities

- Western New York: **Niagara Falls**
- Finger Lakes: **Seneca Falls**
- Central New York: **Fulton**
- Southern Tier: **Hornell**
- Mohawk Valley: **Utica**
- North Country: **Potsdam**
- Capital Region: **Schenectady**
- Mid-Hudson: **Peekskill**
- New York City: **Staten Island**
- Long Island: **Baldwin, Town of Hempstead**

to change, even in a crisis like this. And the DRI is proving to be resilient and adaptable, too.

In the face of COVID-19, round four DRI communities have effectively pivoted to examine the immediate impacts of the pandemic and expand their downtown strategic investment plans to respond to this new challenge through the recommendation of projects that will support recovery and resiliency, especially for the small businesses that represent the heart of our downtowns. The ten round four communities demonstrated a true commitment to realizing their community visions for vibrant and robust downtowns, even in the midst of NY PAUSE. Indeed, each of the ten communities pursued innovative strategies to engage local stakeholders and successfully identify viable and impactful revitalization projects in safe and effective ways.

The DRI process involves a combination of community-based strategic planning, inter-agency project support and leveraging of outside investments. The process starts with a community-based Strategic Investment Plan that sets the path for successful downtown revitalization—a clear vision for the downtown; goals and strategies to accomplish the vision; and catalytic projects identified in the plan.

The strategic planning process is led by Secretary of State Rossana Rosado and facilitated by staff from the Department of State's Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure, with the assistance of NYS Homes and Community Renewal and Empire State Development. This collaborative multi-agency effort mobilizes the expertise, technical assistance and project management skills of State agencies alongside those of a team of consultants to support a Local Planning Committee (LPC) in each DRI to develop a community-based vision, goals and strategies for downtown revitalization.

Central to the Strategic Investment Plans are the slate of viable,

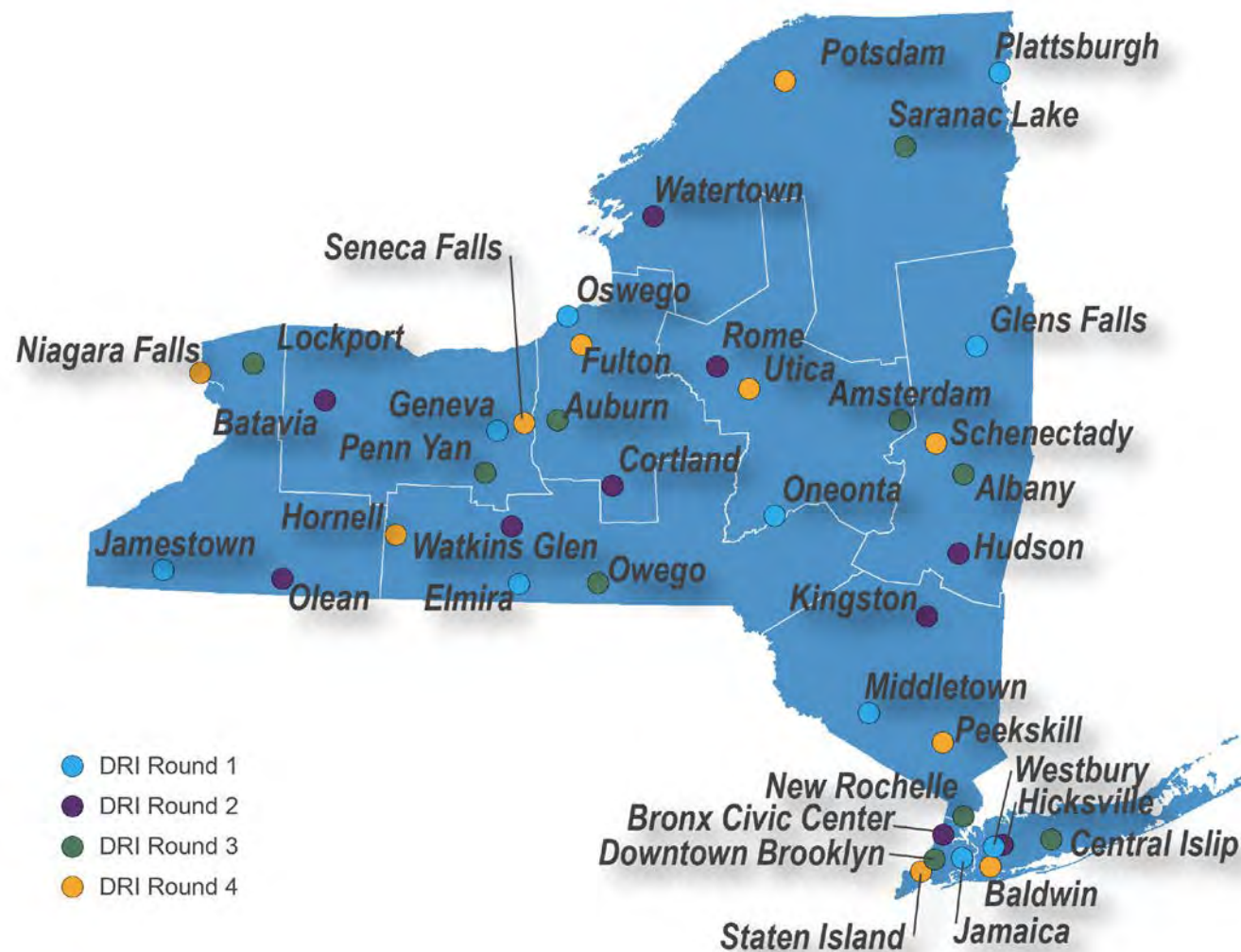
transformative and catalytic projects identified by each LPC that will help realize the community's vision for revitalization of its downtown. Of the projects included in the plans, those that are ready to go and show the greatest potential to contribute to revitalization, especially when knitted together with other projects, are awarded DRI funding.

The DRI is much more than a one-off \$10 million grant. Firstly, the projects are not selected in a vacuum, rather, they are synergistic and catalytic—that is, they work in concert to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Secondly, the positive momentum created by the DRI generates exponential effects that leverage additional public and private investments that, in turn, create a self-perpetuating cycle of revitalization.

We often hear the phrase “live, work and play” to describe city life, but we need to move beyond that limited characterization. Downtowns are so much more than that; they are a place to connect, eat, shop, drink, learn, absorb, innovate, observe and interact—they serve as a spark to human inventiveness and social entrepreneurship. Downtowns also offer public gathering spaces that allow people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds to interact safely and comfortably to appreciate the diversity of city life.

There is no cookie-cutter formula for our urban centers. Each one is unique—a different vibe, heritage, culture; a whole different story to tell if we listen carefully enough. And we do just that - the DRI treats and respects each downtown as its own special place—which is the hallmark of what we call “placemaking.”

The DRI has launched a renaissance in downtown redevelopment. With bottom-up leadership and top-down assistance from the State, deep participation from within the community and collaborative partnerships with public and private investors, the DRI is truly paying dividends by not just transforming the existing community, but also by creating new and yet-to-be-discovered opportunities for generations to come.



The 40 cities awarded funding through four rounds of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.



Photo Credit: Mitch Ramsey

Executive Summary

Introduction

Schenectady was historically known as “the city that lights and hauls the world” due to the presence of industrial giants General Electric and the American Locomotive Company (Alco) that employed thousands of local residents. Alco closed its plant in 1969 and GE slowly reduced its local workforce. By the early 2000’s, Schenectady faced an economic crisis. Local leaders and investors refused to let the city’s past dictate its future however. They were determined to revitalize the downtown area and undertook an ambitious, multifaceted series of improvements to foster new hubs of activity.

Today downtown Schenectady is a gem of the Capital Region. In the 15 years since the economic crisis of the early 2000’s, the historic Proctors Theatre cemented its status as a premier regional attraction, anchoring an entire downtown block. Mohawk Harbor is a recently developed riverfront mixed-use destination which includes the region’s first casino and an active marina. Businesses have grown downtown and visitors flock to major events like SummerNight, Harbor Jam, or Jammin’ on Jay. A CDTA bus hub downtown provides convenient connections throughout the city, a reconstructed Amtrak station offers train service to the region, and the popular Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail brings bicyclists and other users into downtown. Schenectady also benefits from a rich history and distinctive culture supported by a strong arts scene, natural beauty, numerous landmarks, and a proud tight-knit community.

These successes and assets were recognized when Schenectady was selected for the DRI Round 4 award by the Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council. The City is receiving \$9.7 million in State funding to implement transformative public improvement, private development, and wayfinding projects within the 400-acre DRI area that will further realize its vision of excellence. This funding is even more critical now to counter the impacts of COVID-19.

The DRI area encompasses downtown’s many attractions and landmarks including the dynamic Proctors Block, emerging Mill Artisan District, and successful Mohawk Harbor. DRI funding will support projects that will better connect these attractions, add new spaces for housing and businesses, and weave the DRI area together with public art. Together, these projects will further strengthen downtown, continue its momentum, and keep Schenectady moving forward post-pandemic.

The State’s investment will leverage almost \$50 million in additional private or other funding that will further catalyze downtown growth. The 16 projects recommended for DRI funding could add more than 125 new housing units and approximately 200 jobs downtown, while strengthening connections through the area and continuing its transformation into an accessible and vibrant urban center.



Opportunities and Challenges

Like many Upstate New York downtowns, Schenectady includes a mix of opportunities and challenges described below. The Strategic Investment Plan is tailored to capitalize on the City's many opportunities, respond to its challenges, and build on the momentum evident in downtown. It provides a transformative approach that can further stabilize and grow the success of recent investments.

Opportunities

- **History of transformative investment.** Schenectady has made significant downtown improvements over the past 15 years, facilitated by successful partnerships that continue today.
- **Vibrant arts and entertainment scene.** More than 800,000 people a year visit downtown Schenectady, supporting a variety of events and spending money at local businesses.
- **Prominent regional and local destinations.** Schenectady is perhaps most known regionally for the Proctors Block, and the casino and resort at Mohawk Harbor has emerged as a new destination. Local attractions such as the dining scene in Little Italy and the recently completed Mill Artisan District are additional anchors of activity to build from.
- **Regional multi-use trail system.** The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail brings bicyclists and families into the heart of downtown and supports an active lifestyle.
- **Riverfront access.** The marina at Mohawk Harbor is one of the largest in the area and offers kayak rentals to the public. The adjacent publicly accessible space includes an amphitheater that hosts popular events and performances.
- **Strong housing demand.** More than 450 housing units have opened in the DRI area in the past five years, mostly apartments in new or renovated buildings, and there is demonstrated demand for more than 160 new units per year in the DRI area over the next five years.
- **Distinct historic character.** The city benefits from a long history and many intact historic resources including the Stockade Historic District, one of the country's oldest residential neighborhoods.

Challenges

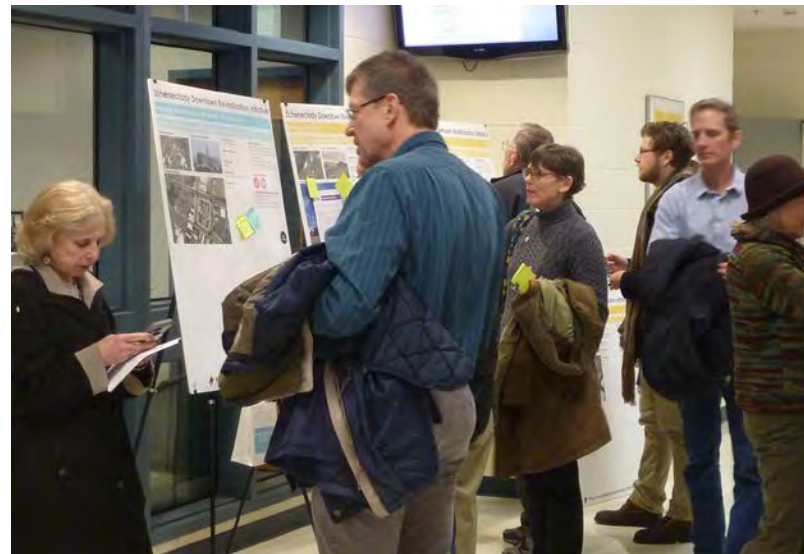
- **Mitigating COVID-19 impacts and regaining momentum.** There was undeniable momentum in downtown prior to COVID-19, but local businesses were hit hard by closures due to public health conditions. Once the crisis has passed, assistance will be needed to reopen businesses, restart stalled projects, and safely invite people back downtown.
- **Challenging non-vehicular routes between destinations.** Attractions like the Proctors Block, Little Italy, and Mohawk Harbor are relatively isolated from one another due to a lack of convenient, attractive walking and bicycling routes.
- **Limited wayfinding.** While some wayfinding exists, more is needed to direct visitors from one attraction to another. An expanded and updated wayfinding system is needed to benefit new businesses and direct trail users downtown.
- **Few public gathering spaces.** The DRI area only has three main public spaces and limited public amenities for shared use. There is a need for a greater variety of public spaces in more locations to help enliven downtown.
- **Retail market gaps.** Neighborhood goods and services like convenience stores, dry cleaners, laundromats, and drug stores are hard to find downtown today.
- **Need for greater economic diversity.** Creating ladders of opportunity for residents, with more jobs at different skill and wage levels, will be important to the long-term success of downtown.

Community Engagement

The community played a key role in the DRI plan development, building on prior engagement that contributed to the City's successful DRI application. Hundreds of people participated in three public meetings to provide their input on the proposed vision, goals, strategies, and potential DRI projects. The project website (<https://schenectadymetroplex.com/>) provided updates throughout the process and attracted more than 4,000 visits and 8,000 page views. Key stakeholders were interviewed early in the process to gain a better understanding of local conditions, opportunities, and needs. This collective input shaped the plan development from the early stages through to the end.

A Local Planning Committee (LPC) was established with diverse representation from community leaders and business owners. LPC members provided thoughtful insight throughout the process, helping to refine the vision, goals, and strategies that guide this effort and offering valuable perspectives that helped shape the slate of projects recommended for DRI funding.

The vision for the Schenectady DRI area was developed by the LPC based on significant public input from the first community meeting. It was shared back to the public at the second community meeting to confirm their support. After a pause in the planning process due to COVID-19, the vision was slightly modified to reflect the latest conditions. Four goals and a series of strategies support the vision statement.



The community played an important role in the planning process.

DRI Vision, Goals, and Strategies

The City of Schenectady—a center for culture, education, commerce, and recreation—is entering the next chapter of our ongoing comeback story. We remain committed in our efforts to rebuild, diversify, and grow our job base; increase a full range of quality housing options; celebrate and preserve our historic resources; and make the Mohawk River fully accessible to all. Our DRI will further brighten our City, enable an inclusive recovery, and connect our increasingly rebounding downtown with our new waterfront to create a dynamic and active destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



Goal 1: Create a vibrant urban center and attractive public realm that welcomes residents, workers, and visitors alike

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support retail that increase access to healthy food
- Attract businesses that reflect the local creative economy
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Increase the number of taggable and shareable social media moments through public art and events
- “Light up” public spaces to create dynamic evening settings



Goal 3: Diversify our economy, grow our job base, increase retail choices

- Create new workforce training and diverse job opportunities
- Build on current local growth sectors (arts, entertainment, software, technology)
- Connect local workforce to new employers
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth



Goal 2: Improve all modes of connectivity between Downtown, Mohawk Harbor, Lower State, the Riverfront, and the surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity (Jay Connector, Alco Tunnel)
- Extend and connect multi-use trail system
- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors including historic facades and underpasses
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas



Goal 4: Build on and celebrate our historic and cultural richness

- Support and advertise existing institutions including the numerous colleges in the area
- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance our historic character
- Promote and program a local—and diverse—array of creative initiatives
- Provide necessary infrastructure to support existing and new public events
- Celebrate, integrate, and communicate Schenectady's historic elements to visitors and residents
- Reinforce our “Electric City” through locally created art and light installations

Recommended Projects

During this process, the LPC and public participants considered potential projects from the DRI application and the open call for projects. Members of the LPC and public evaluated project alignment with overall vision and goals, project readiness, and catalytic potential for the DRI area. The LPC ultimately approved a slate of 16 projects recommended for DRI funding consideration, totaling more than \$13 million in DRI funding requests. From this list, New York State will select projects totaling \$9.7 million in DRI funding awards.

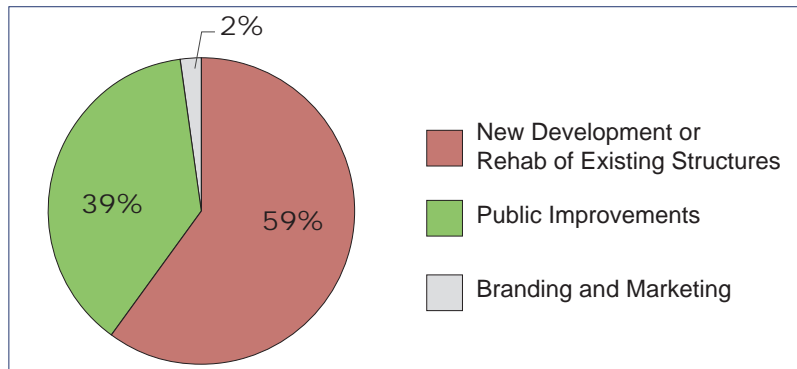
Four additional projects are also included in this plan but are not recommended for DRI funding because further development is needed before they are implementation-ready. These projects have potential for more than \$72 million in additional investment in the DRI area.

Project Mix and Leverage

The recommended projects are categorized as one of three types: public improvements (including art), new development or rehabilitation of existing structures, and branding and marketing. New development and rehabilitation projects comprise the majority of the DRI funding request and leverage the most additional investment. Public improvement projects account for 40% of the overall funding request. Nine project sponsors are public entities and seven are private or non-profit sponsors.

The projects recommended for DRI funding represent a total investment of more than \$61 million in downtown Schenectady. These projects could leverage an additional \$3.50 for each \$1.00 of DRI funding, demonstrating exactly the impact that the DRI program seeks to achieve.

Overall DRI Request By Project Type



Project Mix

	Total Project Cost	DRI Request
Public Improvements	\$7,358,000	\$5,185,500
New Development or Rehab of Existing Structures	\$53,581,650	\$7,893,000
Branding and Marketing	\$500,000	\$250,000
TOTAL	\$61,439,650	\$13,328,500

Note: New York State will select from the list of recommended projects a total of \$9.7 million in DRI funding for project implementation.

Projects Recommended for DRI Funding

Project	Description	DRI Request	Total Project Cost
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center			
Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets	Redevelopment of three underused blocks into housing, retail, and medical office	\$2,750,000	\$38,673,000
Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors	Fund to improve building facades on Lower State, in Little Italy, and along Lafayette Street	\$750,000	\$1,050,000
Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors	LED street lighting along North Broadway and Clinton Street, canopy-style lighting in Little Italy	\$875,000	\$875,000
Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street	Infill construction to build five-story building with 17 housing units and provide parking for public and State Street tenants	\$3,000,000	\$8,250,000
Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire	LED installation to illuminate church spire with color-changing light as visual landmark	\$78,000	\$108,000
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity			
Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway	Trail extension between State Street and Front/River Streets, and wayfinding and tourist information at gateway to Empire Trail	\$760,000	\$760,000
Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail	Sidewalk, lighting, and signage upgrades to connect Jay Street and Erie Boulevard via existing tunnel	\$350,000	\$350,000
Extend North Jay Street and Improve Maxon Road	Extension of Jay Street to Nott Street and Maxon Road improvements to complete new connection between Mohawk Harbor and downtown	\$2,000,000	\$4,147,000
Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation	Two-way conversion in front of City Hall for enhanced connectivity and public space opportunity	\$425,000	\$425,000
Improve Signage and Wayfinding	Expand signage and wayfinding throughout DRI area to direct residents and visitors	\$250,000	\$500,000
Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty Streets	Pedestrian improvements to beautify and light alleyway between Lower State Street redevelopment and Liberty Street	\$238,500	\$238,500
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice			
Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space	Renovation of vacant building in central location into new retail and office space	\$425,000	\$2,400,000
Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway	Further enhancements to this prime pedestrian retail corridor	\$250,000	\$250,000
Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center	Exterior and interior improvements to complete building renovation for workforce training programs	\$590,000	\$1,690,000
Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground	Adaptive reuse of historic buildings into art studios, gallery, event space, and maker spaces	\$300,000	\$1,410,650
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness			
Install Public Art Throughout Downtown	Installation of eight public art pieces in key locations	\$287,500	\$312,500



Projects are recommended for funding that reinforce one another. In this rendering, public improvements to street lighting complement private investment in new downtown housing.

Management Plan Summary

The City of Schenectady has designated Metroplex as the lead administrator for this initiative and will work closely with them, as well as with private developers, investors, local businesses, and other stakeholders. Metroplex has been significantly involved throughout the DRI process beginning with the application, and its leading role will be extended through to the implementation phase. The City of Schenectady and Metroplex will be supported through this process by the following groups:

- Office of the Mayor
- The City of Schenectady Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Historic District Commissions
- City of Schenectady Departments of: Engineering, Development, and Finance
- Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation
- Discover Schenectady

Nine project sponsors are public entities and seven are private or non-profit sponsors. Private and non-profit entities leading recommended DRI initiatives are:

- Redburn Development Partners
- Highbridge Prime Development, Inc.
- First United Methodist Church (FUMC)
- L & S Realty
- The Social Enterprise and Training (SEAT) Center
- Urban Initiatives Group LLC
- Albany Barn, Inc.

Project Sponsors

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Sponsor Type
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center		
Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets	Redburn Development Partners, LLC	Private
Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors	Metroplex	Public
Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors	City of Schenectady	Public
Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street	Highbridge Prime Development Inc.	Private
Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire	First United Methodist Church	Non-Profit
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity		
Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway	City of Schenectady and Metroplex	Public
Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail	Metroplex	Public
Extend North Jay Street and Improve Max-on Road	City of Schenectady	Public
Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation	City of Schenectady	Public
Improve Signage and Wayfinding	City of Schenectady	Public
Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty Streets	City of Schenectady	Public
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice		
Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space	L & S Realty	Private
Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway	Metroplex	Public
Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center	SEAT Center	Non-profit
Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground	Urban Initiatives Group LLC	Private
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness		
Install Public Art Throughout Downtown	Albany Barn, Inc.	Non-profit



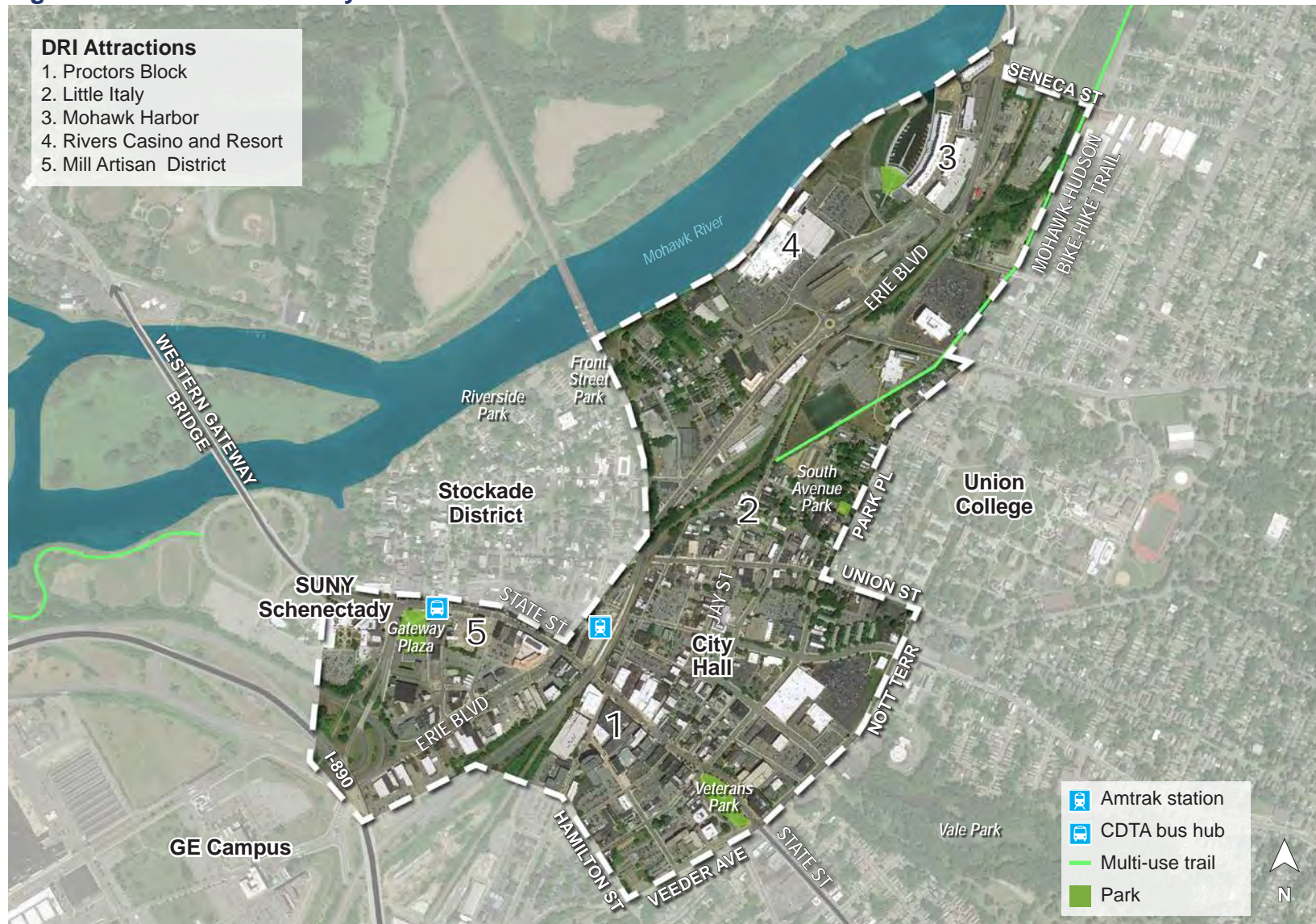
I. Downtown Profile and Assessment

Overview

Schenectady is no stranger to change and innovation. The city has been resilient in the face of adversity, allowing it to bloom into the vibrant place it is becoming today. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges but local leaders, residents, and other stakeholders are already responding and planning for the future. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) offers a unique opportunity to accelerate the growth already happening in Schenectady, leveraging community assets and better connecting existing destinations.

The DRI area is home to Proctors Theatre, a regional performing arts destination that attracts more than 650,000 patrons annually. The Jay Street Mall, a charming pedestrian alley lined with cafes and shops, is a destination for residents and visitors alike. The recently opened Mohawk Harbor offers a new riverfront destination just north of downtown, providing a dynamic mix of entertainment, dining, recreation, housing, and office space. These and other assets combine to form an attractive downtown that will benefit from the investment in DRI projects.

Figure 1: DRI Area Boundary and Local Context



Note: Boundary lines include both sides of the street.

DRI Area

Schenectady's DRI area encompasses approximately 400 acres downtown, as shown in Figure 1. It stretches along State Street from SUNY Schenectady east to Veterans Park, and along Erie Boulevard from the Mohawk River south to I-890. CDTA bus service, Amtrak, and the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway connect the DRI area to the region.

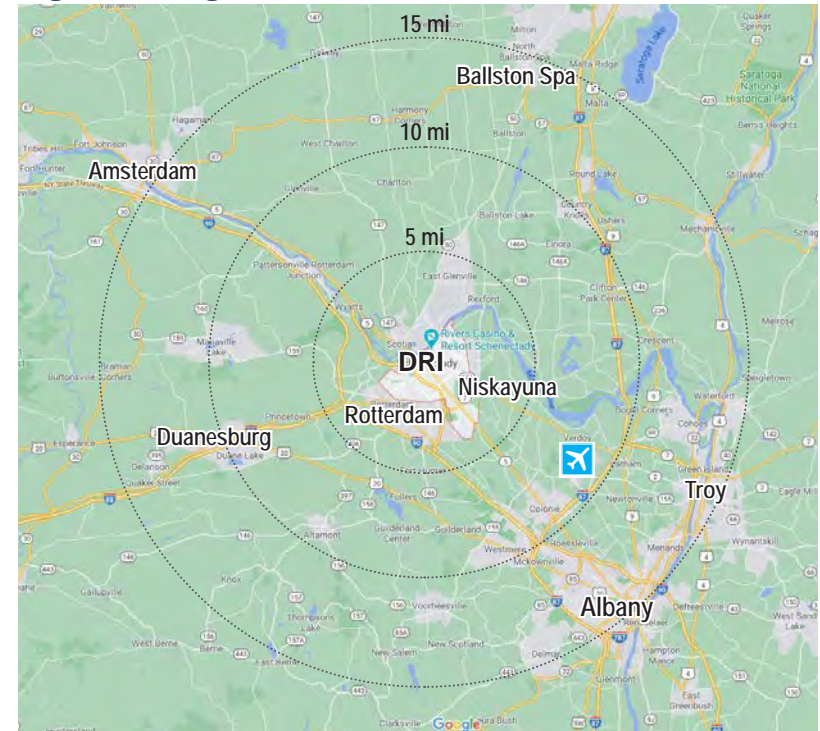
It contains several notable regional destinations that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors downtown annually. The **Proctors Theatre** on State Street is a major anchor in the heart of downtown Schenectady. This performing arts venue is a cultural and educational hub for the region, attracting more than 650,000 patrons annually. It has expanded over the years while also spurring development of nearby hotels, recreation facilities, higher education buildings, and office space. **Little Italy** is a charming collection of restaurants and shops that evoke Schenectady's Italian heritage and is a regional dining destination. **Mohawk Harbor** is a transformative 60-acre brownfield redevelopment just north of downtown, offering a dynamic mixed-use destination along the Mohawk River. It includes the popular **Rivers Casino and Resort**, 200 new apartments and condominiums, restaurants, office space, and hotels, as well as a waterfront amphitheater and new bike trails. The **Mill Artisan District** is an emerging area along Lower State that will extend the energy of the Proctors Block west of Erie Boulevard. This \$30 million redevelopment project will feature new apartments, retail, and commercial space with an emphasis on craft businesses, complete with a brewery, bakery, software company, and other businesses.

Erie Boulevard is an important corridor for the DRI area, connecting downtown and State Street north to Mohawk Harbor while also providing access to I-890 to the south. It was recently reconstructed with new street lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping to make it more visually appealing and safer for pedestrians, although more work is needed to make this an attractive walkable corridor.

Regional Context

The City of Schenectady is a cultural and entertainment hub within the Capital Region. It is also the seat of Schenectady County, which also includes the towns of Duanesburg, Glenville, Niskayuna, Princetown, and Rotterdam. It is a 30-minute drive to the state capital, Albany, which is also accessible via regional express bus. Amtrak provides daily train service to New York City, Montreal, Buffalo, and other destinations across Upstate New York and beyond. The Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway is a popular multi-use trail from Rotterdam Junction through Schenectady to the Corning Preserve in Albany.

Figure 2: Regional Context



The Schenectady DRI area play an important role in the Capital Region.

Recent Planning Efforts

This Strategic Investment Plan complements and advances the goals of several previous planning efforts described below. The City's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2008, is a foundational document that guides investment throughout Schenectady. The 2017 Bike Infrastructure Master Plan outlines a series of recommended improvements to enhance multimodal transportation and connectivity. Earlier plans, such as one to redevelop Gateway Plaza, demonstrate the city's ability to implement.

Citywide Plan: Comprehensive Plan 2020 (2008)

A two-year public engagement process informed the Citywide Plan completed in 2008. It adopts ten Smart Growth principles to direct the City's planning and implementation, guided by a clear vision statement and four vision elements that shape the goals. The plan seeks to capitalize on the city's assets and build momentum to transform Schenectady into a more appealing destination for all to learn, work, live, and play.

The vision elements organize the action plan into four distinct areas. Goals relevant to the DRI area include:

Quality City Services Efficiently Delivered

- Ensure that excellent transportation amenities are accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and public transit users
- Enjoy a stable tax base with expanded contributions from commercial and industrial sectors
- Protect and promote historic resources

Great Homes in Safe and Stable Neighborhoods

- Encourage downtown housing development
- Promote a sustainable jobs/housing balance and ensure adequate workforce housing for employees of newly recruited companies

Beautiful, Clean, and Green Community

- Employ best practices and creative land use tools to shape development, improve design and aesthetics, preserve historic resources and enhance urban character
- Develop and maintain excellent park and recreation resources, and become a model "healthy community"
- Promote beautification program and efforts city-wide

Quality Workforce and Growing Businesses

- Create work and wealth for local residents by recruiting compatible new companies, supporting business expansion, and creating a thriving retail center

Since its completion, numerous high-profile recommendations in the plan have been accomplished downtown. These include redevelopment of the Alco site into Mohawk Harbor, reconstruction of the Amtrak station, completion of mixed-use and market-rate apartment projects throughout downtown, reconstruction of Erie Boulevard, and creation of other downtown amenities.

City of Schenectady Bike Infrastructure Master Plan (2017)

This three-phase master plan adopted by the City will improve and expand bicycle infrastructure to increase connectivity and empower cyclists of all skill levels. Its recommendations identify a growing network of shared lane markings, bike lanes, and neighborhood greenways. It also recommends an increase in bike route signage and the installation of wayfinding kiosks to direct cyclists and pedestrians to local destinations.

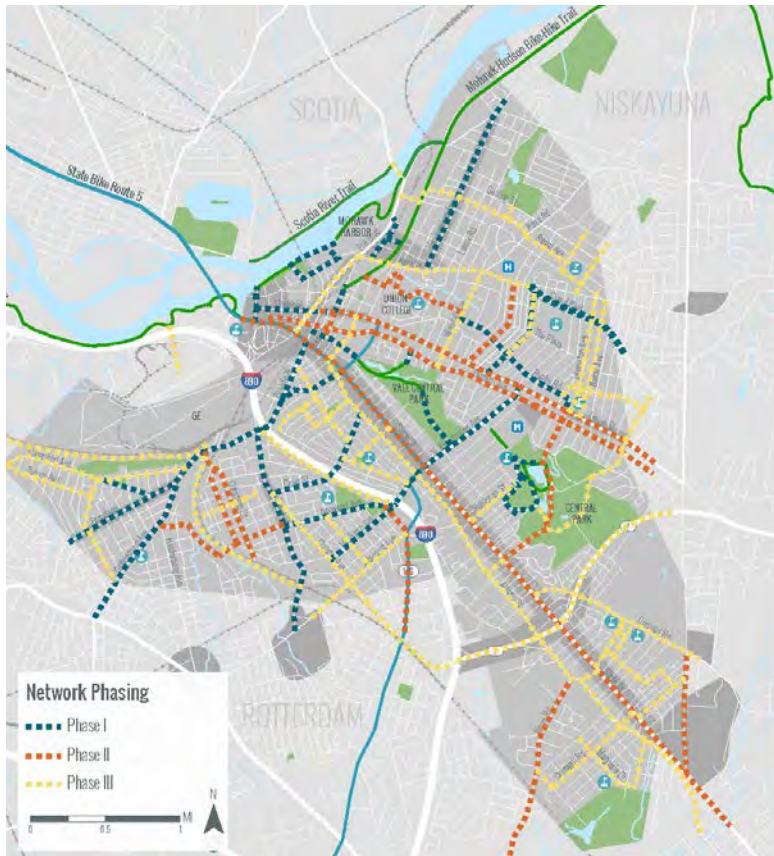
Recommended Phase 1 Improvements in the DRI Area:

- Jay Street neighborhood greenway: Union Street north to Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail.
- Vale Park Connector: Franklin Street from Broadway to Nott Terrace, with contra-flow lane from Broadway to Jay.

- Union Street: shared lane markings to identify on-street link between current ends of Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail.

Recommended Phase 2 Improvements in the DRI Area:

- State Street: shared lane markings, intersection treatments, and signage.
- Jay Street neighborhood greenway: extend Phase 1 project from Union Street to Franklin Street
- Union and Liberty: westbound bike lane on Union and eastbound buffered bike lane on Liberty



Network Phasing Plan, Bike Infrastructure Master Plan

Recommended Phase 3 Improvements in the DRI Area:

- Erie Boulevard: buffered two-way cycle track from State Street to Nott Street
- Lafayette Street neighborhood greenway: connecting State Street to Vale Park Connector/Franklin Street
- Nott Street: bike lane in eastbound/uphill direction

HUD Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Action Plan (2017)

This two-year action plan addresses the city's current needs in six main areas:

- Increase Economic Activity
- Expand Employment Opportunities
- Raise Educational Achievement
- Promote Health, Wellness, and Public Safety
- Expand Housing Opportunities
- Enhance Community, Cultural, and Recreational Opportunities

These goals are expanded upon with 24 additional sub-goals and activities split over the two-year duration of this plan.

City of Schenectady's Five-year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan (2015)

This plan details the budget allocation for projects addressing key community needs. As of 2020, the proposed budget of \$2,915,000 is allocated to projects in economic development, emergency solutions, housing assistance, public service and works, and administration. Each project is outlined by the organization and funding source and has the potential to further improve Schenectady.

Gateway Plaza Implementation Study (2012)

This plan focused on what was an underutilized park with the potential to be transformed into something more dynamic and resilient. This site was susceptible to flooding but could serve as a connector and social hub due to its location. The study identified several goals for the plaza's redevelopment:

- Function as a landmark
- Celebrate Schenectady heritage
- Reduce traffic speeds from I-890
- Create safe linkages between Schenectady Community College, Downtown Schenectady, and the Historic Stockade District
- Create and foster a strong relationship between surrounding institutions
- Provide a safe environment for multi-modal transit as well as pedestrians
- Provide opportunities for mixed-used development
- Allow for flexible use
- Design the space to mitigate flooding

Gateway Plaza has since been redeveloped and expanded, successfully responding to many of these goals. The plaza provides a safe and accessible hub for socialization and transit needs while a new park provides community green space and flood hazard mitigation.

Mohawk River Waterfront Revitalization Plan (2010)

This plan addresses riverfront development in five municipalities within the region: Glenville, Niskayuna, Rotterdam, Schenectady, and Scotia. The goal of the plan is to balance four key values:

- Encouraging economic growth and development
- Stewarding water resource quality and overall community life
- Improving public access to and enjoyment of recreation, cultural, and historic resources
- Participating in regional coordination in order to effectively develop Schenectady's water resources.

Mohawk River Blueway Trail Plan (2008)

Established by towns and cities within Schenectady County, this plan aims to develop an 18-mile recreational water trail. The trail unites many areas along the bike trail from Rotterdam to Glenville, including the DRI area. The project brings attention to the river, points of interest along it, and highlighted future projects. The document also details many complimentary projects/ studies to respond to issues and opportunities within the area.



Source: <https://www.shadyharbormarina.com/mohawk-harbor-marina>

Access to the Mohawk River is provided at the Mohawk Harbor marina.

Relationship to CREDC Strategies and Priorities

The DRI planning and implementation effort also aligns with the vision of both the 2011 Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) strategic plan and Capital 20.20, the regional job growth plan. The DRI plan aligns with the strategic plan's pledge to "support innovative programs in all sectors, to revitalize our urban centers, to preserve and enhance business areas, and improve the urban living environment, and attract people back to cities." Schenectady has been leading by example with the projects it has supported in recent years. The DRI supports this vision as it revitalizes and connects the existing and new anchors of downtown.

One of the goals of the CREDC strategic plan is to "Bring Cities to Life" by creating connected, smart, and exciting places to live where there is improvement for both school districts and public safety. The DRI reflects this goal by proposing connections between different areas along Erie Boulevard, all while making downtown more exciting, accessible, and safe.

The Capital 20.20 plan cites Schenectady in the Metro strategy as one of six dynamic urban areas in the region into which the CREDC is committed to investing. This strategy discusses building vibrant cities for businesses and families. Smart urban investments are essential to the economic development, health, and vibrancy of the region. This strategy is an integrated portfolio of investment that will catalyze smart, mixed-use urban development; take a place-based approach to supporting small businesses and tackling blight in the region's most challenged neighborhoods; and better connect workers to jobs and improve transportation equity. The DRI plan works to advance these strategies.



Jay Street Mall offers pedestrians a pleasant walk past shops and restaurants.

The DRI plan aligns with the CREDC strategic plan's pledge to "support innovative programs in all sectors, to revitalize our urban centers, to preserve and enhance business areas, and improve the urban living environment, and attract people back to cities."

Figure 3: Walkability in the DRI Area



Opportunities and Challenges

Key opportunities, advantages, and critical issues were identified from public outreach prior to and during the DRI process, conversations with local stakeholders, and analysis of local issues. These are summarized below and discussed in greater detail throughout the Downtown Profile.

Opportunities and Advantages

- **History of transformative investment.** Schenectady has made significant downtown improvements over the past 15 years, facilitated by successful partnerships that continue today. This recent history of successful partnerships will be essential to ongoing progress spurred by DRI investment.
- **Vibrant arts and entertainment scene.** More than 800,000 people a year visit downtown Schenectady for theater performances, cultural events, and entertainment. A variety of public events like SummerNight and Harbor Jam bring thousands downtown to enjoy music, food, and entertainment.
- **Prominent regional and local destinations.** Schenectady is perhaps most known regionally for the Proctors Block, and the casino and resort at Mohawk Harbor has emerged as a new destination. Local attractions such as the dining scene in Little Italy and the recently completed Mill Artisan District are additional anchors of activity to build from.
- **Regional multi-use trail system.** The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail brings bicyclists and families into the heart of downtown and supports an active lifestyle.
- **Riverfront access.** The marina at Mohawk Harbor is one of the largest in the area and offers kayak rentals to the public. The adjacent publicly accessible space includes an amphitheater that hosts popular events and performances.
- **Strong housing demand.** More than 450 housing units have opened in the DRI area in the past five years, mostly apartments in new or renovated buildings, and there is demonstrated demand for more than 160 new units per year in the DRI area over the next five years.

- **Downtown employers and colleges.** Major employers and smaller growing companies together bring thousands of employees downtown. Higher education institutions like SUNY, Clarkson, and Union College attract students to the city.

Challenges and Critical Issues

- **Mitigating COVID-19 impacts and regaining momentum.** There was undeniable momentum in downtown prior to COVID-19, but local businesses were hit hard by closures due to public health conditions. Once the crisis has passed, assistance will be needed to reopen businesses, restart stalled projects, and safely invite people back downtown.
- **Challenging non-vehicular routes between destinations.** Convenient pedestrian and bicycle access between downtown's many attractions is severely limited (see Figure 2). It takes 20-25 minutes to walk between the Proctors Block and Mohawk Harbor, an anchor destination north of downtown. Erie Boulevard is the main connector between the two and while it has been recently improved, parking lots and vacant buildings continue to limit its pedestrian appeal.
- **Limited wayfinding.** While some wayfinding exists, more is needed to direct visitors from one attraction to another. An expanded and updated wayfinding system is needed to benefit new businesses and direct trail users downtown.
- **Few public gathering spaces.** The DRI area only has three main public spaces and limited amenities for shared use. There is a need for more public realm improvements like art, lighting, and shared spaces to help enliven downtown.
- **Retail market gaps.** Neighborhood goods and services like convenience stores, dry cleaners, laundromats, and drug stores are hard to find downtown today.
- **Need for greater economic diversity.** Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, citywide unemployment jumped from 5.1% to 17.5% in July, an increase of 4,300 more unemployed residents. Creating ladders of opportunity for residents, with more jobs at different skill and wage levels, will be important to the long-term success of downtown.

Table 1: Quick Facts

	DRI Area				City of Schenectady			
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2019 Estimate (ESRI)	% Change '00-'19	2000 Census	2010 Census	2019 Estimate (ESRI)	% Change '00-'19
Population	2,240	2,704	2,959	+32.1%	61,812	66,135	67,259	+8.8%
Households	917	864	1,005	+9.6%	26,266	26,633	26,658	+1.5%
Housing Units	1,236	1,108	1,285	+4.0%	30,273	30,095	30,716	+1.5%

Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, and ESRI Estimate 2019

Socio-Economic Characteristics

The following demographic analysis provides a data-driven understanding of existing conditions and trends in the DRI area. This analysis was used to help identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop goals and strategies tailored to the community.

Both the DRI area and the City of Schenectady have had growing populations over the past 20 years, with the DRI area growing at a faster rate than the City (see Table 1). Both are diverse, with over one-third of DRI area residents identifying as Black and almost 12% identifying as Hispanic origin (see Table 2).

The median age of residents in the DRI area is 34.4 years, about a year older than the citywide median age but almost four years younger than New York State's median age of 38.2. Notably, the DRI area has a higher share of people in their prime earning years (ages 20-64) than citywide (see Table 3).

Households in the DRI area do face challenges. The median household income is only about \$25,000, almost \$15,000 lower than the citywide median. Average household income is \$36,000 in the DRI area compared to \$55,000 in the city. The difference between the median and average incomes indicates that income disparity is an issue in Schenectady. Over one-third of households in the DRI area have incomes below poverty level and approximately 30% receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (see Table 4).

Table 2: Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

	DRI Area	Schenectady
White Alone	54.5%	54.0%
Black Alone	34.3%	23.5%
American Indian / Alaskan Native Alone	0.3%	0.8%
Asian Alone	3.2%	4.9%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.2%
Other Race Alone	3.8%	8.4%
Two or More Races	3.8%	8.2%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	11.6%	13.1%

Source: ESRI 2019 Estimate

Table 3: Age Composition

	DRI Area	Schenectady
0 to 19	13.8%	26.2%
20 to 44	52.8%	36.2%
45 to 64	24.8%	23.5%
65+	8.5%	14%

Source: ESRI 2019 Estimate

Table 4: Household Characteristics

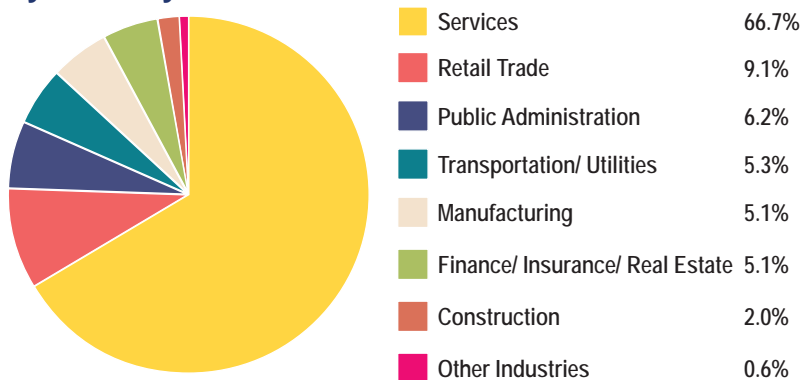
	DRI Area	Schenectady
Households with people under 18	10.1%	23.6%
Households with people over 65	16.0%	25.7%
Households with 1+ person with disability	24.3%	28.4%
Median household income	\$24,853	\$39,682
Average household income	\$36,159	\$55,759
Households with income below poverty level within last 12 months	34.5%	17.9%
Households with SNAP/food stamps	30.0%	23.5%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2013-2017

Educational attainment is also comparatively low. Only 80% of the DRI area population ages 25+ has a high school diploma or higher, compared to almost 84% citywide and over 86% statewide. Only 17.5% has a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 22.5% citywide and almost 36% statewide. This has implications for skilled workforce availability and local household incomes among other factors.

DRI area residents in the workforce primarily hold jobs in what are typically lower paid industries with limited opportunities for advancement. The majority of workers living in the DRI area are employed in the services and retail trade industries. Public administration ranks third, representing the city and county government functions housed downtown (see Figure 3). The prevalence of these industries is reflected in the household income distribution. Half of households in the DRI area earn less than \$24,999 and fewer than one-quarter make more than \$50,000 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Employed Population in DRI Area by Industry



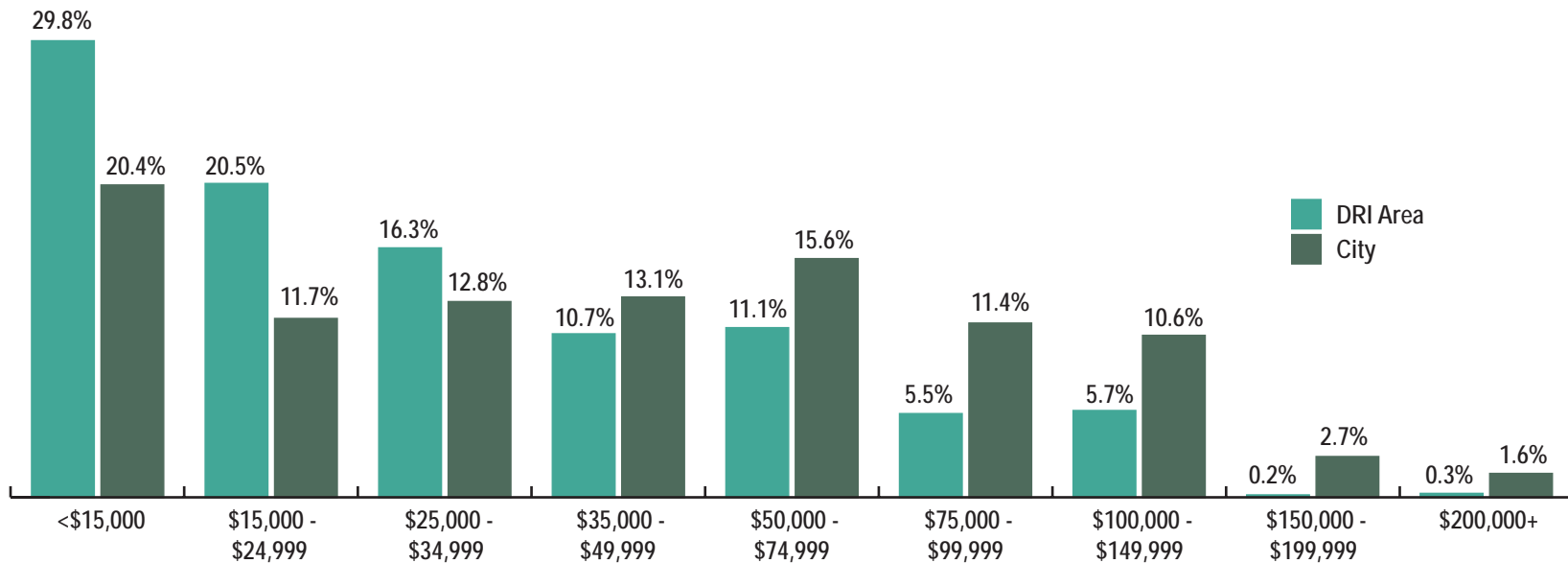
Source: ESRI Estimate 2019

DRI Area Takeaways:

- Growing, diverse population
- More than 75% of population in prime earning years (age 20-64)
- Household incomes lower than citywide
- More than 75% of employed population in services or retail trade

Half of households in the DRI area earn less than \$24,999 and fewer than one-quarter make more than \$50,000. This reflects that the majority of workers living in the DRI area are employed in the services and retail trade industries.

Figure 5: Household Income Comparison



Source: ESRI Estimate 2019

Housing Availability and Characteristics

The DRI area offers a variety of housing types including one- to three-family homes (which tend to be older), townhouses, and apartments. More than 450 housing units have been built in the DRI area in the past five years. Recent projects like River House at Mohawk Harbor and Electric City offer modern studio, one- and two-bedroom units in walkable areas. This variety is appealing to a broad range of existing and potential residents and is an asset for the DRI area.

Based on available data, the DRI area contains almost 1,300 housing units. The vast majority of occupied units in the DRI area are renter-occupied, a significantly greater share than found citywide. Approximately 36% of housing units are within buildings with ten or more units and only 8% are single family detached. Vacancy is an issue in the DRI area where more than 20% of units are vacant, higher than citywide where about 13% of all units are vacant. The City has conducted several rounds of selective demolition to address this issue and reduce blight.

Table 5: Housing Data*

	DRI Area	Schenectady
Housing Units [^]	1,285	30,716
Owner Occupied [^]	11.7%	43.5%
Renter Occupied [^]	88.3%	56.5%
Vacant Housing Units [^]	21.8%	13.2%
Median Year Structure Built [†]	1940	1939
Housing Units in Structure with 10+ Units [†]	36.6%	11.6%
Single Family Detached Housing Units [†]	8.1%	37.8%

Sources: [^] ESRI 2019 Estimate, [†]American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017

*This data may not capture recent housing developments such as River House and Electric City Apartments



Modern apartments at River House in Mohawk Harbor.



Traditional neighborhood housing near downtown.

Physical Characteristics

Schenectady's DRI area encompasses its traditional downtown along State Street as well as the recently built Mohawk Harbor mixed-use development. State Street is a relatively intact main street with a mix of renovated historic buildings, new construction, and only a few surface parking lots or vacant buildings that impede walkability. Mohawk Harbor capitalizes on its riverfront location with a mix of apartments, townhouses, office space, restaurants, a hotel, and Rivers Casino. In between these two anchors, Little Italy on North Jay Street is a compact stretch of popular restaurants. Erie Boulevard is an auto-oriented corridor providing access to I-890, but is also starting to see new investment take place that will help provide better pedestrian and bicycle connections through the DRI area.

Parks and Open Space

The DRI area has three public parks and a publicly accessible waterfront amphitheater that provide shared spaces for residents and visitors. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the importance of convenient access to high-quality open spaces. As downtown continues to grow, it will need new flexible-use spaces to provide greater access and more opportunities for programming.

- Gateway Plaza/Liberty Park: This plaza and park space is across from SUNY Schenectady, adjacent to a CDTA bus hub and the Greyhound bus station. The plaza was renovated and expanded to include park space following Tropical Storm Irene, in part with flood hazard mitigation grant money. The design increases green infrastructure that can function as a flood retention area, while also enhancing transit access and improving safety. The park hosts community celebrations and events such as the Schenectady Pride Festival.
- Veterans Park: This 1.4 acre civic green space on State Street features a new gazebo and fountain set in a tree-shaded grassy area. Notable buildings around the park include the Schenectady County Court House, two historic churches, and MVP Health Care's corporate office.



Gateway Plaza incorporates public art and green infrastructure.



Veterans Park is a civic space near the Proctors Block.



Source: Google Street View

South Avenue Park is a small neighborhood park.



Schenectady City Hall anchors one end of the Jay Street Mall.

- South Avenue Park: This small neighborhood park between Barrett Street and Park Place features a recently added playground and a basketball court.
- Mohawk Harbor Amphitheater: Privately owned but open to the public, this waterfront space offers kayak and bicycle rentals and hosts a summer concert series. It also has 50 dock slips for daily or seasonal rental.

Historic Resources

Schenectady, first settled in 1661 and chartered as a city in 1798, is enriched by many historic resources. The Stockade Historic District, located adjacent to the DRI area, is the oldest neighborhood within the city and was the first historic district in New York State. Within the DRI area, there are several resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- Proctors Theatre (432 State Street): Built in 1925-1926 and designed by famous theater architect Thomas Lamb, this building is an important cornerstone of the downtown area. It flourished through the 1940's, declined over the next twenty years, and was reborn in 1979 after a concerted community effort to save the building. A \$40 million expansion began in 2003 and today Proctors boasts performance spaces suitable for a range of productions.
- Schenectady City Hall and Post Office (105 Jay Street): Constructed in 1931, this building continues to house city government functions.
- Hotel Van Curler (78 Washington Avenue): Now known as Elston Hall, this building constructed in 1925 was established as worker housing for General Electric employees. Today it functions as a main building for Schenectady County Community College.
- Schenectady Armory (125 Washington Avenue): Built in 1936, the Schenectady Armory originally housed local units of the New York National Guard. The facility closed in 2008 and was sold five years later. Today it serves as a multi-function event space.

- H.S. Barney Building (217-229 State Street): Built in 1873 as a department store, it currently has office space and apartments.
- Foster Building (508 State Street): Built in 1907 as a hotel to accommodate the rapidly growing General Electric and its employees, it was later renovated into a mix of retail and residential. It is currently planned for redevelopment into a luxury hotel.
- Union Street Historic District: Some of the district's 184 buildings are within the DRI area, spanning along Union Street from Erie Boulevard east to Park Place.

Cultural Resources

The DRI area is a cultural center for the region that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to downtown annually. From Broadway shows to community theater productions and popular outdoor event series, downtown Schenectady has something for everyone. As development continues throughout the DRI area, its capacity for bringing the community together has only increased.



The H.S. Barney Building on State Street has ground floor offices with apartments above.

The Proctors Block is the preeminent artistic hub and a major catalyst for downtown revitalization. Proctors attracts premiere productions ranging from Broadway shows to small productions and art films. It includes the 2,600-seat MainStage theatre, the 450-seat GE Theatre, and the 100-seat Addy for art films and small productions. More than 650,000 theatre patrons come to downtown Schenectady each year, supporting local restaurants, hotels, and businesses. An adjacent six-screen movie theater attracts hundreds of moviegoers weekly.

Other cultural attractions include the Schenectady Light Opera Company (SLOC) and the Schenectady Civic Players. SLOC has a 300-seat performance space in a renovated building a block north of Proctors, and the Schenectady Civic Players hosts performances at its playhouse just north of Lower State Street.

Major public events draw thousands more downtown. The SummerNight county block party, Harbor Jam concert series at Mohawk Harbor, and Jammin' on Jay, a month-long live music



Proctors Theatre has been a cultural hub since its construction in 1926.

series, are some of the more prominent events. Others include the Funk N Jazz Festival and Schenectady Pride, both hosted at Gateway Plaza. In addition to live music and food, health-oriented activities like silent outdoor yoga classes encourage people to get out and enjoy downtown.

Environment Constraints

Like many older downtowns and former industrial areas, contaminated sites called brownfields are not uncommon in the DRI area. State funds for remediating them have been critical to spurring new development. The most notable of these is the former American Locomotive Company (Alco) site along Erie Boulevard in the northern part of the DRI area. The site sat vacant following decades of industrial activity that included the construction of railway and military products. Today it is home to Mohawk Harbor and Rivers Casino & Resort, thanks in part to brownfield remediation funds.



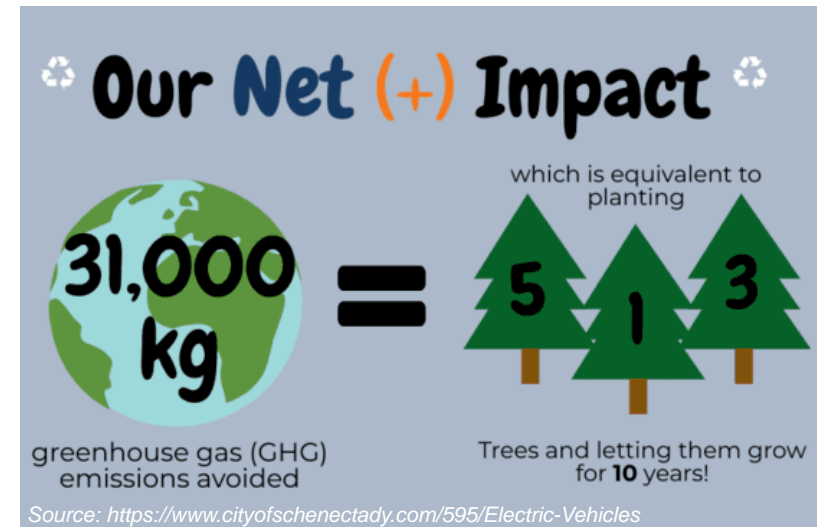
The former Alco site during demolition and redevelopment.

The Mohawk River can flood due either to large precipitation events or ice jams in the winter. A recent example is the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene that affected the SUNY Schenectady campus, Stockade Neighborhood, and the former Alco site. Land south of lower State Street and west of the railroad tracks lies within the 1% Annual Chance (“100-year” flood) zone, as well as Mohawk Harbor. The Broadway corridor from I-890 to Smith Street lies within the 0.2% Annual Chance (“500-year” flood) zone.

Most of the DRI area is classified as a potential Environmental Justice area by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, based on socioeconomic factors like percent of the population below the poverty level and/or the percent of minority residents.

Sustainable and Smart City

The City advocates for sustainable choices in all forms of development. In 2018, Schenectady’s Mayor Gary McCarthy was recognized with the U.S. Conference of Mayor’s Climate Protection Award for small cities. The DRI area includes a district heating



The City’s electric vehicle charging initiative has made significant environmental impact since 2018.

and cooling system for buildings in the Proctors Block, 11 charging stations for electric vehicles, energy-efficient LED streetlights that can be equipped with Smart City technology, and single-stream recycling.

The City is exploring the development of solar infrastructure through the City Solar Energy Consortium Project and has received funding to complete an assessment of its greenhouse gas inventory. It is also participating in Climate Smart Communities, a New York State program tracking twelve action categories, and the Global City Teams Challenge, a collaborative platform to develop smart cities and communities.

A Smart City Advisory Council has been established to help build an environment of sustainability, efficiency, and improved quality of life by leveraging technology and innovation for the betterment of residents and businesses in Schenectady. The City's Smart City initiative incorporates multiple efforts including a Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) demonstration project in partnership with National Grid. The City is in the process of replacing 4,200 city streetlights with more energy-efficient LED lights that will be equipped with smart and connected technology. The City also provides free public access wi-fi on both Union Street, between Broadway and Lafayette Street, and Jay Street around City Hall, which was installed during the Union Street reconstruction in 2017.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The DRI area benefits from a well-connected multimodal network that includes car, bus, bicycle, and train access. Improving walkable connections between parts of the DRI area and adding more signage and wayfinding to direct people to local destinations are key issues to be addressed.

Erie Boulevard is the busiest vehicular thoroughfare in the DRI area with Annual Daily Traffic (ADT) of 16,500 vehicles as last reported by NYS Department of Transportation in 2016 (prior to the opening

Improving walkable connections between parts of the DRI area and adding more signage and wayfinding to direct people to local destinations are key issues to be addressed.



Erie Boulevard is a major vehicular thoroughfare but lacks an attractive pedestrian realm.

Transit, walking, and bicycling are important modes of transportation in the DRI area. Almost 20% of workers walk to their job and 15% take public transportation.



Amtrak connects Schenectady to New York City and other destinations.

of the casino and Mohawk Harbor). It provides access to downtown from I-890 to the south. State Street east of Erie was the second-busiest with 12,000 ADT. Other streets like State Street west of Erie, Union Street, and Liberty Street were estimated to have fewer than 10,000 ADT.

Parking is available in the 1,200 space Metroplex parking garage near the Proctors Block, 12 Metroplex-owned parking lots with more than 2,300 spaces, additional private lots, and metered on-street parking spaces in front of businesses. During the community engagement process, residents raised concerns about a perceived shortage of parking downtown. In further discussion with stakeholders, it appears the supply is adequate but that improved signage, wayfinding, and real-time availability information is needed to better manage it, especially during peak demand periods. Improved lighting and pedestrian connections between parking areas and destinations will also alleviate this concern.

Transit, walking, and bicycling are important modes of transportation in the DRI area. Almost 20% of workers walk to their job and 15% take public transportation. In addition, over one-quarter of occupied housing units in the DRI area do not have access to a vehicle.

Public Transit

The Capital District Transportation Agency (CDTA) operates local and regional bus service in the DRI area. There are six bus routes that pass through the DRI area, including the BusPlus Red Line that connects downtown Schenectady and Albany via bus rapid transit. A bus hub at Gateway Plaza provides access to multiple routes with convenient transfers. The Electric City Trolley provides free service on Friday and Saturday evenings between local destinations including Proctors Theatre, Rivers Casino, Mohawk Harbor, and the Amtrak station.

Amtrak provides daily train service via a recently rebuilt station on Erie Boulevard. It provides direct service to New York Penn Station

in as little as 3.5 hours. In addition, Greyhound provides intercity bus service from its station on lower State Street. Both providers offer convenient access to New York City, Upstate New York, and beyond.

Walkability

The downtown area is generally a very walkable location. State Street is a classic main street with sidewalks lined by active storefronts that encourage pedestrian activity. The Jay Street Marketplace is a popular block-long, pedestrian-only space between State and Franklin Street lined with cafes and shops.

Beyond the core of downtown, however, sidewalk conditions vary and pedestrian connections are more challenging. The recent reconstruction of Erie Boulevard, the primary corridor between downtown and Mohawk Harbor, added new street lights, heated sidewalks, landscaping, and decorative pavers. While these enhancements improved its visual appeal, it remains a lightly used pedestrian and bicycle corridor. Further improvements are planned

to transform it into a fully multi-modal corridor. Other potential projects like reopening the former Alco tunnel and extending Jay Street would better connect Mohawk Harbor to downtown.

As part of a larger 2016 New York State initiative, the \$110 million Pedestrian Safety Action Plan is helping Schenectady to improve pedestrian conditions. The plan focuses on the three E's of pedestrian planning: engineering, education, and enforcement. To date, Schenectady has received approximately \$1.1 million to determine and develop their own pedestrian improvements.

Bicycling

Schenectady is making the city more friendly and accessible to cyclists through a citywide bike-sharing program and improved local and regional connections.

CDPHP Cycle! is a joint venture between Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, CDTA, and Social Bicycles that offers bike sharing stations throughout the DRI area. Users pay on either an



State Street provides a high-quality pedestrian experience.



'Cycle!' bike sharing hubs offer a convenient way to get around downtown.

hourly or seasonal basis. There are approximately thirteen bike hubs throughout the DRI area including three near the Proctors Block, one in Mohawk Harbor, and two along Lower State Street. Ridership rates throughout the Capital Region indicate the growing popularity of this service, with 10,000 paying members and 24,000 trips taken between April 1 and August 27, 2019.

The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail is a popular regional system that connects Rotterdam to Albany. It connects to the DRI area from the northeast at Jay Street and from the southwest at the Western Gateway Bridge. Cycling between these two trailheads is via currently unmarked streets, however. The City's 2017 "Bike Schenectady: Bike Infrastructure Master Plan" recommends an expanded network of bicycle routes, shared lane marking, and updated wayfinding to create a safer and more welcoming environment for cyclists of all abilities.



Source: Google Street View

The bike-hike trail connect the DRI area to the region.

Retail Outlets for Healthy and Affordable Food

The DRI area has limited options for healthy, affordable food which is an important need to address given the socioeconomics of the resident population. Access to healthy and affordable food was one of the points of discussion throughout the public engagement process. In addition, fresh locally grown food is an attractive amenity that can help support new development.

Two farmers markets are the primary sources for fresh, healthy food within the DRI area today:

- Schenectady Greenmarket was founded in 2008 with the mission to supply all residents, including food-insecure residents, with healthy, high-quality food. The market has 60+ diverse vendors who provide high quality, locally sourced produce. Vendors accept EBT/SNAP and many donate to local food banks and other social service providers. It is open every Sunday, outdoors at City Hall between May and October and inside at Proctors between November and April.



Source: www.schenectadyygreenmarket.com

The Schenectady Greenmarket offers local produce downtown.

- The Schenectady Farmer's Market is run by the County and has 15 vendors who accept EBT/SNAP. It is open Thursdays at City Hall and features food demonstrations and live music.

Alltown Fresh Market opened a 4,800 square foot store on Erie Boulevard in August 2020. It offers fresh and healthy foods, including prepared meals made with local ingredients, in a convenience store format. The nearest major grocery stores for DRI area residents are Gabriels Supermarket (IGA) less than 2 miles west in Scotia, Market 32 by Price Chopper located about 2 miles east, and Hannaford and Price Chopper both located about 2.5 miles south. Gabriels, Hannaford, and Price Chopper are accessible via bus from the Gateway Plaza CDTA hub.

There is also a grassroots effort underway to organize, fund, and open a community-owned food co-op downtown to address the gap in fresh food accessibility.

Significant Employers and Anchor Institutions

Significant employers and anchor institutions are important place-based community assets. They raise the city's profile and attract employees and visitors who patronize other local businesses. Major employers contribute to the local tax base and business leaders often champion downtown improvements.

About 13,000 employees work in the DRI area, and most commute from the southeast (likely from the Albany area). While just over 50% of employees live within ten miles, few DRI area residents work and live here. Major employers include Rivers Casino and Resort, MVP Health Care, and the Golub Corporation (the third-largest employer in the county). Rivers Casino opened in early 2017 and employs over 1,000 people, mostly in union jobs. MVP's corporate headquarters has 800 employees located across from Veterans Park, and the Golub Corporation's headquarters employs approximately 700 people on Nott Street near Mohawk Harbor. Other significant employers in the DRI area include Fluor, Transfinder, and the rapidly growing Jahnel Group. Over 100,000

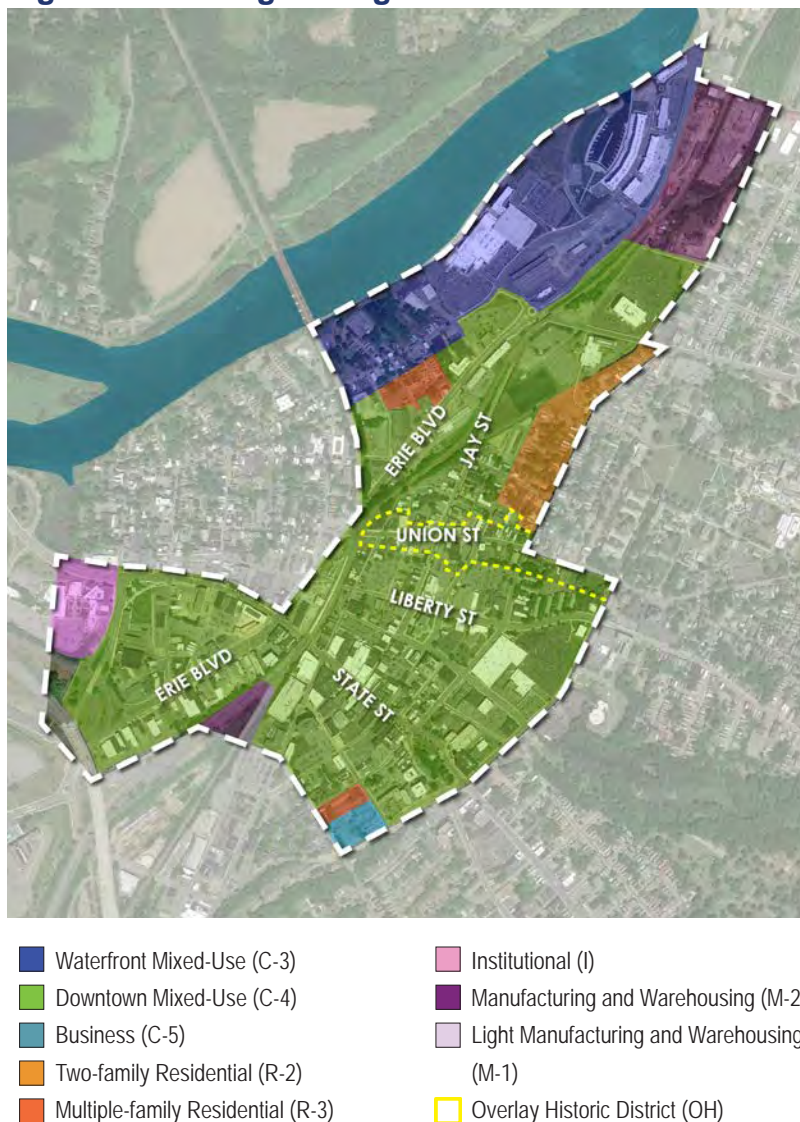


Mohawk Harbor has over 100,000 square feet of new office space.



MVP Health Care headquarters downtown has 800 employees.

Figure 6: Existing Zoning



square feet of new office space at Mohawk Harbor is mostly occupied now with tenants including Beekman 1802, LeChase Construction, and Delta Engineering.

Major anchor institutions within the DRI area include local government at City Hall, the Schenectady County Judicial Building, Schenectady Community College, Clarkson University, and cultural institutions like Proctors. City Hall sits at the north end of the Jay Street Connector and houses local government offices. The Schenectady County Judicial Building opposite Veterans Park contains the Supreme, County, Surrogate, and Family Courts. Schenectady Community College is a SUNY school with a student population of more than 5,200 students supported by approximately 250 faculty. Clarkson University's Capital Region Campus houses its Graduate School in a building on the eastern edge of the DRI area.

Two more anchor institutions are located immediately adjacent to the DRI area and contribute to its vitality. Union College, a private liberal arts college founded in 1795, is just east of the DRI area. It has a student population around 2,200 supported by over 200 faculty members. The Museum of Innovation and Science, known as miSci, offers interactive exhibits and a planetarium that attract families and school groups.

Land Use and Zoning Regulations

The DRI area contains a compatible mix of land uses including commercial, residential, retail, entertainment, and civic/institutional. Most residential use is in higher-density mixed-use settings with only small sections of lower-density residential neighborhoods within the DRI area. There are also a few remaining areas of light industrial use near Mohawk Harbor, reflective of the area's previous industrial character. Vacant and/or underused land and buildings are scattered throughout the DRI area, particularly along Erie Boulevard. These are opportunities for infill development that can contribute to a more walkable environment.

Most of the DRI area is zoned for mixed-use development as shown in Figure 5, suitable for the projects recommended for DRI funding. The majority of the DRI area is within either the Downtown mixed-use (C-4) or waterfront mixed-use (C-3) districts. The flexibility of these zones allows for many types of development opportunities. Buildings in the C-4 zoning district must be between 35' and 75' tall and have a zero front setback, conducive for creating a pedestrian-scale street environment. Parking requirements allow for shared parking among uses with different peak demands to reduce the total number of spaces provided, and exempts nonresidential uses in the C-4 district from minimum requirements. However, residential parking requirements of 1.5 spaces per multifamily unit may burden projects with excess parking costs, especially when the proposed unit mix is weighted toward studio and one-bedroom units. Variances to provide less parking than this requirement should be considered.

Vacant/ Underutilized Sites and Infill Opportunities

As an established downtown area, most development projects within the DRI area reuse vacant and underutilized sites. Prominent examples of this include the Mohawk Harbor brownfield

redevelopment project and the Mill Artisan District infill project on State Street.

Significant remaining development opportunities within the DRI area include:

- The former Pentagon Restaurant/ Sears buildings on Erie Boulevard south of State Street
- The former Coyne Textile building on Erie Boulevard north of State Street
- The southern corner of State and Erie, including the Masonic Temple building

All three sites are zoned Downtown Mixed-Use (C-4) which allows a range of uses including residential, retail, and office. Plans for each are in various stages of development. Erie Landing is a proposed mixed-use development on the former Pentagon/Sears site which will provide apartments, retail, and office space. The Coyne Textile is a brownfield site that will require remediation before it can be redeveloped. Previous plans for the Masonic Temple block included adaptive reuse and new construction for housing and office but the project is currently stalled.

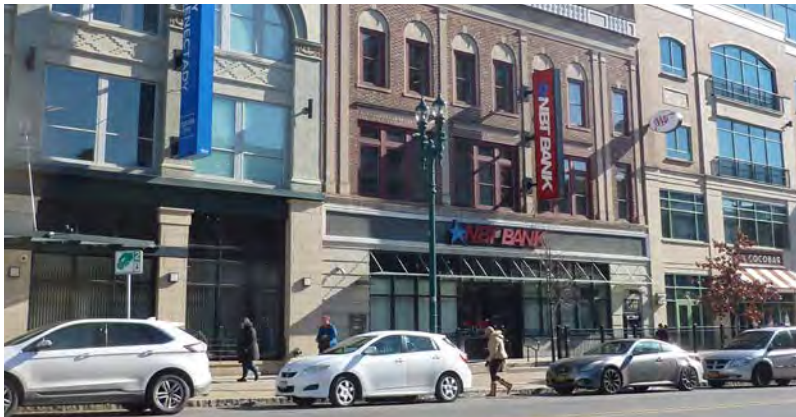


Significant underused sites include (from left to right): the Pentagon/Sears lot, the Coyne Textile building, and the Masonic temple building.

Within the vacant and for sale land directory compiled by the city, four other properties have significant potential for future development. The properties are all located near Mohawk Harbor on Front, State, and Jefferson Streets. The city's goals for these underused sites are to create exciting and productive uses that can benefit the community.

Retail Market Analysis

The retail market analysis defines four retail micro-climates or nodes within the DRI area: the Proctors Block, Lower State Street including the Mill Artisan District, Little Italy, and Mohawk Harbor. These four micro-climates together have 414,000 square feet of retail space (including full build-out of the retail space at Mohawk Harbor). Proctors Block is the largest, comprising 40% of the DRI area's retail space. Mohawk Harbor will have 35% of total space when completed, featuring 135,000 square feet of Class A waterfront retail space. Lower State Street has about 60,000 square feet of retail space, including a mix of older existing spaces and recently completed or under construction spaces. Little Italy is the smallest micro-climate with about 40,000 square feet of existing retail space. The market analysis found vacancies in the Lower State Street district (20%, due to new inventory) and the Proctors



Retail on State Street opposite the Proctors Block.

Block (11%). Little Italy is currently 100% occupied. Mohawk Harbor has empty storefronts awaiting lease-up, but there was no vacancy data available at the time of the analysis.

The retail market study recommends that neighborhood goods and services be prioritized throughout this area. These uses include dry cleaners, laundromats, neighborhood markets, pet supply stores, drug stores, butchers, salons and barber shops. The study estimates that demand currently exists to support an additional 61,200 square feet of space. Other recommendations from this analysis include:

- Projects with a ground-floor retail component should be located within one of the existing retail nodes in order to build on existing retail visibility and density.
- Ground floor retail within projects recommended for DRI funding should be made as visible and accessible as possible, especially to downtown residents, office workers, and visitors as well as commuters driving along Erie Boulevard.
- Projects located outside the four retail nodes that have ground floor commercial space are recommended to recruit non-retail tenants that would benefit from sidewalk visibility.
- New retail space for food and beverage, as well as general merchandise, apparel, furnishings, and others, are not recommended for DRI prioritization due to an apparent oversupply of these uses within the area compared to existing demand. However, improvement and enhancement of existing uses is recommended to better serve the community.

The retail market study recommends that neighborhood goods and services be prioritized throughout this area.

Housing Market Analysis

A housing market analysis was conducted to determine the market potential for new rental and for-sale housing units that could be developed within the Schenectady DRI area. The analysis includes delineation of the draw areas; determination of the depth of the potential market for new and existing housing units in the city; determination of the target households and the target residential mix corresponding to the housing preferences of those target households; and the optimum market position for new market-rate rental and for-sale residential units in the DRI area.

Market-Rate Housing Opportunity

The downtown housing market is robust. The DRI area could potentially absorb between 162 and 211 new rental and for-sale housing units each year over the next five years. The optimum market positioning for this annual demand is approximately 85% multi-family rental in a mix of lofts and flats, 6% multi-family for-sale condominiums, and 9% single-family attached for-sale townhouses. Over five years, the DRI area could potentially absorb a total of 810 to 1,055 new market-rate housing units—675 to 850 new rental units, 50 to 75 new condominiums, and 85 to 130 new townhouses.

The multi-family market, both for-rent and for-sale, is primarily composed of younger singles and couples (more than half) and secondarily empty-nesters and retirees (one-quarter to one-third). The attached single-family market is evenly split between these two groups as well as traditional and non-traditional families.

The market opportunity is based on the determination that the DRI area should be able to achieve an annual capture of 15 to 20 percent of the average number of potential renters of all incomes each year, over the next five years. New for-sale multi-family and single-family attached development should be able to achieve an annual capture of 10 to 15 percent of the annual average number of potential buyers of condominiums and townhouses each year over the next five years. These capture rates are within the target market methodology's parameters of feasibility.

The downtown housing market is robust. Over five years, the DRI area could potentially absorb a total of 810 to 1,055 new market-rate housing units.

Table 6: Residential Market Draw Area

	Share
City of Schenectady (local draw area)	33.3%
Balance of Schenectady County (county draw area)	10.0%
Albany, Saratoga, Rensselaer Counties (regional draw area)	25.4%
Balance of U.S. (national draw area)	31.3%
TOTAL	100%

Table 7: Optimum Market Position

Housing Type	Number of Households	Capture Rate	Annualized Average Absorption
Multi-family for rent	676	20 - 25%	135 - 170
Multi-family for sale	100	10 - 15%	10 - 15
Single-family attached for sale (townhomes)	174	10 - 15%	17 - 26
TOTAL	950	-	162 - 211

Housing Choice and Affordability

Recent and under construction projects like River House (206 units at Mohawk Harbor), Electric City Apartments (104 units on Lower State Street), Mill Artisan District (74 units on Lower State Street), and the Live-In Schenectady townhouses (15 units on Barrett Street) demonstrate the depth and breadth of the local market. The DRI area also includes student housing and senior living in the Lower State Street area and a number of affordable housing options both in the DRI area and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Federal fair market rents and income limit ranges are provided in Tables 8 and 9 to provide context of rent affordability in relationship to area incomes. These HUD-determined limits are required only for affordable housing projects receiving federal funding.

A typical measure of affordability is that a household should spend 30% or less of its income on housing expenses. The DRI area median household income is just under \$25,000 (see Table 4) which equates to an affordable monthly rent around \$625 or less, significantly less than even the HUD FMR for the metro area. The average household income is around \$36,000 which equates to an affordable monthly rent around \$900 or less. American Community Survey data from 2017 indicates that 62% of DRI area households spend more than 30% of their income on rent.

The City has worked with numerous local groups including the Land Bank and Metroplex to develop 500 affordable housing units to date, with another 200 units planned. The Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority provides resources to residents in need of publicly subsidized or Section 8 housing. The City has also worked to develop resources and incentives for potential homebuyers to move into the area. The most prominent program is Home Ownership Made Easy in Schenectady (HOMES), a collaboration between the City and 28 different partners including banks and local organizations. The program educates homebuyers and future homeowners about buying property within Schenectady and offer financial incentives. The program provides a list of available

financial resources including tax benefits and grant opportunities. The incentives vary from the local level up to federally funded programs.

The City has worked with numerous local groups including the Land Bank and Metroplex to develop 500 affordable housing units to date.

Table 8: HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) for Albany-Schenectady-Troy Area (2019-2020)

	2019 FMR	2020 FMR
Efficiency	\$768	\$747
1 Bedroom	\$904	\$855
2 Bedrooms	\$1,115	\$1,054
3 Bedrooms	\$1,397	\$1,313
4 Bedrooms	\$1,507	\$1,428

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Table 9: HUD Income Limits, Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA (FY 2020)

Income Limit Category	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person
Extremely Low Income (30%)	\$20,400	\$23,300	\$26,200	\$29,100
Very Low Income (50%)	\$33,950	\$38,800	\$43,650	\$48,500
Low Income (80%)	\$54,350	\$62,100	\$69,850	\$77,600

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Figure 7: Recent, Ongoing, and Planned Projects



Recent, Ongoing, and Planned Projects

There has been substantial investment taking place within the DRI area in recent years. Figure 7 and Table 10 identify recently completed, ongoing, and major planned projects in the DRI area. Historic preservation, brownfield redevelopment, and new

construction have contributed to the growing vitality of downtown Schenectady. An important goal of the recommended DRI projects is to help connect these projects by filling in gaps and creating more walkable streets to link the energy of downtown and the waterfront.

Table 10: Recent, Ongoing, and Planned Projects

ID	Project	Address	Summary
1	Proctors Theatre	432 State Street	Historic preservation, restoration, and improvements to the main theater
2	SEFCU Square	469 State Street	Office complex with ground floor retail
3	SCCC Center City	433 State Street	160,000+ sq ft office building with ground level retail
4	One Liberty Square	600 Liberty Street	100,000 sq ft office building
5	Foster Building	508 State Street	21 apartments, 7,000 sq ft of commercial office, a restaurant, and 2 retail stores
6	Clinton Street Mercantile	144-8 Clinton Street	20 apartments with ground floor retail incubator (20+ artisanal vendors)
7	The Kindl Building	201 State Street	12,000 sq ft renovation to create space for SUNY Schenectady's Workforce Training Center
8	Gateway Plaza	12 State Street	Renovation of existing plaza and creation of new green space
9	Electric City Apartments	236 State Street	105 apartments and ground floor retail space
10	Amtrak Station	332 Erie Boulevard	New transit station with daily service to multiple destinations including New York Penn Station
11	Colonial Commons Apartments	1419 Erie Boulevard	52 apartments
12	Mohawk Harbor	Harborside Drive	Brownfield redevelopment including a resort casino, 100,000 sq ft office, 200 housing units, and retail
13	Mill Artisan District	108 State Street	Three block redevelopment nearing completion with 74 apartments and ground floor retail
14	Breslaw Department Store	10 Mill Lane	Conversion of a former department store into business incubator space and housing
15	NY BizLab	251 State Street	Expansion of the existing business incubator
16	Trustco Building	192 Erie Boulevard	26,000 sq ft office space and 36 apartments
17	Former Masonic Temple	1473 Erie Boulevard	Planned conversion into retail-commercial-residential space
18	Live In Schenectady	Barrett Street	15-unit townhouse development (Phase 1 complete late 2019)
19	Alltown Fresh Market	1410 Erie Boulevard	Convenience store offering fresh food + gas station
20	Mohawk Trail	Riverside	Multi-use trail along the Mohawk River that connects to existing trails

RECENT PROJECTS

Proctors Theatre

Proctors Theatre received \$1,155,000 through three separate funds to aid with historic preservation, restoration, interior renovation, and accessibility projects. A new marquee was installed in 2014, the Addy Theatre opened in 2017, and facade improvements to Key Hall were completed in 2019. The area around the theatre has experienced approximately \$40 million of investment that continues to reinforce Proctors position as a vital anchor within the area.

SEFCU Square

This development at State and Clinton Streets provides office and retail space across from the Proctors Block. Completed in 2019, this \$4.2 million project (including \$1.4 million from RestoreNY) now houses an SEFCU offices and credit union.

Center City Building

Previously a vacant soccer arena with empty retail and office space, this site was redeveloped in 2011 into a multi-tenant office building with ground floor retail. Approximately 160,000+ square feet are now home to various business generating significant sales tax revenue. Tenants of the building include: M/E Engineering, NBT Bank, AAA Northway headquarters, SCCC's downtown campus, Schenectady YMCA, CVS, Johnny's, Adecco, Rush Street Gaming, Metroplex and Assemblyman Santabarbara's district office.

One Liberty Square

Formerly a department store, this 100,000 square foot building now functions as office space after extensive renovation completed in 2016. It is currently home to Fluor Marine Propulsion LLC and belongs to Naval Reactors. The project was funded in part by \$1,000,000 from Empire State Development (ESD).

Foster Building

This project includes the Foster Building (a former hotel), the Schenectady Rail Building, and two additional buildings. The three-phase renovation was completed in 2018 and now provides

21 apartments, 7,000 square feet of commercial office space, a restaurant, and two retail stores. The development significantly improves the site from a series of neglected buildings into an exciting mixed-use area. It received \$7 million through a combination of private investment, a Metroplex facade grant, and Historic Tax Credits.

Clinton Street Mercantile

Previously office buildings, this project completed in 2018 provides both commercial space and apartments today. A retail incubator for local artisans currently has 20 independent shops, and the residential component includes 20 units in the two buildings.

KINDL Building (Schenectady Workforce Training Center)

The Kindl Building on Lower State Street, previously donated by the Kindl family (an inventor for General Electric), was renovated in 2015 to become SUNY Schenectady's Workforce Training Center.



The KINDL building now houses a workforce training center.

Gateway Plaza

After extensive flood damage in 2011, a \$1.7 million reconstruction created a welcoming urban plaza adjacent to a bus transit hub, added green infrastructure to manage future flooding events, and created an urban green space. Funding for this project completed in 2017 included a \$960,000 flood grant and a \$400,000 parks, recreation, and historic preservation grant.

Electric City Apartments

Representing a major transformation along Lower State Street, this \$20 million project completed in 2019 adds new housing and ground floor retail space. It offers 105 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Schenectady Amtrak Station

The station was recently rebuilt and opened in the fall of 2018. This is the third iteration of the train station and its design honors the original Schenectady Union Station built in 1908. This \$23

million project was made possible through funding provided by New York State, the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, and local funding.

Colonial Commons Apartments

This four-story apartment building is one of the first infill projects along Erie Boulevard. Completed in 2016, it replaced a vacant lot with 52 1- and 2-bedroom units within a ten-minute walk of State Street and Mohawk Harbor.

Mohawk Harbor

This transformative waterfront development converted a former contaminated Alco industrial site (American Locomotive Company), into a new mixed-use destination. It is the home to Rivers Casino and Resort, two hotels, over 100,000 square feet of office space, and retail and restaurant space. A waterfront amphitheater hosts public events open to the community. The redevelopment project was completed in 2017 and received \$9 million in NYS funding in addition to over \$500 million in private investment.

ONGOING OR PLANNED PROJECTS

The Mill Artisan District

This \$25 million three-block redevelopment project contributes to the transformation of Lower State Street, complementing the nearby Electric City Apartments. The nearly completed project includes 74 apartments that will soon be open for leasing. Anticipated commercial tenants include a brewery, custom software developer, bakery, and barbecue restaurant. The project received \$2.3 million in ESD funding.

Breslaw Department Store Redevelopment

Originally a department store in the early 1940's, this building was acquired as part of the Mill Artisan District redevelopment. It is being renovated to create a culinary and craft beverage space with loft apartment space on the upper floors. It was the recipient of \$2.9 million in ESD funding as well as \$450,000 in Restore NY funding.



Electric City Apartments opened in Summer 2019.

New York BizLab Expansion

Previously the Department of Motor Vehicles, this site now functions as an extension of New York BizLab, an incubator for start-ups and growing businesses. It benefited from a combined \$2.1 million funding sourced from a Restore NY fund as well as private investment.

Trustco Building Renovation

With \$363,000 in ESD funding and over \$5 million in private equity, this renovation of an old bank headquarters will create 26,000 square feet of office space in addition to 36 apartments.

Masonic Temple Redevelopment

Originally a Masonic Temple and later a drug and alcohol recovery center, this site is currently planned to become a retail-commercial-residential space. The project anticipates an investment of \$4.7 million from private investors in addition to \$450,000 in Restore NY funds.

Live In Schenectady Townhomes

Phase 1 of this 15-unit townhouse project opened in late 2019. Located adjacent to the Mohawk-Hudson multi-use trail, this \$3.5 million investment by local partners is part of a larger community development effort.

Alltown Fresh Market

Opening in August 2020, this project will bring fresh food access to the Erie Boulevard corridor. It combines a welcoming convenience store that will include free Wi-fi and seating with a gas station. It replaces a dilapidated vacant building that was an eyesore along this primary vehicular corridor.

Mohawk Harbor Multi-Use Trail

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) has funded a 1.3-mile-long multi-use trail along the riverfront. The trail will connect Mohawk Harbor to existing trails throughout the DRI area.

Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail (Canalway Trail)

The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail (also known as the Canalway Trail) recently received \$265,000 from a Canalway grant program for upgrades and improvements. The existing trail stretches from Albany to Rotterdam and is an important community amenity.

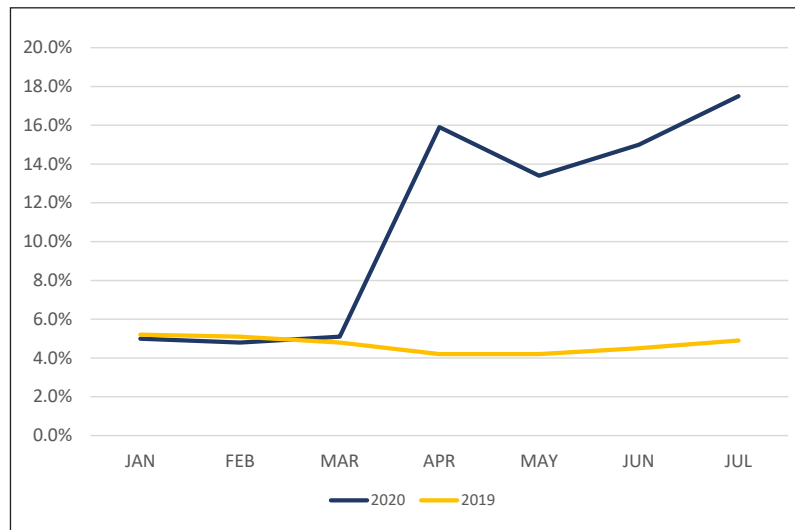


Mill Artisan District nearing completion on State Street

COVID-19 Impacts

Schenectady has suffered from both the human and economic cost of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 1,200 confirmed cases and 48 deaths have been reported in Schenectady County as of early September 2020. The City's unemployment rate jumped from 5.1% in March to 17.5% in July, representing approximately 4,300 more unemployed residents in July than in March. Both percentages are higher than Schenectady County, which saw an increase over the same period from 4.1% to 13.2%.

Figure 8: City of Schenectady Monthly Unemployment Rate



Not seasonally adjusted. Source: <https://labor.ny.gov/stats/laus.asp>

As of July, the City of Schenectady estimated a \$12 million loss of revenue due to COVID-19 impacts. Major economic impacts in the DRI area include:

- Temporary closures of significant venues:
 - » Proctors Theatre
 - » Rivers Casino & Resort (1,000 jobs temporarily lost)
 - » Bow Tie Cinema
- Four downtown hotels closed or operating at minimum capacity
- All three downtown colleges impacted: SUNY Schenectady, Clarkson, and Union
- Many office employees working from home, decreasing foot traffic for restaurants
- Local government -- major downtown employers looking at layoffs unless federal funding is forthcoming

After a four-month pause in the planning process, the DRI effort resumed mid-summer with two LPC meetings and the final public meeting, all held online to meet public health guidance. The vision statement was slightly modified to acknowledge the impacts of COVID-19. Two potential projects were removed from consideration by their sponsors.

This is not the first time the City has been faced with unexpected challenges. DRI funding will help Schenectady recover from this crisis and continue its momentum.



Photo Credit: Mitch Ramsey

II. Downtown Vision, Goals, and Strategies

The vision, goals, and strategies for the Schenectady DRI provide a guiding framework for this plan and reflect a shared sense of purpose. The community played a key role in developing the vision, starting during the application process and continuing during the DRI planning process. Community members provided feedback on a draft vision statement at the first DRI community meeting, offering important insights and perspectives. The Local Planning Committee (LPC) incorporated these changes for review during the second community meeting. After a four-month pause due to COVID, the LPC made minor changes to the vision to better reflect the new reality. For more information on the community engagement process, see Section IV.

Vision:

The City of Schenectady—a center for culture, education, commerce, and recreation—is entering the next chapter of our ongoing comeback story.

We remain committed in our efforts to rebuild, diversify, and grow our job base; increase a full range of quality housing options; celebrate and preserve our historic resources; and make the Mohawk River fully accessible to all. Our DRI will further brighten our City, enable an inclusive recovery, and connect our increasingly rebounding downtown with our new waterfront to create a dynamic and active destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Goals and Strategies

To achieve this vision, the LPC developed four goals and a series of strategies based on input from public meetings and stakeholders. These goals and strategies were used as part of the evaluation process to identify those projects with the broadest impact.



Goal 1: Create a vibrant urban center and attractive public realm that welcomes residents, workers, and visitors alike

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support retail that increase access to healthy food
- Attract businesses that reflect the local creative economy
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Increase the number of taggable and shareable social media moments through public art and events
- “Light up” public spaces to create dynamic evening settings



Goal 3: Diversify our economy, grow our job base, increase retail choices

- Create new workforce training and diverse job opportunities
- Build on current local growth sectors (arts, entertainment, software, technology)
- Connect local workforce to new employers
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth



Goal 2: Improve all modes of connectivity between Downtown, Mohawk Harbor, Lower State, the Riverfront, and the surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity (Jay Connector, Alco Tunnel)
- Extend and connect multi-use trail system
- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors including historic facades and underpasses
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas



Goal 4: Build on and celebrate our historic and cultural richness

- Support and advertise existing institutions including the numerous colleges in the area
- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance our historic character
- Promote and program a local—and diverse—array of creative initiatives
- Provide necessary infrastructure to support existing and new public events
- Celebrate, integrate, and communicate Schenectady’s historic elements to visitors and residents
- Reinforce our “Electric City” through locally created art and light installations

III. Downtown Management & Implementation Strategy

Local capacity and leadership are integral to the successful implementation of DRI-funded projects. An effective management structure for both public and private sector projects—one that includes a broad-based implementation support team—are critical to ensure that each project can move forward in a manner consistent with what is outlined within this Strategic Investment Plan. This section summarizes the City's strategy for ensuring the success of the projects recommended for DRI funding.

Core Team

The City of Schenectady and the Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority have a long, successful working relationship that has been a key factor in ongoing downtown redevelopment. This partnership will continue to be important for DRI project implementation and monitoring.

The City of Schenectady has proven capacity for managing and implementing public improvement projects and participating in highly successful public-private partnerships. Through its various departments, primarily the Department of Engineering and Department of Development, the City plays a key role in downtown revitalization. Once the State makes funding awards based on those projects recommended by the Local Planning Committee, the City of Schenectady will then work with Metroplex to ensure that all projects are supported and coordinated through completion.

Metroplex is a public benefit corporation enabled to design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage, and maintain numerous types of projects. It has relevant experience with more than 800 projects throughout the county, and has administered and managed numerous grants including:

- 5 Restore NY awards
- 4 REDC awards
- 3 NYS DOT awards
- 3 NYS DEC environmental remediation grants
- 8 National Grid Urban Center projects

Metroplex has provided leadership, expertise, administrative, and financial resources from the start of the DRI process. Its continued success with project management and delivery also includes a deep commitment to engagement with the local community and transparency throughout the process. During the DRI process, outreach starting during the application period and has continued into planning which is helping to build a constituency of support for the potential projects.



Ongoing Project Administration and Assistance

The entities listed below will be available to assist both public and private project sponsors for technical assistance and guidance, and can assist in identifying additional project resources:

City of Schenectady Department of Engineering

This department handles the planning and design development of infrastructure and utilities within the city including sidewalks, stormwater systems, curb infrastructure, and road details. Staff also assists with sidewalk permitting, curb cut applications, lot line adjustments, and more.

City of Schenectady Department of Development

This department handles long- and short-range planning and the administration of multiple funding programs that focus on the renewal of the city. This group's capacity includes planning/ zoning, community and economic development, historic preservation, transportation planning, neighborhood revitalization, and grant procurement/monitoring.

City of Schenectady Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission works with property owners to review exterior modifications to structures for historical appropriateness. This group is the only locally recognized authority for approving proposed changes to historic properties and can guide the development of any buildings within the DRI area that falls under that designation.

City of Schenectady Planning Commission

The nine-member Planning Commission handles all planning and development changes as they pertain to businesses in the area. They review site plan and subdivision applications, special use permits, and rezoning requests.

The City of Schenectady and the Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority have a long, successful working relationship that has been a key factor in ongoing downtown redevelopment. This partnership will continue to be important for DRI project implementation and monitoring.

City of Schenectady Zoning Board of Appeals

This seven-member citizen board reviews land use and area variances requested in zoning applications and interprets zoning regulations. They review project applications for building height, setback, or use variances.

City of Schenectady Department of Finance

This department handles all fiscal transactions and accounting responsibilities for the City. This responsibility includes annual budget recommendations, preparation of the city's annual financial report, management of city assets, investments and debt issuance, oversight of city tax collection, financial analysis, city revenue and forecast monitoring, preparation of fiscal reports, and payroll processing.

City of Schenectady Corporation Counsel

The Corporation Counsel is responsible for the management of multiple legal components of City government. This Counsel provides legal advice for all City departments as well as manages, reviews, and contracts with multiple parties. This group can provide additional support to the DRI implementation process as they are the entity that is responsible for managing the sale of City-owned property. Following the completion of supported projects, they will be instrumental in handling land ownership from the City to project sponsors.

Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation (DSIC)

This nonprofit organization has a mission to facilitate and support economic and cultural growth within the central business district of Schenectady. It plays an active role in business and community development, including programming and publicity.

All projects will involve coordination with the designated NYS agency. As noted in the project profiles, some DRI initiatives include an administrative budget allocation, and both the City and Metroplex will need this support to ensure implementation success.

Project Sponsors

Nine project sponsors are public entities and seven are private or non-profit sponsors. See Table 11 for a complete list of project sponsors.

Public Sponsors

Public improvement projects will largely be administered by Metroplex Development Authority in close collaboration with the appropriate City of Schenectady departments. Metroplex will handle project coordination and implementation to meet community goals.

Private Sponsors

Projects that involve rehabilitation or construction of privately owned properties will be managed by the project sponsor. State agencies assigned to fund and/or manage the projects, such as Empire State Development or Homes and Community Renewal, will contract directly with project sponsors. All private development projects are required to comply with NYS requirements outlined in their contracts, meet all City regulatory requirements, and obtain all necessary state, local and federal permits or approvals.

Private and non-profit entities leading major DRI initiatives include:

- *Redburn Development Partners* is a leading real estate development firm in the Capital Region with over \$100 million in local development over the last two years. Redburn currently owns and operates more than 125,000 square feet and 122 dwelling units within the City of Schenectady. The firm manages all its properties directly through its maintenance and management arm Redburn Property Services. *Redburn would lead: Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton.*
- *Highbridge Prime Development, Inc.* is responsible for the recently completed Electric City Apartments on Lower State Street which includes 104 market-rate apartments and 12,000 square feet of retail/office space. They have developed projects in the Capital Region with a combined value exceeding \$300 million. *Highbridge Prime would lead: Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State.*
- *First United Methodist Church (FUMC)* is a historic church in downtown Schenectady. Its Board of Trustees is responsible for building maintenance of the almost 150-year-old church and would assume maintenance of the new lighting. It is working with an experienced team of lighting experts to design the project. *FUMC would lead: Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the FUMC Spire.*

- *L & S Realty* has 60+ years of collective experience with successful construction, leasing and management. With over 175,000 square feet of real estate in the Capital Region, their portfolio includes Class A office, medical, warehouse, and retail space. *L&S Realty would lead: Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space.*
- *The Social Enterprise and Training (SEAT) Center* provides education and training programs for underrepresented populations, businesses, and communities, with a strong focus on serving young adults. The organization has outgrown the space it maintains on State Street and has the capacity to oversee completion of improvements at their new facility. *The SEAT Center would lead: Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center.*
- *Urban Initiatives Group LLC (UIG)* is a local redevelopment company with multiple projects in downtown Schenectady. Completed projects include 140 Erie Boulevard and work is underway to convert 432 Franklin Street into a mixed-use building. *UIG would lead: Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground.*
- *Albany Barn, Inc.* is a creative arts incubator that seeks to catalyze community renewal through creative collaboration. Its work in Albany includes 14 prominent murals downtown and a popular walking tour series presenting the stories behind the art. It opened a location in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood in 2018, called Electric City Barn, and has been involved in many arts and cultural projects throughout the city including "Schenectady & Me" sculptural bench installations and the planned Sculpture Park and Phoenix Walks programs in Hamilton Hill. *Albany Barn would lead: Install Public Art Throughout Downtown.*

Project Implementation Timeline

While the impacts of overall Downtown Revitalization Initiative are intended to be long-lasting and sustainable, projects considered for funding should see significant progress within 24 months of the award announcement. Anticipated project timelines are listed in the Project Profile section. Most projects can commence immediately upon award and contracting, and are anticipated to be completed within a one- to two-year time frame. Given the complexity of many projects, timelines will have to be closely monitored and coordinated. Projects that are not selected for DRI funding may be positioned for other funding sources as other awards are made.

DRI Project Implementation and Benefits to the Local Community

The DRI vision addresses economy, housing, historic preservation, celebration of cultural resources, and improved connectivity options to create a more unified, dynamic downtown. The recommended projects realize this vision and will directly benefit Schenectady residents. Public improvement projects will improve the quality and availability of mobility options within the area, create or improve civic spaces, and beautify the public domain through art initiatives. New development and rehabilitation projects will create housing and job opportunities that benefit the community. Branding and marketing projects will direct residents and visitors to local small business and other destinations to bolster the economy. The combined effects of these projects will have a significant positive impact on the larger community, further strengthening Schenectady's role as a thriving urban center in the Capital Region.

Table 11: Project Sponsors

Project Name	Project Sponsor	Sponsor Type	Proposed Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center				
Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets	Redburn Development Partners, LLC	Private	Fall 2020	Fall 2022
Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors	Metroplex	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2023
Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors	City of Schenectady	Public	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street	Highbridge Prime Development Inc.	Private	Spring 2021	Spring 2023
Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire	First United Methodist Church	Non-Profit	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity				
Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway	City of Schenectady and Metroplex	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail	Metroplex	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Extend North Jay Street and Improve Maxon Road	City of Schenectady	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation	City of Schenectady	Public	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Improve Signage and Wayfinding	City of Schenectady	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty Streets	City of Schenectady	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice				
Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space	L & S Realty	Private	Spring 2021	Summer 2022
Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway	Metroplex	Public	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center	SEAT Center	Non-profit	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground	Urban Initiatives Group LLC	Private	Summer 2021	Spring 2023
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness				
Install Public Art Throughout Downtown	Albany Barn, Inc.	Non-profit	Spring 2021	Spring 2022



IV. Public Involvement

Introduction

Community stakeholders played an integral role in the development of Schenectady's DRI Plan. The general public participated in a series of events that began during the application phase and continued through the planning process, and key stakeholders were engaged individually. The process built on prior community engagement initiatives held in Schenectady for this and other planning projects. The input from these conversations was incorporated into the vision and plan priorities.

The COVID-19 public health crisis brought the planning process to a halt in March. When the process resumed in July, the final two LPC meetings and third public meeting shifted to an online format to comply with NY Forward and public health guidance. Information was posted to the website and sent to the project mailing list to publicize these opportunities, and the public continued to participate in this new format.

Public Involvement Process

Local Planning Committee (LPC)

Sixteen community members were selected at the onset of the planning process to form the Local Planning Committee (LPC). This group provided guidance to the planning team via five working meetings that were open to the general public. They helped

promote public events with their constituencies and provided important local insight to the planning team.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders at the beginning of the planning process, including property and business owners, community leaders, and public officials within the area. Interviews were conducted by members of the planning team over two days in January.

Open Call for Projects

The LPC held an open call for additional projects to identify other potential DRI candidate projects not included in the City's original application. This process led to 18 additional projects being submitted for consideration, of which 7 are included in the list of recommended projects.

Project Website

In addition to the three public meetings, the City also hosted a project website. The website provided notification and information on all public and LPC meetings; included a digital library of project deliverables; and provided a continuous opportunity for community members to provide input. In total, the website had 4,481 total website visits and 8,411 total page views.

Public Events

Engaging a wide spectrum of the community through a transparent engagement process is critical to the overall success of any DRI initiative.

Three major public events were held during the DRI planning process, two in-person prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and one online once the planning process resumed. Each of these meetings was open to residents, stakeholders, and anyone interested in learning more about the DRI. During each of these, different activities were designed to gain insight into community ideas, priorities, and feedback on proposed projects, highlighted in the following section. Full meeting summaries are available in the appendix.

“Light up the Electric City!”



Small groups of community members worked together to identify shared priorities and brainstorm potential project ideas to improve the DRI area.

Kickoff Meeting #1

January 16, 2020

SUNY Schenectady Van Curler Room

The Schenectady DRI planning process kicked off with a public meeting bringing more than 60 community members together to learn about the DRI process, and share their insights to help guide community priorities and potential projects.

The event opened with a brief presentation to provide an understanding of the DRI process and what types of projects can be funded. Participants completed an individual exercise to provide feedback on the draft vision statement and goals. After reviewing individual responses to the draft vision statement, several themes emerged that informed the final vision:

- Mobility and connectivity
- Recreational amenities
- Affordable housing
- Historic and cultural resources



Community feedback on the proposed goals for the DRI area included specific references to connectivity, parking, college presence, recreational and other amenities, and cultural and historic resources.

Participants then worked in small groups to brainstorm potential project ideas and identify shared priorities. The small groups generated a total of 82 potential project ideas across the four broad categories of fundable project types. Ideas were proposed for 36 Public Improvements, 25 New Development or Rehab of Existing Structures projects, 3 Revolving Loan and Grant Funds, and 18 Branding and Marketing projects.

The small groups worked together to determine their top five shared priorities with which all table members could agree. These were shared with the entire group at the end of the meeting, during which similar priorities and consistent themes emerged:

- Incorporate lighting as a core component of the DRI to reflect Schenectady's history;

- Develop pedestrian-friendly roadways with improvements centered on walkability and urban design that connects different areas of the downtown;
- Promote health and wellness via a downtown supermarket;
- Address parking issues, but with fewer surface lots and more complete strategies;
- Encourage art such as mural and sculptures to create photo opportunities and tourist attractions;
- Develop an Alco Museum/ visitors center at Mohawk Harbor.

“Making downtown a ‘cool’, ‘interesting’, and artistic destination is vital to our reputation and attraction to all.”



Each group shared their top five priorities with the entire audience, allowing the community to appreciate the similarities and consistent themes.

Schenectady Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Public Meeting #1: January 2020

Shared Table Priorities

- 1 ALCO Museum / Visitors' Center at Mohawk Harbor
- 2 Special event spaces (e.g., City Hall plaza)
(build capacity for bathrooms, electrical, signage)
- 3 Art (e.g., Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail, mural on ugly wall from Liberty to Union on Erie Blvd)
- 4 Bike/pedestrian bridge crossing on Nott St. at the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Trail
- 5 Marketing of a theater & entertainment district

Create Art in Public Spaces

Project Location


Current Site Condition


Proposed Design


Project Sponsor
Albany Barn, Inc.

Supporting Sponsors
Albany Center Gallery, Discover Schenectady, and Operation Bridge + 4 proposed partners

Project Cost
\$147,000

DRI Request
\$147,000 (100% of project cost)

Time Frame
9 months for murals
4 months for rail bridge lighting

Notes:
LOCATION: NEW SECTION OF JAY ST. TO ATTRACT TOURISTS TO NEW CORRIDOR.
DOUBLE PROJECT COST
1 SCULPTURE SHOULD BE VERY LARGE SCALE (30'x40') - THE FINAL PART IN THE CITY
THIS BRIDGE WOULD BE THE BIGGEST ATTRACTION IN THE AREA
VISITORS CAN ALTER THE LIGHTING VIA MULTIPLE TOUCHSCREENS
Rail bridge lighting and signage

Precedent: A colorful mural can enliven a blank wall.

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Comment Sheet

BETTER SIGNAGE & LANE MARKINGS
needed for BICYCLES from downtown,
to casino & Stockade.

CONSIDER RESTORING BIKE PATH
BRIDGE over NOTT ST. LEASE
PARK CHOPPER

NEW YORK STATE
Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Shared Table Priorities

- 1 JAY ST. CONNECTOR + ALCO TUNNEL
w/ Pedestrian Focus + Amenities
(Art, Seating) + Lighting + Restrooms
(Bike)
- 2 Wayfinding - integrate public art,
large + small scale orientation
(Little Italy, Downtown, Harbor, Stockade,
Mill Lane, etc.) - Neighborhood Connections too!
- 3 Urban Infill b/w Proctors +
Little Italy - strong emphasis on
pedestrian experience
- 4 New Destinations/Amenities → Dog Park
Destination Playgrounds, Murals for Placemaking
Places that will draw people for selfies
- 5 Preservation of historic facades that
are significant

Public Restrooms to support events

Different types of housing, not all high-end

A sample of comments and public input collected during the two in-person meetings.

Public Workshop Meeting #2

February 20, 2020
SUNY Schenectady

The second public meeting attracted more than 65 participants to cast their votes to help identify priority projects. The meeting started with a summary of input from the kickoff public event, demonstrating how public input was incorporated into the final vision, goals, and strategies.

A summary of findings from the retail market analysis highlighted the opportunity for developing neighborhood goods and services in the DRI area. It included a series of recommendations for determining the retail component of potential projects in the area.

The list of potential projects was then presented, organized by the primary goal each one addressed. Participants were directed to a gallery of project posters that highlighted key information, including project renderings where available. All audience members received five high priority tickets and five medium priority tickets to identify projects they felt best achieved the vision and goals for the DRI and/or had the greatest transformative potential.

Following the meeting, the tickets for each project were tallied with high priority tickets counted as two points and medium priority tickets counted as one point. The projects were then categorized into highest, significant, or low transformative capacity. This community ranking was one factor in the LPC's evaluation of which projects to recommend for funding, while also acknowledging that several projects had strong showings from their supporters that skewed the voting. Projects that were highly rated include:

- Alchemy Urban Playground
- Capital Region Aquatic Center
- Electric City Food Co-op
- Family Friendly-Public Art
- George Westinghouse Statue
- Create Art in Public Spaces
- Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway



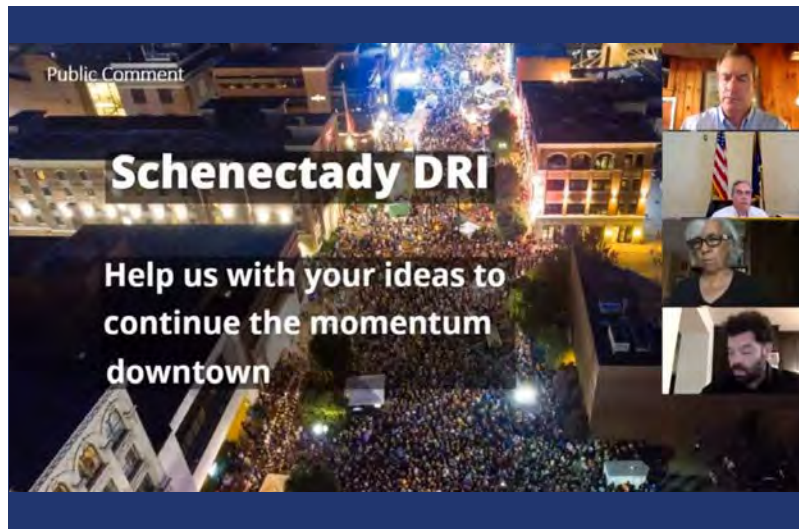
Community members viewed a poster gallery of potential projects before casting their votes for those they felt should be the highest priorities.

Public Meeting #3

August 13, 2020

Zoom Online Webinar

The third public meeting was rescheduled from March to August due to COVID-19. It was conducted virtually on the Zoom meeting platform and attended by approximately 30 participants. The meeting was recorded and posted to the project website. The planning team provided an overview of the planning process; a discussion of the impacts from COVID-19; highlights from the residential market findings; finalized DRI vision, goals, and strategies; and an overview of the DRI projects being recommended for funding. Following the presentation, community members were encouraged to provide comments regarding the Schenectady DRI plan.



A screenshot from the third public meeting held online.

Local Planning Committee Meetings

LPC #1

December 17, 2019

SUNY Schenectady

The purpose of the first meeting was to introduce the DRI process and LPC responsibilities to the new committee members, review the successful Schenectady application, and discuss the public engagement plan with the committee. The preliminary projects identified in the application were highlighted during the presentation.

LPC #2

January 9, 2020

SUNY Schenectady

During the second LPC meeting, committee members reviewed key demographic findings; discussed emerging opportunities and challenges; reviewed a list of potential public improvement projects; and received feedback on amended DRI project goals and vision.



All LPC meetings were open to the public.

LPC #3

February 13, 2020

SUNY Schenectady

At the third LPC meeting, committee members reviewed key findings from the first public meeting and highlights from the retail analysis. They approved the final vision, goals, and strategies that incorporated the community's and their input. Importantly, they were introduced to the full slate of potential DRI projects identified during the planning process.

LPC #4

July 30, 2020

Zoom

After a four-month pause due to COVID-19, the LPC reconvened online to resume the planning process. The meeting's purpose was to provide an overview of the DRI process, discuss impacts to the DRI due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, review input from the second public meeting, review findings from the residential market analysis, and review and discuss the potential DRI projects to be recommended for funding.

LPC #5

August 27, 2020

Zoom

During the final LPC meeting, committee members reviewed the comments and input provided by community members at the third public meeting. They discussed the final list of projects being recommended for funding, and they were given instructions for the DRI project voting process. Members overall voiced their support for the identified projects and DRI planning process in general.

Public Impact

In total, hundreds of Schenectady residents participated in the public and LPC meetings, and thousands visited the project website. The ideas generated and reinforced throughout the engagement process—from calls for public art to improved connectivity to more downtown housing—clearly set the foundation for the slate of projects ultimately identified to be recommended for DRI funding.

“I really think the Jay Street connector (and ALCO tunnel) really touches upon all of the DRI Goals.”

“Thank you to all of you for making it possible for the public to participate in such a challenging time.”

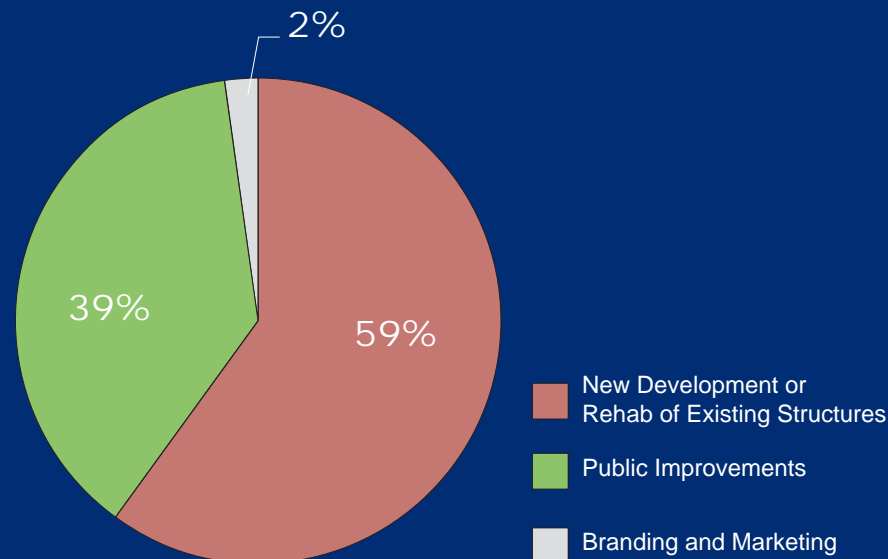


V. Project Profiles

Overview

The Local Planning Committee approved a slate of 16 projects that are recommended for DRI funding consideration, totaling more than \$13 million in DRI funding requests. These projects represent a potential overall investment of more than \$61 million in downtown Schenectady, meaning that DRI funds will leverage more than \$48 million in other funding. Seven projects are for new development or rehabilitation of existing structures, eight are public improvement projects including public art installations, and one is for branding and marketing. Nine project sponsors are either the City or Metroplex and seven are either private or non-profit.

Figure 9: Overall DRI Request By Project Type



Project Evaluation Criteria

The initial list of potential DRI projects included projects from the City's DRI application and new projects submitted during the open call for projects. The LPC evaluated projects on this list based on the criteria listed below, with analysis regarding feasibility and benefit/cost provided by the consultant team to assist LPC members. Committee discussions focused on this information, how well potential projects aligned with the overall vision and goals, and their catalytic potential for the DRI area. The final slate of projects recommended for DRI funding are those that best address this combination of factors and that the committee feels has the greatest potential to drive positive change downtown.

<u>First Screen</u> FEASIBILITY	POTENTIAL IMPACT	<u>Second Screen</u> BENEFIT/COST	PUBLIC SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readiness to start• Completeness of funding plan• Clarity of site control and regulatory steps• Capacity of project sponsor to complete and maintain investment• Program sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alignment with DRI vision & goals• Transformative & catalytic potential• Synergies with other DRI projects• Timeline to completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percent of total DRI funds relative to impact• Demonstrated need for DRI funds to complete project• Other funds leveraged• Past State investment• Appropriateness of DRI as a funding source	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Planning Committee meetings• Community feedback from public open houses & stakeholder engagement events• Previously expressed local & regional priorities

Figure 10: Project Location Map



Note: DRI area boundary lines include both sides of the street.

ID	Project	Page
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center		
1A	Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets	5-8
1B	Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors	5-13
1C	Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors	5-17
1D	Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street	5-21
1E	Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire	5-25
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity		
2A	Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway	5-29
2B	Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail	5-33
2C	Extend North Jay Street and Improve Maxon Road	5-36
2D	Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation	5-39
2E	Improve Signage and Wayfinding	5-42
2F	Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty Streets	5-44
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice		
3A	Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space	5-47
3B	Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway	5-50
3C	Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center	5-53
3D	Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground	5-56
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness		
4A	Install Public Art Throughout Downtown	5-60

Table 12: Project Summary Table

ID	Name	Description	Responsible Party
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center			
1A	Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets	Redevelopment of three underutilized blocks to provide medical office space, apartments, retail, and parking.	Redburn Development Partners, LLC
1B	Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors	Facade improvement fund to enhance existing buildings in three corridors: Lower State Street, Lafayette Street, and Little Italy.	Metroplex
1C	Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors	Streetlight replacement with energy-efficient LED along North Broadway and Clinton Street, and adding canopy-style lighting in Little Italy.	City of Schenectady
1D	Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street	Construction of 17 market-rate housing units, and a parking structure with 142 public parking spaces and 132 assigned parking spaces.	Highbridge Prime Development Inc.
1E	Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire	Installation of programmable LED lighting to illuminate a prominent church spire as a highly attractive area landmark.	First United Methodist Church
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity			
2A	Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway	Extension of existing heritage trail to Front Street Park, and installation of informative gateway at Mohawk Harbor trailhead.	City of Schenectady and Metroplex
2B	Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail	Improvement of existing tunnel to connect pedestrians and bicyclists between Jay St/Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and Erie Boulevard.	Metroplex
2C	Extend North Jay Street and Improve Maxon Road	Extension of Jay Street from current dead-end to Nott Street, and pedestrian improvements to Maxon Road.	City of Schenectady
2D	Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation	Public square improvements around City Hall and conversion of Jay Street to two-way traffic between City Hall and Union Street.	City of Schenectady
2E	Improve Signage and Wayfinding	Installation of signage to guide residents and visitors through the DRI area, highlighting local businesses, historical and cultural destinations.	City of Schenectady
2F	Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty Streets	Pedestrian and parking improvements including lighting, landscaping, and walkways in this mid-block alley.	City of Schenectady
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice			
3A	Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space	Renovation of a vacant building across from City Hall and along the Jay Street Mall into ground floor retail and second floor office space.	L & S Realty
3B	Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway	Public space, lighting, and drainage improvements to support local businesses along this popular walkway.	Metroplex
3C	Complete Building Improvements for SEAT Workforce Training Center	Facade and interior improvements to this expansion site for a successful youth education and training program.	SEAT Center
3D	Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground	Renovation of existing structures to create four urban art studios, a retail gallery, an event space, and two maker/ training spaces.	Urban Initiatives Group LLC
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness			
4A	Install Public Art Throughout Downtown	Multi-faceted public art initiative to create and install murals, interactive art pieces, sculptural seating, LED lighting, and a historic statue.	Albany Barn, Inc.

ID	Estimated Total Project Cost	DRI Funding Request	Funding Sources	Proposed Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Jobs Created
1A	\$38,673,000	\$2,750,000	Developer equity, loans, DRI	Fall 2020	Fall 2022	100+
1B	\$1,050,000	\$750,000	Metroplex, DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2023	0
1C	\$875,000	\$875,000	DRI	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	0
1D	\$8,250,000	\$3,000,000	Developer equity, loans, DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2023	1
1E	\$108,000	\$78,000	Private fundraising, DRI	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	0
2A	\$760,000	\$760,000	DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
2B	\$350,000	\$350,000	DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
2C	\$4,147,000	\$2,000,000	City funds, DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
2D	\$425,000	\$425,000	DRI	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	0
2E	\$500,000	\$250,000	City funds, DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
2F	\$238,500	\$238,500	DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
3A	\$2,400,000	\$425,000	Developer equity, loans, Metroplex, National Grid, DRI	Spring 2021	Summer 2022	75-85
3B	\$250,000	\$250,000	DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	0
3C	\$1,690,000	\$590,000	Developer equity, DRI	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	0
3D	\$1,410,650	\$300,000	Developer equity, loans, grants, DRI	Summer 2021	Spring 2023	10-16
4A	\$312,500	\$287,000	Schenectady Foundation, DRI	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	10
	\$61,439,650	\$13,328,500				



Projects are recommended for funding that reinforce one another. In this rendering, public improvements to street lighting complement private investment in new downtown housing.



Goal: Vibrant Urban Center

Create a vibrant urban center and attractive public realm that welcomes residents, workers, and visitors alike.

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support retail options that increase access to healthy food
- Attract businesses that reflect the local creative economy
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Increase the number of taggable and shareable and other social media moments through public art and events
- “Light up” public spaces to create dynamic evening settings

Transform Underutilized Blocks Near State and Clinton Streets



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$2,750,000

Total Project Cost: \$38,673,000

Project Description

This transformative redevelopment of three underutilized blocks adjacent to the Proctors Block will create a dynamic mixed-use environment featuring 108 apartments, 5,000 square feet of retail space, and 52,000 square feet of medical office space. Parking will be provided in nearby surface lots and a future 180-space parking structure.

The former Citizens Bank building, a prominent blank-walled structure on State Street that was vacant since 2018, was demolished in early 2020. It will be replaced with a four-story mixed-use building featuring 58 one- and two-bedroom market-rate apartments and 5,000 square feet of State Street retail space. The building across from this site at 500 State Street will be renovated into 52,000 square feet of medical office space. An attractive brick building at 510 Smith Street will be renovated into housing, and existing surface parking lots along Clinton Street will be replaced with two new buildings providing at least 50 more housing units. A two-level, 180-space parking structure behind those buildings will provide convenient parking for commercial tenants, residents, and visitors.

Project Location

Thirteen parcels totaling approximately 2.8 acres located within a two-block radius of the intersection of State and Clinton Streets:

- 501 State Street (former Citizens Bank building site)
- 500 State Street (Bank of America branch)



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed design for 501 State Street. A fourth story was approved by the Schenectady Planning Commission in September 2020.



Location map: The project is between Proctors Block and Veterans Park

- Clinton Street (parking lot adjacent to 215 Clinton Street)
- 215 Clinton Street (parking lot)
- 219 Clinton Street (parking lot)
- 221 Clinton Street (parking lot)
- 510 Smith Street, aka 301 Clinton Street (two-story building)
- 507 Smith Street (parking lot)
- 509 Smith Street (parking lot)
- 511 Smith Street (parking lot)
- 513 Smith Street (parking lot)
- 208 Lafayette Street (two-story building)
- 214 Lafayette Street (parking lot)

Property Owner/Sponsor

Redburn Development Partners, LLC is the sponsor and owns 501 State Street. It has the remaining parcels under contract to purchase from two owners.

Capacity

Redburn Development Partners is a leading real estate development firm in the Capital Region with over \$100 million in local development over the last two years. Redburn currently owns and operates more than 125,000 square feet and 122 dwelling units within the City of Schenectady. Specializing in historic restorations, the Redburn team recently completed similar projects such as The Foster and Fitzgerald Buildings in Schenectady and the nearly complete Kenmore portfolio in Albany. The firm manages all its properties directly through its maintenance and management arm, Redburn Property Services.

Project Partners

- Metroplex Development Authority, partner in acquisition of 501 State Street

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance our historic character
- Build on current local growth sectors (arts, entertainment, software, technology)
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Great homes in safe and stable neighborhoods (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)
- Quality workforce and growing businesses (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Demolition of a prominent vacant, blank-wall building in the core of downtown that detracted from the visual appeal and pedestrian experience.
- Adaptive reuse of two existing buildings to return them to productive use.
- Replace surface parking lots with new housing options.
- More residents, workers, and healthcare visitors downtown who can support local retail and dining and expand activity around the Proctors Block.

Public Support

This project was ranked as having significant transformative impact based on public input at the second public meeting. The now-demolished Citizens Bank building had been described as the “last remaining eyesore in Downtown.” The community identified

increased jobs, strategic infill downtown, and preservation of existing buildings as priorities during public events, all of which this project achieves. Planning Commission members supported the 501 State Street project, saying it will bring fresh momentum downtown and will ideally revitalize side streets as well, driving foot traffic and carrying activity up State Street.

Jobs Created

The project could inject more than 100 new healthcare and retail jobs into the urban core and indirectly support dozens more. These new jobs will diversify the downtown economy and boost the City's job base in healthcare, a growing industry.

Property Acquisition

The project sponsor acquired 501 State Street in Fall 2019 and is currently under contract to purchase the other 12 parcels from two owners. All parties remain committed to these agreements and expect to execute the transactions in the coming months.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Site and Building Acquisition	\$3,930,000
Abatement, Demolition, Site Work	\$2,553,800
Construction	\$30,963,200
Design Fees	\$926,000
Permitting	\$300,000
TOTAL:	\$38,673,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Developer Equity	\$12,718,000	Hard and soft costs
Loans	\$23,205,000	Hard costs
DRI Request	\$2,750,000	Hard costs
TOTAL	\$38,673,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The project budget was developed by the sponsor based on cost estimates and extensive experience with similar project types. DRI funding is necessary to address an approximately \$1 million asbestos abatement and the high development costs associated with providing the structured parking necessary to attract medical office space to locate here versus less expensive suburban locations.

The residential market analysis demonstrated demand for between 160 and 210 new market-rate housing units per year in the DRI area. This project addresses that demand by providing at least 100 new market-rate apartments in the core of downtown.

The retail market analysis recommended that new retail be located in existing clusters. The retail component of the 501 State Street building will have excellent visibility adjacent to other State Street retail. The analysis also indicated demand for neighborhood goods and services such as dry cleaners, salons and barber shops, and convenience stores which are potential retail tenant types here.

Much of the existing medical office space in the City is outdated or on the edge of the core. This project will create modern medical office space in a historic downtown building, the design and cost of which will be comparable to other medical office developments throughout the area.

Parking will be provided initially in existing surface parking lots nearby. Over time, a parking structure is planned for the Clinton Street sites to accommodate the project's demand.

Regulatory Requirements

The proposed mixed-use building at 501 State Street received Planning Commission approval in June 2020 (which included acceptance of the project's Negative Declaration under SEQRA) and Schenectady IDA approval in July 2020. Adaptive reuse of the 301 Clinton Street building was approved by the Planning Commission

in September 2020 (which included acceptance of the project's Negative Declaration under SEQR). Future project phases will also need City of Schenectady planning approval, and all phases will need building permits and certificates of occupancy prior to completion.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

This project is poised for implementation and the sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award notification. Building demolition at 501 State Street is complete and site preparation is underway.

Design:

- Design and documentation for other sites: 6 months
- Municipal plan review/approval: 2 months

Construction:

- Construction at 501 State: 8-10 months (complete late 2021)
- Renovation of 301 Clinton: 6-9 months
- Construction for other sites: 7-12 months

Total: 20-24 months (some phases may occur concurrently)

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics.

Metrics include:

- Number of new residents living downtown
- Number of new healthcare and retail employees downtown
- Change in assessed property value

Existing Conditions



Source: Project sponsor



Top: The site of "the last remaining eyesore in downtown," was cleared in Spring 2020. Bottom: 500 State Street will be renovated for medical office.

Existing Conditions



301 Clinton Street will be adaptively reused to create 27 apartments.

Improve Building Facades Along Key Corridors

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$750,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,050,000

Project Description

This project will establish a fund for facade repairs and renovations to encourage additional private investment and to enhance the visual appearance of buildings in three key corridors:

- State Street, from Washington Avenue to the railroad bridge. This portion of State Street is seeing significant investment in new construction but support is needed to rehabilitate existing facades.
- Little Italy along Jay Street, from Union Street to South Avenue. This popular stretch of restaurants is a local destination that will benefit from facade repairs and maintenance.
- Lafayette Street, from Smith Street to Chapel Street. This area near Veterans Park is starting to see improvements which will be further boosted by facade renovation funds.

These areas still exhibit physical distress and have a demonstrated need to improve the building stock and visual appearance.

Fund Structure:

Improvements submitted for funding must make a meaningful, positive change in the appearance of the structure and follow Downtown design guidelines. Minor repairs, signage, roofing, and pavement or sidewalk projects are not eligible. The property owner must provide a cash match for 50% of eligible project costs. Tenants can also participate but must meet 50% match requirement and show evidence of the building owner's approval.



Potential facade improvements to an existing building at 102 State Street, adjacent to the new Mill Artisan District.



Location map: Three corridors in the heart of downtown.

Property Owner/Sponsor

Metroplex Development Authority is the sponsor and will manage the fund. The properties are owned by private entities.

Capacity

Metroplex has assisted with more than 100 facade improvements and signage projects throughout downtown. It administers other loan and grant programs and has the capacity to implement this project. It will administer this project with no administration costs charged to any program costs.

Project Partners

Private property owners

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance our historic character
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Renovates and improves existing buildings to enhance the character of State Street, Little Italy, and Lafayette Street.
- Encourages private investment in existing building stock.

Public Support

This project was ranked as having significant transformative impact based on public input from the second public meeting. The community identified preservation of existing buildings as a priority during public events. LPC members supported this project, recommending to expand the target area to include Little Italy and

parts of Lafayette Street. Citing the demonstrated need in these areas, members also recommended increasing the DRI request to the maximum allowed.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Improvement funds	\$1,050,000
TOTAL:	\$1,050,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Metroplex	\$300,000	Improvement funds
DRI Request	\$750,000	Improvement funds
TOTAL	\$1,050,000	

The total investment will be \$2,100,000 with the required 50% match that will leverage an additional \$1,050,000 or more in private funds.

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Metroplex frequently fields inquiries about available funds. Buildings at 29-33, 102, 249, and 277 State Street are prominent examples of the need for funding assistance. Some of these building owners have expressed interest in making facade improvements, and Metroplex has determined that all of these and many others would be strong candidates for the program. The high costs of facade improvements—particularly with historic structures—are often the barrier to successful redevelopment. This project will target resources to three areas that are seeing investment and have potential for further private activity.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

Metroplex will be able to implement this project quickly by drawing from past experience with similar funds.

Design:

- Develop fund award guidelines: 2 months
- Initial call for applications: 2 months
- Review, award, contracting: 2 months

Construction:

- Facade improvements: within 12 months of award

Total: 12-36 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics.

Metrics include:

- Number of facades renovated
- Amount of private funding leveraged
- Change in assessed property values

Existing Conditions



Source: Google Streetview



The Lower State corridor includes numerous existing buildings eligible for facade improvement funds.



Source: Google Streetview

Existing buildings eligible for facade improvement funds include restaurants in Little Italy (top) and storefronts on Lafayette Street (bottom).

Existing Conditions



Existing buildings in the Lower State corridor eligible for facade improvement funds, including (clockwise from top left): 29-33 State Street; 102 State Street; 249 State Street; and 277 State Street, the former State Theater prominent at the corner of State and Erie.

Install New Lighting Along Three Prominent Corridors



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$875,000

Total Project Cost: \$875,000

Project Description

This project consists of two components: replacing existing streetlights with more energy-efficient LED lights along two streets, and adding decorative canopy-style lighting within Little Italy.

The new LED light fixtures will be installed along North Broadway and Clinton Street. These corridors provide important vehicular and pedestrian connections to State Street. The North Broadway corridor connects State Street to several restaurants, public parking, and a new adaptive reuse project. The Clinton Street corridor connects City Hall and parking to State Street. The LED fixtures will reduce the City's lighting costs and carbon footprint, and can be upgraded with Smart City technology in the future. Enhanced lighting controls will provide better illumination tailored to the time of day.

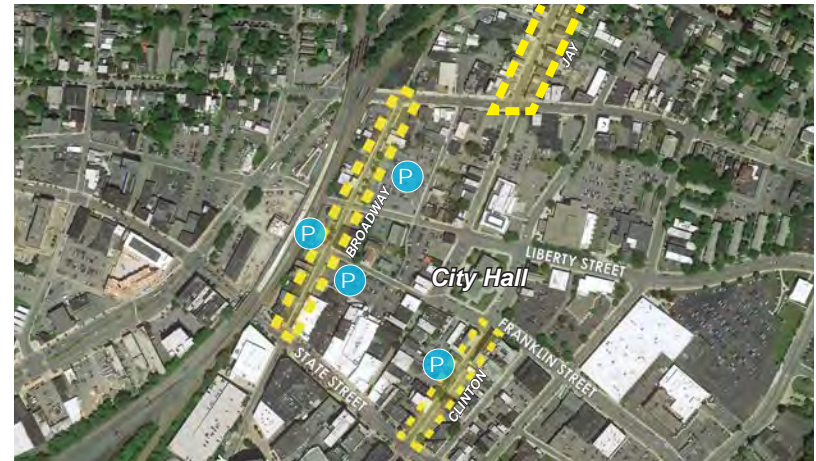
Canopy-style overhead lighting will be installed along Jay Street within Little Italy to enhance its visual appeal and reputation as a popular dining and cultural corridor. This attractive lighting will complement the well-known Italian restaurants in this neighborhood and enhance the general ambiance. This project is inspired by the success of a similar initiative completed along the Jay Street Marketplace.

Project Location

- North Broadway, between State and Union Streets
- Clinton Street, between State and Franklin Streets
- Jay Street, between Union Street and South Avenue



Proposed lighting improvements along Clinton Street approaching State Street.



Location map: Three important corridors connecting destinations downtown.

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady is the sponsor. The street lights are within the public right-of-way and owned by National Grid.

Capacity

The City of Schenectady has the capacity to implement this project. It has already partnered with National Grid for similar street light replacements downtown.

Project Partners

- National Grid
- Metroplex Development Authority

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors including underpasses and historic facades
- “Light up” public spaces to create dynamic evening settings

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Quality city services efficiently delivered (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Enhanced illumination along narrow streets in the evenings will foster a perception of safety and encourage pedestrian activity.
- Ability to accommodate future smart city technology like pedestrian and bicycle counters, air quality monitors, etc.
- Energy-cost savings and carbon footprint reductions.
- Improved visual appeal and ambiance will support local businesses.

Public Support

The community expressed a strong interest in lighting downtown. It was a common theme heard at the first public meeting, with several references to Schenectady’s historic identity as the “Electric City”. This project was ranked as having significant transformative impact based on public input from the second public meeting. However, there were some concerns raised about the benefit of overhead canopy lighting.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
LED street lights	\$675,000
Canopy-style lighting	\$200,000
TOTAL:	\$875,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$875,000	Lights, installation, soft costs
TOTAL	\$875,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

These estimates were developed by the City Engineer and Metroplex construction manager. Estimates for the street lighting are based on multiple previous downtown lighting projects. The overhead canopy lighting costs are based on costs for similar lighting on the Jay Street Mall.

Regulatory Requirements

None

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award.

Design:

- Lighting design: 3 months

Construction:

- Street light replacement: 2-4 months
- Canopy lighting installation: 1 month

Total: 6-9 months

Project Reporting

The City of Schenectady will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Number of street lights replaced
- Estimated energy cost savings

Existing Conditions



Top: Current view of Jay Street where canopy lighting would be installed.
Bottom: Example of canopy lights recently added to the Jay Street Mall.

Existing Conditions



Source: Google Streetview



Source: Google Streetview



Source: The Daily Gazette



Source: Times-Union

Top row: Current views of North Broadway as seen from State Street and of Clinton Street, two corridors where new lighting will be added.
Bottom row: Recently installed LED street lighting in Schenectady.

Add New Housing and Public Parking on Lower State Street



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$3,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$8,250,000

Project Description

This project will create new housing and publicly available parking to complement ongoing development in the Lower State Street area. The project requires the demolition of two existing structures which have exceeded their useful life and have documented asbestos and mold issues. They will be replaced with a new five-story building containing 17 market-rate residential units which will connect to the recently completed Electric City Apartments next door. Behind this building, a two-level parking structure will be built along South Ferry and Erie Streets. It will provide 142 public parking spaces with direct access to State Street (30% more than currently exists on-site) and another 132 covered parking spaces assigned to residents and other State Street tenants. The public parking area will include five reserved spaces for electric vehicle (EV) charging.

The project sponsor is also in discussions with ABOVEGrid to determine the viability of installing a photo-voltaic car canopy system for the upper parking level. This could provide solar energy to the project, reducing its energy costs and carbon footprint.

Project Address

224 - 230 State Street

Property Owner/Sponsor

Highbridge Prime Development, Inc. is the sponsor and property owner.



Source: Project sponsor

Rendering of proposed housing (right side) that would replace outdated buildings next to the recently completed Electric City Apartments (left side).



Location map: The site would complement other investment nearby.

Capacity

The principals of Highbridge Prime Development, Inc. have developed projects in the Capital Region with a combined value exceeding \$300 million. Successfully completed projects in Schenectady include apartments, retail, office, and warehouses.

Highbridge Prime Development is responsible for the recently completed Electric City Apartments on Lower State Street which includes 104 market-rate apartments and 12,000 square feet of retail/office space. It was recently awarded a CFA grant for Erie Landing, a mixed-use project that will create 144 apartments and 15,000 square foot of retail /office space on Erie Boulevard between South Ferry and Erie Streets.

Highbridge Diamond Development LLC, an affiliated company, worked with Schenectady Metroplex and New York State to secure a Restore New York grant for SEFCU Square, a successful mixed-use project located at 469 State Street downtown.

Project Partners

Schenectady County ARC, a local chapter of The Arc New York which provides services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, owns air rights above the parking lot.

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas.

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Great homes in safe and stable neighborhoods (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Infill construction providing new housing on Lower State Street
- Additional public parking to support Lower State Street businesses and residents.

Public Support

This project received only modest support from the community and LPC. LPC members expressed concern about the cost of the new parking and the magnitude of the DRI request, but also mentioned support for more public parking to alleviate competition for on-street parking in the nearby Stockade neighborhood. The availability of parking downtown and the need for continued improvements to Lower State Street were both significant concerns expressed at public events.

Jobs Created

One additional employee will be added at the Electric City Apartments.

Acquisition of Real Property

No property acquisition is required. The sponsor is finalizing a letter of intent with Schenectady County ARC for use of air rights above its parking lot along South Ferry and Erie Streets behind 224-230 State Street.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Site Acquisition	\$335,000
Hard Costs	\$6,800,000
- Asbestos abatement	\$225,000
- Site and building demolition	\$300,000
- Foundations	\$750,000
- Housing construction	\$2,125,000
- Parking structure construction	\$3,375,000
- Monitoring	\$25,000
Soft Costs	\$1,115,000
- Professional fees	\$280,000
- Development fee	\$200,000
- Construction loan interest	\$185,000
- Other fees and taxes	\$250,000
- Parking study	\$30,000
- Utilities and geotech	\$20,000
- Contingency	\$150,000
TOTAL:	\$8,250,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Developer Equity	\$1,000,000	Site acquisition and hard costs
Loans	\$4,250,000	Hard and soft costs
DRI Request	\$3,000,000	Hard costs
TOTAL	\$8,250,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The project budget was developed by the sponsor based on cost estimates and experience with similar projects. The primary driver for grant funding support is the high costs associated with providing the structured parking. The cost of the two-level open-air parking structure is within reasonable parameters. The project will provide a total of 274 parking spaces (142 public and 132 assigned) at a cost of \$3,375,000, or approximately \$12,300 per space. Overall, the project estimates an investment yield of 6.8% which could be considered a strong return. A 6% return is considered the minimum investment yield by the consultant team.

Anecdotally, the area would benefit from additional parking to support the recently completed Electric City and Mill Artisan projects which together have added 180 new apartments and approximately 77,000 square feet of office and retail space. If the project is approved for funding, the project sponsor will undertake a parking study for the Lower State Street area to confirm the magnitude of need.

The residential market analysis demonstrated demand for between 160 and 210 new housing units per year in the DRI area. This project addresses this demand by creating 17 new apartments in the core of downtown, adjacent to other recently opened residential projects that have successfully leased up.

Regulatory Requirements

The proposal conforms with existing mixed-use zoning. Site plan approval and building permit will be required from the City of Schenectady. No other approvals or permit are required.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Detailed schematic design is complete.

Design:

- Engineering and planning approvals: 4 months
- Construction documents: 4 months
- Building permit: 1 month

Construction:

- Asbestos removal and demolition: 1 month
- Construction: 14 months

Total: 24 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics.

Metrics include:

- Number of new residents living downtown
- Increase in publicly available parking supporting nearby dining and retail
- Change in assessed property value

Existing Conditions



Source: Google Streetview

Vacant buildings at 224-230 State Street which will be demolished and replaced with new housing adjacent to Electric City Apartments.

Proposed Design



Source: Project sponsor



Source: Project sponsor

Top: The proposed residential floor plan. Bottom: The proposed State Street facade, shown with Electric City Apartments to the left.



Install LED Lighting to Illuminate the First United Methodist Church Spire

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$78,000
Total Project Cost: \$108,000

Project Description

This project will install LED lighting to illuminate the 190-foot-tall spire of First United Methodist Church (FUMC) at night, creating a landmark visible for miles around the city. LED spot lights will be directed along each ridge line of the eight sided steeple, positioned and calibrated to tightly parallel each ridge line. This lighting will be programmable to change colors as appropriate throughout the year, symbolically representing seasonal events and national holidays in color like the City Hall Tower.

First United Methodist Church is a historic fixture in Downtown Schenectady. The cornerstone for the current church building was laid June 21, 1871 and the building was completed in 1874. It is one of two churches that anchors the northern end of Veterans Park closest to the Proctors Block, and its spire is one of the tallest structures downtown. Its location marks the eastern end of Schenectady's Central Business District.

Project Address

603 State Street

Property Owner/Sponsor

First United Methodist Church is the sponsor and property owner.

Capacity

FUMC has the capacity to oversee this project. It is represented in this project by its Board of Trustees. The Trustees are responsible



Source: Project sponsor



Source: Project sponsor

Two options for proposed LED lighting illuminating the spire at night.



Location map: The church is prominent at the corner of Veterans Park.

for building maintenance and upkeep. It will be the Board's responsibility to maintain any installed lighting going forward.

FUMC worked with Stracher/Roth/Gilmore (SRG), Wolberg Electric, and ME Engineering to design the LED installation. SRG was the designer for the iconic LED illuminated alleyway arches and directory signs along the Jay Street Mall. ME Engineering specializes in special exterior lighting assignments including highlighting architectural and civic structures.

Project Partners

None

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Reinforce our "Electric City" through locally created art and light installations
- Celebrate, integrate, and communicate Schenectady's historic elements in the DRI area to visitors and residents
- "Light up" public spaces to create dynamic evening settings
- Increase the number of 'taggable and shareable' and other social media moments through public art and events
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Creates an iconic visual landmark for downtown
- Highlights a historic building downtown

Public Support

Lighting was a common theme heard at the kickoff public event, as a way to connect to the city's history and create visually appealing spaces downtown. This project received among the highest levels

of public support at the second public meeting. This church spire was specifically cited for its prominent hilltop site and location marking the beginning of downtown. The LPC, however, expressed concern about only lighting one of the many historic church spires in downtown. Committee members supported expanding this lighting opportunity to all churches in the study area, particularly African American churches.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Acquisition of Real Property

No property acquisition is required.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Material	\$37,000
Labor and equipment	\$60,000
Soft Costs	\$11,000
TOTAL:	\$108,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Private donations	\$30,000	Equipment, labor, soft costs
DRI Request	\$78,000	Material and labor
TOTAL	\$108,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The lead architect partnering with FUMC has completed similar lighting projects in the Capital Region. SRG and Wolberg Electric developed the cost estimate based on similar projects. DRI funds will support purchasing the LED light fixtures and installation work. While FUMC has not entered into a contract with the State of New York, it has the capacity to do so as well as cover the expenses of

the project while they seek reimbursement. This project continues the theme of public lighting initiatives of major buildings such as the train station and will contribute to the downtown ambience at night.

Regulatory Requirements

None.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Preliminary design concepts are complete.

Design:

- Prepare engineering design documents: 1 month
- Permit review and approval: 2 months

Construction:

- Construction/installation: 2 months

Total: 5-6 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Existing Conditions



View of the church spire from State and Lafayette Streets.



Goal: Connectivity

Improve all modes of connectivity between Downtown, Mohawk Harbor, Lower State, the Riverfront, and the surrounding neighborhoods and destinations

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity (Jay Connector, Alco Tunnel)
- Extend and connect multi-use trail system
- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors including underpasses and historic facades
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas

Extend the Alco Heritage Trail and Construct the Empire State Trail Gateway



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$760,000

Total Project Cost: \$760,000

Project Description

This two-part project will make important improvements to the regional multi-use trail network that serves Schenectady and the DRI area. One component will connect the Alco Heritage Trail to Front Street Park. The other component will install a trail gateway with local information and a small plaza at Mohawk Harbor.

The Alco Heritage Trail runs along the riverfront from River Street through Mohawk Harbor and under Freeman's Bridge, where the trail runs up Maxon Road and connects with the NYS Canalway Trail. Currently, the trail ends at River Street, a narrow residential street. This project will install a link trail connecting the ten-foot wide asphalt trail south to the existing Front Street sidewalk east of the railroad bridge. The route will use the sidewalk along Front Street to pass under the bridge to Front Street Park. Spot sidewalk improvements and improved directional signage are anticipated.

The trail gateway element at Mohawk Harbor will include an informational kiosk and gathering area to mark the Empire State Trail. The gateway will feature a paver plaza with the kiosk, landscaping, and lighting, together with interpretive historic signage, directional wayfinding, bike racks, self-serve bike repair station, and benches. Parking will also be provided for trail users.



An example of an Empire State Trail gateway in Syracuse.



Location map showing the trail extension and gateway.

Project Location

The trail extension is located between the western terminus of the Alco Heritage Trail at River Street and Front Street just east of the railroad bridge. The gateway will be located just east of the amphitheater at Mohawk Harbor.

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady and Metroplex Development Authority are co-sponsors.

Capacity

The project sponsors have the demonstrated capacity to complete the project in a timely and cost-effective manner. They successfully worked with the property owners to complete the existing Alco Heritage Trail.

Project Partners

- County of Schenectady
- Galesi Group (Maxon Alco Holdings, LLC)

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity
- Extend and connect the multi-use trail system
- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Beautiful, clean and green community (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Improved off-street connection between the Alco Heritage Trail and Front Street Park.
- New wayfinding and historic information for trail users
- Improved recreation and mobility opportunities for residents and visitors.

Public Support

An increase in connected recreational trails was a consistent community priority heard at the first two public meetings. This project received significant community support at the second public meeting. The bike trail has been getting record use during the COVID-19 pandemic and the cycling community has been advocating for improved signage to direct trail users to downtown destinations. The trail extension was identified as the preferred alternative to connect the trail west of the railroad bridge during a 2018 public engagement process for the trail feasibility study.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Acquisition of Real Property

Land for the trail extension is owned by National Grid and CSX Railroad. The City currently has an agreement with National Grid for the existing trail. An easement and license agreement for construction of the trail will be obtained from National Grid. Land for the gateway is owned by Maxon Alco Holdings, LLC. An easement for use of the property for the gateway is offered by Galesi Group (Maxon Alco Holdings, LLC), expanding the current easement for the existing Alco Heritage Trail.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Trail Extension	\$260,000
- Engineering design	\$25,000
- Construction	\$235,000
Gateway	\$500,000
- Architecture and engineering design	\$50,000
- Construction	\$450,000
TOTAL:	\$760,000

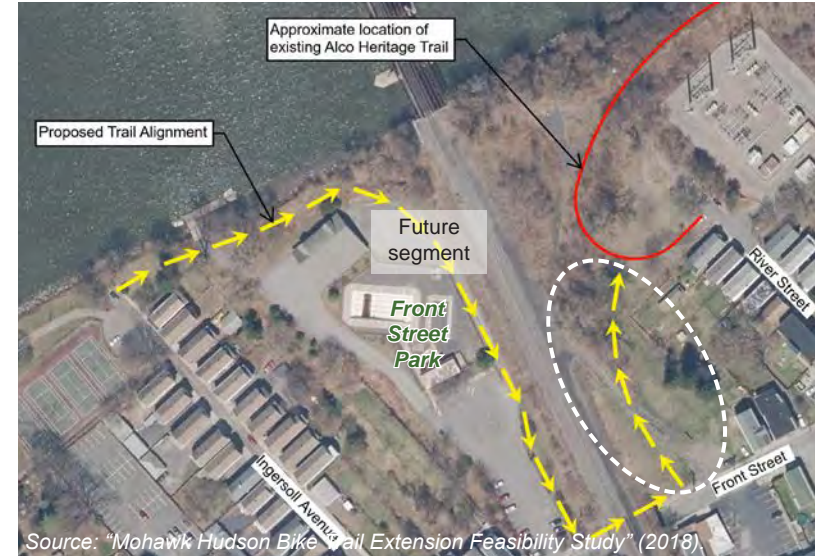
Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$760,000	Design and construction
TOTAL	\$760,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The trail extension cost estimate is detailed in Appendix H of the “Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail Extension Feasibility Study” completed by Bergmann in 2018. The gateway cost estimate is based on similar installations along the Empire State Trail.

The trail and a gateway represent a tourism and economic development opportunity for Schenectady. The trail segment between Amsterdam and Albany, which includes Schenectady, is expected to see nearly 500,000 visitors annually. The complete trail network is projected to see more than 8.5 million visitors annually. The trail extension enables future off-street connections to Riverfront Park, and the gateway will help promote the trail as well as nearby businesses and attractions.

Existing Conditions



Top: Existing Front Street sidewalk that will connect the trail to the park.
Bottom: Proposed off-street extension from the existing trail to Front Street.

Regulatory Requirements

The trail extension will require environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). A Phase 1A/1B Archaeological Investigation is anticipated since the proposed trail is in an archaeological sensitive zone. A “No Effect” letter from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is anticipated since very little excavation, if any, will be required to construct the trail. Similar trail construction in the area received a “No Effect” determination from SHPO. Since the trail extension is partially located within the 100-year floodplain, the City of Schenectady’s Floodplain Administrator will need to be consulted to determine whether a Floodplain Development Permit will be needed. Coordination with CSX may also be required. The gateway component requires no further permitting.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. A feasibility study was completed in 2018 but engineering design and environmental review and permitting will need to be completed.

Design:

- Trail extension design/documentation: 3-4 months
- Permit review and approval: 3-6 months
- Gateway design/documentation: 2-3 months

Construction:

- Construction/installation: 3-6 months

Total: 12-18 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Number of trail users



The Empire State Trail gateway will include maps, community features, and other information to encourage trail users to visit downtown.

Reopen and Upgrade the Alco Tunnel Trail

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$350,000

Total Project Cost: \$350,000

Project Description

This project will renovate and reopen a tunnel under the railroad tracks to provide a new pedestrian and bicyclist connection between the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway near Jay Street and Erie Boulevard. The tunnel was originally used by Alco employees to walk between neighborhoods east of the track and the riverfront factory on the other side. Although it has been closed for decades, it is in good condition and can once again serve residents and visitors. The renovated tunnel will create an important non-vehicular connection between Downtown, Little Italy, and Mohawk Harbor.

The approximately ten-foot wide tunnel will be renovated with new lighting and surface repairs. On the Jay Street side, sidewalk improvements will provide access to the tunnel from the end of the off-street Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway. On the Erie Boulevard side, site improvements will include a ten-foot wide path, landscape strip, and pedestrian lighting to link the tunnel to the existing Erie Boulevard sidewalk.

Project Location

Between North Jay Street and Erie Boulevard (near 1410 Erie Boulevard).

Property Owner/Sponsor

Metroplex Development Authority is the sponsor. The City of Schenectady controls access between Erie Boulevard, the tunnel, and Jay Street.



Conceptual rendering of the proposed tunnel improvements.



Location map: The tunnel would connect Jay Street and Erie Boulevard.

Capacity

Metroplex has the demonstrated capacity to complete this initiative. The Metroplex enabling statute allows the Authority to design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage and maintain facilities within its service district, which it has done since being established in 1998.

Project Partners

City of Schenectady

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity (Jay Connector, Alco Tunnel)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Increased connectivity between downtown Schenectady, Little Italy, and Mohawk Harbor
- Complements Jay Street extension to Nott Street
- Safer off-street mobility option for cyclists and pedestrians

Public Support

An increase in connected recreational trails was a consistent priority at both public meetings. The tunnel will also improve access to fresh food—a major public priority—at the recently-opened Alltown Fresh Market on Erie Boulevard, especially for residents and Union College students east of the railroad tracks. This project received significant community support at the second public meeting and was one of the top-rated connectivity projects.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Design and tunnel assessment	\$50,000
Tunnel rehabilitation	\$125,000
Tunnel lighting	\$50,000
Sidewalk improvements	\$15,000
Decorative pedestrian lighting	\$90,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Signage	\$10,000
TOTAL:	\$350,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$350,000	Design and construction
TOTAL	\$350,000	

The developer of the adjacent Alltown Fresh Market has set aside funds to enhance the connection from the tunnel to Erie Boulevard as part of their overall \$4 million development project.

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The cost estimate was developed by the Metroplex construction manager, City Engineer, and County planning staff. The estimate is based in large part on two similar tunnel projects recently completed within Schenectady County. Re-opening the tunnel will create an important connection between the two sides of the railroad tracks, improving access and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway has seen increased use during the pandemic and the tunnel will provide a direct connection to Erie Boulevard. It will connect the Jay Street extension DRI-recommended project to the recently completed Erie Boulevard upgrades.

Regulatory Requirements

City of Schenectady approvals will be required. Work to be performed on the tunnel below the railroad tracks will require an agreement with Amtrak.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award.

Design:

- Final design/documentation: 4 months
- Permit review and approval: 1-2 months

Construction:

- Construction: 6 months

Total: 12-15 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Number of users accessing the tunnel

Existing Conditions



Top: The Alco tunnel has been closed for years but is still in good condition.
Bottom: Improvements will include lighting, landscaping, and new sidewalks.

Extend North Jay Street and Improve Maxon Road

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$4,147,000

Project Description

Connectivity between downtown and Mohawk Harbor is currently limited primarily to Erie Boulevard, a major vehicular thoroughfare providing the most direct connection. This project will complete a second north-south connection that is more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly to better link these major destinations.

North Jay Street extends from the Jay Street Mall and City Hall downtown through Little Italy to a dead-end north of South Avenue, adjacent to Union College's Turf at College Park. The first component of this project will construct a new two-lane street segment to connect Jay Street to Nott Street, a major east-west thoroughfare with access to Mohawk Harbor, Union College campus, and Ellis Hospital. The design includes an 8' sidewalk/multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The second component will make improvements to Maxon Road, extending from the new Nott/Jay intersection to Erie Boulevard opposite Mohawk Harbor Way. Improvements include an 8' sidewalk/multi-use path which will complete a pedestrian and bicycle link from Mohawk Harbor along Maxon and Jay Streets through Little Italy to downtown.

Project Location

North Jay Street, from its current terminus north of South Avenue northeast to the intersection of Nott Street and Maxon Road, and Maxon Road, from Nott Street northeast to Erie Boulevard.



Source: Project sponsor

The proposed Jay Street connector includes an 8' multi-use trail for pedestrians and bicyclists that will run along one side of the roadway.



Location map: The project will connect Mohawk Harbor to downtown.

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady is the project sponsor and owns the public right-of-way. Trustees of Union College owns the land through which the extension will be located and an agreement is in place with the City for use of this land.

Capacity

The City has the demonstrated capacity to complete this initiative. It has completed numerous roadway projects throughout the city in the past.

Project Partners

Union College

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Improve multi-modal connectivity with emphasis on biking and walkability enhancements
- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity (Jay Connector, Alco Tunnel)

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Quality city services efficiently delivered (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Increased connectivity between downtown and Mohawk Harbor
- Close proximity to the Alco tunnel trail makes it an appealing mobility amenity for pedestrians and cyclists

Public Support

This project received among the highest levels of public support at the second public meeting and was one of the top-rated connectivity projects. LPC members emphasized the importance of creating this connection to better link Mohawk Harbor with Little Italy and downtown. Support for this project has been consistent since the City's initial application process.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

Cost Estimate	
Engineering	\$317,000
Earthwork	\$250,000
Street/sidewalk construction	\$1,516,000
Street lighting	\$394,000
Traffic signal	\$125,000
Landscaping	\$224,000
Signage and striping	\$57,000
Construction inspection	\$395,000
Misc. (traffic control, admin, etc)	\$342,000
Contingency (20%)	\$527,000
TOTAL:	\$4,147,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
City of Schenectady	\$2,147,000	Engineering, contingency, misc.
DRI Request	\$2,000,000	Construction
TOTAL	\$4,147,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Costs were estimated by the City and based on the design concept and previous street projects. Based on estimates from similar street projects in Upstate New York, the cost per linear feet typically range from \$2,900 to \$3,400. The estimated cost for this project falls within that range. In tandem with the Jay Street two-way conversion project, this initiative will provide a new direct connection between downtown and Mohawk Harbor for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. It will also increase accessibility to the adjacent Alco tunnel.

Regulatory Requirements

Work zone traffic control will be required. All proposed signs should be compliant with the MUTCD.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Design development is complete and an agreement with Union College is in place.

Design:

- Final design/documentation: 6-9 months
- Permit review and approval: 3-6 months

Construction:

- Construction: 8-12 months

Total: 18 - 24 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation. Metrics include:

- Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular counts

Proposed Design

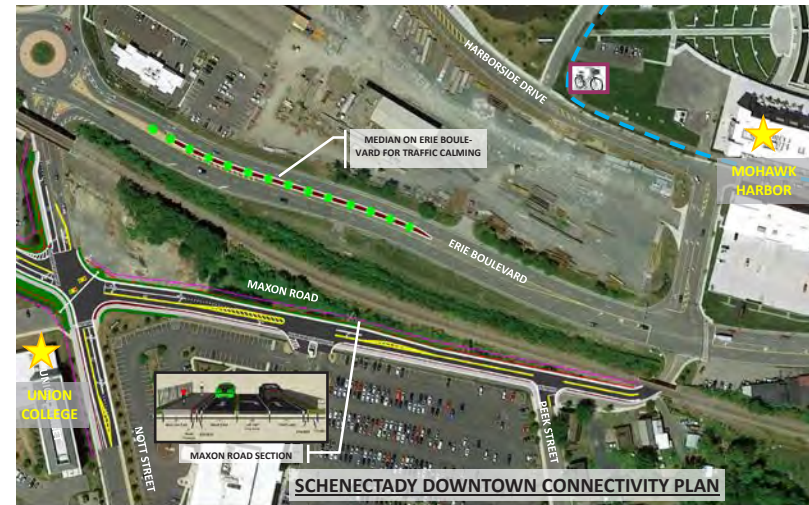
Maxon Road Improvements



Maxon Road improvements will add an 8' multi-use trail for walking and biking connections between Mohawk Harbor, Little Italy, and Downtown.



Proposed route of the connector linking Jay Street to Nott Street.



Proposed design for Maxon Road improvements between Mohawk Harbor and Nott Street.

Improve City Hall Square and Jay Street Traffic Circulation



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$425,000

Total Project Cost: \$425,000

Project Description

This project will make pedestrian improvements to City Hall Square at the southern terminus of Jay Street and will convert a two-block segment of Jay Street from one-way to two-way traffic. Together, these changes will help Jay Street better connect downtown to Little Italy and improve the pedestrian experience.

City Hall Square includes segments of Jay, Franklin, and Clinton Streets, wide streets with a mix of angled head-in and parallel parking. It can be a dangerous mix of cars and pedestrians trying to access City Hall. Improvements will include converting Jay Street to two-way traffic like the other street segments and adding landscaped corner bulb-outs to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and reduce traffic speeds.

Jay Street is one-way heading north from City Hall Square to Little Italy's gateway at Union Street, where it becomes two-way. This forces Little Italy patrons to take an indirect route if they want to drive downtown. Converting this two-block segment to two-way traffic will simplify navigation and improve access to City Hall, Little Italy, and local businesses. If the Jay Street extension to Nott Street project is also funded, this two-way conversion becomes even more important to provide a convenient alternate route between Mohawk Harbor and downtown.

Project Location

Jay Street from Franklin Street to Union Street.



City Hall Square today.



Location map: Jay Street connects downtown, City Hall, and Little Italy.

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady is the project sponsor and owns the public right-of-way.

Capacity

The City has the demonstrated capacity to complete this initiative. It has completed numerous roadway projects throughout the city in the past.

Project Partners

None.

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity
- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Quality city services efficiently delivered (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Easier navigation through downtown streets with the conversion of one-way street segments to two-way
- Improved pedestrian environment around City Hall

Public Support

This project received significant community support at the second public meeting. Improved connectivity downtown is an important public priority. While there were some public concerns about the street reconfiguration, the LPC supported the two-way conversion at City Hall to improve traffic and pedestrian safety.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Jay Street - Liberty to Union	\$68,000
- <i>Engineering</i>	\$6,000
- <i>Paving</i>	\$41,000
- <i>Striping/signage</i>	\$4,000
- <i>Construction inspection</i>	\$7,000
- <i>Misc. (traffic control, admin, etc)</i>	\$5,000
- <i>Contingency (20%)</i>	\$5,000
City Hall Square/Jay Street	\$357,000
- <i>Engineering</i>	\$27,000
- <i>Public realm improvements</i>	\$330,000
TOTAL:	\$425,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$425,000	Design and Construction
TOTAL	\$425,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Costs were estimated by the City and based on previous street projects. By itself, the conversion of Jay Street will simplify navigation between downtown and Little Italy. In tandem with the Jay Street extension/Maxon Road project, it will provide a new two-way connection between downtown and Mohawk Harbor. Improvements to City Hall Square will create a safer environment for pedestrians and complement the adjacent Cohn Building renovation and Jay Street Walkway projects.

Regulatory Requirements

All proposed signs should be compliant with the MUTCD. Changing traffic patterns should involve a public education component.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Schematic design is complete.

Design:

- Construction documentation: 4-6 months
- Bidding and award: 3 months

Construction:

- Construction: 6-8 months

Total: 12-18 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Vehicular and pedestrian counts
- Number of events held at City Hall Square

Existing Conditions



Source: Google Street View

Jay Street at Union Street prevents a direct route from Little Italy to downtown.

Proposed Design



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed changes will improve traffic circulation and enhance the pedestrian experience.



Improve Signage and Wayfinding

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$250,000

Total Project Cost: \$500,000

Project Description

This project will install new wayfinding to direct visitors and residents to destinations throughout the DRI area. It will also install new informational signage to educate viewers about Schenectady's notable cultural and historical features.

Signage and wayfinding downtown is dated, lacks consistency, and is not prevalent enough. With all the recent growth happening, new signage and wayfinding is needed to communicate a consistent brand and direct visitors to new attractions. Expanding to more locations such as Mohawk Harbor and the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail will encourage visitors to explore more of downtown, supporting local businesses and increasing pedestrian activity.

Project Location

Key locations throughout the DRI area.

Existing signage along State Street will be replaced. New signage will be installed at other gateways to downtown and key attractions such as the MHBH trailhead on Jay Street, Mohawk Harbor, City Hall, the Amtrak station, and the CDTA bus hub.

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady is the sponsor and owns the public right-of-way.



Current wayfinding / signage in Schenectady's Downtown needs to be updated and expanded to more locations.

Capacity

The City has the demonstrated capacity to provide signage and complete this initiative. It already fabricates and maintains existing signage and has personnel, equipment and facilities dedicated to this task.

Project Partners

None.

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Invest in improved wayfinding for the city to facilitate convenient resident and visitor movement
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support and advertise existing institutions including the numerous colleges in the area

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Increased number of visits to sign-marked destinations.
- Increased knowledge about Schenectady's cultural and historical background.

Public Support

This project received significant community support at the second public meeting. Signage and wayfinding were high priorities expressed by the community. Bicyclists have asked for better signage to direct trail users to downtown destinations. LPC members further reinforced this sentiment. Signage was described as how downtown communicates with its customers, and is particularly important as new restaurants and businesses continue to open downtown. Members emphasized the importance of thoughtful design to facilitate easy wayfinding for residents and visitors.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Design	\$100,000
Pedestrian wayfinding: labor and materials	\$200,000
Informational signage: labor and materials	\$200,000
TOTAL:	\$500,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
City of Schenectady	\$250,000	Design, labor and materials
DRI Request	\$250,000	Labor and materials
TOTAL	\$500,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Costs were developed by the City and Metroplex's construction manager and are based on signage projects in comparable communities, including several previous DRI communities. New signage and wayfinding will improve connectivity throughout the study area and between destinations and local businesses.

Regulatory Requirements

Signage and wayfinding will be installed in the public right-of-way. Article IX of the zoning code addresses signage requirements.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award.

Design:

- Branding/signage design: 6-8 months

Construction:

- Fabrication and installation: 6-10 months

Total: 12-18 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones. Metrics include:

- Restaurant and business referrals and activity
- Visitor sentiment

Improve the Connector Between Lower State and Liberty

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$238,500

Total Project Cost: \$238,500

Project Description

This project will improve the mid-block alleyway between Lower State Street and Liberty Street, adding a new pedestrian walkway, lighting, and landscaping while better defining parking. Twelve parking spaces will be created, with one-way access provided from State to Liberty. A new crosswalk on Liberty will connect this new space with existing parking for residents of the adjacent Barney Square Apartments as well as Stockade neighborhood residents.

Project Address

233 State Street, located mid-block between Erie Boulevard and South Ferry Street

Property Owner/Sponsor

City of Schenectady is the sponsor. Civco Realty Corp is the current property owner.

Capacity

The City has the demonstrated capacity to complete this initiative.

Project Partners

Civco Realty Corp, property owner.

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Take advantage of existing opportunities to increase connectivity



The alleyway seen from State Street looking toward Liberty Street. Barney Square Apartments are to the left.



Location map: The connector will improve a mid-block gap on Lower State.

Connectivity

- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors
- Address the current parking issues and create a working plan to account for future demand to reduce encroachment into surrounding residential areas
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- New parking added to the Lower State Street corridor to serve existing and new retail, dining, and businesses.
- Enhanced connection from State Street to Liberty Street and the historic Stockade neighborhood.

Public Support

This project received only modest support from the community and LPC. LPC members agreed that the space is unattractive today but questioned the usefulness of an improved pedestrian connection in this location. Members did state that improved lighting would enhance the perception of safety, and it was noted that this is an important connection between the Stockade District and downtown.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Pavement and curbs	\$82,320
Sidewalk	\$24,800
Lighting	\$87,800
Landscape and fencing	\$14,880
Signage	\$2,000
Traffic control	\$5,000
Contingency (10%)	\$21,700
TOTAL:	\$238,500

Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$238,500	Labor and materials
TOTAL	\$238,500	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Costs are based on similar improvement projects completed by the City. The project will improve connectivity between Lower State and the Stockade neighborhood. It will also add parking in the Lower State area and improve the visual appearance and lighting of an underused vacant lot between buildings.

Regulatory Requirements

Site plan review due to creating 10 or more parking spaces.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Schematic design is complete.

Design:

- Construction documentation: 3 months
- Bidding and award: 3 months

Construction:

- Construction: 4-6 months

Total: 10-12 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Parking utilization
- Pedestrian counts



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed design of the connector



Goal: Workforce

Diversify our economy, grow our job base, increase retail choices

- Create new workforce training and diverse job opportunities
- Build on current local growth sectors (arts, entertainment, software, technology)
- Connect local workforce to new employers
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth

Renovate Former Cohn Building to Create New Retail and Office Space



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$425,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,400,000

Project Description

This project will renovate the vacant former Cohn building into a mixed-use anchor, bringing new jobs and vibrant spaces downtown. The building is in a prime location, opposite City Hall Square and at one end of the Jay Street Mall. It has two floors with a total of 17,000 square feet. New ground floor retail space will add activity and street life to the Jay Street Mall and City Hall Square. The sponsor plans to work with the Jay Street Business Association and Schenectady Farmers Market to create retail synergy with its neighbors. The second floor will provide contemporary office space for employers to locate downtown. Additional space in the basement will be used for storage.

Renovation plans include demolition of all interior materials and environmental remediation. New interior construction will provide a vanilla shell for tenants complete with mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, and an elevator to make the building ADA compliant. Exterior improvements will replace the 1950's era facade with a modern design featuring traditional accents, and replacement of the roof. In addition, a nearby parking lot on Clinton Street will be repaved and striped to provide 28 new spaces downtown. The sponsor is also evaluating potential public improvements including sidewalk repairs, LED lighting along the Jay Street Walkway, and exterior lighting.

Project Address

426 Franklin Street (Cohn Building)

145, 151, 155 Clinton Street (parking)



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed facade renovations will feature extensive ground-floor glass for views into new retail space.



Location map: The building occupies a key corner downtown.

Property Owner/Sponsor

L & S Realty is the project sponsor and recently completed site acquisition.

Capacity

L & S Realty was formed in 1994 and has a team with 60+ years of collective experience with successful construction, leasing, and management. With over 175,000 square feet of real estate in the Capital Region, their portfolio includes Class A office, medical, warehouse, and retail space.

Project Partners

- Metroplex
- City of Schenectady
- Jay Street Business Association
- Schenectady Farmers Market

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Attract businesses that reflect the local creative economy
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Quality workforce and growing businesses (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Returning a vacant building to active use, especially important given its location across from City Hall and on the Jay Street Mall.
- New office and retail space in the core of downtown.
- Potential to add up to 75 office and retail jobs downtown.

Public Support

This project received significant community support at the second public meeting. People were excited by the renderings and perceived quality of the project. The vacant building occupies a prime corner location and its reuse is important to the community.

Jobs Created

The new spaces will support 55-60 office jobs, 20-25 retail jobs, and 1 full-time property manager.

Acquisition of Real Property

None required.

Project Budget and Funding Source

	Cost Estimate
Acquisition	\$565,000
Design (architecture and engineering)	\$65,000
Interior Demolition	\$100,000
New construction	\$1,590,000
Soft costs	\$80,000
TOTAL:	\$2,400,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Equity	\$375,000	Acquisition, soft costs, design
Bank financing	\$1,325,000	Acquisition, demolition, construction
Metroplex	\$175,000	Construction (facade)
National Grid	\$100,000	Construction (interior)
DRI Request	\$425,000	Construction
TOTAL	\$2,400,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The project budget was developed by the sponsor based on cost estimates and experience with similar projects. Based on an analysis of the overall project costs, the construction estimates are reasonable. DRI funding will provide several community benefits including re-activating a vacant building, creating new retail space to serve community needs, and further revitalizing an area that includes two other DRI-recommended projects, City Hall Square and the Jay Street Walkway. The DRI request is within the range of what is considered an appropriate grant request for the developer to achieve a reasonable investment yield.

The building was previously used for offices. After renovation, it will provide the first, newly renovated Class A office space on Jay Street in more than eight years, and on Franklin Street in over twenty years. Its central location downtown near restaurants, entertainment, City Hall, and transit options all support office use.

The retail market analysis indicated a high demand for neighborhood goods and services. The retail component of this project can potentially help address this gap, and it is well situated in an existing retail cluster on Jay Street Mall. Local research indicates demand for experience-based retail, which is a focus market for the sponsor.

Regulatory Requirements

A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment has been completed. The project will require SEQR review, Planning Board approval, issuance of a building permit, and a certificate of occupancy.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

This project is poised for implementation and the project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award.

Design:

- Construction documentation: 6 months
- Municipal plan review/approval: 2 months

Existing Conditions



The vacant Cohn building, seen from City Hall Square.

Construction:

- Environmental remediation: 3 months
- Interior demolition: 4 months
- New construction: 7 months
- Certificate of Occupancy: 1 month

Total: 20-24 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics.

Metrics include:

- Number of new retail and office workers downtown
- Change in assessed property value

Upgrade the Jay Street Pedestrian Walkway



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$250,000

Total Project Cost: \$250,000

Project Description

This project will extend LED canopy lighting along the popular Jay Street Mall, upgrade paving, and introduce movable seating to further enhance the public realm. The Mall is a pedestrian-only alleyway between State and Franklin Streets lined with cafes and shops. The first component is to complete Phase 3 of the LED canopy lighting project, extending it from mid-block to Franklin Street. The second component includes making drainage improvements and replacing paving materials, installing contemporary pedestrian-scale lighting, and adding movable seating and flexible site furnishings. These improvements will support more daytime and nighttime use, offer greater flexibility in how the space is used, increase dwell time for visitors, and reduce maintenance needs. These enhancements will drive much-needed traffic here, particularly after the significant impact of COVID-19 related store closures.

Project Location

Jay Street between State and Franklin Street

Property Owner/Sponsor

Metroplex Development Authority is the sponsor. City of Schenectady owns the public right-of-way.

Capacity

Metroplex completed an earlier round of renovations to the Jay Street Mall and has capacity to complete this project. The Metroplex enabling statute allows the Authority to design, plan,



Source: "Jay Street Pedestrian Corridor Feasibility Study"

Improvements to the Jay Street Mall will support the local businesses along it, offering more flexible use of the space throughout the day and week.



Location map: The walkway connects State Street to City Hall Square.

finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage and maintain facilities within its service district, which it has done since being established in 1998.

Project Partners

City of Schenectady

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Enhance existing infrastructure and streetscapes along main corridors

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Beautiful, clean and green community (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Makes aesthetic and functional improvements to a popular pedestrian and retail corridor linked to one of the busiest areas in the city.
- Supports more flexible use of the space during the daytime and evenings.
- Reduces ongoing maintenance needs.

Public Support

This specific project and improved pedestrian connectivity were priority initiatives expressed by the community. Enhanced lighting of major public spaces and features was also an important priority. This project received among the highest levels of public support at the second public meeting.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
LED canopy lighting, installation, and design	\$165,000
Pavers, drainage, pedestrian-scale lighting, site furnishings	\$85,000
TOTAL:	\$250,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
DRI Request	\$250,000	Construction
TOTAL	\$250,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

LED canopy lighting costs are estimated based on the first two phases of the Jay Street project completed by Metroplex. Other improvement costs were estimated by Metroplex's construction manager. A feasibility study for the other project components was completed by TW&A Construction Management, LandArt Studio, and Place Alliance Northeast in December 2019. This project will complete improvements to this popular public space, supporting the small businesses along it by providing flexible seating and enhanced lighting. It will also reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

Regulatory Requirements

Work will take place in the public right-of-way. A General Project Plan (GPP) has been approved for the LED canopy lighting, including a completed review under SEQRA.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. The feasibility study was complete in 2019.

Design:

- Design development: 2 months
- Construction documentation: 4 months

Construction:

- Site work: 3 months
- Site furnishings: 1 month

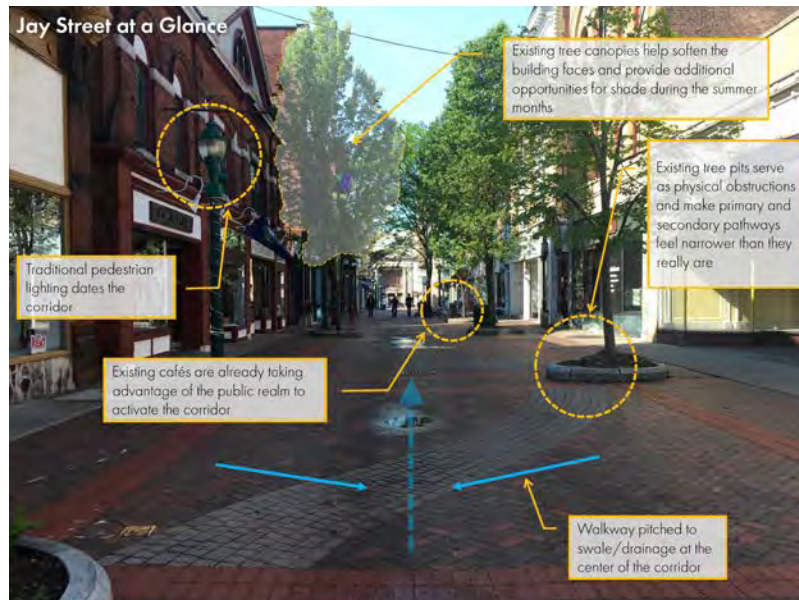
Total: 10-12 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Pedestrian counts along the Jay Street Mall
- Business activity along the Jay Street Mall
- Programming taking place along the Jay Street Mall



Site analysis completed for "Jay Street Pedestrian Corridor Feasibility Study"



Potential site furnishings, paving materials, drainage, and lighting from the "Jay Street Pedestrian Corridor Feasibility Study"

Complete Building Improvements for the SEAT Workforce Training Center

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$590,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,690,000

Project Description

The SEAT (Social Enterprise and Training) Center is a successful youth training program that has outgrown its current space on State Street. This project will complete facade and interior improvements necessary to finish an extensive renovation project to transform a formerly vacant building into the SEAT Workforce Training Center for Young Adults. The existing facade is a featureless gray brick which has a very industrial look and does not convey a sense of dignity or excitement for those who will use the building. This project will transform the exterior of the building to give it a personality which matches the look and feel of the freshly renovated interior, and will complement the new energy of this neighborhood. Improvements include a vertical metal rainscreen entry feature to add dimension to the facade, window and door replacement, and sun shades over the front windows to improve energy efficiency. Site improvements include new sidewalk, curbing, landscaping, and parking lot resurfacing and striping.

When complete, this building will provide a progressive, modern space dedicated to young adults ages 18-24 years old who are disengaged from the workforce. They will be able to receive the necessary technical skills training and soft skills preparation to enter the local job market and provide employers with a qualified candidate pool.

Project Address

120 South Church Street



Source: Project sponsor

The new facade will feature a prominent entry feature and sun shades to improve the building's energy performance.



Location map: The building will extend State Street's energy to Church St.

Property Owner/Sponsor

SEAT Center is the sponsor.
S Church Street, LLC (Spa City Management) currently owns the property.

Capacity

The SEAT Center's main space is located on Lower State Street and it also maintains two satellite locations in Albany and Troy. The organization has outgrown its State Street location and has the capacity to oversee completion of improvements at their new facility. While the SEAT Center has not entered into a contract with the State of New York, it has the capacity to do so as well as cover the expenses of the project while they seek reimbursement.

Project Partners

Spa City Mgmt (current building owner)

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Create new workforce training and diverse job opportunities
- Connect local workforce to new employers

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Talent: Building the workforce of today and tomorrow (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Quality workforce and growing businesses (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Providing attractive, high-quality training space for an industry-responsive source of entry level employees.
- Increased visual prominence in the community for an important workforce training organization.
- Improvements to a building visible from the Mill Artisan District and transit plaza.

Public Support

Workforce development is a high priority for the community. LPC members expressed support for the SEAT Center and commended its results in recent years. Members generally supported its physical expansion to better serve more youth in the city, but questioned its ability to spur catalytic change due to its location off of State Street.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project, however the SEAT Center is growing its professional staff as a result of expanding to this new location. SEAT has also placed more than 200 young people in new jobs as a result of its programming in the past three years.

Acquisition of Real Property

None.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Acquisition	\$400,000
Architecture/Engineering Design	\$20,000
Permitting	\$10,000
Interior Construction	\$700,000
Exterior Construction	\$560,000
TOTAL:	\$1,690,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Developer	\$1,100,000	Acquisition, Design, Construction
DRI Request	\$590,000	Construction
TOTAL	\$1,690,000	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The cost estimate was completed by the project sponsor's contractor based on the proposed design. This project directly supports workforce development which is a high priority for the community. By helping this non-profit social service enterprise rehabilitate the building's exterior, DRI funding will enhance the appeal of the facility to its constituents and improve the appearance of the building.

Regulatory Requirements

Building permits will be needed for construction.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. This project would need to coincide with the sidewalk and curbing project planned by the City of Schenectady for the S. Church Street corridor.

Design:

- Construction documentation: 4 months
- Municipal plan review/approval: 2 months

Construction:

- Facade and site improvements: 3 months
- Interior renovation: 1 month

Total: 10-12 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics:

- Change in assessed property value
- Number of youth trained at the facility

Existing Conditions



Source: Project sponsor

Top: The current facade is uninviting and does not reflect the energy of the program. Bottom: The interior reflects the excitement of the SEAT Center.

Renovate Historic Structures for Adaptive Reuse: Alchemy Urban Playground



DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$300,000
Total Project Cost: \$1,410,650

Project Description

The project will adaptively reuse two structures on Erie Boulevard to create Alchemy, a unique artistic and entrepreneurial environment within the Capital Region. The project will occupy approximately 15,500 square feet of a larger historic property. It is comprised of four distinct elements:

- Arts studios - four studios designed and managed by partner Bogran Production to provide working space for local artists in a collaborative setting.
- Retail gallery - an industrial space to feature the completed work of artists and entrepreneurs working on-site and as part of Capital Coworks.
- Maker spaces - two spaces, including a carpentry shop and a small commercial kitchen, will be operated in partnership with the SEAT Center and the City of Schenectady's Office of Affirmative Action.
- Warehouse event space - Raw 8,000 square foot space available for events too big for the GE Black Box and too small for the Armory.

This project will also integrate job training and job creation activities within its creative environment, with a focus on providing opportunities for minority contractors, artists, and entrepreneurs.

Project Address

136 -138 Erie Boulevard



Source: Google Streetview

Alchemy will occupy the rear of these buildings, bringing new life to a stretch of Erie Boulevard.



Location map: The project will bring reinvestment to Erie Boulevard.

Property Owner/Sponsor

Urban Initiatives Group, LLC is the project sponsor. John Samatulski, owner and manager of Urban Initiatives Group, LLC, owns both sites under separate LLCs.

Capacity

The sponsor has two local projects, the completed 140 Erie Boulevard adjacent to this site and 432 Franklin Street where work is underway to convert it into a mixed-use building. It has the capacity to enter into a contract with the State of New York as well as cover the expenses of the project prior to reimbursement.

Project Partners

- The SEAT Center, which will use the maker spaces for youth job training
- Bogran Productions, which will recruit artists for the studio space and organize events to display their creations
- Capital Coworks, LLC, which will operate shared meeting space in the adjacent 140 Erie Boulevard building that can be used for trainings
- The City of Schenectady's Office of Affirmative Action, which will help identify minority contractors for construction and provide workforce training in the new space

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Build on current local growth sectors (arts, entertainment, software, technology)
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth
- Create new workforce training and diverse job opportunities
- Attract businesses that reflect the local creative economy
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Promote and program a local—and diverse—array of creative initiatives

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Quality workforce and growing businesses (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Increased art and culture opportunities and events
- New space to support local artists and entrepreneurs
- New investment along Erie Boulevard

Public Support

Workforce development opportunities received consistent public support. The community also wants to see more arts and cultural amenities. This project received considerable support from constituents and had among the highest levels of support at the second public meeting. A large number of individuals attended that meeting and expressed their support.

Existing Conditions



Source: Project sponsor

Existing warehouse space that will be renovated for Alchemy

Jobs Created

6-8 full-time positions and 4-8 part-time positions.

Acquisition of Real Property

None required. The project sponsor owns the site.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Acquisition	\$575,000
Design (Architecture and Engineering)	\$33,000
Demolition	\$32,400
New Construction	\$738,750
Soft Costs	\$31,500
TOTAL:	\$1,410,650

Sources	Amount	Uses
Developer Equity	\$795,650	Acquisition, Design, Demo, Soft Costs, Construction
Loans	\$280,000	Construction
Grants	\$35,000	Construction
DRI Request	\$300,000	Construction
TOTAL	\$1,410,650	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

The cost estimate was completed for the project sponsor based on the proposed design. The grant amount to total project costs, at just under 24%, is consistent with many projects recommended for DRI funding. Documentation of lending support from the financial institution has been secured. This project will create job training opportunities and support the creative economy while restoring a vacant building to active use.

Regulatory Requirements

The project needs review from the City of Schenectady's Planning Commission and necessary permitting from the City of Schenectady's Building Department.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The project sponsor is prepared to begin work upon award. Preliminary design concept is complete.

Design:

- Final design development: 4 months
- Construction documentation: 6 months
- Municipal plan review/ approval: 2 months

Construction:

- Interior demolition: 1 month
- Construction: 6 months

Total: 18 - 24 months

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will document project implementation progress, including all State contract requirements, and will provide information for the identified metrics.

Metrics include:

- Number of artists using the facility
- Number of events held at the facility
- Change in assessed property value



Source: Project sponsor

Floor plan of proposed design



Goal: Art and Culture

Build on and celebrate our historic and cultural richness

- Support and advertise existing institutions including the numerous colleges in the area
- Support initiatives that preserve and enhance our historic character
- Promote and program a local—and diverse—array of creative initiatives
- Provide necessary infrastructure to support existing and new public events
- Celebrate, integrate, and communicate Schenectady's historic elements in the DRI area to visitors and residents
- Reinforce our “Electric City” through locally created art and light installations



Install Public Art Throughout Downtown

DRI Funding Request

DRI Funding Request: \$287,500

Total Project Cost: \$312,500

Project Description

During the planning process, three separate public art projects were proposed for the DRI area. Each identified new locations for interactive installations, pieces that brought Schenectady's rich history to life, and multi-functional pieces that improved the public realm. In order to better coordinate these efforts and improve the efficiency of project administration, the sponsors decided to consolidate their proposals into a single, multifaceted public art initiative.

Component 1: Gateways

This component will enhance the character and visual interest of important gateways between downtown amenities, improving walkability by continuing the landscape of public art throughout downtown:

- Design two wall murals to bookend Jay Street, an important corridor between State Street downtown and Mohawk Harbor.
- Establish a sculptural seating area with lighting along the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike (MHBH) trailhead.
- Light up the railroad bridge over Union Street near Erie Boulevard with a programmable LED lighting display.

Component 2: Creative Connectors

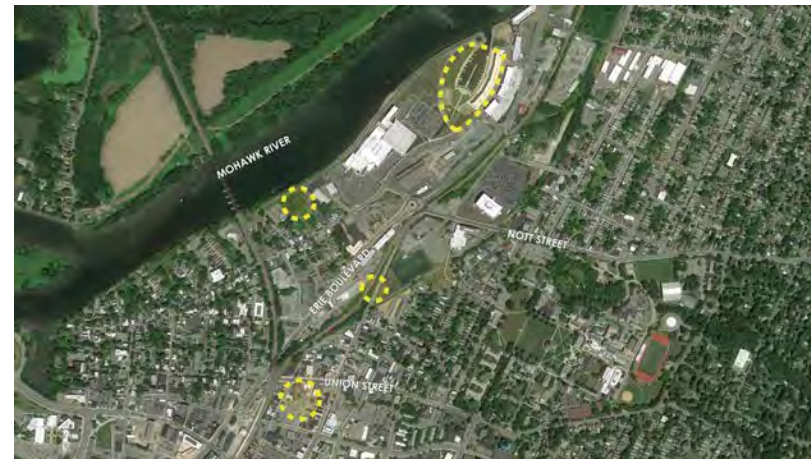
This component is dubbed "Creative Connectors" in reference to how it uses public art pieces to enhance pedestrian and bicycle corridors through the DRI area:

- Add a vibrant mural to the blank concrete retaining wall in the Amtrak station parking lot, a gateway for visitors and highly



Source: CREATE Community Studios

A mural by CREATE at the Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy



Location map: Public art will be added in multiple locations.

visible from recently improved Erie Boulevard.

- Turn the Alco tunnel into a celebration of Schenectady's residents and neighborhoods, installing tiles created from the "Schenectady & Me" project for which residents created collages of their favorite places, events, or other aspects of the city.
- Install family-friendly, interactive public art pieces along the MHBH Trail.
 - » A train sculpture reflecting the history of the American Locomotive Company (Alco) which once built some of the world's most famous trains at its factory on what is today the Mohawk Harbor development site.
 - » "Drums Along the Mohawk", an interactive musical playground to complement the outdoor concerts held at Mohawk Harbor.
 - » "Schenectady & Me" tile artwork on public benches along the trail.

Component 3: Commemorating History

This component highlights Schenectady's role in historic scientific and industrial achievement. It will design, fabricate, and install a bronze statue of inventor and businessman George Westinghouse to recognize his monumental achievements as a person of importance coming from Schenectady. The statue will stand on a pedestal with an informational plaque and lighting for nighttime illumination.

Together, the components of this public art initiative will have a transformative impact on the public realm downtown. These installations will engage residents and visitors, help tell the story of the community, and visually enhance connections between downtown and the riverfront.

Project Locations

- Jay Street murals: one near the Jay Street Mall and one along the extension of Jay Street near Nott Street.

- MHBH Trail seating area: Trailside near Jay Street and South Avenue, behind a recent townhouse project on Barrett Street.
- Rail bridge lighting: Erie Boulevard just north of Union Street.
- Amtrak station mural: parking lot retaining wall off of Erie Boulevard between Liberty and Union Streets.
- Tunnel art: The Alco tunnel between North Jay Street and Erie Boulevard.
- MHBH installations: Various locations along the heritage trail and Mohawk River.
- George Westinghouse statue: Vacant plaza at the north corner of Erie Boulevard and South Ferry Street, opposite the existing statue of Thomas Edison and Charles Steinmetz.

Property Owner/Sponsor

Albany Barn, Inc., one of the three original sponsors, will be the lead sponsor of this combined initiative.

All proposed public art locations have been approved by the respective property owner. The City of Schenectady owns the locations of the Jay Street and Amtrak station murals, rail bridge lighting, tunnel art, and Westinghouse statue. The MHBH seating area site is owned by Live In Schenectady, LLC. The MHBH installation sites are on land owned by Maxon Alco Holdings, LLC, a subsidiary of the Galesi Group.

Capacity

Albany Barn, Inc. has completed numerous public art projects in Schenectady and Albany. Albany Barn opened a location in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood in 2018, called Electric City Barn, and has been involved in many arts and cultural projects throughout the city including "Schenectady & Me" sculptural bench installations and the planned Sculpture Park and Phoenix Walks programs in Hamilton Hill. Its work in Albany includes 14 prominent murals downtown and a popular walking tour series presenting the stories behind the art.

Project Partners

- 440 State Street Inc., aka the ElectriCity Arts District, was the original sponsor of the Creative Connectors component. 440 State Street Inc. is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the downtown Schenectady Arts District through event management and arts programming. It is a subsidiary of Proctors and has 26 years of experience running arts programming in downtown Schenectady.
- Brian Merriam was the original sponsor of the Westinghouse statue. Mr. Merriam led the campaign to install the Edison-Steinmetz statue on Erie Boulevard.
- Albany Center Gallery is a long-standing partner of Albany Barn, Inc., working to install the murals in downtown Albany.
- Operation Rail Bridge will design and install the railroad bridge lighting project.
- Discover Schenectady will assist with relations between building owners and support the marketing and promotion of the mural projects.
- CREATE Community Studios will oversee contracting with artists of the “Creative Connectors” installations.
- Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County has pledged to provide a construction manager for the “Creative Connectors” installations, as well as volunteer supervision and help securing materials at cost.
- The Schenectady Foundation will provide resources for this project, including funding, assistance with planning, and communications and marketing.
- Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation has pledged to assist with relations between building owners and implementing marketing and promotional activities.
- Dexter Benedict of Fireworks Foundry will be the Westinghouse statue sculptor. He cast statues of Thomas Edison, Charles Steinmetz, Harriet Tubman, and William Seward in Schenectady and is currently completing a statue of President Harry Truman for the Presidential Library.

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Promote and program a local—and diverse—array of creative initiatives
- Increase the number of ‘taggable and shareable’ and other social media moments through public art and events
- Increase tourist and regional visits through the creation of unique destination locations
- Focus on initiatives that create buzz
- Reinforce our “Electric City” through locally created art and light installations
- Celebrate, integrate, and communicate Schenectady’s historic elements in the DRI area to visitors and residents

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Improved visual interest along major pedestrian and bicycle corridors.
- Distinctive visual statement at prominent rail bridge gateway.
- Interactive public art that encourages participation.
- Increased social media opportunities.

Public Support

The three components of this project received among the highest levels of public support at the second public meeting. Public art initiatives were among the shared priorities expressed by participants at the first public meeting.

Jobs Created

This project will support three full-time positions for Albany Barn staff. Six part-time, temporary jobs will be created for artists to design and execute the Jay Street murals. Each mural can support up to five apprenticeships.

The “Creative Connectors” component will support one full-time staffer at DSIC and one staffer at CREATE Community Studios.

Five part-time temporary artist jobs will be created to design and execute the projects.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

	Cost Estimate
Component 1	\$147,500
Jay Street murals	\$46,000
MHBH seating area	\$12,500
Rail bridge lighting	\$89,000
Component 2	\$85,000
Amtrak station mural	\$29,000
Alco tunnel art	\$14,000
MHBH installations:	\$42,000
- <i>Train sculpture</i>	\$16,000
- <i>Drums Along the Mohawk</i>	\$18,000
- <i>Benches</i>	\$5,000
- <i>Signage</i>	\$3,000
Component 3	\$80,000
Westinghouse statue	\$80,000
TOTAL	\$312,500

Sources	Amount	Uses
Schenectady Foundation	\$25,000	Materials and installation for "Creative Connectors"
DRI Request	\$287,500	Materials and installation
TOTAL	\$312,500	

Feasibility and Cost Justification

Project costs are estimated based on similar previous experience by the project sponsors. By adding well-curated, large-scale works of public art to the existing public art portfolio of the City, the arts can continue to be a driving force in developing a walkable, vibrant, and distinct downtown. The 2018 report *Why Public Art Matters* notes that "enhancing the identity and character of communities through public art directly supports cultural tourism and economic development strategies, which can both retain and attract residents." Walking, biking, and bus tours can be offered that include guided tours of public art, opportunities to meet with artists, and stops at local restaurants and shops along the way. Public art also serves to create organic social media content that highlights the city's assets as residents and visitors share photos and videos with hashtags that drive online traffic to other tourism sites and points of interest around the City.

Regulatory Requirements

Project sponsors will work with the City of Schenectady and private property owners. Approval for work will be obtained from the City and property owners upon final design.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

The public art projects can commence as soon as funding is awarded and contracting is complete. Certain components such as the tunnel art and Jay Street murals will be dependent on completion of those projects before starting.

Component 1

Jay Street murals and MHBH seating area:

- Design and site prep: 3-4 months
- Installation: 1-2 months

Rail bridge lighting:

- Lighting design and permitting: 2-3 months
- Installation: 1 month

Component 2

Amtrak station mural:

- Design and concrete repair: 3 months
- Installation: 2-3 months

Tunnel art:

- Tile creation: 1 month
- Installation: 2 months

MHBH installations:

- Design: 3 months
- Installation: 3 months

Component 3

Westinghouse statue: 1 year

The mural projects can commence as soon as funding is awarded. The MHBH installations will occur after the Mohawk Harbor dock project is complete, with anticipated completion by late summer 2021. The tunnel art project can commence once the Alco tunnel project gets underway.

Project Reporting

The project sponsor will report on key milestones during implementation.

Metrics include:

- Resident and visitor sentiment on social media

Existing Conditions



Top: The rail bridge over Union Street near Erie will be lit with LED lighting.
Bottom: The Amtrak parking lot wall will be enhanced with a vibrant mural.



Source: ElectriCity Arts District

A "Schenectady & Me" bench featuring tiles created from resident artwork.



Source: Albany Center Gallery

Albany Capital Walls: "Geraldine's Reverie" by Liz Zunon.



A bust of George Westinghouse.



Source: <https://www.billfitzgibbons.com/lightrails.html>

An example of programmable LED lighting to enliven a railroad underpass.

Other Projects

Several projects evaluated by the LPC and consultant team were determined to be important to the future of downtown but not yet implementation-ready. As a result, they do not meet the threshold criteria to be recommended for DRI funding at this time. As these projects continue to develop, however, they should be strong contenders for other funding sources so that they can contribute

to the growth of the DRI area. By including them in this plan, the LPC is demonstrating the community's support and advocating for additional funding. Once they are implementation-ready, these four projects will contribute to the ongoing success of downtown Schenectady.

Table 13: Projects Recommended for Other Funding

ID	Project	Page
GOAL: Vibrant Urban Center		
	Construct Capital Region Aquatics Center	5-68
	Develop Multipurpose Arena at Mohawk Harbor	5-70
GOAL: Improve All Modes of Connectivity		
GOAL: Diversify Economy, Grow Job Base, and Increase Retail Choice		
	Construct the Electric City Food Co-op	5-72
GOAL: Build on and Celebrate our Historic and Cultural Richness		
	Renovate Interior and Add Lighting for the SLOC Building	5-75

Construct Capital Region Aquatic Center



Total Project Cost

DRI Funding Request: TBD

Total Project Cost: \$35,393,200

Project Description

The Capital Region Aquatic Center will be a regional attraction and community resource for Schenectady. Current plans envision an 80,000 square foot facility with an 8-lane, 25-yard instructional pool; an Olympic-size competition pool; a professional diving pool; and a heated therapy pool.

The mission of the facility is to prevent drowning, promote fitness, host competitions, and provide warm water aquatic therapy. Planning has been underway since 2013 and accomplishments include establishing a Board of Directors, completing a market study to quantify the regional demand for a facility of this type, initiating an ongoing capital campaign, and developing a conceptual facility design.

Project Location

Options under consideration

Property Owner/Sponsor

Metroplex Development Authority will be the project sponsor. Property owner to be determined.

Capacity

The Metroplex enabling statute allows the Authority to design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage and maintain facilities within its service district, which it has done since being established in 1998.



Source: Project sponsor

The latest conceptual building design for the Aquatic Center.

Project Partners

- Capital Region Aquatic Center (a 501(c)(3))
- City of Schenectady

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Potential to attract more than 100,000 additional visitors a year.
- Increased tourism through hosted competitive swimming events.

Public Support

The aquatic center has a significant local constituency. It received among the highest levels of public support at the second public meeting.

Projects Recommended for Other Funding

Jobs Created

Permanent jobs will be created, however an estimated total is unknown at this time.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

Estimated Costs: \$35,393,200

Funding sources will likely include private equity, conventional loans, and other potential grants and loans.

Regulatory Requirements

Zoning and site plan approval, building and occupancy permits

Timeframe for Implementation

Fundraising and Financing: ongoing

Design Phase: 9 - 12 months

Construction Phase: Unsure



Develop Multipurpose Arena at Mohawk Harbor



Total Project Cost

DRI Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$33,000,000

Project Description

Development of a multipurpose arena potentially hosting hockey games and other sporting and entertainment events throughout the year. Preliminary plans include fan amenities, training facilities, public plaza, retail and dining, hotel, and parking.

Project Location

Mohawk Harbor, Harborside Drive

Property Owner/Sponsor

Maxon Alco Holdings, LLC

Capacity

The sponsor successfully designed and built Mohawk Harbor and Rivers Casino.

Project Partners

- Metroplex Development Authority
- Union College
- City of Schenectady

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Greatly increased tourism and increased capacity to host a variety of events
- Higher attraction to Mohawk Harbor can result in increased development and patronage of existing businesses.



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed arena and plaza design



Location map: The arena would be located at Mohawk Harbor.

Public Support

Project was announced after the first two public meetings

Jobs Created

Permanent jobs will be created, however an estimated total is unknown at this time.

Project Budget and Funding Sources

Funding sources will likely include private equity, conventional loans, and other potential grants and loans.

Regulatory Requirements

Planning Board approval, SEQR, and local building permits

Timeframe for Implementation

TBD



Source: Project sponsor

Potential arena location, with supportive retail and hotel nearby



Source: Project sponsor

Proposed arena entrance

Construct the Electric City Food Co-op, a Downtown Food Market



Total Project Cost

DRI Funding Request: \$1,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$4,160,000

Project Description

The Electric City Food Co-op will bring a community-owned, one-stop grocery market featuring locally sourced and bulk foods to downtown Schenectady. This project will fund interior fit-out of the market space in an existing building located within the DRI area. The market will function as a retail anchor, supporting other nearby businesses and providing residents with convenient access to fresh, healthy foods. This project will also create an education classroom for health and wellness classes, and an “innovation kitchen” for local entrepreneurs and cooking classes. In addition, the market space will be designed to provide an indoor space for the Schenectady Greenmarket during inclement weather and over the winter months.

Project Location

Not identified yet.

Property Owner/Sponsor

Electric City Food Cooperative, Inc. (ECFC) is the project sponsor.

Capacity

ECFC was incorporated in 2013 as a not-for-profit cooperative. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors and has grown to more than 400 member-owners. Leadership strength is maintained through continual Board of Directors training with food co-op industry professionals, building an informed understanding of the

process of food co-op startups. Support from the Food Co-op Initiative and Neighboring Food Co-op Association will assist the ECFC in carrying out this project. As member-owner numbers continue to increase, so does the ECFC's capacity to implement and sustain this project.



Project Partners

- The Schenectady Greenmarket
- Schenectady County Historical Society

Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Support retail options that increase access to healthy food
- Support existing businesses and increase new retail in strategic locations
- Support smaller entrepreneurial/incubator opportunities that target the local workforce and promote local economic growth

The project also aligns with other goals and strategies:

- Metro: Building vibrant cities for businesses and families (CREDC Capital 20.20)
- Quality workforce and growing businesses (Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

Projects Recommended for Other Funding

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Conveniently located source for locally grown, healthy foods for downtown residents and visitors
- Economic support of local farmers and producers
- Commercial kitchen space for food entrepreneurs to test ideas
- Increased social capital due to member-owner model

Public Support

A common theme among participants at the first public meeting was promoting increased health and wellness via a downtown grocery. The co-op has a significant local constituency. It received among the highest levels of public support at the second public meeting.

Jobs Created

15 estimated full time employment jobs created for the retail component

Acquisition of Real Property

A site will need to be identified and acquired.

Project Budget and Funding Sources Feasibility and Cost Justification

	Cost Estimate
Leasehold improvements	\$1,250,000
Equipment	\$1,100,000
Inventory	\$256,000
Interest and fees	\$372,000
Soft costs	\$257,500
Working capital	\$356,500
Professional support	\$25,000
Contingency (15%)	\$543,000
TOTAL:	\$4,160,000

Sources	Amount	Uses
Owner contribution	\$1,339,000	Working capital, soft costs, professional support, interest and fees, contingency
Debt	\$707,000	Improvements
Co-op loan funds (CFNE)	\$200,000	Inventory
City/Community loan	\$150,000	Soft costs
Tenant improvement (TI) allowance	\$200,000	Improvements
Vendor credit	\$38,400	Inventory
Free fill	\$25,600	Inventory
DRI Request	\$1,500,000	Equipment, improvements
TOTAL	\$4,160,000	

ECFC hired a consultant that specializes in food co-ops to conduct a market study in December 2018. It concluded that there is sufficient sales potential to support a full-line natural foods co-op in the Schenectady market area. The study forecasted that a 5,600 sq ft retail space in the Mill Artisan District could generate more than \$3 million in sales in its first year, increasing at 2-3% per year with store maturity not expected until at least Year 4. It recommended at least 4,500 sq ft of retail sales area and a total of 7,200 sq ft for the market, with an optimum size around 5,600 sq ft of sales area and 9,000 sq ft total.

The retail market analysis conducted for the DRI also indicated demand for neighborhood goods and services, of which grocery stores and markets are included.

Regulatory Requirements

Projects Recommended for Other Funding

The awarded building owner will have to acquire necessary permits for renovation, Certificates of Occupancy, and more. The ECFC will require food retail licensing.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

ECFC estimates 1-2 years for implementation once a site is identified. The organization is moving from phase 2a (feasibility) to 2b (planning) of its implementation timeline.

Project Reporting

Metrics include:

- Sales volume
- Increase in member-owners
- Number of events held in market
- Change in assessed property value



Renovate Interior and Add Additional Lighting for the SLOC Building

Total Project Cost

DRI Funding Request: \$400,000 - \$600,000

Total Project Cost: \$400,000 - \$600,000

Project Description

The Schenectady Light Opera Company (SLOC) has performed in the former St. John the Baptist Complex since 2010. As part of an ongoing series of building repairs and improvements, this project will help SLOC better serve patrons and enhance its physical presence within downtown. It consists of three components:

- Enlarge the lobby by expanding into empty space between the administrative and theater buildings. This will improve patron comfort and safety while allowing SLOC to offer concessions in the lobby.
- Add a large under-lit marquee to the exterior lobby entrance. This will elevate SLOC's physical presence by clearly identifying the former church as a performing arts venue.
- Add facade up-lighting similar to the train station and City Hall. This will visually link the facility to other downtown landmarks that have been lit up in recent years.

Project Address

427 Franklin Street

Property Owner/Sponsor

Schenectady Light Opera Company (SLOC)

Capacity

SLOC is a non-profit organization. The SLOC Board and leadership are fully committed to seeing through this extensive, multi-faceted



Source: Google Streetview

Exterior of the SLOC Theater today.



Location map: SLOC is near City Hall Square.

project. They have been overseeing and completing a series of building improvements since 2018, installing a new heating and air conditioning system, upgrading technical equipment, and improving floor surfaces.

Project Partners

Metroplex Development Authority

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

- Improved physical presence downtown
- Better capacity for future expansion/ development
- Increased potential for additional shows and ticket sales
- Higher potential for patrons to the SLOC to visit local businesses

Public Support

The public supports performing arts and cultural venues as an important part of downtown's vitality.

Jobs Created

No permanent jobs will directly result from this project

Project Budget and Funding Sources

\$400,000 - \$600,000

Regulatory Requirements

The project sponsor/ building owner would have to acquire necessary building permits from the City of Schenectady.

Timeframe for Implementation

Design:

- Engineering design: 4-5 months
- Municipal plan review/approval and bidding: 4-5 months

Construction: 6-12 months

Total: 14 - 22 months

Existing Conditions



Source: Project sponsor
Interior of the SLOC Theater today.



Photo Credit: Mitch Ramsey

Schenectady Strategic Investment Plan

CAPITAL REGION REDC
NEW YORK STATE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

