

The Village of Herkimer
“Gateway to the Adirondacks”



2019 Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Basic Information

REDC Region: Mohawk valley

Municipality Name: Village of Herkimer

Downtown Name: "Gateway to the Adirondacks"

County Name: Herkimer County

Applicant Contact(s): Mayor Mark Netti

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Vision for Downtown

Ice cream socials, bands in the park, a village courtyard, open mike nights, canopied store fronts are all reminiscent of happier times and family focused communities. Combine this with quality downtown housing, a new downtown retail center, and an upgraded park system and you have the vision for the new Village of Herkimer. With the assistance of the DRI grant, the Village of Herkimer will revitalize its future by looking into its past to create better times in this beautiful community.

As with so many municipalities in the Mohawk Valley Region, the once family oriented, bustling village of Herkimer was slowly affected by the loss of major industrial employers; hence leading to the decline in population, income, viable housing stock and a retail/ entertainment center.

The Village of Herkimer wrote their first Strategic plan in 2002 focusing on assisting home owners within walking distance to their Downtown Center, in maintaining and upgrading the housing stock, looking to bring their municipal housing up to better standards, and to create a retail center within walking distance. The retail center would allow for employment to the low and moderate income individuals living in the area, as well as a downtown environment with shops for those not only living in the area and at Herkimer County Community College, but an area that will encourage those from the surrounding towns and villages to stay within the Herkimer county corridor and shop, eat and seek entertainment in the center of the county, the Village of Herkimer.

The vision continued to evolve with an updated document that complimented the first document in the vision of a retail center. This document is the "Village of Herkimer Master Plan 2020". This plan also focusses on the current state of Main Street and the potential that lies within this area to bring it back to a time where it was the center of "the valley", an area consisting of towns and villages in an 18 mile radius, Frankfort, Ilion, Mohawk to the west and Little Falls to the east.

The two plans together address, housing, infrastructure, employment, arts and entertainment, parks and recreation, and historical preservation. The focus for Herkimer is to utilize all avenues above to move Herkimer forward as a millennial friendly and family focused community.

The start-up has been difficult, but this determined Village with Mayor Mark Netti at the helm, a very involved Planning board, and the initiative of local investors, this village is already addressing the

housing stock and beginning to work to add retail initiatives. The DRI money from New York State will move Herkimer into the year 2020 as the active, family-oriented Village it once was.

The vision is taking a look backward to go forward by focusing on becoming a family friendly community that can not only exist, but grow even in the face of the loss of manufacturing jobs. With the Frankfort Industrial Park only approximately 6 miles away, manufacturing is still alive and well in this valley yet now contained to one basic area, leaving room for municipalities such as the Village of Herkimer to focus on its people, its families, and to provide opportunities for those living in this area.

Justification

Why the village of Herkimer?

They are a vision-oriented area that has the layout and outline to become the family oriented community for the valley's towns and villages nestled in the beautiful county of Herkimer. The Village of Herkimer has the buildings of opportunity just waiting for investors and tenants, housing stock that is within walking distance to the center of Downtown, and Herkimer County Community college in their backyard less than 5 miles from the center of town. Just as important are the investors, both local and out of town that see this Village as a prime location to start the rebuild with a Phase one upgrade to the downtown District of North main Street to attract new retail businesses and restaurants.

Utilization of park space and reconstruction and revitalization of buildings on North Main street, will provide a safe and enjoyable place for families to gather and draw a family friendly environment into a now blighted area. With active investors and financial assistance from the Village and the State of NY, this dream of revitalization is on its way to reality.

As a village deep in history, once the revitalization of the North Main Street is under way, the village can focus on its value as gateway area to the Adirondacks. The village of Herkimer, also known as "The Gateway to the Adirondacks", is a natural stop over off the thruway exit 30 with Rte. 28 being a direct access to the Northern part of Herkimer County. Mom and Pop shops mixed in with the chain stores that currently call Herkimer home, historical buildings and biking and walking trails along the canal make a visit to this historically rich village a worthwhile stopover before heading north.

The location, availability of housing and retail space, combined with investors to upgrade North Main St. and the Village of Herkimer can become the center for recreation and shopping for the towns and villages that surround it; Frankfort, Ilion, Mohawk and Little Falls.

With the opportunity to work with new and current investors, upgrade infrastructure, and develop a cohesive marketing plan, the Village of Herkimer will be the prime valley location to draw millennials to the downtown area to live, work and play. In addition, the envisioned retail corridor will provide employment opportunities for college students as well as low and moderate income individuals who can walk to a place of employment.

The Village of Herkimer was at one time the center of retail and entertainment for "the Valley" area. As with many downtown areas, especially those surrounded by rural properties, Herkimer saw a decline in employment opportunity, young people were leaving the area, housing in decline, but based on a recent study, the village is beginning to see a rise in average income and an increase in families moving back to

the area. This grant will assist Herkimer in maintaining their current family and employment base while seeing continued growth of employment and allowing the village the opportunity to once again become the entertainment and shopping district for the five municipalities that make up the valley portion of Herkimer County. This 18 mile stretch of municipalities has a population of 25,159 and Herkimer basically lies in the middle of this area, and is also the county seat for the County of Herkimer. There is great potential for this area to be the entertainment and shopping district for this line of communities.

Based on updated data from the census bureau, the village is seeing an increase in individuals with higher education. The influx of Basset Hospital to the area as well as the influence of Basset's presence at Little Falls Hospital has and will continue to draw professionals to the valley for employment. With the upgrades to downtown, housing, and an opportunity for new single family homes, the village can become a more alluring place for professionals to call home.

Downtown Identification

- 1) **Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** *Detail the boundaries of the targeted downtown area or neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the area should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond traditional central business districts are eligible if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Include a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.*

The core of the village of Herkimer is the downtown district that has opportunity for retail space, mixed use buildings, offices and housing, and housing stock that is either in need of façade improvement or those ready for an investor to purchase and put back on the tax rolls. The area also includes multi-family housing within a 2 mile walking distance to the proposed downtown area. The parameters include North Main Street to Prospect St, to Washington street. It will form a rectangular area parallel to Route 5.





Another example provided shows how N. Main Street could be segmented to provide a foot traffic Marketplace in the northern most portion of the newly created Retail Corridor. By creating a one-way (east to west) single lane road that connects North Washington Street over the current driveway of LW Bills through to N. Main Street, vehicle access is provided for north to south traffic.

By having the Marketplace occupying the roadway from the Mary Street intersection to the newly created “Market Street”, there would be a new persona for local retailers, boutiques, clubs, diners, and kiosk

vendors that would also be leveraged to profile seasonal decorations for residents to shop, dine, and enjoy entertainment throughout the year. This is just another example of a new North Main Street.

- 2) **Past Investment, future Investment potential.** *Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.*

The largest building on Main Street is the Munger building. The building was a deteriorated, underutilized, blighted building. The village has worked to market this building as the adaptive reuse of the building would significantly enhance Main St. and the revitalization efforts.

A local investor purchased the Munger building and over the past several years began slowly revitalizing the area from 136-148 Main St. This downtown revitalization will be a catalyst to other investors. The plan will be to restore these buildings and put retail stores, restaurants, coffee shop and offices in the open space. The investor has a five-year plan to rebuild this area, but more assistance is necessary to keep this project going and keep this investor interested in staying the course. The village and the investor will be writing for additional grants to speed up the process of this building block.

One way, streets and angled parking as described above as well as a coridored off walking block which would house this large retail center with coffee shops, restaurants and independent specialty shops. In addition, a courtyard is in the plans as a place for those taking a lunch or coffee break to have a peaceful setting to relax outside without the noise and disruption of traffic.

This is a prime example of where a past investment, with a little help will build a big future for the residents of the Village of Herkimer.

Housing is an issue that was heavily studied in a 2002 strategic plan. The plan addressed the central business district condition of North Main Street as well as targeting rehabilitation programs in this neighborhood. Improving Eastern Gardens was also on that list. The major areas of improvement looked at in 2002 were minimally addressed, but are now a major part of the new strategic plan for revitalization. This includes 1-4 unit houses along N. Bellinger, Prospect Street and North Washington. The need for senior housing buildings was identified at this time and the need has increased. With many buildings in the area just waiting for the right investor, Herkimer can provide quality housing for everyone.

The updates to Eastern Gardens is part of a new plan underway through the Herkimer Housing authority and a private investment group, Edgemore Development. The first project which received approval in 2018 consisted of reconfiguration of Midtown apartments from studio to one bedroom. A similar reconfiguring will be used in the Creekside project and will include substantial rehabilitation of the interiors, exteriors and building systems. Creekside was also approved to add a daycare building. This upgrade will make this more marketable housing. In addition, the Edgemore Team submitted a 9 percent tax credit application for the Eastern Development including a new apartment building and the new daycare building at Creekside. These projects are currently underway.

Most recently \$21.3 million is being allocated between public and private funds to revitalize Eastern Gardens. Eastern Gardens is comprised of 50 apartments and a pre-K class room operated by Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency's Head Start program. Eastern Gardens has been serving the community for over 60 years and preserving this property will allow it to continue to do so in a manner consistent with local, regional, and state goals of preserving important housing stock. The project is prepared to close and start construction in the fall of 2019. This is a first step towards bringing families downtown and moving forward with our family friendly community vision.

The Village of Herkimer has a mix of housing stock to complement the Herkimer Housing Authority housing currently being upgraded for low to low-moderate income individuals and families. Additionally, there are privately owned multi-family properties. The village wants to assist these property owners in upgrading the property, infrastructure, and façade in an attempt to keep owners who have a local presence in the village. To add to this mix is locally owned land just outside of the downtown district waiting to be developed for more upscale housing as part of the overall project. The perfection of this is that all this housing is a short walk to this future retail/recreation center. When people live downtown, people, shop, eat and use downtown facilities.

The photo chronology below depicts recent decades where North Main Street had **retail appeal** and "traffic" – during the 60s, 70s, and 90s. It also provides the **desperate** profile that has evolved in the past decades from retail appeal to barren streets, shoddy store fronts, the sleep quarters for the homeless, and North Main Street has become the "stoop" for those living in the low income apartments above.



Growth Beyond North Main Street

Studied in the 2002 Strategic Plan and the 2020 vision Plan was the S. Main St. district also, as well as the waterways and walking Paths. In addition, the housing in this southern area of the Village of Herkimer is also in need of revitalization. This will be a natural progression once the North Main St, Downtown revitalization becomes a reality.

The future also holds an expansion of tourism that can expound on the success of Gems along the Mohawk, a shopping, eating water complex on the Mohawk River. The village will begin to address upgraded walking and biking trails that border the canal. The opportunity is also there to develop an historical experience recreating the Revolutionary battles of General Herkimer, starting in Herkimer and moving west to Utica, Oriskany and Rome.

The scene for this is being set with the construction of the "War Dog Memorial". This memorial will be located at the New York State Thruway Exit 30. The memorial will consist o a bronze statue depicting a military working dog and his handler. The monument is to memorialize the generations of veterans who served in all branches of the military as well as the Military Working Dogs and their handlers. Their teamwork, courage and sacrifice on the battlefield should never be forgotten. These canines were, and still are, the partners and best friends of our family members, their military handlers. These canines deserve our attention, respect and appreciation and this monument will be an ongoing reminder.

3.) Recent or impending job growth. Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment and make growth sustainable in the long term.

Bringing the village of Herkimer back to its status as the retail center for the County of Herkimer will not only add much needed jobs for low and moderate income individuals with a high school degree or less, but will provide a family friendly environment for the professionals working in the area to eventually live in the area.

A look back at the 2002 Strategic plan show that the foresight of an improved business district would be vital to redevelopment and revitalization. This plan would create opportunities on Prospect St. to improve and increase the presence of businesses in this downtown section. This would add to the success of a retail center in the Downtown area, and will add to potential job creation in an office setting.

In research done for the more recent 2020 plan the educational profile provided interesting information representing roughly 75% of the village residents. The profile denotes that the highest percentage population has a high school education, but the surprising twist is that it also shows a significant increase in residents that achieved an Associates or Bachelor’s Degree. Those with graduate degrees such as a Masters or a doctorate has remained fairly consistent. These statistics provide for a good base range of employment opportunities in the Village and surrounding regions.

	1990	2000	2010	2015
Less than 9th grade	13%	8%	4%	4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	18%	16%	14%	7%
High school graduate (includes GED)	33%	37%	36%	33%
Some college, no degree	13%	16%	20%	17%
Associate’s degree	9%	8%	11%	18%
Bachelor’s degree	9%	8%	7%	12%
Graduate or professional degree	5%	7%	8%	10%

When the industry profile was completed, the obvious trend for employment was retail. It remained a steady 18% of the employment opportunity in the village of Herkimer. The Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service industry saw the greatest increase

of 7% since the 2010 census and is responsible for 17% of the employment opportunity. (see Industry chart o png.8)

INDUSTRY	2010	2015	Shift
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	1%	1%	0%
Construction	2%	2%	0%
Manufacturing	9%	12%	+3%
Wholesale trade	2%	2%	0%
Retail trade	18%	18%	0%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	2%	3%	+1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	6%	3%	-3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management services	2%	7%	+5%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	38%	26%	-12%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	10%	17%	+7%
Other services, except public administration	4%	6%	+2%
Public administration	5%	4%	-1%

These statistics only add credibility to the vision of increasing the retail, arts, entertainment and parks and recreation for the village. While unemployment hasn't changed much in the village the labor force grew by 25% and unemployment grew by only 6% detailing an overall increase in employment opportunity by 19%. The work force is in place and with the rebirth of North Main Street the job opportunities will begin to decrease that unemployment rate.

The development of the Village of Herkimer as a retail center for Herkimer County is not new. Over the years the village has amassed more national and regional chain locations than any other municipality in



the county with chains such as Auto Zone, Applebee's, McDonalds, Taco Bell, Verizon, Walgreens, Walmart, Stewarts Shops, Subway, Denny's, Tractor Supply company, Red Roof Inn, Burger King, Mavis Tire, Enterprise Rent a Car, Arby's and Hannaford. The upgrade of North main Street with new independent specialty shops, coffee shops and upscale restaurants are just a compliment to the national chains that call the village home.

4.) Attractiveness of physical Environment. *Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute , or could contribute if enhanced to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender, identity, ability, mobility and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bike ability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.*

The Munger Building anchor project that encompasses a prime location of main street will be enhanced with dollars for streetscape including awnings, bike racks, floral street arrangements and more to increase the attractiveness not only of this building but of the surrounding area.

In addition, within these buildings, the first opera house was once housed, and the intent is to restore this portion of the building using as much of the original seating and wood working as possible.

This type of history is deeply rooted in the Village of Herkimer and can be a draw to this area. The architecture that make up the historic structure of the buildings date back to the early 1800's. They may now be in ill repair, but they are still structurally sound and in need of updating. The northern end of North Main St. is anchored by the "Historic Four Corners" District and the Herkimer County Office building complex. The "Historic Four Corners" was addressed in the 2002 Community Development Strategic Plan and is currently undergoing upgrades. This area consists of the Herkimer Historic Society headquarters and museum, the county court house, and two magnificent churches – the Dutch Reformed Church on the northwest corner of Church and North Main Streets, and the Christ Episcopal Church on the northwest corner of North Main and Mary Streets.

With construction of a new jail outside of the downtown district, the historic old jail is being worked on by the not for profit group "Friends of the Jail". The use of this building is not definitive, but it will be likely turned into some type of restaurant, microbrewery, museum, or any combination of the three.

Overall, the Village of Herkimer is now its own melting pot and has adjusted its housing stock accordingly to have something for everyone. The vision is to not only have housing, but job opportunities, eateries, and entertainment for this multitude of ethnicities, genders and age groups.

This area also provides green space, Myers Park, that that has a bandstand and gazebo, both now in need of repair. This location was once a spot for families to relax and enjoy activities, all in a close walking proximity to what was once retail center with mom and pop shops and eateries. This vision can once again be a reality with the DRI grant.

Increasing safe walkability and bike ability by reducing street traffic and quartering off this four block radius around the anchor building is an important aspect to this plan, once again bringing back that home town feeling.

5.) Quality of Life policies. *Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age- friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies that support livability and quality of in downtown are not currently in place, describe near term efforts the municipality to create and implement such policies.*

The Village of Herkimer is currently in the process of updating and modernizing their codes and zoning. They are looking to work with the same company that was used by a nearby community (Little Falls N.Y) to update all their zoning. The company will be charged with modernizing the current codes and bringing them up to the expectations of today's community. Mayor Netti is "striving to get all of the civil liberty type zoning straightened out so there will be no discriminatory acts involved intentionally or unintentionally. We also need to set up proper aspects of our laws to better describe our intent to not only beautify Herkimer downtown district but fix its infrastructure. Getting this accomplished will supply us with new language to help keep our college residents here. I know a good number of residents in our immediate area that stayed around from the 80's, but that population is fading. I would like to change this. I would like to build on a trend that I currently see happening which is continued small population growth. We need to keep that growth going with the younger generation. Our quality of life policies have to focus on our millennials calling Herkimer home and obtaining employment or starting new businesses."

6.) Public support. *Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.*

When Master Plan 2020 was being developed the first public hearing survey was developed and the answers were utilized to hone the plan to not only fit the needs of the Village of Herkimer but the needs of the people. In light of this application now being presented, a second public hearing is being held to obtain additional input. The following were the answers for the Master plan 2020 survey:

The Master Plan 2020 Village Profile Survey

A **key** ingredient in the development of the Master Plan 2020 was to solicit and respect the views of those that live and work in the Village of Herkimer. To enable this broad input the Planning Board conducted the Master Plan 2020 Village Profile Survey without restriction using both on-line (using the web site at URL <http://www.voherkimer2020.com/>) as well as through paper forms of the survey that was available in the **Village Office** (located at 120 Green Street, Herkimer, NY) and the **Frank J. Basloe Library** (located at 245 N. Main Street, Herkimer, NY). The paper forms were then transcribed into the on-line survey forms to centralize all input throughout the survey period – which was conducted from June 1st to September 30th, 2016. The results were tallied on a bi-weekly basis and the results were published to the on-line web site.

The survey was conducted to identify the interest of those that either lived or worked in the Village specific to twelve (12) Characteristic Groups or profiles. The following is the list of the Characteristic Groups in the order they were presented, but not in the order of priority as ranked by the over 200 individuals that filled out the survey:

- 1) **Family Focused Community** – Provides suggestion on how the Village of Herkimer will support the residential community.
- 2) **Herkimer County's Retail Center Hub** – Focused on the primary offerings of the Village of Herkimer as the Retail Center Hub of Herkimer County.
- 3) **Pathway of the Retail Center Profile** – Presented ways that zoning would identify and personify those areas of the Village that are defined as the Retail Center.
- 4) **Travel Corridor of Herkimer County** – Solicited confirmation that the Village of Herkimer should promote its position as a participant and gateway for tourism in Herkimer County.
- 5) **Supporting a Rich Cultural Mix** – Provided suggestions on how the Village of Herkimer would support cultural diversity.
- 6) **Supporting the College Community** – Provided recommendations on how the Village of Herkimer would support the College community as a more integrated member of the Village community.
- 7) **Appealing to the Evolving High-Tech Workforce** – Focused on example offerings that would appeal to this profile of workforce per its expected growth in the Mohawk Valley.
- 8) **Expose and Clearly Define the County Seat Profile/Persona** – Suggested methods of enhancing and promoting the Village of Herkimer as the County Seat of Herkimer County.
- 9) **Develop a Tourism Profile That Amplifies the Village as a Travel Corridor** – Provided suggestive services that would enhance the Village of Herkimer's support of tourism.

- 10) **Retail Offering in Line with Retail Center Profile** – Provided a set of suggested services to incorporate in the Village of Herkimer per its role as the Retail Center Hub of Herkimer County.
- 11) **Visitor and Traveler Friendly** – Provided suggestive services that would appeal to area visitors, travelers, and tourism.
- 12) **Infrastructure Fitness** – Solicited interest in exemplified areas of infrastructure fitness, as well as means of accentuating the Retail Center profile of the Village of Herkimer.

Each Characteristic Group was supported by a set of example characteristics which the survey respondents were instructed to check all characteristics they agreed should be included when developing the Master Plan 2020. **Comments from survey:**

- Safe, recreational places for youth to go and spend time together
- Clean up the drug traffic downtown
- Family Health Ctr, like Clark's gym
- A YMCA that is on the ground floor and is excess able for handi cap and elderly
- Safe adequate housing for all
- "in-community schooling" as a priority is part of what's holding this community back.
- Focus less on parochial educational concerns
- Merge with another school district
- Herkimer is losing their population mostly due to high NYS taxes. if you want to keep families from leaving please consider cleaning up Main Street. add more activities to serve all age groups.
- Summer outdoor weekly activity like Saranac Thursday, and create an central area block like Varick Street in Utica with bars and restaurants.
- Green areas and other indoor venues family friendly and safe
- There needs to be Parks, Recreation for young and old, centers and places of recreation like movie theaters, bowling alleys, restaurants.
- a public swimming pool
- Make absentee landlords financially responsible for the damage their tenants cause. Put foot patrols on n main st at all hours. A stronger police presence will eventually deter the dealers
- Continue and enhancing community events like music and movies in the park.
- Youth center
- job training, wood shop, computer repair
- Have youth programs-somewhere the children can go.
- School system question does not delineate how/why this is currently thought to be untrue or in need of improvement. Community center for youth-specifically opposed to this. Age agnostic-equally-these demographic groups do NOT require equal treatment.
- academics first - sports next
- Its time this Village embraces and works with the College and not against this great employer. The College has great opportunities for this entire community
- Our schools are vital in order to attract and keep young people a part of our village. So many young adults who want to stay nearby move to New Hartford, Clinton, etc. when it is time to raise a family. Herkimer schools once had a wonderful reputation. We need

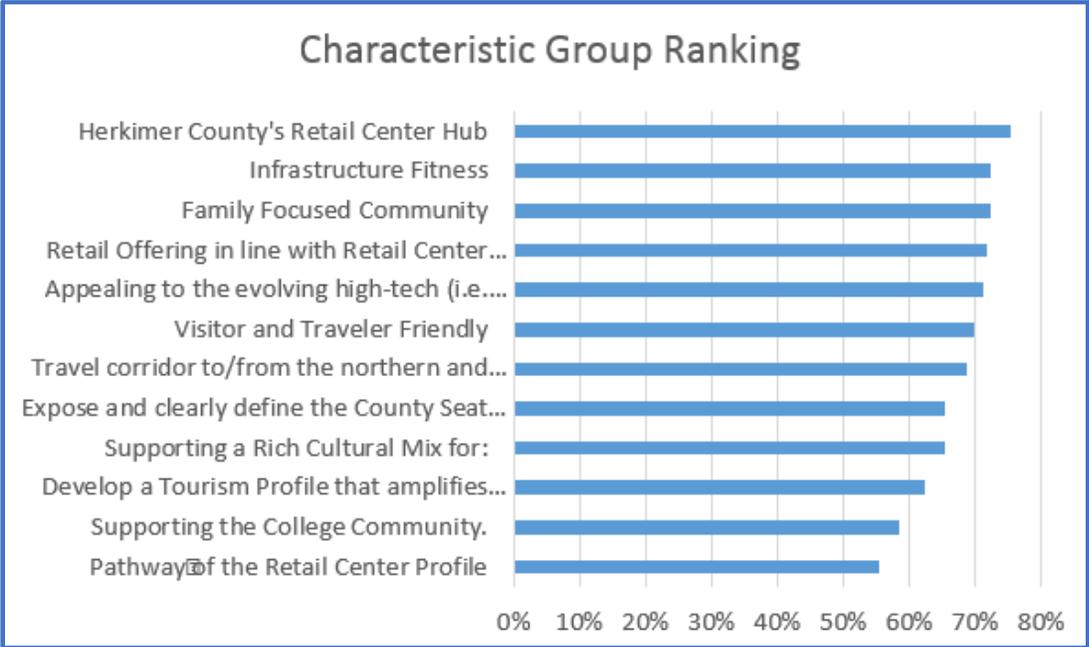
a school administrator who appreciates young people and has a vision of what we can do to improve our students' education. The school can be at the core of what makes us great!

- Bring in something for the kids to do so they spend less time drinking and smoking weed. It is disgusting that the youth spend all their weekends partying because there is nothing to do.
- Clear zoning for residential fitting of their requirements makes no sense Who is "their"
- Should have merged school when we had the chance. I would like to see this happen.

The Village is scheduling ongoing public hearings to continue to keep public need and opinion as part of this ongoing revitalization.

In addition, the planning and zoning boards, along with codes are actively working with the Mayor to make the changes necessary to provide the greatest opportunities to all people of the village of Herkimer.

The chart below presents the ranking of each of the Characteristic Groups. It should be noted that all of the Characteristic Groups received scoring in excess of 50%, which denotes a majority of respondents were in favor of these Characteristic Groups for defining the future vision of the Village of Herkimer.



The support for this plan comes from local, state and federal leaders as well as private investors who see this village as a diamond in the rough and support this plan going forward

Mayor Mark Netti in conjunction with his Board of Trustees and the Planning Board have come together to set the parameters for phase 1 of the redevelopment they believe will be the beginning of the revitalization of Downtown Herkimer. Herkimer Housing Authority has started its resurgence by developing affordable housing within walking distance to the targeted redevelopment area.

7.) Transformative opportunities. *Describe the opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project). Identify potential development opportunities such as municipally owned property that may be appropriate for redevelopment. Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. It should be recognized that if a DRI award is made to downtown the projects identified here, along with any others that may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI Grants.*

Housing: The need for updated, more codes friendly housing has been identified as a priority for keeping people in the downtown area. The first steps have already been taken with improvements to subsidized housing.

The need for housing and assistance to multi family homeowners was addressed as far back as the 2002 Community Development Strategic Plan.

The Village of Herkimer contains a wide variety of housing types and structures. One and two family homes are predominate in addition to garden type apartments, addressed above, and mid-rise apartment projects. Based on the 2000 census of 3,528 total housing units in the village 344 were vacant. Less than half of the properties were owner occupied. These numbers have changed and there is lower occupancy and less owner occupied housing. The village is looking to address this issue with the following programs.

Façade and Infrastructure Programs

Since this Census, the decline in owner occupied units as well as the decline of occupancy has changed to a point that much of the housing stock is unlivable. It is the goal of the Village of Herkimer to assist the homeowners that are still living or owning property in the village to update their properties and infrastructure through a façade and sidewalk program.

Creation of an Urban Renewal Department

Currently, when these home fall into disarray, the bank or the County are taking control. The Village of Herkimer has the foresight to see that if they could gain control of these properties and remarket them, they can have greater control and vetting over who is purchasing the properties as well as getting them back on the tax rolls. As part of the DRI grant, the village is looking to begin a quasi type urban renewal agency enabling them to purchase, resell and put houses back on the tax rolls. In addition, and most importantly, they will be able to assure quality housing in the revitalization downtown area, providing safe quality living for students, professionals, and families, with that continued theme of Herkimer becoming a Family Friendly Community.

In an effort to continue to draw professionals and families to the area, Mayor Netti is also working with two local landowners who have an interest in building a development of single family homes just outside of the Downtown district, yet still in walking distance. There is developable land to be marketed to the right developers, but can only be a reality with positive improvements to the downtown district.

Commercial Opportunities: Currently, the anchor building for the downtown revitalization is a four building block of Main Street. There are presently several tenants in this block of property, but more showing interest. The plans for new restaurants, coffee shops and offices are on the table, but investors are hinging on seeing more improvements to this area. There are several other commercial and mixed use opportunities in the now abandoned buildings in this downtown district. It is the intention of the Village to assist those investors that are showing an interest in these properties to bring them back to the natural, historical beauty that once was a symbol of the history of this beautiful eclectic village.

Parks and Recreation: Myers Park which lies in the Revitalization area and is a walking park where families once gathered for a day with their families or for entertainment. The park hosts a bandstand and gazebo, but with the decline of the area, the bandstands use is minimal and both are in need of upgrades. An extension of the growth of housing and industry will be to bring back this park to the family friendly, entertainment center it was decades ago.

Harmon Fields currently houses several ball fields and the Village is working with the school district to take over these fields, upgrade them and put in concessions. With the school district making these



improvements, the village will have the capitol to take over Brookwood National park. The vision here is to create a park that will house 15-20 RV sites and to build a community center. This vision serves dual purposes with the community center being available and accessible to those within the county. This 30 acre park preserve will be a step in marketing the area as a stop over to those heading to the northern part of Herkimer County. The RV park will be another way to utilize the thruway exit and to market Herkimer

once again as “The Gateway to the Adirondacks”.

This vision can become a reality within a two-year time frame, but the offshoot and growth of the area beyond the original Master Plan 2020 plan can be a definite reality with the influx of the DRI dollars. As you can see above, there will be a spiraling affect once the Phase one Zone starts to see improvements.

Continued Growth

Studied in the 2002 Strategic Plan and the 2020 vision Plan was the S. Main St. district also, as well as the waterways and walking Paths. In addition, the housing in this southern area of the Village of Herkimer is also in need of revitalization.

This will be a natural progression once the North main St, downtown revitalization becomes a reality.

8.) Administrative capacity. *Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.*

If the village of Herkimer receives this grant they would be looking to an outside manager to implement the future vision. The village attorney also will execute the grant contract as they have in the past.

Multiple grants have been handled through our office staff and they know what is needed to succeed. The level of money that would constitute the DRI grant would require more time and the village would utilize an outside manager as they have in the past

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

Listed among the best Community Colleges in the state in 2019, this institution is vitally important to the Village of Herkimer. Even greater is the way the College's curriculum fits into the 2020 Vision for the Village.

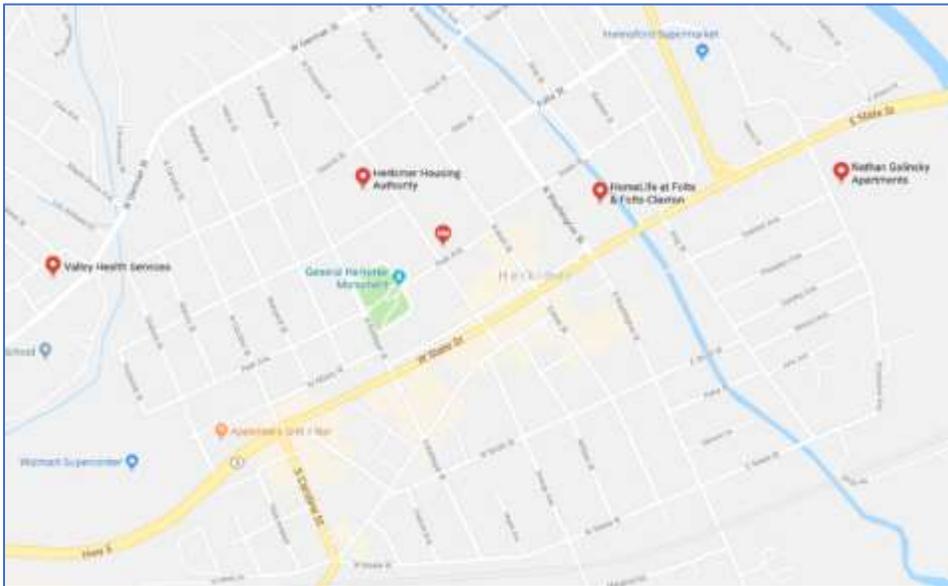
The Herkimer College supports an Education curriculum that includes a program in **Recreation Leadership**. Those enlisting in this program could be engaged in support of the development of recreational programs as outlined in the **Recreational Facilities** section of the section on **Family Focused Community**.

The Herkimer College also supports a **Teaching Assistance Certificate** program that could include participation of its students in educational class support at the Herkimer High School. The College and Village can also establish a collaborative support program for students taking the **Childhood Education** and **Early Childhood** programs to enlist participation at child daycare businesses in the Village as well as the Herkimer Elementary School.

Collaboration Opportunity – Healthcare

The Herkimer College supports an educational program in Healthcare and Service, which would serve well to support interns to be staffed in support of (for example) the various elderly facilities located in

the Village as indicated in the map below



It is also suggested that there be health and wellness programs conducted by the Herkimer College that would provide community residents (or those from surrounding communities) with the opportunity to be educated in good living guidance or supporting those battling with drug addiction.

Collaboration Opportunity – STEM

The Herkimer College support a wide array of programs focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). These include:

- Computer Science and Networking
- Engineering Science
- Laboratory Technology
- Mathematics
- Quality Assurance

It is also envisioned that the Village Planning Board will engage College interns in support of the various **Actions Points** listed throughout this plan. Examples of intern collaboration include supportive roles per:

- Development and execution of a community web-site that will include the use of advanced computer technology, such as:
 - Live event streaming to expand visibility of community events beyond the physical and into the digital
 - Loyalty Apps enabling smart phone interaction with areas of interest in the village per the Traveler and Tourism Friendly Community
 - Supporting local business marketing and advertising campaigns
 - Enlisting of Augmented Reality technology to enhance the experience of events to all age levels, but especially community's youth
- Development and execution of establishing community Wi-Fi in support of developing the Village as a **Smart City** as referenced in the section of Community Demography enabling deliverables such as:

- Connected community activities, increased foot traffic in support of retail center development, etc.
- Traffic flow analysis to assist in improving traffic light controls per day/time, road repair priority, etc.
- Foot traffic analysis to enhance retailer visibility and association of time/date trends and market campaign influence

The Herkimer Central School District is a participant in the **STEM** program (see <https://www.ed.gov/stem>) that aligns well with the STEM program offered at the Herkimer College. It is strongly encouraged that Herkimer College and the Herkimer Board of Education join together to identify a program of collaboration regarding STEM projects that serve to benefit those in the Herkimer Junior/Senior High School and the students of Herkimer College.

It is highly possible that this on-going collaborative program would also result in the students of Herkimer High School to consider Herkimer College as a next step in their educational program. This would serve the students, the Herkimer College, and the Village by increasing the longevity of student occupancy in the Village.

With the vision and revitalization outlined above, the students will have all they need to call the Village of Herkimer home. With the industrial park less than six miles to the west, medical centers throughout the “valley”, and the Basset Healthcare Network Little Falls hospital seven miles to the east, employment opportunities for millennials are growing.

Summary

The Village of Herkimer encompasses everything the DRI embraces for communities:

- Housing Stock that is currently being updated with additional housing opportunities for all family types. Shovel ready property that is suitable for investors to create a retail center, professional offices and mixed-use properties.
- Green space to provide parks and recreation for family use.
- Economic changes to provide more employment opportunities to millennials, professionals and low to moderate income individuals.
- A village deep in history with a location that can draw from traffic heading to the Adirondacks.
- A mayor, planning board, and community ready to embrace the necessary changes to bring back this once family friendly community.

Herkimer is taking a page out their past to build their future, and that future focusses on millennials and families.