



CITY OF RENSSELAER, NEW YORK DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE: ROUND 5 FUNDING APPLICATION

BASIC INFORMATION

- **REDC Region:** Capital Region
- **Municipality Name:** City of Rensselaer
- **Downtown Name:** Rensselaer's Waterfront Business and Recreation District
- **County Name:** Rensselaer County
- **Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title:** Ketura Vics, Director of Planning
- **Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address:** Ketura.vics@rensselaerny.gov; keturavics@gmail.com

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Rensselaer's vision for downtown is a vibrant, built out waterfront business district where blight becomes home to small businesses, open spaces offer thoughtfully designed opportunities for passive and active recreation, and adaptive reuse of brownfields creates an anchor for the new and progressive industries that are burgeoning across New York State. Through strategic investments in critical infrastructure, the use of public-private partnerships to facilitate adaptive reuse and infill development, and the successful completion of ongoing public utility projects, Rensselaer will continue to overcome barriers to developing in our prominent waterfront location.

JUSTIFICATION

Rensselaer's Waterfront Business and Recreation District ("downtown") is an ideal candidate for \$20 million in funding through the New York State ("NYS") Downtown Revitalization Initiative ("DRI") program. Rensselaer's proposed DRI area is large, spanning the length of Broadway from the Columbia Turnpike to the Hudson Riverfront, just southwest of Exit 7 on I-90 ("northern waterfront"). This area was selected because of its many opportunities to stimulate smart growth and have community development projects completed. All developable properties in the existing downtown, along North Broadway, and even our anchor property at the northern waterfront have public utilities, access to public transit, and have undergone extensive improvements to provide safe options for pedestrians and cyclists. The waterfront is also included because waterfront revitalization is desirable and celebrated throughout Hudson River communities across New York State. Rensselaer, like many small cities nationwide, has been stifled by generations of disinvestment. Many businesses vacated downtown following its' designation as a 100-year floodplain in the 1980's. Fortunately for all, though, this trend is reversing and downtown is ready. Due to the increased investment in existing buildings and an array of new construction projects, our Building Department has been able to nearly double in size to help manage requests for building and alteration permits as well as rental inspections. The City is on track to issue over 200 certificates of occupancy for new market-rate residential units by the end of 2022 and there are more projects obtaining approvals now. Rensselaer is at the nexus of major employers, educational institutions, and two successful DRI cities. We have nearly 35 acres of undeveloped Hudson Riverfront and with the recent completion of the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail ("AHET"), Rensselaer is more developable and more closely linked to the Capital Region than ever before. The City is well poised to continue strengthening the link between Hudson Riverfront cities by being centrally located and shovel ready for catalytic community development and capital projects. Rensselaer will greatly contribute to the success of the New York State DRI program.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1. Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.

The proposed DRI area is anchored to the north by the former Hilton Center property and to the east, it follows Broadway south until reaching the existing business district, where it expands slightly further along Third Avenue to reach Green Street. The definitive southern boundary of the DRI area is the Columbia Turnpike. The western boundary of the area is the Hudson River shoreline. This is exhibited in *Map 1: DRI Study Area*. There are four proposed (4) subareas in the DRI zone identified in *Map 2: Proposed DRI Subareas*.

The proposed strategic planning districts are discussed below.

NORTH BROADWAY DISTRICT

- Includes mixed-use zoning district along the northern portion of Broadway from Partition Street on the south to Washington Avenue on the north.

MILL CREEK REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

- Includes former City Hall, former solar site, surrounding homes and businesses, and the NYS Offices of Child and Family Resources (also known as Capital View Office Park).

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

- Includes Rensselaer's existing downtown business district at south Broadway

WATERFRONT RECREATION DISTRICT

- Includes "Barnett Mills", public boat launch and docks, the multi-use waterfront trail, Kiliaen's Landing, DeLaet's Landing and public esplanade, Rensselaer's Hudson Riverfront art park

Starting at the north and heading south along Broadway, *Map 3: Key Revitalization Properties* shows the following:

1. THE CURRENT HILTON CENTER BUILDING AND FUTURE SITE OF "BARNETT MILLS"

- A Planned Development District ("PDD") which has begun the approval process to become a mix of market-rate apartments, a brew pub, and a commercial space designed for water related recreation including daytime use boat rentals
- Renderings submitted by BBL Construction on August 25, 2021 are included in the appendices

2. THE CITY OF RENSSELAER PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH AND DOCKS

- Directly across from Barnett Mills

3. NORTH BROADWAY

- A linear mixed use area nearly a mile long with longstanding mom-and-pop style convenience shops, membership based clubs such as the American Legion, and new businesses that serve a variety of needs
- The proximity of the existing business cluster to waterfront development and impressive views make this walkable area highly attractive for adaptive reuse

4. THE CITY OF RENSSELAER MULTI-USE WATERFRONT TRAIL FROM THE BOAT LAUNCH TO THE PUBLIC ESPLANADE AT DELAETS LANDING

- Design for the trail has been approved by New York State Department of Transportation and construction will begin following right-of-way acquisitions

5. KILIAEN'S LANDING

- 34 acres of developable land on the Hudson River just north of the Livingston Avenue Bridge
- The City has completed a full Generic Environmental Impact Statement for this area
- The GEIS includes the multi-use waterfront trail in all development alternatives

6. DELAET'S LANDING AND PUBLIC ESPLANADE

- 96 existing market rate apartments
- 84 market rate apartments with a pool on-site; under construction now.
 - i. The site plans complete the connection of the waterfront trail to AHET trailhead using on-street connections

- Opportunity zone

7. FORMER CITY HALL AT 501-505 BROADWAY

- 1.28 acre cluster, seen on map as the large brownfield south of DeLaet's Landing
 - i. Building in need of demolition offering a prime location for infill
 - ii. Key redevelopment site in Brownfield Opportunity Area: Phase I study
- Walkable to downtown and the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station
- On CDTA bus line
- Bike or pedestrian access to AHET
- Opportunity zone

8. FORMER SOLAR COMPANY AT 428-432 WASHINGTON STREET

- .25 acre cluster of sites
- Walkable to downtown and the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station
- On CDTA bus line
- Bike or pedestrian access to AHET
- Opportunity zone

9. RENSSELAER'S HUDSON RIVERFRONT ART PARK

- Existing park beneath Dunn Memorial Bridge with over 90 murals
- Trailhead for AHET, connecting Albany to Hudson via Rensselaer
- Walkable to downtown and the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station
- On CDTA bus line
- *Recreational amenities include:* baseball diamond, known for being home to the first grand slam in Major League Baseball history, which is still in use today; public docks offering Hudson River access; tennis/pickle ball courts; playground equipment; gazebo; basketball courts.

10. RENSSELAER'S DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT AT SOUTH BROADWAY

- A mix of municipal buildings, local businesses, and numerous vacant plots of land and blighted buildings. Also boasts impressive views and excellent access to I-787 and the Columbia Turnpike.
- Walkable to the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station
- On CDTA bus line
- Opportunity zone

11. Past investment, future investment potential.

The DRI area will be able to capitalize on the prior investments detailed in the tables below by bridging the gap between services provided and capacity needed for our city blocks to support more development. Many of the transformative projects discussed in *Section 7* are community development projects that there is a proven need for. The DRI will be catalytic for Rensselaer's revitalization by enabling capacity expanding projects to occur years, if not a decade or so, ahead of what a competitive annual process would allow for.

In recent years, the public and private investments discussed in the tables below have been completed in Rensselaer. **Note:** On the maps, the portion of Broadway over the rail lines is the Broadway Bridge. Partition Street is the first block running perpendicular to Broadway at the end of the bridge. Pine Street is the fourth block perpendicular to Broadway north of Partition Street.

PAST INVESTMENT	
\$20.4M	Water and sewer infrastructure replacement on southern Broadway from the Columbia Turnpike to Pine Street Complete Street improvements on Broadway from the Columbia Turnpike to New Broadway Reconstruction of and complete street improvements to Veterans Memorial Bridge (i.e. Broadway Bridge over Amtrak facility)
\$23M	DeLaet's Landing Phase 1: completed construction of 96 market rate waterfront apartments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units are fully rented, mostly to Regeneron and Albany Medical Center employees
\$2.8M	The public esplanade at DeLaet's Landing
N/A	Riverfront Park as the trailhead for the Albany Hudson Electric Trail
Est. \$2M	Adaptive reuse of numerous abandoned but well located zombie properties into local dining, retail, and service oriented establishments such as Partition Wine and Liquor, Partition Laundry, and Illusive Bar and Grill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of new international cuisine – both local Korean hot spot “Son of Egg” and the new local Burmese restaurant “Shway” will be opening on Broadway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both have received all planning approvals and building permits and are currently under construction, on schedule to open Fall 2021
\$2.2M	Water and sewer infrastructure replacement on the Columbia Turnpike Complete street improvements to the Columbia Turnpike
\$14M	Green infrastructure and water/sewer infrastructure improvements to East Street, a primary access road to the local Amtrak station
\$3.5M	Third Avenue Bridge reconstruction, another primary access road to the local Amtrak station
.5M	Quackenderry Creek flood mitigation improvements
\$5M	Water and sewer infrastructure replacements in City's Eastland Park neighborhood (north end)
\$1.5M	Water and sewer infrastructure replacements on various streets city wide

The projects discussed in the table below are ongoing investments in the City of Rensselaer.

ONGOING INVESTMENT	
\$25M	National Grid north end substation
\$1.8M	One mile of waterfront trail leading from DeLaet's Landing to the City of Rensselaer Boat Launch and the future site of Barnett Mills
\$15M	Barnett Mills adaptive reuse of a historic waterfront mill
\$20M	DeLaet's Landing Phase 1A: construction of 84 market rate units and a waterfront in ground pool and cabana

\$5M	Pedestrian Safety Access Program (“PSAP”) improvements along Broadway connecting the AHET to the public esplanade at DeLaet’s Landing and further pedestrian connections to the Hollow nature preserve multi-use trail and Rensselaer City School District on the north end
\$3.1M	The Hollow nature preserve multi-use trail
\$6M	City wide combined sewer outflow (“CSO”) elimination to address flooding and Hudson River water quality
\$1M	Partition Street culvert replacement on Mill Creek to address flooding
\$.575M	Third Avenue reconstruction, a gateway to the City from the east
\$2.2M	South Street bridge replacement and complete street improvements

Past and ongoing investments such as these support future investment potential in and around the DRI area.

The projects discussed in the table below identify future investments potential in the City of Rensselaer’s DRI area.

FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL WITHIN THE DRI AREA

Almost 4 acres of infill development, adaptive reuse, and/or brownfield redevelopment opportunities in a quaint 23 acre downtown area

Another 1.5 acres available in the 14 acre Mill Creek Redevelopment Corridor

Over 15 store fronts along the northern and southern Broadway corridors that are vacant and have high potential for adaptive reuse

34 acres of developable waterfront property, known locally as Kiliaen’s Landing, which has a complete Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Phase II commercial development at DeLaet’s Landing

Downtown property owners within DRI area planning to pursue retail cannabis licensing due to simple and convenient highway access and proximity to the waterfront

The projects discussed in the table below identify future potential investments in the City of Rensselaer which directly abut the DRI area.

FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL DIRECTLY ABUTTING THE DRI AREA

Transit-oriented development capitalizing on the Rensselaer Amtrak Station; 1.5 acres of underutilized parking owned by New York State and 6.25 acres of parking currently used for the train station and owned by CDTA.

Industrial development where there is vacant land in the City’s Heavy Industrial (“I-1”) Zone, just south of the Columbia Turnpike

Brownfield redevelopment along the Columbia Turnpike

180,000 square foot warehouse that is applying for supply-side adult use cannabis licensing as a “cultivation campus”

In addition to these projects, recent planning efforts have made it possible for Rensselaer to continue expanding its development footprint in a way that is consistent with smart growth principles, sustainable, and well thought out.

The recent completion of our Natural Resources Inventory (“NRI”) has provided Rensselaer a data driven document that identifies and discusses sensitive habitats, ecosystems, physical geography, and climate change projections. It was created in order to be used by the Planning Department, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals for all planning and plan review purposes. This plan enables the full consideration of how proposed projects will impact our local natural resources and it allows our decision making bodies to understand how approvals they issue today will affect the Hudson River Estuary and its’ communities in the long term. Part of this process which involved the community was applying the NYS Climate Smart Communities (“CSC”) Action Framework to our sustainability and resiliency goals. Residents discussed and ranked a selection of CSC Actions to establish local priorities to drive the pursuit of project funding.

The City has been participating in the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (“BOA”) program since 2016 and has just completed the Phase I: Nomination Study following almost 18 months of hard work by Planning Department staff. The City has applied for designation as a BOA and will plan to pursue Phase II funding upon receipt of designation. This plan has been instrumental in understanding our development potential, where we can leverage brownfields, and the identification of key properties for our next phases of redevelopment.

In March of 2021, the City was awarded funding to conduct a linkage study that considers solutions for what is known internally as the “Forbes Avenue bottleneck”. While our southern waterfront is occupied by industrial operations and our central waterfront is developing, our northern waterfront has been slow to attract development due primarily to site access issues. The purpose of the Northern Waterfront Linkage Study is to consider how the City can best promote private development on the waterfront through public transportation improvement projects that address this prohibitive bottleneck.

Finally, the Planning Department is currently engaged in an effort to identify which property disposition methods are most suitable to the City’s sustained and long term redevelopment. The current auction system has proven detrimental to neighborhoods by discouraging owner occupation of multi-family units and has allowed numerous properties with prime locations to sit dormant for years due to inaction by owners. This is a near-term effort and the goal is to implement a more strategic approach to the disposition of one, two, and three-family homes while recognizing development potential for tax-foreclosed land and commercial properties.

3. Recent or impending job growth.

Rensselaer’s Heavy Industrial Zone, located south of the DRI area, hosts numerous operations that are major local employers, such as Albany Molecular Research Inc. (“AMRI”). Slightly to the east, there is another site which is home to Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Taconic Biosciences, and the UAlbany East

Campus. Major expansions are planned for both the AMRI and Regeneron facilities. Recently completed job training facilities also lie just outside of the DRI area and there is the potential for extensive job growth resulting from adult-use cannabis retail and manufacturing facilities, craft brewing, and new commercial operations that locate in the City.

REGENERON

Just outside of municipal limits, Regeneron has completed a major expansion that included a 346,000-square-foot packaging plant and a 212,000-square-foot warehouse as part of a 130 acre construction project valued at \$800 million; they also received approvals in 2019 for another 240,000-square-foot quality control lab and a 1,050-space parking garage. These rapid expansions are slated to increase their employee-base from 2,700 to 4,000 by the end of 2024, creating at least an additional *1,300 skilled employment opportunities* a few short miles from Rensselaer's DRI area.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES TRAINING FACILITY

Another project just outside municipal limits is the conversion of the former K-Mart on the Columbia Turnpike into a 97,000-square-foot/\$17 million Human Services Training Center for the New York State Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS). The Training Center provides standardized training to state and county caseworkers, child welfare supervisors, voluntary agency staff, juvenile justice workers, child care licensors, and child abuse specialists, among others. This facility has the capacity to *train over 20,000 state employees on an annual basis*, many of whom will access the facility via the Columbia Turnpike exit from I-787 (est. 46,000 vehicles a day). This is directly adjacent to our DRI area. Additionally, as the demand for child care and other similar services continues to grow at an exponential rate in the wake of COVID-19, the demand for human services is growing and the facilitation of training is more pertinent than ever before.

AMRI

On a smaller scale and within municipal limits, AMRI has received a building permit for a 300,000-square-foot expansion of their facility's production capacity that is slated to create *additional 35-50 jobs within the City*.

ADULT-USE CANNABIS LICENSING

Certain other impending job growth relies on the success of applications for adult-use cannabis licenses. This industry has been touted to provide *up to 25 jobs per licensed retail facility and an additional 50-75 per licensed cultivation, processing, and/or delivery facility*. At the time of this application, two Rensselaer locals are planning to pursue licenses; one for retail and another for supply-side operations.

CRAFT BREWING

The City has numerous acres of developable properties that could include infill, adaptive reuse, or brownfield redevelopment that would be excellent candidates for locally brewed craft beers. Being on the AHET makes us an attractive location and addressing our 100-year flood plain will seal the deal for our exponential development potential.

As a side, the north end anchor property at Barnett Mills has recently been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (“NRHP”). The owners have also brought in a major construction partner, BBL Inc., for the redevelopment of this site. The tax incentives offered for properties on the NRHP and the local Industrial Development Agency’s (“IDA”) requirement that at least 15% of a vacant mixed use facility be used for commercial space have allowed this project to move forward at an impressive pace. These incentives also ensure that the Mills will provide commercial space; the developers have always planned for craft brewing space. Barnett Mills is currently in the preliminary stages of applying for designation as a Planned Development District with the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission. Because of the immense progress that has been made to move this project forward in the last 12 months, we are highly confident in the successful revitalization of this property. We look forward to the new jobs, new residents, and new commercial activity that this adaptive reuse will bring to our northern waterfront.

FUTURE INFILL DEVELOPMENT USING LOCAL LOAN AND TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Further, all infill projects and adaptive reuse in the DRI area will need to provide commercial space and create jobs in order to be eligible for local revolving loan funds and IDA benefits. This is required to ensure the continued growth of our local economy through full-time equivalent job creation and retention. Our local programs are discussed further in *Section 5: Supportive Local Policies*.

4. Quality of life.

Data from the 2020 United States Census indicates that in the Capital Region, population growth is trending towards counties with major urban areas such as Albany, Schenectady, and Rensselaer while it is trending away from more rural area such as Columbia, Greene, and Washington counties. Rensselaer offers a healthy mix of affordable and market rate housing opportunities throughout the city and specifically in our DRI area. Overall, we serve a diverse locale. Estimates from the 2018 American Community Survey (“2018 ACS”) indicate that in downtown (“Census Tract 515”), 22.6% of the population is minority/non-white, 10% of the population is above the age of 65, and 18% of the population is disabled. City wide, the 2018 ACS indicates that 19.9% of the population is minority/non-white, 14.3% of the population is above the age of 65, and 13.5% of the population is disabled. Knowing this, it is the City’s prerogative to ensure that quality of life improvements are inclusive above all else – community development project enhance the attractiveness and livability of a place and that is exactly what our transformative projects will do. As we continue to see industrial growth within the City and in our neighboring municipalities, residents require improved provision of services. This is a top priority among residents and is a necessity to oversee, especially as we experience new population growth following the completion of several residential projects. As we begin to experience adaptive reuse and infill of our downtown properties, the minorities, aging, and disabled living downtown will be the immediate benefactors of smart growth, improved access to emergency services, and creative place making projects for open spaces such as the Hudson Riverfront Art Park.

With DRI funding, it is our goal to realize the wealth of opportunities that exist to:

Beautify and green our public spaces

- This will be done through the continued investment in local art, riverfront place making, and green infrastructure projects

Become even more walkable and bikeable

- This will be done by continuing to implement Complete Street projects and improving our wayfinding and signage for on and off-road linkages between public parks; and

Bring in more businesses, large and small, to serve our existing populations and attract new residents

- This will also serve those who are simply passing through to enjoy our impressive array of waterfront recreational amenities.

These goals are discussed further in *Section 7: Transformative Opportunities*.

5. Supportive local policies.

In recent years, the City's Common Council has adopted resolutions with the support of the Mayor to express bipartisan support for the streamlining of development processes for burgeoning industries such as craft brewing and legalized adult-use cannabis to locate their operations in Rensselaer. The City has also procured policies promoting quality of life improvements such as Complete Streets and has had residents prioritize state frameworks such as the CSC Action Items in order to establish a strong local narrative supporting sustainable public and private developments. Additional economic development initiatives are discussed on the following pages.

POLICY OR FRAMEWORK	DATE PASSED OR ADOPTED	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Craft Beverage Resolution	October 17, 2018	Establishes Rensselaer as “one stop shop” for craft beer manufacturing and offers streamlined approvals for craft brewing operations
Complete Streets Policy	December 19, 2018	Requires all city transportation projects and all private development to use Complete Streets principles in site design
Adult-use Cannabis Resolution	August 6, 2021	Establishes unanimous support for manufacturing of adult-use cannabis for the 180,000 square foot warehouse at 2 Rensselaer Ave, just outside of the DRI area
Natural Resources Inventory	May 28, 2021	Identifies the City's natural resources and prioritizes CSC Items to support future funding applications for climate and community resiliency projects

Municipal “no-bid” list

July 17, 2021

Establishes list of 13 planning, engineering, and architecture firms to do work for the City on an “as needed” basis without going to bid

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The City of Rensselaer has been recently paving its own way with the following economic development accomplishments, in addition to others on the Planning, Zoning and Building Department fronts. We offer for your consideration, as you review our DRI Application, the following list of economic development initiatives/actions, presented in chronological order beginning in March, 2020:

- The hiring of an experienced, capable Economic Development Director in March, 2020;
- Naming the above referenced Economic Development Director to serve as CEO of the City of Rensselaer IDA in October, 2020;
- After a determination made by the CEO, hired by the City IDA Members in October 2020: the new CEO finally engaging, the day after being hired, the usual CPA firm to conduct the 2019 audit, thereby setting the stage to rescue the City IDA from a state of dormancy in early 2021, as described further below;
 - a. Collaboration with the Rensselaer County IDA (“RCIDA”) to offer/consider offering IDA benefits to three economic development projects (one is referenced below) to keep/increase PILOT payments flowing to the City, County and School District;
 - b. Resurrection of the City of Rensselaer IDA to a position of good standing with the NYS Office of the State Comptroller (“OCS”) by researching actions taken by the IDA, by collecting delinquent PILOT payments, by making documentation corrections where necessary and by completing/submitting a delinquent 2019 PARIS Report deemed satisfactory by the NYS OSC;
 - c. Revision of the City of Rensselaer IDA Uniform Tax Exemption Policy (“UTEP”) to include a PILOT schedule which mirrors that offered by New York State Real Property Tax Law Section 485-a, thereby enabling the City of Rensselaer to compete more effectively with the nearby Cities of Albany, Menands and Cohoes in attracting developers willing to convert non-residential real estate to mixed-use commercial (at least 15%) and residential uses.
 - i. Such UTEP revision was undertaken to capitalize on the existence of a 96-unit, upscale, waterfront apartment building at DeLaet’s Landing, the site of the former city high school. Average monthly rents in the two -unit building are approximately \$1,700 with the peak rent being approximately \$2,100 and the low rent being approximately \$1,500. The UTEP was amended after a public hearing at which the Rensselaer City School District Superintendent was in attendance and did speak in favor of the UTEP revision;

- d. Collaboration with the Rensselaer County IDA to offer IDA benefits to a second, upscale, 84-unit apartment building at DeLaet's Landing. Average rents are expected to be \$1,800 for the 84 new units; highest rents in the new building will be approximately \$2,200 while the lowest rents will be \$1,600.
 - i. Such collaboration with the RCIDA was necessary because an IDA application was submitted to the RCIDA before the City of Rensselaer IDA's eligibility to offer tax exemptions was restored after being suspended by the NYS OSC for failure to submit a timely 2019 PARIS report (as mentioned above).
- e. The conduct of ongoing economic development outreach efforts involving direct contact with decision makers employed by businesses that are known to have had a positive impact on other area/non-area communities. The goal in doing so was to effectively couple the above-referenced 485-a exemption with the impending increase in DeLaet's Landing affluent apartment dwellers (from occupants of 96 units to occupants of 180 units).
- f. Issuance of two new IDA applications, both of which are currently confidential—our being without permission to release details until after we are asked and until after we successfully request from the applicants permission to disclose proposed project details in support of this application. One of the proposed projects is transformational in that it, if completed, will convert a not-for-profit, zero-tax property into a mixed-use taxable development (as a result of inclusion, by the City IDA, of a 485a-like mixed-use tax exemption in its UTEP). The second potential application will be far more transformational when planning work is completed by a leading Capital Region contractor/architect.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN PROGRAM

Below is a brief description of the City's existing Economic Development Loan Program.

- HUD funded revolving loan fund
- Available to new and existing businesses (manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers with three or more employees) and some service-based businesses located in the City of Rensselaer
 - Excludes all food service enterprises and those establishments where alcohol or if applicable cannabis is consumed on premises
- Minimum loan amount: \$30,000; based on available funds
- Fixed rate is Lowest WSJ Prime Rate as of date of closing
- Loan cannot exceed 40% of total project financing
- One job must be created (within two years) for each \$10,000 borrowed
- 51% of jobs created must be "made available" to those in low-to-moderate-income households
- Loan proceeds may be used to acquire fixed assets, purchase inventory, to support current accounts receivable, and to refinance existing debt where such refinancing is a required element of total project financing

- Loan proceeds shall not be used for capital improvements

REAL ESTATE DISPOSITION COMMITTEE

The City's newly established Real Estate Disposition Committee ("REDCO") is currently undergoing a near-term effort to establish new property disposition mechanisms as opposed to a traditional highest bidder auction system. The current effort seeks to consider mechanisms such as land banking, an application system for tax foreclosed one to three-family homes, and a referral system by which the REDCO recommends certain strategic and commercial properties be held by the City as opposed to auctioned. The research into the long-term results of past disposition practices and an assessment of current land use opportunities is underway and policy suggestions will be prepared for Common Council consideration by December 2021.

6. Public support.

As with prior year's applications, there is immense support within the community for the DRI application. The Director of Planning presented the highlights of the application to the Planning Commission, an informational meeting with the public was held, and a public feedback form was distributed at the meeting for residents to complete and submit. Residents were asked to prioritize proposed projects on a scale of 1 (low importance) to 5 (high importance) to determine the community priority of proposed DRI projects. Of the proposed DRI projects, the community prioritized North Broadway water, sewer, and complete streets, a revolving loan fund for blighted buildings, and northern waterfront access improvements. A rich and productive discussion ensued about specific projects such as the downtown flood plain assessment and a new police and fire headquarters. Discussions such as these highlight the importance of outreach because they offer the opportunity for trained professionals to provide clarity to the public on the importance of certain projects, which can help curb dissent for valuable public improvements. There is also bipartisan support for the DRI within City Hall. The Mayor, Common Council, and department heads city wide have all supported this application. The Common Council has passed a resolution authorizing our submission and the Mayor has been instrumental in its development. The opportunity to forego years of competing for grants to conduct the projects discussed in *Section 7* is both attractive and necessary to pursue. The City is prepared to continue fully engaging residents throughout the planning and project development processes in order to ensure that the resulting DRI projects serve the needs of our public infrastructure and the priorities of our community.

7. Transformative opportunities and readiness for \$20 Million request.

Rensselaer is ready for Round V funding through the NYS DRI Program. The City has struggled for years to attract just a single transformational project that would "put us on the map"; but the question of "what is stopping this from happening already" is one that has not been answered. Following discussions with developers, understanding the pitfalls of previously proposed projects, and working with our highly qualified staff, Mayor, and Common Council, we find that the same barriers to development have come up time and time again. The barriers identified are: *the downtown floodplain, the Forbes Avenue*

bottleneck, derelict public infrastructure along north Broadway, and lack of site control. Now is the time to address them. These barriers and transformative opportunities are discussed below.

Barrier to Development: Downtown Rensselaer is a 100-year flood plain

As mentioned previously in this application, the 1980's designation of Rensselaer's most developed/developable properties as a 100-year flood plain has proven to be prohibitive of new investment. This designation led to businesses vacating the City and while some have remained as staples, very few have returned. The high cost of FEMA insurances greatly skews the costs and benefits of building or redeveloping downtown. The FEMA FIRM panels which determine flood plain status have not been updated since they were first created in 1983. In recent years, the City has taken significant steps to improve our infrastructure and reduce the risk of our creeks flooding during major storm events. Using state and federal funding, the City has previously and continues to replace and repair infrastructure along Quackenderry and Mill Creeks. These are the bodies of water that pose a risk of flooding as opposed to the Hudson River. The City also used constructed a dam and retention area in the local nature preserve which has reduced flooding events greatly. Additionally, the City has replaced over 17 miles of water lines citywide and is 15 years ahead of schedule for completing CSO as part of the Region's Long Term Control Plan.

Proposed DRI Solution: Flood Plain Assessment for Downtown - \$250,000

With tens of millions of dollars invested into our water and sewer infrastructure, the transformative project being proposed to bridge this gap is a floodplain assessment for the downtown area. The purpose of the floodplain assessment is to determine which properties are truly at risk of flooding and which are not. City engineers anticipate that because of all of the work done, the majority of buildings downtown will no longer be in the flood plain. For those properties that are determined to no longer be in the floodplain, we will be able to market our economic development tools discussed in *Section 5* to incentivize infill and adaptive reuse projects to promote smart growth downtown.

Barrier to Development: Forbes Avenue Bottleneck

The area known locally as Kiliaen's Landing has had a completed GEIS for nearly three (3) years and very little development interest has been generated for this prime Hudson Riverfront location. A common reason for lack of interest from developers has been one major thing, lack of site access. Access to the site is both a switchback and a bottle neck. This makes it difficult to imagine some-500 cars per day coming and going from this area.

Proposed DRI Solution: Funding an Engineered Solution to the Bottleneck - \$5,000,000

The City is in the early stages of a fully funded linkage study to identify viable connections between I-90 and the city's northern waterfront. The purpose of the linkage study is to consider access issues to the waterfront and for the consulting engineers to provide fundable solutions to this issue employing complete streets principles. The study is on track to be completed by November 2022 and funding will be pursued afterwards. The DRI would ensure that the solution that is identified and funded will not cut corners but instead will be truly transformative for the northern waterfront area. Additional funding will likely also be pursued to address the access issues that exist just outside of the identified DRI area along the steeply graded access roads; infusing this area with public funds is the number one solution to enabling future growth here.

Barrier to Development: Derelict Public Infrastructure along North Broadway

Southern Broadway has received new water and sewer infrastructure and has complete streets. Power

lines have been consolidated and it is a highly attractive area of Rensselaer. The same cannot be said of North Broadway, where there are congestion issues due to two-sided on street parking, a lack of driveways, broken sidewalks, and unkempt power lines amongst other things. Water and sewer have only been replaced on a small portion of North Broadway and there have been no complete improvements north of Partition Street. Without reliable water and sewer infrastructure and as long as the streets remain blighted by public infrastructure, there will be a visible divide along North Broadway between the development south of Partition Street and any new construction on the northern waterfront.

Proposed DRI Solution: New Water, Sewer, and Complete Streets for North Broadway - \$3,250,000

In providing North Broadway with new water, sewer, and complete streets infrastructure, we will be able to promote equity in the neighborhood that is going to be bookended by new investment and high-end waterfront developments. We will also be completing critical infrastructure projects that might otherwise take years to get funding for. Equitable and sustainable public improvements are fundamental to a successful revitalization of the DRI area. The capacity to build begins with suitable public infrastructure. These issues are essential to address as we redevelop North Broadway in the coming years.

Barrier to Development: Lack of Site Control

As discussed earlier in the application, Rensselaer's past property disposition practices are believed to have hindered development in a number of ways. Highly-developable land and buildings have been sold at auction to property owners who have allowed them to devolve into zombie properties. The City is participating in a near-term effort to reconsider our land use practices for future tax-foreclosed properties. While often times, site control may be difficult to reclaim, the City has the opportunity to create our own instances of site control by reconsidering where some of our public buildings are located downtown.

Proposed DRI Solution: Relocating Public Buildings in DRI Area - \$8,000,000

Much like the City's past decision to exchange the waterfront location of the former high school to promote economic development opportunities, relocating our Police and Fire Department buildings to one single south end location would open up two more buildings for adaptive reuse. The current police station is in the existing downtown and the current south end fire station is on North Broadway. This project will help meet the dire need for improved emergency services downtown to our lowest income residents and the "I-2" Heavy Industrial Zone. It will also ensure that these services are close to the Port of Albany without requiring emergency vehicles to cross the Broadway Bridge; this is of notable importance, as bridges pose a major risk to provision of services in terms of emergency management. The current state of our police and fire stations create blight by keeping emergency vehicles on public and private properties. To add to that, the Broadway fire station is so small, the City must buy used fire trucks to fit in the bays. This results in extensive maintenance cost and more frequent replacement of fire trucks as opposed to the one-time purchase of new, steadfast vehicles that will reliably serve the southern portion of the City. Since the second and newer firehouse is in the City's north end near North Greenbush, our best emergency vehicles would be required to cross two bridges to respond to a fire downtown. The new Police and Fire Headquarters

would provide reliable emergency services to the City's south end and would also create room for more development in the DRI area where the City has site control.

The readiness/site control, commitment of project partners, funding sources, and zoning/regulatory requirements of these projects is discussed on the following pages.

CATALYTIC CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FOR \$20M REQUEST					
Project	Project Readiness	Est. Completion	Proposed Fund Source	Project Sponsor	Proposed DRI Cost
Downtown flood plain assessment	Ready. City can procure a consultant from the 2021 municipal "no-bid" list. No planning or zoning approvals needed.	Spring 2023	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$.25M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water and sewer infrastructure (from Pine Street to end of Broadway) Complete Streetscape (from Partition Street to end of Broadway) 	Ready. City can procure a consultant from the 2021 municipal "no-bid" list. No planning or zoning approvals needed.	Spring 2025	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$3.25M
New police and fire headquarters	Negotiating site control	Spring 2025	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$8M
Forbes Avenue bottleneck/access improvements	Engineering study under way; municipal site control	Spring 2026	DRI & Federal Funds	City of Rensselaer	\$5M
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED FOR CATALYTIC DRI PROJECTS: \$16.5M					

ADDITIONAL TRANSFORMATIVE DRI PROJECTS					
Project	Project Readiness	Est. Completion	Proposed fund source	Project sponsor	Proposed DRI Cost
Public art and riverfront place making	Ready. The projects using DRI funds will need to obtain all local approvals.	Spring 2025	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$1M
Revolving Loan Fund for sustainable elements in infill development (after flood plain assessment)	Ready. The projects using DRI funds will need to obtain all local approvals.	Ongoing	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$.5M

Revolving Loan Fund for adaptive reuse & façade improvement	Ready. The projects using DRI funds will need to obtain all local approvals.	Ongoing	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$.5M
DRI area marketing & wayfinding	Ready. The projects using DRI funds will need to obtain all local approvals.	End of grant	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$.15M
LED streetlight upgrades	Ready	Spring 2024	DRI	City of Rensselaer	\$2M
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED FOR OTHER DRI PROJECTS					\$4.15M

Proposed revolving loan funds will be managed by the Economic Development Director, the Grants Administrator/Secretary to the Economic Development Loan Program Committee, and additional support staff in the Planning Department, Treasurers Department, and Office of the Comptroller.

In addition to the DRI projects listed on the previous page, the projects below are considered by the City to be transformative in terms of how they will contribute to the extent of Rensselaer's redevelopment and revitalization. Without addressing critical issues such as the electrical grid's capacity and the reliable flow of water, it is difficult to imagine how we could sustain new development. This is why the projects below are considered fundamental critical infrastructure projects, but not DRI projects.

ADDITIONAL TRANSFORMATIVE NON-DRI PROJECTS					
New pump station from South Troy	Ready to establish shared services agreement with East Greenbush; immediately following, will be ready to draft contract and procure consultant from municipal "no-bid" list	Spring 2025	Federal Funds	City of Rensselaer and East Greenbush	\$.5M
National Grid substation	New substation at northern end of study area to increase capacity of grid to support new development; National Grid is currently establishing site control and will apply for site plan approval once it is established	Spring 2025	National Grid	National Grid	\$25M
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:					\$25.5M

Commitment of project partners is set in stone, since the bulk of projects are municipal and none of the private projects rely on the DRI being awarded. Each of the municipal projects are necessary for Rensselaer to continue advancing as an up and coming urban hub in the Capital Region, so the question here is not *if* these projects will happen but rather, when they will happen. The proposed projects are all effectively shovel-ready.

8. Administrative Capacity.

Rensselaer's tight-knit staff has a diverse spectrum of work experience across a variety of fields ranging from municipal project management to decades of involvement in nationally accredited arts societies. Together, the City of Rensselaer looks forward to managing the \$20 million DRI award. Staff bios which speak to our administrative capacity to do so are below.

MAYOR, MICHAEL STAMMEL

Prior to being the Mayor of Rensselaer, Mike Stammel used his seat on the Rensselaer County Legislature to help provide services to the City for decades. As a legislator, he sponsored legislation that effectively enhanced provision of emergency services, ensured the provision of continuous and high quality services to seniors and the aging, and supported a sales tax distribution agreement that has provided Rensselaer millions. Stammel has also been supportive of key economic development projects in the city and environmentally, he has supported millions of dollars for improvements to the County sewer facility and combined sewer flow to reinvigorate the historic Hudson River. As a Mayor, he works feverishly to achieve efficacy and efficiency in government. He strongly supports staff in their pursuit of citywide initiatives and, being a life-long resident of Rensselaer, offers an in-depth knowledge of the community and the City itself. Mayor Stammel's breadth of city knowledge has proven invaluable when considering capital and community development projects for DRI funding.

BUILDING AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, KYLE WOODARD

Kyle Woodard, Building and Zoning Administrator ("BZA"), is the City's head Building Inspector and has transformed the functions of the Building Department. In the 2.5 years he has been with the City, he has doubled the size of the building department, nearly quadrupled permit-related revenues, and created a degree of accountability for the owners of publicly subsidized senior housing that has never before been seen in the City. The City is experiencing higher project quality and notably safer neighborhoods as delinquent landlords are being held accountable as well. The value of this in community revitalization cannot be understated. Kyle's contributions to the City will only be amplified as we conduct DRI projects.

CITY CLERK, NANCY HARDT

Nancy Hardt began her government career in 2011 as Deputy Clerk and was then elected City Clerk in 2014. Our Clerk's Office works tirelessly to assimilate information to and from the public, draft agendas and bylaws for and with our City Council; record minutes of council meetings; answer official correspondences; keep fiscal and historic records and accounts; and prepare reports on civic needs. In her time as City Clerk, Nancy has also proven to be an upstanding example of a public servant through her transparency and dedication to the community in Rensselaer. She was responsible for the creation of the new, user friendly, city website which now offers the convenient option of online bill payment for city residents. She was also responsible for the re-birth of the City's annual "Christmas in the City" event and works tirelessly as a key member of the Memorial Day Parade Committee. She will be instrumental in the public distribution and will assist with record maintenance of all DRI related information. She looks forward to promoting community involvement in the DRI planning process.

CITY ENGINEER, BILL SMART P.E.

Bill Smart is the City's Engineer. He has spent much of his career as a Professional Engineer in the public sector leading project management and supervising consultants. In his time with NYS DOT, he managed many large projects including the Corning Bypass, the Bruckner Sheridan Interchange, Hunts Point Access, Exit 8 off of I-90, the Gowanus Expressway, and several Long Island Expressway projects. With the City, he has overseen the implementation of projects using tens of millions of dollars in state and

federal funding and he has been a major driving force behind numerous water infrastructure projects that have effectively reduced flooding in our downtown. He is also the Secretary/Assistant Treasurer of the Town of Guilderland IDA.

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, JIM BRADY

Jim Brady has over two decades of experience in project management. Working in both the public and private sector over the years, Mr. Brady has managed and overseen a significant number of construction and demolition crews, building water and sewage plant projects, hospital renovations, dams, road work, and all manners of commercial construction. He also has extensive experience working with contractors to design, plan, budget, schedule, follow and pay for various construction projects. Jim's experience will be invaluable to the timely and orderly execution of all infrastructure related DRI projects.

COMPTROLLER, KRISTIN DALY

Kristin P. Daly is the City Comptroller for the City of Rensselaer. She has been in this position approximately nine months. Her background includes over thirty-three years specializing as an expert in the municipal arena, having spent over twenty-two years in the CPA business with a concentration in municipalities including the State, counties, towns, villages, IDA's, benefit plans, non-profits, and school districts. The services Kris brings to the table range from financial statement and single audits to audits of specialized areas, consulting services, budget preparation, budget review, fraud investigations, tax returns, accounting and financial services, capital project and grant project accounting, along with educational conferences and training. Prior to working in Rensselaer, she worked at a public school district and a large Florida county for twelve years specializing in capital and grant project accounting: processing receipts, disbursements and payroll; conducting various analyses; budget preparation and execution, and financial and programmatic reporting. She is an expert in grants and looks forward to working with our Planning department on the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

DEPUTY COMPTROLLER (PART TIME), MICHAEL SLAWSON

Michael Slawson is the part time Deputy Comptroller for the City. He has over 30 years of experience in municipal government. This includes serving as Rensselaer County Chief Fiscal Officer for over twenty years. Other positions held at the County included Budget Director and County Auditor. Prior to working at the County, he was employed as the Accountant for the City of Oneonta. His educational background includes a B.S. in Accounting and an M.B.A. from the University at Albany. Additionally, he has served on the boards of not-for-profits that have accessed and managed state funding sources. He has participated in successfully managing dozens of New York State and federal grants with an emphasis on proper financial record keeping, contract oversight and programmatic compliance. This involvement included working on all phases of the grant process including application, implementation and final reporting and review.

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/CEO OF THE CITY OF RENSSELAER IDA, JACK BONESTEEL

Jack Bonesteel is the Director of Economic Development for the City of Rensselaer and the CEO of the City of Rensselaer IDA. Jack is an experienced economic developer with broad and diverse experience in arranging financing for businesses of all sizes. Major strengths include commercial bank lending experience, experienced knowledge of Industrial Development Agency incentives, owner-occupied real estate lending, government loan programs, business development, credit analysis, and customer service. Management expertise includes the ability to develop, train and supervise a small business lending team and a commercial credit department. As the Deputy Director of the Rensselaer County Economic Development & Planning Division as well as the County IDA, Jack also offered HUD-funded Job Development Program loans ranging from \$25k to \$750k to eligible businesses while responding to site

availability and funding needs received from more than 100 potential new employers annually. His expertise in this area will be instrumental to the development and management of revolving loan funds as well as the continued oversight of all IDA activity to attract new businesses.

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, KETURA VICS

Ketura Vics is the Director of Planning for the City of Rensselaer. Ketura holds a Master of Regional Planning focused in environmental and land use planning and a Certificate in Urban Policy. She enjoys the daily opportunities that arise in Rensselaer to provide a fresh young take on decades old issues. In her time as Director, she has dedicated her attention to advancing an environmentally and socially conscious planning agenda while working with residents and developers to achieve excellence in project implementation. In doing so, she has regimented the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals processes to become uniform and streamlined and turns to state frameworks for climate action and conservation. She prioritizes sustainability and community resiliency above all else and has taken a policy driven approach to achieving this locally. In recent years, she has overseen the completion and adoption of both a Natural Resources Inventory and Phase I of the Brownfield Opportunity Area program and is also responsible for the City's 2018 Complete Streets Policy. While continuing to advance the City's long term and open space planning, Ketura will provide the DRI planning process with a bright and practical approach to help make changes that will continue to shape Rensselaer for decades to come.

ENGINEERING AIDE, MARK HENDRICKS

Mark Hendricks, the City's Engineering Aide, has worked for the City for over five years following his 28 years doing contract administration, project management, estimating, and expediting for a Local Heavy Highway Contractor. Mark has also been a Board Member of the Albany Pool Communities Corporation, a CSO Long Term Control Plan Intermunicipal Organization, for five years. In his time with the City, he has administered tens of millions of dollars in federally and locally funded public works projects. His combined experience in CSO elimination, underground utilities management, and highway engineering is perfectly suited to help oversee some of our most impactful DRI projects.

GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR, AMY LOLIK

Amy Lolik, Grants Administrator, has over twenty years of experience as an administrative professional serving both public and private interests across the nation, focusing mainly in the Capital Region and in Southern California. She also holds a Dual Masters in Regional Planning and Geography. Amy also has both passion and expertise in the arts. As former member of the International Decorative Artisans League, she has worked in conjunction with many Capital Region builders for local design related events. As the City's Grants Administrator and the Secretary of the Economic Development Loan Program, she oversees all grants and loan funded activities and ensures compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulations. Administration activities include but are not limited to updating local program guidelines, securing release of funds, developing contract requirements and routine program oversight/fiscal management such as accounting, record-keeping, maintenance of all project files and reporting. With her administrative expertise, the Planning Department has successfully overseen many awarded contracts such as: Community Development Block Grant, the Office of Community Renewal's RESTORE and HOME Programs (administering federal Housing and Urban Development Funding), NYS DOT & EFC Projects from grant award to grant close-out. Amy's eclectic portfolio of work experience provides she will be a versatile and fundamental member of the DRI team.

9) Concluding Remarks from the Planning Director

The former director for the City's Planning Department once said "picture the Capital Region in 20 years... if Rensselaer isn't thriving, the rest of the Capital Region can't be". It doesn't take much to see Rensselaer's incredible potential, a word not used in this application until now for a reason. For generations, the City has experienced disinvestment and has heard time and time again that Rensselaer "could be" so great. This application is here to convey that Rensselaer **is** great – and by removing the barriers that have been holding this city back for so long, it will be even greater even sooner. By eliminating the need to apply for project funding on a yearly basis until it is awarded, the DRI will enable the City of Rensselaer to accomplish 15-20 years' worth of critical infrastructure projects in a manageable 3-5 year time frame. This defines the need for \$20 million as opposed to \$10 million. In a city of less than 10,000 people and with only 3.5 square miles, the dollar goes further and the impact of each project is substantially greater.

We are not applying for what "could be" **if** we won \$20 million, we are applying for what will be **when** we do \$20 million worth of transformative projects. It is for these reasons and because of those listed throughout this application that the City of Rensselaer should be the Capital Region's Round V recipient of New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding.

Please refer to the attached appendices for supplemental information.

APPENDICES


APPENDIX A: DRI AREA MAPS


City of Rensselaer


Downtown Revitalization Initiative





Map 1: DRI Area

 DRI Area

 Water

 Local Roads

 Rail Lines

 Streams

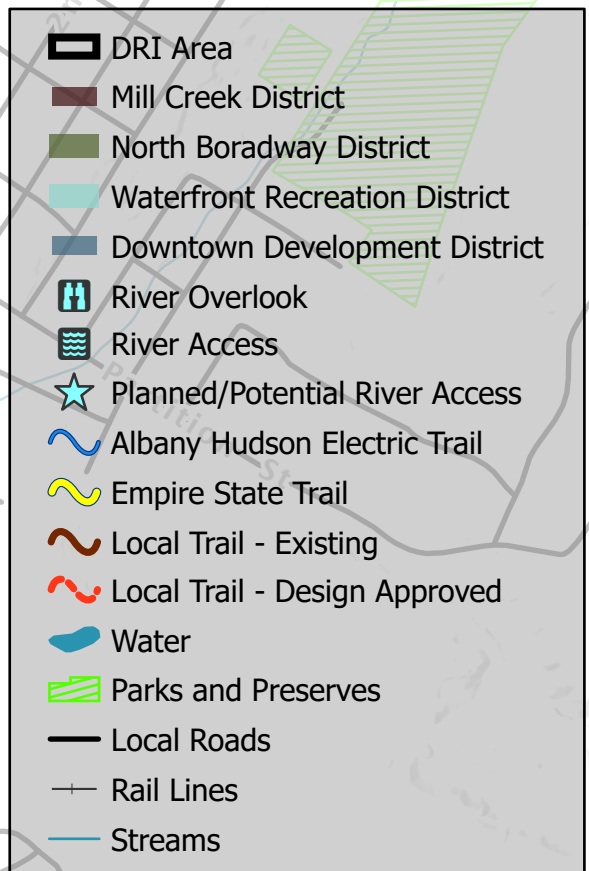


City of Rensselaer

Downtown Revitalization Initiative



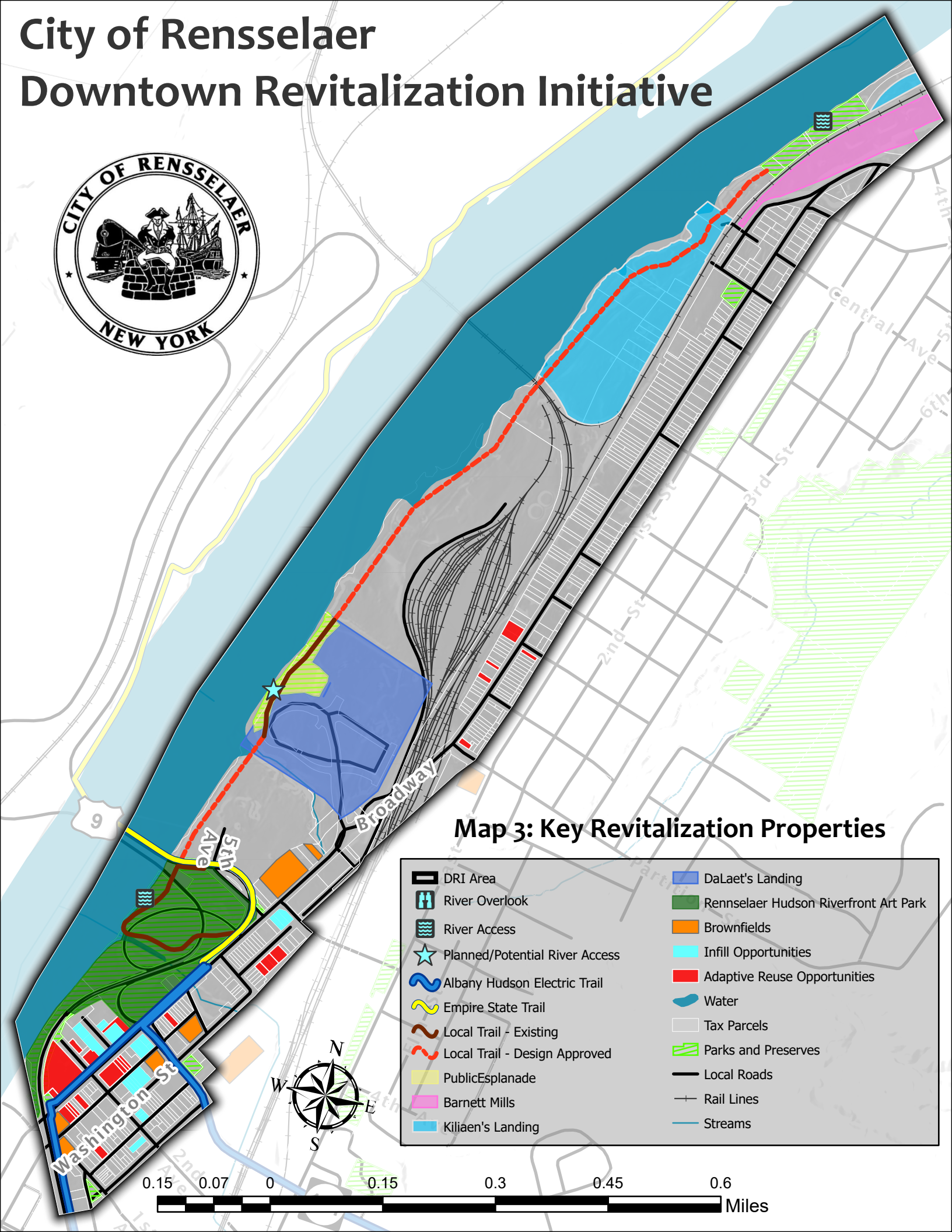
Map 2: Proposed DRI Subareas



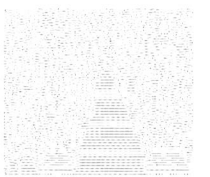
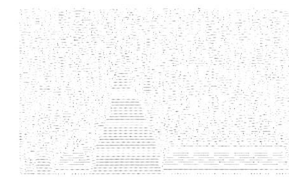
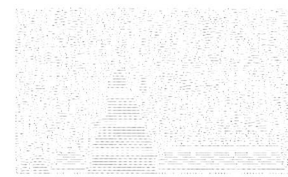
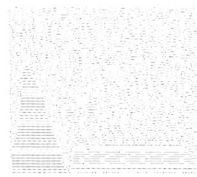
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City of Rensselaer

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

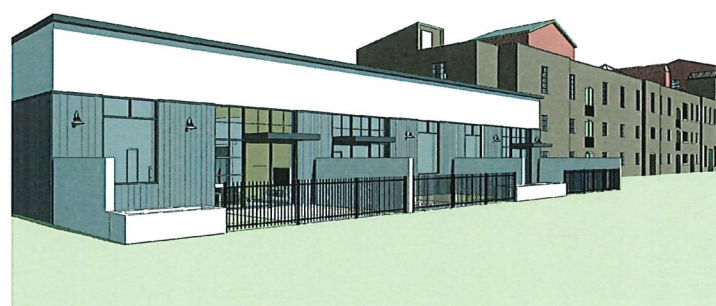


APPENDIX B: BARNETT MILLS “PDD” RENDERINGS



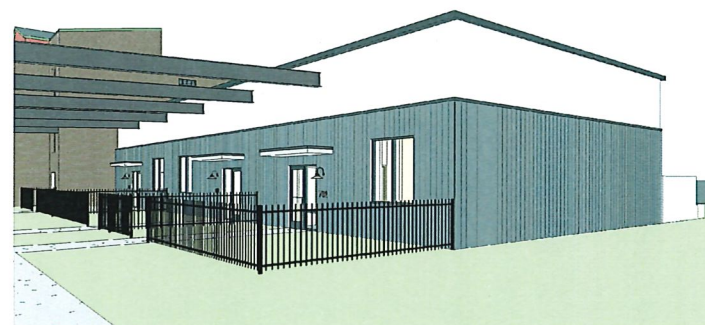
BARNET MILLS APARTMENTS - WEST EXTERIOR ELEVATION

NTS



BUILDING 7 REHABILITATION

NTS



BUILDING 1 REHABILITATION

NTS



APPENDIX C: PUBLIC FEEDBACK



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET

Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693 Fax (518) 465-2031



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE: ROUND V PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, September 9th 2021 at 6:00 PM

Please rank the following proposed projects on a scale of

1-5 (1 = low importance and 5 = high importance)

RESPONSES WERE TOTALED AND FINAL COMMUNITY

PRIORITY RANKINGS ARE PROVIDED BELOW.

PROJECT	TOTAL TALLY OF ALL RESPONSES
Downtown and creekside floodplain assessment	45
Complete water and sewer improvements on Broadway from Pine Street to Washington Street	58
Complete streetscape improvements on Broadway from Partition to Washington Street	58
New police and fire headquarters	46
Public art and riverfront place making	36
Revolving loan fund for blighted buildings	50
Revolving loan fund for new construction	45
Forbes Avenue/Northern Waterfront access improvements	58
DRI area marketing/wayfinding	47
LED street lighting upgrades city wide	51

APPENDIX D: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

8

By Alderperson : COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

Seconded by Alderperson : _____

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO FILE AN
APPLICATION UNDER THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
INITIATIVE FOR UP TO \$20 MILLION**

WHEREAS, the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a product of the Governor's office and her effort to transform downtowns into vibrant communities where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work, and raise families; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rensselaer is home to the nation's 9th busiest Amtrak Station; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rensselaer is centrally located within the geographic and historic heart of the Capital Region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rensselaer is at the center of an employment triangle bounded by the State Capital, RPI Tech Park, Regeneron, Curia Global (formerly AMRI), and the University at Albany Health Sciences Campus; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rensselaer possesses the unique distinction of having the most tax exempt property of any city in the state; and

WHEREAS, downtown Rensselaer and environs is poised for revitalization as demonstrated by multi-million dollar investment interests in new research and technology development, higher education, and mixed-use development and employment growth in technology, biomedical, health care, and other sectors; and

WHEREAS, the city of Rensselaer possesses the one downtown best positioned to take advantage of the DRI; and

WHEREAS, the City of Rensselaer downtown meets all of the criteria, specifically, capitalizing on prior and planned future public and private sector investment; and

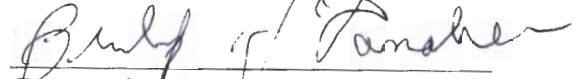
WHEREAS, the DRI will include public involvement in framing a transformative investment strategy for downtown Rensselaer; and

WHEREAS, awarding of up to \$20 million to the City of Rensselaer will leverage tens of millions more in private funds, while capitalizing off of the best skyline views in upstate New York; and

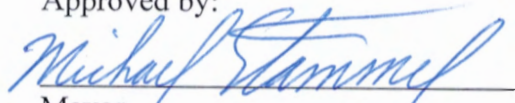
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor of the City of Rensselaer is hereby authorized to execute a final application on behalf of the City of Rensselaer, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer hereby authorizes the filing of said application and hereby authorizes the Mayor to act in connection with the application and execute all necessary documents.

Approved as to form and sufficiency
this 9 day of September, 2021


Corporation Counsel

Approved by:


Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	7 Aye	0 No	0 Abstain	0 Absent
Result	PASSED			



MICHAEL STAMMEL
MAYOR

CITY OF RENSSELAER

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL
62 WASHINGTON STREET
RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144



(518) 462-9511
Fax: (518) 462-9895

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez –

The City of Rensselaer is proud to submit our application for Round V of the New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). As a lifelong resident, the Mayor, and as Rensselaer County Legislator, I have dedicated my life's work to uplifting our community and revitalizing this fine city.

Following the hard work completed by staff in recent years, Rensselaer is the obvious choice for the Capital Region's DRI. Our infrastructure has made substantial progress with over \$80 million invested in infrastructure including water, sewer, and complete street improvements. Our downtown is truly starting to hold its own with new small businesses and our solid working class neighborhoods becoming infused with young professionals and families. Rensselaer is attractive to those who prefer comfort and convenience to a more bustling urban setting. The City is also well positioned in the heart of academic, technological, and pharmaceutical powerhouses that maintain significance both locally and nationally.

The DRI will be a strong catalyst for Rensselaer by enabling the City to complete public improvements up to two decades ahead of schedule. This will support continued development and investment and will keep pace within the rest of the Capital Region. Additionally, I have full confidence in the capability of my staff and the diverse range of skills they hold to successfully implement DRI funded projects.

Thank you in advance for consideration of our DRI application. If there is anything you need for review please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely –

Honorable Michael Stammel
Mayor



September 14, 2021

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez –

I am writing to express my overwhelming support for the City of Rensselaer's proposed Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round V application. The DRI has the ability to help transform the greater Rensselaer area through sustainable development and growth for years to come.

Polsinelli Public Affairs (PPA) is a community-oriented development and management agency since 2006. We are focused on assisting local leaders achieve goals through innovative first-to-market projects and partnership. Our focus is constructing a better future for the people of Rensselaer through innovative development that brings jobs and new economic activity. As a result, we are honored to partner with the City of Rensselaer to assist and support its DRI application wherever needed.

The State of New York legalized adult use cannabis on March 31, 2021. PPA is a trusted and experienced operator within the industry here in New York and has developed new medical cannabis business operations across the state since 2016. PPA has been creating jobs, new local revenue and new cannabis operations from the Capital Region to New York City and Buffalo to Long Island. Our intent is to also help position the City of Rensselaer for inclusion in this burgeoning industry. Together we will achieve this through education, capabilities and new local developments that will enhance and beatify the overall community. We feel strongly that the City of Rensselaer has the ability to now truly transform its local economy to the benefit of the families, guests and all residents. As a community, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

Again, we are in full support of the City of Rensselaer's proposed DRI application. Please do not hesitate to follow up with any further questions, comments or concerns. Thank you.

Best regards,

Fred Polsinelli
Founder
Polsinelli Public Affairs





JOHN T. McDONALD III
Assemblymember 108th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Oversight, Analysis &
Investigations

COMMITTEES
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
Health
Higher Education
Insurance
Real Property Taxation
Ways and Means

September 9, 2021

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez –

I'm pleased to provide my support for the City of Rensselaer's proposed Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round V application. The DRI will be a strong catalyst for Rensselaer by enabling the City to complete public improvements that will support development and continued investment for decades to come.

Rensselaer is a city with a rich history that is uniquely situated on the Hudson River. The City lends itself to an experience that combines metropolitan living with a hometown feel and a strong sense of community. The potential for Rensselaer to grow alongside the rest of the Capital Region is endless, as it offers multimodal access to cities like Albany and Hudson (two successful DRI cities) and highly convenient access to locations like New York City, Washington D.C., and Montreal via the nation's 10th busiest Amtrak Station.

As the City continues to build on over \$80 million in public infrastructure improvements in recent years, I look forward to seeing how the DRI's \$20 million bridges the gap between what could be and what will be.

Please accept this letter as indicative of my strong support of the City's application. Please let me know how I can be further helpful in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. T. McDonald III", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John T. McDonald III
Member of Assembly

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



NEIL D. BRESLIN

SENATOR, 44TH DISTRICT

VICE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

CHAIR

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIR

LEGISLATIVE ETHICS COMMISSION

MEMBER

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON RURAL
RESOURCES

COMMITTEES

BANKS

ETHICS AND INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

FINANCE

CITIES 2

JUDICIARY

RULES

September 8, 2021

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

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Please accept this letter as indicative of my strong support of the City's application. Please let me know how I can be further helpful in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Neil".

Neil D. Breslin
Member of Senate

NDB:bsr

ROOM 430 STATE CAPITOL • ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247 • TEL (518) 455-2225 • FAX (518) 426-6807
E-MAIL BRESLIN@NYSENATE.GOV • TWITTER @NeilBreslin44 • FACEBOOK NeilBreslin44





Rensselaer County
Office of County Executive Steven F. McLaughlin
Rensselaer County Government Center
1600 Seventh Avenue, Troy, N.Y. 12180
(518) 270-2900

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez –

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Please accept this letter as indicative of my strong support of the City's application. Please let me know how I can be further helpful in this process.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.F. McLaughlin", is written over a horizontal line.

Steven F. McLaughlin
Rensselaer County Executive



September 10, 2021

Carm Basile
Chief Executive Officer
518-437-6840
carmb@cdta.org

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez:

We are pleased to support the City of Rensselaer's proposed Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round V application. The DRI will be a catalyst for Rensselaer by enabling the City to complete improvements that will support development and continued investment for decades to come.

CDTA is the region's mobility manager, providing bus service, shuttle systems, paratransit services as well as on-demand transit like FLEX, SCOOT, CDPHP *Cycle!*, and soon Car Share. CDTA also owns and operates the Rensselaer Rail Station.

Rensselaer is a city with a rich history, uniquely situated on the Hudson River. The City lends itself to an experience that combines metropolitan living with a hometown feel and a strong sense of community. The potential for Rensselaer to grow with the rest of the Capital Region is endless, as it offers multimodal access to cities like Albany and Hudson (two successful DRI cities) and highly convenient access to locations like New York City, Washington D.C., and Montreal via our train station, which is the 10th in the Amtrak network.

As the City builds on over \$80 million in public infrastructure improvements in recent years, I look forward to seeing how the DRI's \$20 million bridges the gap between what could be and what will be.

Our investment will create Transit Oriented Development opportunities in the city. We are committed to working with city leaders to get this done and show how good transit investments can fuel development.

Sincerely,


Carm Basile
Chief Executive Officer

Jayme B. Lahut
Chairman
Schenectady County

Michael J. Criscione
Vice Chairman
Albany County

Mark Schaeffer
Secretary
Albany County

David M. Stackrow
Treasurer
Rensselaer County

Georgeanna M. Nugent
Saratoga County

Jaclyn Falotico
Schenectady County

Denise A. Figueroa
Albany County

Patrick M. Lance
Labor Representative

Carm Basile
Chief Executive Officer



September 9, 2021

Ms. Ruth Mahoney and Dr. Havidán Rodriguez
Co-Chairs
Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council
Hedley Park Place
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12210

RE: Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Round V

Dear Ms. Mahoney and Dr. Rodriguez:

The Center for Economic Growth (CEG) supports the City of Rensselaer's proposed Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round V application. The DRI will be a strong catalyst for Rensselaer by enabling the City to complete public improvements that will support development and continued investment for decades to come.

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Please accept this letter as indicative of my strong support of the City's application. Please let me know how I can be further helpful in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mark Eagan'.

Mark Eagan
President and CEO
Capital Region Chamber, CEG