

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Application Template

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications must be received by the North Country Regional Economic Development Council by **4:00 PM on June 14, 2017**. Submit your application as a Word Document to NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: North Country

Municipality Name: City of Watertown

Downtown Name: Public Square

County: Jefferson

Vision for Downtown: Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.

The City of Watertown seeks funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to build upon its vision for the City's 21st Century revival and revitalization. An award through the DRI will ensure a long-term cohesive plan for the City, leading to definitive measures of sustainability and viability where residents will not only live, but thrive. Specifically, the City seeks to:

1. Amplify its efforts in placemaking, capitalizing on its unique and attractive riverfront setting;
2. Promote and continue the renovation and adaptive reuse of its many historic and architecturally significant properties;
3. Improve the walkability and accessibility of its downtown corridor; and
4. Increase downtown opportunities for commerce, culturally identifying activities, artisans, and the local food and craft beverage market.

Upon further development of these initiatives, downtown Watertown will ingrain itself as the City's core identifier and that of its residents, representing the diverse interests and activities of its military families, students, general citizenry, and seasonal tourists. Downtown Watertown will catalyze the growth of young entrepreneurs, provide a multitude of opportunities for redevelopment and community investment, and become known as a thriving City center that offers a wide range of housing options and employment prospects. Achieving these goals will ensure that Watertown continues to strengthen its position as the primary hub of commerce and culture for Jefferson and neighboring counties; drawing residents from surrounding areas to its downtown assets and attracting vital visitor spending from thousands of seasonal residents and tourists that visit the Greater Thousand Islands Region every summer.

Downtown Watertown exudes progress and the current levels of public and private investment exhibit an unprecedented momentum in downtown's resurgence. Collaborating with the State's Downtown Revitalization

Initiative will ensure a direct and strategic path forward. It will bolster local efforts and elevate downtown Watertown as a vibrant place to live, work, and play.

Justification: Provide an overview of the downtown, highlighting the area’s defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

Watertown’s role in the Industrial Revolution begat generations of wealth and a geographically significant downtown filled with architectural treasures. While the City has struggled with the transition away from a manufacturing economy, this historical foundation serves as a culturally identifying factor of the City, as does its location on the storied Black River and its role as the “Nexus of the North Country.” Many major transportation routes converge on the City of Watertown from all directions and intersect at Public Square. Ever since the City was settled in the early 1800s, Public Square has remained a central activity node that epitomizes the City’s present and historic prominence as the commercial and industrial center of the region. Downtown Watertown offers experiences and amenities not found elsewhere in the region, including spectacular views of the Black River’s Class 3 and Class 4 rapids, opportunities for whitewater rafting and kayaking with one of three local outfitters, and a world-class trail system that is being developed to connect downtown Watertown to the City limits and beyond.

Downtown Watertown is a city center that serves as the primary venue for inclusive community and cultural events, diverse employment opportunities, and a place for residents and visitors to find unique goods and services. Goals and objectives to sustain and enhance downtown revitalization will implement themes of local interests, strengths, and regional significance, and will utilize the DRI to establish Downtown Watertown as a special place and destination of choice. An attractive downtown sustains growth and development and serves as a marketing focal point to potential businesses, residents, entrepreneurs, and tourists.

We believe the City of Watertown exceeds all established criteria for the DRI. The City, in recent years, has established real momentum in its downtown revitalization efforts. An investment of DRI funds into Watertown will help the North Country region achieve maximum economic benefit from the program by expediting Downtown Watertown’s ongoing renaissance. Additionally, DRI funding will facilitate long-range planning and implementation – an effort that is vital to both the City and the North Country region as a whole.



DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the DRI program description.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be concentrated and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood.

Downtown Watertown begins with and radiates out from Public Square. Many of the streets that originate on Public Square radiate out to the City Limits and in many cases beyond. The compact area, commonly known as downtown, centers on Public Square and stems out along each of these radial corridors for two to three blocks from the core.

Watertown's first landowners donated the land now known as Public Square in 1805. Originally called "The Mall", the area was intended as a New England-style commons to cultivate a central business district. Over the last two centuries, as more institutions moved in, the downtown area slowly expanded in all directions, leading to the boundaries defined today.

Today's defined downtown, in addition to Public Square itself, includes each of the following radial corridors, extending out in their respective directions to the identified intersections that mark the outer boundaries of downtown:

- Washington Street south to Mullin Street/Academy Street
- Stone Street west to Massey Street S
- Arsenal Street west to Massey Street S
- Court Street northwest to Massey Street N
- Black River Parkway northwest to the underpass beneath the Court Street Bridge
- Newell Street northwest to the underpass beneath the Court Street Bridge
- Mill Street north to the shore of the Black River
- Factory Street northeast to Mechanic Street
- State Street east to Mechanic Street
- Franklin Street southeast to Union Street

The defined downtown also includes the following side streets and spurs connecting to the primary radial corridors:

- Clinton Street between Washington and Sherman Streets
- Arcade Street between Stone and Arsenal Streets
- Park Place spurring off Stone Street
- Sherman Street between Stone and Arsenal Streets

- Coffeen Street between Court and Massey Street N
- JB Wise Place spurring off Black River Parkway
- Polk Street between Factory and State Streets
- Armstrong Place between State and Franklin Streets
- Union Street between State and Franklin Streets
- Goodale Street between Franklin and Sterling Streets
- Sterling Street between Washington and Gotham Streets

Please refer to the attached maps (Exhibit A: Downtown Location Map) and (Exhibit B: Defined Downtown Area Map) to see a visual representation of how the downtown area fits within the context of the entire City and a representation of the above-described downtown area.

Within this area are several anchor institutions that include multi-family residential developments, major employers, professional services, and cultural and recreational destinations.

The defined downtown is approximately 0.25 square miles in area, and is an approximate 15-minute walk from one end to the other at its widest point. The five-minute walkability buffer in Exhibit B represents the distance a pedestrian walking 3 mph could travel in five minutes from the center of Public Square.

One block west of Public Square on Arcade Street is the CitiBus service's downtown transfer center. The CitiBus route system is a hub-and-spoke style bus routes, with the transfer center acting as the hub. Any destination within the defined downtown is similarly within a comfortable 10-minute walk of the transfer station.

- 2) Catchment area.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.

Downtown Watertown has been, and still is, the most important venue for civic life for residents of the City, the rest of Jefferson County, and beyond. Parades culminate in Public Square and special events, such as the annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony, take place there. Moreover, it is the commercial hub where residents shop, dine, do business, and attain health care. Unlike many other downtowns in New York State, the City of Watertown has an intact central business district, with many existing companies and non-profit entities, as well as civic buildings such as the Jefferson County Office Buildings, Jefferson County Court Complex, Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library, Watertown City Hall, and the Dulles State Office Building. Within a few miles of Public Square are many of the North Country's premier anchor institutions, including Samaritan Medical Center with 2,413 employees, Jefferson Community College with over 3,700 students and 300 faculty and staff members, and the United States Army Base at Fort Drum with 15,069 active duty soldiers and 15,229 family members that accompany them. Hundreds of private employers are situated within walking distance of the area, including both Knowlton Technologies with 155 employees and Convergys with approximately 1,200 current employees (679 full-time).

The population of downtown Watertown's catchment area can sufficiently support a vibrant, year-round downtown. It is the epicenter for the entire population of Jefferson County which, according to the U.S. Census Bureau was estimated to be 114,006 in 2016. Watertown is one of the few cities in Upstate New York that has gained population since the year 2000. The City's population grew from 26,705 in 2000 to 27,023 in 2010 (a 1.2 percent increase), and to an estimated 27,590 in 2014 (a 2.1percent increase from 2010). The 2014 number is from the Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The Jefferson County Planning Department developed a map (Exhibit C) that articulates how much faster Jefferson County's population is growing relative to the rest of the state.

Additionally, residents of Lewis, St. Lawrence, and northern Oswego counties regularly visit downtown Watertown to see doctors, dentists, lawyers, financial advisors, and other professionals. Public Square is easily reachable as the roads that radiate out of Public Square extend to, and in many cases beyond, the City and Jefferson County boundaries. U.S. Route 11, N.Y. Route 3 and N.Y. Route 12 all come from outside the county and converge on Public Square.

Most notably, Public Square serves as the primary downtown for the entire population of Fort Drum. Fort Drum is the largest employer in the North Country region and New York State's largest single-site employer with over 15,000 active duty soldiers and thousands making up its civilian workforce. In total, between active duty soldiers, civilians, and retirees, Fort Drum's annual payroll is in excess of \$1 billion. Fort Drum's presence fuels the North Country's economy. Many soldiers and their families choose to call Watertown, and the North Country, home upon retirement. As Watertown continues to invest in and build an attractive more vibrant downtown, this area will become more of a determining factor in military family choices regarding long-term relocation.

Five to six years ago, when confronted with a housing crisis begat by an increase in the number of soldiers garrisoned at Fort Drum, the City of Watertown played a pivotal role in partnering with developers and New York State to implement a solution for the housing shortage, allowing the City to meet the housing demands of our soldiers and their families successfully. Providing a vibrant downtown community for Fort Drum soldiers and their families is essential to maintaining a strong relationship between the City and Fort Drum community.

Finally, in addition to the sizable year-round population described above, Public Square serves as the primary downtown destination for the tens of thousands of seasonal residents of the North Country who own or rent summer homes along the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Typically, this population has increased disposable income and is attracted to the shopping and cultural activities offered in Watertown's historic downtown. Downtown Watertown is central and convenient to lakeside and riverside destinations while also serving as a major hub along the route to the famous Adirondack region.

3) Past Investment, future investment potential. Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior or catalyze future private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The City of Watertown is experiencing unprecedented interest and reinvestment in its downtown, emblematic of the present-day movement in the rebirth of America's downtowns and testimony to the local buy-in to this concept. Historically, like many other upstate downtown areas, Watertown's Public Square district experienced sustained physical deterioration, decay, neglect, and disinvestment over time. As a result, the City's identity also suffered. New City leadership and a reversal in attitudes towards downtown including the revival of concepts and values regarding community, cultural identity, and placemaking, have spurred a resurgence of pride in Public Square and efforts to preserve its important role in Watertown's history. Both civic and business leaders, as well as a number of dedicated citizens, have stepped up and taken strong roles in its redevelopment.

Thanks to the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council process has accelerated investment in downtown and the greater metropolitan area at a rate that the City has not experienced in at least a generation. During the past six REDC rounds, projects in downtown Watertown have earned 10 REDC awards totaling more than \$6 million. In addition, other public and private investments in the downtown area have totaled approximately \$87 million in the past ten years. Several housing rehabilitation projects that are currently under construction will add an additional \$16 million in investment to the downtown by the end of the year.

Past, Current, and Future Investments:

Investments for Vision #1 - Amplify efforts in placemaking, capitalizing on Downtown Watertown's unique and attractive river front setting

- The City received two planning grants from the New York State Department of State in 2016 - one to complete a Downtown Revitalization Plan and the other to complete a Downtown-Riverfront Parks Connection Feasibility Study. These plans will provide a blueprint that will guide downtown development for years to come. The overall vision for downtown Watertown stems from its ability to be meaningfully connected to its riverfront, offering extraordinary quality of life for City residents and a natural, lasting downtown attraction. Commitment to the creation of a Plan and Connection Study are indicative of the City's desire to create a transformational vision and open up many opportunities for design, implementation, and future improvements.
- Over the course of the last 25 years, the City has made significant investments in the development of its riverfront with the construction of new parks and trails along the entire length of the Black River. The City constructed the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk as one of the very first initiatives that aimed to provide a connection between the downtown and the river and capitalize on downtown's unique and attractive riverfront setting. More recently, the City invested \$2.7 million in the **J.B. Wise Parking Lot and Pavilion Construction Project** which aimed to further strengthen the downtown-river connection. This project utilized a variety of green infrastructure techniques to capture and filter stormwater, eliminated a combined sewer overflow and constructed the Mayor Joseph M. Butler, Sr. Pavilion which provided a centralized gathering space that is used for the Saturday Farmer's Market, ice skating during the winter and a variety of events throughout the year.

Investments for Vision #2 - Promote and continue the renovation and adaptive reuse of Downtown Watertown's many historic and architecturally significant properties

- Substantial public and private commitments are in place to improve even more buildings in downtown. In the recent past, the **Woolworth Building**, the home of the original five and dime and the cornerstone of Public Square, at a cost of \$17 million, underwent a complete renovation into a mixed-use building with commercial and retail space as well as 50 income-based housing units. This building's first commercial tenant, a local optician, opened for business in 2015, and full occupancy of the housing units was achieved shortly after the renovations were completed.
 - Washington Street Properties, founded in 2007 is an apartment and commercial real estate owner/operator. The company has grown tremendously since that time and succeeded by focusing on the renovation and turnaround of underperforming, strategically located apartments and commercial real estate assets. Washington Street Properties now owns and operates a large portfolio of properties located in downtown Watertown. As it stands, the company has invested **\$8.7 million rehabilitating several residential, commercial, office, and mixed-use properties in the downtown area.**
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- Doolittle & Hall, LLC recently restored the front façade and several of the five storefronts of the historic **Lincoln Building** during the first phase of a substantial renovation. The second phase will facilitate the restoration of the rear façade and two commercial spaces on the second floor of the structure. In December 2016, \$950,000 in state funding helped expedite the total transformation of this key Public Square property. Today, the Lincoln Building is close to complete occupancy of its first floor commercial and retail space.
 - The **former Mercy Hospital site**, which encompasses an entire city block between Arsenal and Stone streets, has been demolished and the redevelopment plan calls for a \$60 to \$70 million investment to create a new mixed-use site with 108 market-rate and affordable 1 and 2 bedroom apartment units, two office buildings, and a community center.
 - The **Brighton Empsall Apartments** project on Court Street is a multifamily, intergenerational, mixed income and mixed-use project in a prominent downtown historic building. The \$10 million renovation project is currently under construction and when complete, will preserve an eight-story historic 1904 downtown building and 36 apartments endangered by an obsolete elevator system. It will convert the vacant second floor into eight new apartments and create a new rear access through historically rehabilitated rear façades to connect the building with the J. B. Wise municipal parking lot. In addition, it will clean up and reuse several vacant lots, converting them into landscaped handicapped access and parking. Overall, the project will also include 22,500 square feet of historically renovated commercial space.
 - Neighbors of Watertown, Inc. is conducting a \$5.9 million rehabilitation of several **senior housing complexes** in the Public Square area. The Bugbee, Henry Keep, Centennial, and Olympic apartment

buildings are being renovated to include energy efficient upgrades, heat pumps, roofs, window and door replacements, kitchen and bath upgrades, common area and community room upgrades. The improvements to the 262 units are scheduled to be completed in August of this year.

- The Watertown Local Development Corporation (LDC) has operated a **façade improvement program** specifically targeting the downtown area for of the last 10 years. Over the life of the program, the LDC invested approximately \$2 million to improve and maintain the historic characteristics of the façades of the buildings in downtown Watertown.
- In 2016, Empire State Development (ESD) awarded the City of Watertown and local developer, Fourth Coast Inc. \$500,000 through the Restore NY program towards the restoration and adaptive reuse of downtown Watertown’s poignant and striking historic landmark, **the Masonic Temple**. Funding for this phase of the project will address the renovation needs of the building's exterior, making way for commercial tenancy on the building's 7,754 SF basement floor.
- The **Flower Memorial Library** was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and remains to this day one of the most prominent, unique, and special buildings not only in Watertown, but perhaps in all of upstate New York. With outstanding artwork, extensive and detailed stained-glass features, and striking marble embellishment, the library attracts both residents and visitors interested in its beauty, history, and engaging atmosphere. The library has undergone considerable renovations allowing its continued safe and efficient operation, facilitated by both the City and vast public support. This includes a \$2M restoration in 2005 as well as a current \$1.12M construction project to replace the library’s 40-year-old HVAC system, failing ductwork, and the resulting damaged flooring and ceiling tiles. The current construction is set to be completed during the summer of 2017.
- Another large site poised for development in downtown Watertown is the former Medical Arts Buildings Complex, which will be transformed into **Clinton Center Development**. The project, at 161 and 171 Clinton Street is an \$8M redevelopment that will completely rehabilitate the two existing buildings and connect them via a new addition. The project will create modern Class A office space on the 2.7 acre lot. The new medical and professional complex of approximately 48,000 SF already has several potential tenants who have executed Letters of Interest. It is the developer’s expectation that this modern facility will help attract and retain new medical professionals and services to the area.
- The Northern New York Community Foundation recently transformed the former Black River Valley Club (located at 120 Washington Street), identified within the Public Square Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, into the **Northern New York Philanthropy Center**. The \$3M, year-long restoration of the 14,262 SF, 110-year old building is a definitive investment in the future of downtown Watertown and its historic character. The Center will house six not-for-



profit organizations. The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Jefferson County, Girls Scouts NY-Penn Pathways, and the Food Bank of Central NY have already planned to occupy the structure.

- Local developer, S&J Properties of Watertown, LLC, has recently started construction on the \$650K Phase I restoration of the long-abandoned **Berow and Monroe Building** (former shoe store) located at 138 Court Street. The project will create ground-floor commercial space (possibly for a grocery store) and upper-floor loft-style apartments. The same developer also recently closed on another prominent building located at 152-154 Court Street, the home of Dr. Guitar Music, and plans to invest up to \$750K to create additional market rate housing in the spacious second floor of the structure.

Investments for Vision #3 - Improve the walkability and accessibility of the downtown corridor

- To improve traffic flow, walkability, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, and general downtown beautification, the City of Watertown began a \$7.4 million streetscape project in 2006 that reinforced Public Square's infrastructure and beautified its roads, walkways and landscaping. The City completed this project in 2008. This project followed the \$13.1 million reconstruction of State Street that was completed in 2007.
- In 2012, the City completed the reconstruction of the J.B. Wise parking lot and pavilion at a cost of \$2.73 million. In 2016, the City completed the reconstruction of Factory Street, a \$12.9 million project, which serves as a major artery into Public Square.
- Smaller public investments including the resurfacing of streets, streetscape projects, monument restorations, and the creation of public parks, have complemented the larger projects and added significantly to downtown attractiveness and accessibility.
- In January of this year, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy, which will bolster pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety, creating a healthier, more vibrant community. This policy exhibits the City's commitment to being pedestrian-friendly while helping promote private investment and development amongst improved downtown areas.

Investments for Vision #4 - Increase downtown opportunities for commerce, culturally identifying activities, artisans, and the local food and craft beverage market.

- The Watertown Local Development Corporation has hired The Retail Coach to conduct a year-long study on potential retail opportunities in downtown. The Retail Coach is a national retail consulting, market research and development firm that has been hired to combine strategy, technology and creative expertise to develop and deliver high-impact retail recruitment and development strategies to downtown Watertown. The analysis is a key component in bringing business to downtown Watertown, thus aligning with the City's strategy and vision for the local area and its patrons. In an important move towards downtown revitalization, the effort will aid in recruitment - filling vacant storefronts and retail space.
- Several new businesses are emerging in downtown Watertown following the extensive revitalization efforts and prime investment opportunities offered within the downtown landscape. These

businesses reflect the City's desire to hone its local and regional food and craft beverage portfolio. Recent announcements and pending grand openings include:

- Relocation and expansion of the Marcy Spa to the newly restored Lincoln Building.
- Boots Brewing Co. – a small scale craft brewery and tap room which will occupy space in the Lincoln Building.
- Vigilante Yoga – a yoga studio and fitness center which attracts numerous visitors during prime business hours, evenings, and weekends to its downtown location in the Lincoln Building. A Juice Bar is planned for opening within the location in the summer of 2017.
- Spokes Craft Beer and Tapas Restaurant – an upscale establishment located at 81 Public Square, planning to serve at least 99 kinds of craft beer as well as “small plates”-style dining options. The business occupies a previously empty storefront adjacent to the locally-famed Crystal Restaurant.
- Other potential tenants, including a prominent local craft brewery and a local catering business have expressed their interest in occupying the soon-to-be restored Masonic Temple.
- Commercial space within the restored Franklin Building hit capacity in April 2017 with the addition of Rhonda Foote's dance studio known as Rhonda's Foote-Works. The popular dance company joins a variety of arts-based tenants including The Whimsical Pig, Moontide Arts, Bare Knuckle Tattoo, Tarot Café, as well as the Downtown Local Lounge, a wine lounge serving NY State based products.



- In an effort to draw residents and visitors downtown to its popular Greater Watertown-North Country Farm and Craft Market, the City has a new **shuttle service** for this year's market season. The shuttle operates from three public parking facilities to bus patrons to and from the market. The shuttle alleviates traffic and parking woes, while greatly facilitating increased market patronage and attendance. The downtown market (which accepts EBT and SNAP) is the longest running market in the North Country with a 40-year history. For the 2017 season, there are over 50 vendors, marking a 20percent increase from the year prior. Free performances, local musicians, and vendor demonstrations further enhance the market which directly supports local agribusiness, artisans, crafters, and farmers. The City's support of the market is a direct link to its vision for the downtown and the desire to strengthen ties to locally-produced food, craft beverage, and culture.
- To increase the cultural identity offered downtown while attracting residents, military families, students, and the seasonal populace, the City has partnered with the Watertown Local Development Corporation (LDC), which will host three **Summer Block Parties** on Public Square in summer 2017.

The highly anticipated block parties will feature family-friendly events, local bands, local food and beverage, a children's play area, entertainment, games, and local business presence. The LDC has committed \$12K towards the events which will become an additional opportunity for people to visit downtown and will offer exposure to downtown businesses and services. The new events speak back to a tradition from over 25 years ago when the City held a full schedule of what they called "Party in the Square".

These, and many other public and private investments, have occurred in the very concentrated Public Square area of Watertown (Exhibit D: Recent and Future Investments Map), demonstrating the vast momentum the City's downtown revitalization efforts have generated. Further investment and improvements facilitated via the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will not only stimulate deep-rooted transformation for the local populace, but will also induce positive trends towards downtown Watertown throughout the entire region and North Country.

- 4) Recent or impending job growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Watertown's job market has steadily improved in recent years as retail, commercial, and service-based industries continue to diversify. In addition, Watertown enjoys a solid base of large-scale employers who are dedicated to the community and the local workforce. With a history rooted in industry and manufacturing, these anchor employers reside around the concentrated downtown area, where many benefit from campus-style facilities within the City's industrial parks and commercial settings. The City's critical employers include New York Air Brake, Timeless Frames, Car-Freshner Corporation, Samaritan Medical Center, Children's Home of Jefferson County, Jefferson Community College, and Jefferson Rehabilitation Center, as well as two entities residing within downtown – Knowlton Technologies and Convergys. Despite economic shifts, these employers remain adaptable and continue to strengthen our local and regional economy.

Fort Drum, with 15,069 active duty soldiers and the 15,229 family members that accompany them, is an identifying factor of the region and an economic pillar for all of Watertown, supporting large swaths of the local workforce and helping to drive the economy. Fort Drum also creates robust and continual demand for Watertown's events, amenities, and services.

The tourism sector provides an important area of impending job growth. As the Thousand Islands Region achieves international acclaim as a vacation destination, area municipalities with vibrant downtowns stand to gain the most. As the City aims to diversify its downtown businesses and expand its schedule of events, it will continue to grow visitor traffic and visitor spending. Watertown, with its plethora of options and amenities, is a convenient and compelling stop for many travelers along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway. As downtown continues to distinguish and identify itself, tourism and its economic impact so too will grow. With many new businesses calling downtown Watertown home, residents and visitors alike will be attracted to the unique offerings - patronizing local businesses, increasing lengths of stay, and coming

downtown, not just because of the convenient proximity to local attractions, but because downtown Watertown is an attraction all on its own. The tourism industry will ultimately play a supportive role in the continued job growth downtown. The vision for downtown Watertown ties into the region's vision for its tourism industry, including a desired focus on local craft beverages and supporting agribusiness. Craft brewery-based businesses downtown will complement and build upon the success of the many area wineries and the Thousand Islands-Seaway Wine Trail.

Watertown's anchor employers continue to exhibit positive performance. Most recently, Convergys, the largest downtown employer, created 300 new full-time positions in 2016. Convergys, which is a global communications provider, provides inbound and outbound call handling for sales, marketing, and support. Employees are often promoted from within and are offered health benefits, retirement, paid vacation, tuition reimbursement, and paid training.

Founded in 1808, Knowlton Technologies LLC, the country's longest-running paper mill and one of the City's most prominent businesses, is also located in the Public Square area and was recently sold to Eastman Chemical Co. of Kingsport, Tennessee. Knowlton designs prototypes and manufactures wet-laid nonwovens in filtration, friction and custom-designed composite webs, including materials for the brake, engine drive train and aviation or fluid filtration markets. Under the new ownership, the company has made significant capital investments and plans to continue to do so in the next 5-year period. The company anticipates a 3-to-6 percent annual growth rate. Additionally, its employment levels have climbed steadily - from 98 fulltime employees in 2008, to 134 in 2014, to its current staff of 150.

Samaritan Medical Center is undertaking major developments which will be assets to the entire community, increasing range of services and improving quality of care. A new comprehensive cancer center, Walker Center for Cancer Care, is currently being constructed. Plans call for constructing the 17,300 square-foot, two-story addition behind the medical office building on Woodruff Street. This location is contiguous to the existing hospital building and within a few minutes walking distance of Public Square. The hospital has already recruited two new physicians in advance of the construction and anticipates the creation of many professional health care positions once the center is completed. Additionally, the hospital embarked on a highly anticipated Labor, Delivery, and Recovery construction project which is scheduled to be completed in August of this year. Further improvements, such as the new Acute Rehabilitation Unit (with 16 private rooms, a training apartment, and state of the art gymnasium) which was just completed this April, and upcoming projects such as a new 3T MRI Suite, Loading Dock, Angiography Suite, and others continue to enhance Samaritan's services and infrastructure. Samaritan continues to exhibit strength as a premier employer, growing from 2,339 employees in January 2016 to 2,413 as of January of this year, an increase of 3percent.

Samaritan Medical Center also enjoys a unique relationship with Fort Drum, which is the only military base of its size and type in the country that does not have its own inpatient hospital on post. Samaritan fills this role for the soldiers and their families living on base and in the community. U.S. Army officials made this

decision intentionally to strengthen the relationship between Fort Drum and its surrounding community. The cost-saving measure serves as a model for military bases located elsewhere in the country.

According to information obtained from the Watertown Local Development Corporation, the small business sector has recently created approximately 29 new fulltime positions in the Public Square area. These new entities include opportunities in the retail, service, not-for-profit, and professional service sectors and represent the broad employment availability downtown Watertown offers for a range of skill sets and schedules. Additionally, by funding two large revitalization projects, the Watertown Local Development Corporation has helped support well over 50 temporary construction jobs.

An integral force behind Watertown's growth is its Small Business Development Center (SBDC), housed within Jefferson Community College. Over the past two-years, the SBDC served 1,471 entrepreneurs, including 476 Veterans. Since June of 2015, the Watertown SBDC has facilitated the investment of \$35,321,173 into the region, created 373 jobs, saved 177 jobs, and assisted with 169 new business start-ups.

The above-described recent and impending job growth located within, and in close proximity to, downtown Watertown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support revitalization efforts, and create sustainable, long-term growth. An expanded job market will lend further support to redevelopment by adding to the number of professionals visiting downtown retail and dining establishments found within walking distance of their workplace. Moreover, a thriving downtown, which draws a constant stream of residents and visitors throughout business hours, evenings, and weekends will help maintain year-round, fulltime employment at downtown businesses. Downtown Watertown is poised to be a vibrant city center where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work, play and raise families, sustaining growth and investments well into the future.

- 5) Attractiveness of physical environment.** Identify the properties or characteristics that the downtown 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 bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The concentrated footprint that ensures walkability, the desirable location on the Black River, and historic architectural charm of downtown Watertown creates not only an attractive city center, but also one which will sustain and accommodate vigorous growth in recreational activity, business, and block-style community events. With so many historic restorations completed or underway, a variety of housing types at different levels of affordability have been introduced to the market, lending itself to a diverse residential population (including students, low to moderate-income, families, entrepreneurs, and seniors) and making downtown living accessible for all income levels.

Downtown-Riverfront Connection

A major theme and vision for downtown Watertown derives from its picturesque location on the Black River. The region's Black River Blueway Trail and the river's Class 3 and Class 4 rapids attract whitewater kayakers, rafters, and outdoor enthusiasts from around the country and beyond. Three outdoor outfitters call Watertown home and play a critical role in attracting tourism and visitor spending to downtown and the surrounding areas. Integrating downtown activities and its historic landscape with the Black River, will offer unprecedented opportunities for the City's residents and visitors. The City is committed to discovering the best way to achieve this vision, which would not only be aesthetically appealing but truly iconic, and to working effectively towards these placemaking goals. To ensure viability and cohesion, a 2016 Department of State grant worth \$30,000 is funding a Downtown-Riverfront Connection Study. The City will use this study to evaluate all possible connections from Public Square to its two riverfront parks - the Veterans' Memorial Riverwalk and Whitewater Park. The study will include preliminary design alternatives, cost estimates, and recommendations. An award from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will ensure implementation and proper long-term execution of this vision, which plays a defining factor in the attractiveness of downtown Watertown.



Timeless Architecture

The architecture and urban design of downtown Watertown preserve a distinct 19th Century feel that contributes to its attractiveness and small-city charm. Public Square and its immediate surrounding blocks contain many Italianate style façades representative of urban buildings in the late 1800s, and characterized by wide cornices. Like many of Watertown's residential streets, downtown also features Victorian-era street lights in lieu of modern cobras, which help maintain the historical ambiance.



Opportunities for Development

Watertown's defined downtown area includes many mixed-use spaces available for development. There are prime buildings for development located on Public Square and along the radial corridors with a heavy concentration on Franklin (Commerce Building, Solar Building, and Franklin Street Plaza) and Court Streets. Many buildings are multiple stories, making them ideal for mixed-use development, with commercial and retail on the first or second floors and housing options on the upper floors. Specific sites that are targets for redevelopment include the Smith Restaurant Supply, Globe Mini Mall and Goodyear buildings on Court Street, and the Tallmadge Tire building on Arsenal Street.

Multi-level Accessible Housing

Downtown Watertown is home to a large concentration of both market rate and affordable housing options in the Brighton building, Franklin building, the newly renovated Woolworth and Solar buildings, Henry Keep apartments, Olympic Apartments, Abbey Carpet Building and potentially at the Mercy hospital site where a developer has proposed an additional 108 units which are mostly targeted for market rate. The variety of housing plays an equitable role in attracting residents downtown, offering a vibrant city center where people want to work, live, and raise a family.

Social Welfare and Community Services

Many social service programs are located adjacent to Public Square. These include the Jefferson County Human Services Building, the North Country Family Health Center and the Children's Home of Jefferson County, which operates out of the Marcy Building with 62 employees, and offers mental health services to thousands of individuals annually. The former Black River Valley Club, a half-block from Public Square, has been recently renovated by the NNY Community Foundation and converted into the Northern New York Philanthropy Center, housing numerous not-for-profit agencies. The Foundation's endowment allows philanthropists to leave their legacy for generations of Watertownians and spurs benefits for the community at large.

Health, Recreation, Culture, and the Arts

One of the most attractive features of downtown Watertown is the number of recreational amenities within the defined area. The Flower Memorial Library, Jefferson County Historical Society, YMCA, Paddock Arcade, J.B. Wise Pavilion, Veterans Memorial Riverwalk, kayaking, rafting, and outdoor outfitters are all located in the Public Square area and provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages. Many of these features contribute to a healthy, active lifestyle while encouraging personal, educational, and spiritual growth.

Culturally, downtown Watertown is home to the North Country Arts Council which acts as its creative center - offering art classes, crafting, and exhibits – continually adding local artists dedicated to carrying on rich North Country traditions and folk art. The Little Theatre of Watertown, the City's 85-year old community theatre, and the Sci-Tech Center, a year-round hands-on museum of science and technology, are additional community assets and drive traffic and interest in downtown Watertown.

Above all, like many thriving downtowns, Public Square is seen as the natural destination for most of the City's large community events and seeks to provide the cultural identity for the entire City. For downtown Watertown, these events include holiday gatherings, parades, the Farm and Craft Market, and public celebrations. The presence of the Best Western on Washington Street and its popular Savory Downtown restaurant plays host to many private and corporate events, providing a convenient location for downtown visitors to stay and walk to nearby businesses, events, and recreational amenities.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly

Downtown Watertown is a walkable area with convenient public parking options and access to public transportation. Recent public transportation infrastructure projects include pedestrian walkways and crossings. The City's Complete Streets Policy will guide future revitalization efforts, which will include enhancing corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists to the downtown from large development projects and anchor institutions. One such idea is to develop an urban fitness trail that would loop from Samaritan Medical Center through downtown and to the waterfront. With improved signage, lighting and access, visitors and residents would more easily enjoy the area's public parks, trails, and the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk which is located at the most picturesque location in the City. Building upon this theme, the City has proposed the beautification of the Stone Street corridor as the main pedestrian access from the Mercy site development to Public Square. Possible plans include the construction of pocket parks, green wall gardens, and commissioning artists to develop public artwork.

A Dedicated Tree City USA

Adding to the attractiveness of downtown, the City has a robust urban forestry program. Every year since 2000, the City has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation. This award recognizes communities across the country that meet certain standards and have exceptional community forestry programs. Community Forestry greatly benefits the urban populace – encouraging healthier residents, increasing property value, and generating countless environmental advantages. To further urban forestry efforts, the City of Watertown has applied for funding this year to facilitate creation of a Community Forest Management Plan, utilizing data collected from its Street Tree Inventory (Phase I Inventory) which is currently underway, as well as to fund a public parks Tree Inventory (Phase II Inventory). Based on a cost-benefits analysis, the citywide Community Forest Management Plan will facilitate the City's comprehensive approach to managing the long-term health and benefits of its urban forest.

Attached as Exhibit E are several photos that illustrate the attractiveness of our downtown.

- 6) 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 plans, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

In 2011, The City of Watertown adopted the Downtown Zoning District and the Downtown Core Overlay District. The purpose of the Downtown Zoning District is to regulate development in such a way that the compact, pedestrian-oriented quality of the downtown area is maintained. This is primarily a commercially oriented district with a significant amount of upper-floor housing where the synergy between the uses is intended to revitalize the activity in the area.

Progressive features of the Downtown Zoning District include: a minimum lot size of only 250 square feet, as opposed to the 1,000 square-foot minimum lot size in Limited Business, Neighborhood Business and Commercial Districts, no required setbacks (a zero-foot setback is permitted on the front, rear and side for any property in the Downtown Zoning District so that the maximum lot area covered by buildings is 100 percent), and no off-street parking requirements for any use within the Downtown Zoning District. Simultaneous to adopting the Downtown Zoning District, the City also adopted the Downtown Core Overlay District. The purpose of the overlay district is to extend the forgiveness of off-street parking requirements to properties that are within the walkable downtown area, but are in other zoning districts.

Also within downtown Watertown is the Public Square Historic District which is a significant collection of buildings, parks and statuary, which together reflect the development of Watertown's downtown business district from its most significant growth period from the 1850s to the 1930s. Any property designated as part of a historic district is available for certain tax credits, grant funding, and financial support from the state and federal governments. This provides a great incentive for current property owners to improve their buildings, helps to attract new businesses and redevelopment efforts to Public Square, and contributes to the historical character and quality of the area.

The City of Watertown has also recently (January 2017) adopted a Complete Streets policy. In October 2015, City staff, elected officials, and community leaders attended a workshop conducted by the National Complete Streets Coalition and efforts have been made since that time to implement the City's own policy. The policy protects and ensures a pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly City. It will bolster access and safety, creating a healthier, more vibrant community. Overall, a Complete Streets policy helps to promote private investment and development amongst improved downtown areas as it serves to improve flow and access for potential business patrons and employees.

The City is engaged in a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program initiative that will lead to the development of a Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Black River. The LWRP is currently in a draft form while the City examines revisions of its zoning laws to bring them in compliance with the goals and objectives of the LWRP. An important theme to be synchronized with the LWRP revolves around the City's vision for the Downtown-Riverfront connection.

Downtown Watertown is transit-accessible from all parts of the City, as the CitiBus downtown transfer center is one block away from Public Square on Arcade Street. Five bus routes radiate out from the transfer center and loop their respective sections of the City, with 86 percent of City addresses being within a quarter-mile walk to the bus. The City's Department of Public Works, which operates the CitiBus system, reports that there are more boardings and alightings at the downtown transfer center than any other bus stop in the City.

In addition, the City and County are members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization designated by the Governor for the City and surrounding areas in Jefferson County. The MPO is responsible for developing and

maintaining both a Regional Transportation Plan and a Transportation Improvement Program for the area's federal-aid-eligible highway and public transit facilities. The MPO was established in 2014, as a result of the Watertown-Fort Drum urbanized area's designation as a Metropolitan Statistical Area following the 2010 Census.

- 7) Support for the local vision.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to support the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

In 2016, in anticipation of seeking the DRI designation for the North Country region, the City of Watertown assembled a stakeholder group. This group is comprised of local elected officials, developers, property owners, employers, business associations, and not-for-profit leaders. The stakeholder group has been instrumental in developing the City's application and has already demonstrated a commitment to building and implementing a strategic investment plan if the City is chosen.

This group convened several public meetings to discuss if and why the City should apply for the DRI designation, to determine the boundaries of the defined downtown area, and to offer input into the development of this application. A commitment by the group has already been made to also serve as the local DRI Planning Committee in order to develop and oversee the plan if Watertown is designated the North Country's DRI community.

In order to further articulate its support for the City's application, members of the group will be submitting support letters to the Co-Chairs of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council and to the Governor (Exhibit F: Letters of Support).

Members of the stakeholder group include individuals from the following organizations:

- City of Watertown
- Jefferson County
- Jefferson Community College
- Fort Drum
- Samaritan Medical Center
- Watertown Daily Times
- Senator Patty Ritchie (48th Senate District)
- Assemblywoman Addie Jenne (116th Assembly District)
- Knowlton Technologies
- Children's Home of Jefferson County
- Washington Street Properties
- Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce

- Downtown Business Association
- Watertown Local Development Corporation
- Purcell Construction
- Development Authority of the North Country
- YMCA
- Neighbors of Watertown
- Fourth Coast

The initial local lead for the program, should the City be chosen, will be the City’s Planning and Community Development Department, headed by its director Michael A. Lumbis, working in concert with the City Mayor, Joseph M. Butler, Jr., and the City Manager, Sharon Addison. The City’s Planning Department will coordinate with outside experts and the local DRI Planning Committee to develop and oversee the plan.

8) Readiness: Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above, including a range of transformative projects that will 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) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how the majority of projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

Immediate transformative efforts and projects have been identified and thoughtfully planned to complement the past, current, and future public and private investments taking place downtown. These projects build on the unique strengths and assets of downtown Watertown and firmly root the City’s vision namely, (by means of the four main goals listed above) for complete downtown revitalization and growth.

JCC Downtown TechSpace

In an innovative move to transform and expand opportunities for applied learning, create new programs aligned with community and workforce needs, and increase adult learner enrollment, Jefferson Community College (JCC) has proposed creation of TechSpace. With the proposed inclusion of a “Fab Lab” (fabrication lab), TechSpace will feature the space and tools necessary to facilitate promising and change-evoking ideation – allowing participants to design and test novel ideas in a low-cost, supportive environment. JCC will strongly consider locating this cutting-edge facility in the defined downtown area to further strengthen the college’s ties to its downtown and improve access to the heart of its community.

Serving students as well as entrepreneurs, TechSpace will be a multi-faceted program to increase participation and activities in the STEM subjects - introducing new opportunities for applied learning in Computer Science, Engineering, Energy, and Technology. And while Fab Labs were originally created at MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms, and today there are over 200 locations around the world - the addition of a Fab Lab will be unprecedented for SUNY - JCC's will be its first.

Overall, the program aims to successfully grow non-credit enrollment by 14.5percent and STEM program enrollment by 13percent by Fall of 2020. Moreover, the TechSpace project directly addresses the economic development needs of the community and will retain and create jobs for the local economy. This will be accomplished by:

- Training new and incumbent employees
- Encouraging small business development
- Creating jobs through construction

As an incubator of talent, progress, and productivity, TechSpace will effectively transform and deeply impact Northern New York. Complementing revitalization goals for downtown and aligning with those of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council, the program is an extraordinary boon to upstate. The NCREDC has emphasized the importance of supporting entrepreneurs and linking them to the expertise of higher education institutions. Nearly 25percent of all regional employment currently comes from small businesses. The proposal will specifically progress shared goals by:

- *Developing a Strong Workforce System*: As highlighted in the North Country Regional Economic Development Plan (NCREDP), TechSpace will train employees for the industry clusters that fuel regional employment, including transit equipment and manufacturing. The NCREDP calls for the region to “develop a strong workforce system to support the needs of employers in the targeted clusters using a combination of new and incumbent worker training, certificate programs, degree programs, and recruitment assistance.” TechSpace will help to develop this system by providing new, high-demand training that will be stackable to degree programs while allowing the college to introduce new non-credit programs aligned with regional employment demands.
- *Attracting and Supporting Entrepreneurs*: The NCREDP commits, as a goal, to “attract and nurture entrepreneurial pioneers to cultivate innovative clusters in our rural communities and to catalyze the highest per capita rate of small business start-ups in the State.” The TechSpace’s partnership with the Small Business Development Center, and the introduction of a new entrepreneurship program, paired with the fab lab resources, will attract and nurture small business.
- *Reducing Obstacles to Entry into Postsecondary Education*: The NCREDP also calls on the region to “reduce obstacles so that North Country residents can easily return to post-secondary education or begin...[with] in the region.” TechSpace will provide additional entry and re-entry-points for students and adults, as well as enhance the quality of the education provided. In particular, these new programs will be attractive to adult learners.

Coexisting with and complementing the many efforts and small businesses in downtown Watertown while producing tangible and measurable results, TechSpace will enrich the educational and entrepreneurial spirit of the City's center. The total estimated construction budget for this project is approximately \$4.4 million while the furnishings and equipment would total \$1 million. Please see the attached letter of interest and support (Exhibit G) from JCC's President, Dr. Carole McCoy.

Masonic Temple Performing Arts Center

After serving the Masonic Hall Association for nearly 100 years, the Masonic Temple building in Downtown Watertown is poised for rebirth after being acquired by local developers. Over the last 25 years, the building has been deteriorating rapidly as the previous owners did not have the resources to maintain and invest in needed repairs. This changed beginning in 2014 when the building was acquired by 242 Washington Street LLC and \$600,000 worth



of improvements were made to stabilize the building, replace the main roof and develop office space on the first floor. The second phase of the project, funded by a \$500,000 Restore NY grant and \$125,000 in owner match, is currently underway and will include the portico roof replacement, restoration of two supporting columns, construction of a new entrance, back wall replacement and basement window replacement. While these investments will stabilize the building and prevent further deterioration, much work remains to be completed in order to fully restore the structure and create a property that will transform Downtown Watertown.

The Masonic Temple Performing Arts Center and Building Rehabilitation Project would transform the 1917 Greek Neoclassical building into a mixed-use building that would include a local theater and performing arts venue, a restaurant, and additional office space. The project would include final basement renovations to make the space inhabitable by a food service tenant: bathrooms; kitchen; HVAC; plumbing; electrical; fire protection;



building entrances and egresses. These improvements would allow a restaurant/pub to operate on a daily basis, as well as offer catering to the theater level for festivities, events, and celebrations.

The theater level (2nd and 3rd floors) would also undergo significant renovations including plumbing; electrical; HVAC; bathrooms; fire protection; seating; window rehabilitation; and emergency egress. In addition, some exterior rehabilitation and site work would be included. The preliminary estimate for the next phases of the project described above is approximately \$5.4 million.

A completely renovated theater and basement restaurant would bring a profound impact to the downtown, as well as the North Country region. Watertown is the Jefferson County hub and the downtown plays host to State, Federal and County employees. Close proximity to Fort Drum could allow for coordination of efforts to serve the military community. Adding a cultural venue to the downtown area will encourage visitors and residents to explore their neighborhood, and linger longer in the hub. Please see the attached letter of interest and support (Exhibit G) from 242 Washington Street LLC's President, Augusta Withington.

Lincoln Building Upper Floor Commercial Space Development and Job Creation Project



The Lincoln Building is a large, prominent, five-story building, located on Public Square in downtown Watertown. Prior to the purchase by new owners, it was in a complete state of disrepair. Over the past three years, the new owners have undertaken a phased renovation plan to bring this building back to life. The front façade facing Public Square has been completely restored, and the Public Square ground floor storefronts have been renovated and are now completely occupied by four different businesses not previously located on Public Square. The four businesses include a yoga studio/café, a salon and spa, an insurance office, and a brew pub. These businesses, which created 15 jobs, were all started and are owned by local entrepreneurs. Using a combination of funding from the New York Main Street Program, Empire State Development, and private investment by the owner, the next phase of the project, to be completed during the summer of 2017,

calls for the restoration of the rear façade in the JB Wise Parking lot and the installation of a new roof on the building. Total investment in the Lincoln Building through this phase has exceeded \$2M, with more than half coming from private investment. There are four additional floors of the building that still need to be renovated and the owners are ready to start work on this next phase immediately if the funding can be secured. Completion of this additional work will further leverage prior investments, provide space for more businesses, and create more jobs.

The next goal of the redevelopment is to make improvements to the upper floors to make them ready for tenant occupancy. Partial renovation of spaces on the 2nd floor and complete renovations of floors 3 through 5 remain. The work to be completed includes improving to “White Box” condition all spaces on floors 2, 3, 4, 5 to accommodate future commercial tenants. Renovations will include new walls, restored tin ceilings, new subflooring, new in-suite mechanical systems and new common area bathrooms on each floor for tenant use. There is approximately 28,000 SF remaining to renovate. Each new space will be finished to a

level to be customized for each individual tenant. The budget for these new renovations would be in the range of \$900,000 to \$1,250,000. The current elevator and existing stair tower is planned to be brought on line to accommodate immediate tenancies in the upper floors, however, in order to make this building a Class A commercial office building, a new elevator and stair tower is needed. Current architectural plans have been designed to accommodate this future improvement which would allow the removal of the unsightly fire escape on the rear of the building, which currently serves as a second means of egress. The work for the new elevator and stair tower would be in the range of \$300,000 to \$350,000. These improvements could potentially accommodate 5 to 15 more individual businesses in the building, depending on their space needs. This potential new business expansion could result in anywhere from 20 to 50 new employees working in the building. Please see the attached letter of interest and support (Exhibit G) from Doolittle & Hall, LLC's partners Mark Purcell and Brian Murray.

Franklin Street Building Façade & Streetscape Enhancement Project

With the Public Square hub and several major spokes already completed, Franklin Street is one of the next corridors targeted by the City for investment. The Franklin Street Building Façade and Streetscape Enhancement Project will involve the façade and storefront restoration of the Commerce Building located at 26-44 Public Square (with frontage on Franklin Street), the Franklin Street Plaza Building located at 124 Franklin Street, and the Solar Building located at 200 Franklin Street (with additional frontage on Goodale Street).

Building owner Washington Street Properties has made significant private investment in restoration of the upper floors of the Commerce Building and has leased spaces out to seven new office tenants, successfully bringing more businesses into downtown. Façade restoration on both the Franklin Street and Public Square sides of this structure will further economic development efforts in the building and surrounding area, making the building more attractive to additional tenants. WSP has also secured multiple tenants for the Franklin Street Plaza Building and is similarly planning to improve the façade of the building to not only enhance the aesthetic quality in an area of expanded economic development initiatives, but to also provide handicapped accessibility to the storefronts as the structure is currently only accessible by stairs.

The final façade improvement project is for the Solar Building, a 48,000 square foot mixed-use, six-story building that has 70 market rate apartments and ground floor commercial space. WSP acquired this distressed property in 2013 and has since completed extensive restorations. The developer successfully turned the property around, investing more than \$2M of private money into the project. The next phase of the project will involve the restoration of ground floor commercial space and the storefronts. The final portion of the project will include streetscape enhancements to the 200 Block of Franklin Street, from Goodale Street to Sterling Street. This will include new sidewalks, brick pavers, ornamental street lighting, street furnishings and paving. The project will create a cohesive appearance that is consistent with other

portions of downtown while stimulating economic investment with the redevelopment of the facades and storefronts. Please see the attached letter of interest and support (Exhibit G) from Washington Street Properties Founder and CEO, Brian Murray.

Court Street Market Rate Housing Project

152-154 Court Street, the home of Dr. Guitar Music, was recently purchased by S&J Properties of Watertown, LLC. (S&J) The purchase of this property adds another Court Street property to their portfolio in this area which includes historic buildings at 138-142 Court Street and 150 Court Street. The first floor of 150 Court Street is the home Abbey Carpet of Watertown - a 30-year old downtown business. S&J has recently renovated the upper floors of the building into 10 luxury loft units, transforming the property from a mostly vacant structure into a fully occupied building.

The former Berow and Monroe shoe store building located at 138-142 Court Street was purchased earlier this year by S&J and renovations have begun with the replacement of the roof, building stabilization, and construction on the first-floor commercial space. Future phases of the project, expected to be completed in the next 1-2 years, will include additional market rate loft-style apartments on the second and third floors.

The proposed improvements at 152-154 Court Street include the creation of 6-8 market rate apartments on the 7,000 square foot second floor of the building. The second floor contains several impressive architectural features including large windows facing Court Street and tin ceilings and walls throughout the structure. With the structure in excellent condition and not requiring any significant stabilization or demolition, the project is ready to move forward quickly. The creation of the new apartments is estimated to cost approximately \$750,000. Please see the attached letter of interest and support (Exhibit G) from S&J properties of Watertown, LLC's President, Stephen J. Bradley.

Public Art Initiative

Public art has been proven to increase foot traffic, beautify blighted areas, and create places where people want to spend more time. It is the City of Watertown's vision that the art will enhance the area, with an aesthetic experience both highly visible and welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as, those traveling by in passenger vehicles. The call will be open to all professional artists and artist teams, based locally, nationally, and internationally. Selected artists should demonstrate expertise in creative placemaking and are welcome to propose work in all media and materials. Creative placemaking is an evolving field of practice that leverages the power of the arts, culture, and creativity within the context of community revitalization in ways that catalyze positive economic and social change, and enhance quality of life.



Downtown Revitalization Plan

From 1983 to 1992, four different downtown planning documents were prepared for the City of Watertown - some in-house and some by consultants. These plans and studies included a market analysis, an evaluation of potential development sites, a streetscape plan, and a master plan for the city center area. However, after this decade of significant planning activity, no further plans were prepared for downtown.

Now, for the first time in a quarter-century, the City of Watertown is again actively engaging in a formal and proactive downtown planning effort. In 2016, the Department of State awarded a \$50,000 planning grant to the City of Watertown for the City to hire a consultant to prepare a \$100,000 Downtown Revitalization Plan. The RFP for that plan requests a detailed existing conditions analysis and requests that the plan address several specific issues, including Business Attraction and Retention, Downtown Housing, Parking Management, Downtown Identity, and Placemaking.



Downtown to Riverfront Connection

In 2010, the City of Watertown's draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) envisioned a direct pedestrian connection from Public Square to the Black River waterfront and the eastern terminus of the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk. This plan envisioned a prominent corridor that would not only accommodate those that wished to walk from Public Square to the river, but also encourage such pedestrian trips through attractive design, accentuating the river's proximity to downtown.

The LWRP was never officially adopted and the pedestrian connection that was implemented was a disjointed and poorly signed route. A pedestrian on Public Square still feels little to no sense of the river's proximity.

In 2016, the Department of State Awarded a planning grant to the City of Watertown for the City to hire a consultant to perform a feasibility study for a new downtown to riverfront connection. The chosen consultant will not only revisit the recommendations of the LWRP, but will be expected to generate new recommendations for how to capitalize on downtown Watertown's proximity to the Black River and the best potential means to make that connection.

Connecting downtown to the riverfront has long been a major goal of the City of Watertown, and this feasibility study will contain significant recommendations towards achieving that goal. The availability of DRI funding will greatly expedite project implementation.

JCC Housing

In 2014, Jefferson Community College (JCC) opened its first on-campus residence halls. This occurred during a period of significant growth for the college. As many students commute long distances from outlying parts of Jefferson County, off-campus student housing is an untapped niche market for the City of Watertown.

Other cities in New York State, such as Binghamton, have seen new student housing developments serve as catalysts for recent downtown renaissances. An influx of students into downtown Watertown would increase foot traffic on Public Square and create a built-in market for downtown dining and entertainment-oriented retail businesses. DRI funds would leverage private development investment to finance adaptive reuse of existing buildings, transforming vacant upper floors into student housing.

Leveraging JCC's impending development of TechSpace, downtown student housing will support multiple goals for both the City and the region. Strengthening downtown identity, increasing social cohesion, and creating numerous opportunities in housing, education, and workforce development, the heightened presence of JCC in downtown Watertown will embody the City's revitalization goals.

The Retail Coach

In an important move to help fill out the newly renovated structures throughout downtown while attracting an ideal selection of premier retail and commercial entities, the Watertown Local Development Corporation has hired The Retail Coach. The Retail Coach represents the next level in growth for the City's downtown.

The agency will conduct a year-long study on potential downtown retail opportunities. Data and market analytics will point towards opportunities in the retail and commercial fabric of the City, aiding in smart growth and expansion. As a part of this process, the consultant is charged with preparing a complete inventory of available commercial spaces downtown. Companies ripe for a secondary location, particularly those businesses currently located in Syracuse, will be targeted for downtown Watertown expansion. Additionally, a community workshop planned for September will be held to provide information to businesses that will help them grow their sales and provide unique marketing strategies to increase public awareness of their business.

The consultation is a key component in bringing business to downtown Watertown that is fitting with the City's plans and vision for the local area and its patrons. As a primary factor in sustainable downtown revitalization, the effort will aid in recruitment - filling vacant storefronts and retail space.

Watertown Local Development Corporation Public Square Rent Assistance Program Phase 2

In 2015, the Watertown Local Development Corporation created the Public Square Rent Assistance Program in an effort to stimulate, enhance and create additional economic activity in the city center area and to spark private sector investment that contributes towards revitalizing downtown. The program is also aimed at creating jobs, increasing foot traffic and improving the vitality of existing businesses in downtown. This incentive hopes to introduce diversified services within the Public Square area while attracting new businesses to fill previously unoccupied storefronts or buildings. The first phase of this program has been very successful, attracting four new businesses totaling approximately 50 jobs to downtown. Phase 2 of the program, at an estimated cost of \$120,000, would aim to attract up to 10 additional businesses to the Public Square area and bring 100 jobs into the downtown core.

Readiness and Project Summary

These projects and many other public and private efforts and investments, such as those detailed earlier in this application, exhibit downtown Watertown's readiness and momentum for complete and long-term revival and revitalization. Together, these projects, along with a viable connection to the riverfront, will transform downtown Watertown in an everlasting and meaningful manner.

- 9) **Administrative Capacity.** Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts.

Michael Lumbis, Director of the City of Watertown Planning Department, will oversee the project. Mr. Lumbis has over 20 years of experience working with the City of Watertown Planning Department and has successfully administered many state and federal grants. Mr. Lumbis was the project manager of the recently completed Public Square Streetscape and Reconstruction Project. The project had multiple funding sources including Federal Transportation Enhancement grants, various State grants, and \$25,000 in New York Main Street funds through Empire State Development.

Geoffrey T. Urda, City Planner, who holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, and Jennifer L. Voss, Senior Planner, who has over 10 years of planning experience at the county level, will assist Mr. Lumbis with the project management and grant administration. The City Comptroller, James E. Mills, CPA, who holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and has over 13 years of experience with the City, will oversee fiscal accounting.

The City of Watertown administers a variety of grants, many of which originate from and are implemented through the Planning Department. Since 2014, the City has received Community Development Block Grant Funds as an Entitlement Community. This funding, which totals approximately \$800,000 annually, allows for the implementation of a variety of programs that benefit low-to-moderate income persons in the City,

including housing rehabilitation programs, sidewalk construction programs, playground rehabilitation projects, and many others.

Prior to becoming an Entitlement Community, the City of Watertown received CDBG funds through the Small Cities program for several decades. The Planning Department jointly administered a \$400,000 Small Cities grant from 2012 with Neighbors of Watertown that provided funding to create 10 upper floor apartments in two historic buildings located in the downtown area at 81 Public Square and 320 State Street. These rehabilitation projects, which were completed in 2014 and 2015, involved the historic renovation and adaptive reuse of the upper floors of the buildings.

More recently, the City received two planning grants from the New York State Department of State in 2016; one to complete a Downtown Revitalization Plan and the other to complete a Downtown-Riverfront Parks Connection Feasibility Study. These plans will provide a blueprint that will guide downtown development for years to come. Mr. Urda and Ms. Voss are administering both grants, co-writing the RFP for each, and working closely with the chosen consultants.

These grants demonstrate not only the City's ability to administer this Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant, but also the City's commitment to developing a long-range vision for its downtown and adhering to that vision.

10) Other. Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

There are several additional pieces of information that support the nomination of downtown Watertown for a DRI award. These aspects, in addition to what has already been described above, articulate the momentum the City has created in its downtown revitalization efforts and its readiness to be the North Country's DRI community.

The Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC) is a 501(c) 3 public benefit corporation engaging in economic development in the City of Watertown. The WLDC primarily works with business ventures in the downtown area and offers financing options and incentives to new and expanding businesses. As mentioned above, this very active entity recently began implementing a downtown commercial rent assistance program called the Public Square Rent Assistance Program which assists new businesses that choose to locate in downtown Watertown. Thus far, the program is proving successful with Dr. David A. Ewing-Chow, Dr. David Braun and Vigilante Yoga being some of the first tenants to participate. The WLDC is a critical asset to the Watertown community and will continue to further enhance the City's redevelopment efforts by attracting new businesses to locate in the Public Square area.

The City of Watertown has a very active business community, a Downtown Business Association, and the Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber of Commerce. These groups represent the interests of the City's business community and contribute significantly to the downtown revitalization efforts and the City's ability to sustain growth. With a regular schedule of events which help expose and introduce local

businesses and entrepreneurial leaders, these entities are the life force behind Watertown's growing business community.

The proximity of downtown Watertown to the Watertown International Airport is also an aspect worth highlighting. Visitors can comfortably travel from the airport to downtown in less than 20 minutes by car. A business traveler utilizing the Watertown airport can easily reach many domestic and international destinations via daily flights out of this airport to the American Airlines hub in Philadelphia. The Watertown airport is a convenient asset for both visitors and residents, alleviating the need to travel out of the county for quality air transportation and access.

The City is also uniquely located in close proximity to Canada. Many Canadian tourists from Ottawa and Kingston travel over the Thousand Islands International Bridge to come to Watertown to shop, dine, and receive health care services. Playing a role in the international marketplace and aiding in the attraction of foreign spending, Watertown businesses and services are vital to the economic health of the entire North Country.

Downtown Watertown has tremendous potential that it is only beginning to realize. The last decade has generated significant momentum towards restoring a vibrant downtown. Civic pride in Public Square has returned and investments are flowing. The City of Watertown has established itself as the major hub of economic activity in the North Country region.

The vision for downtown Watertown – to lead the economic renaissance in the region - will harness this momentum, align the City's vision and strategy with that of the region as a whole, and guide this historic city center into a future every bit as prosperous as its celebrated past.

Downtown Watertown's vast potential, and its importance as the commercial hub of Jefferson County, serving a diverse span of the area's population and Fort Drum, make it ideal for DRI investment. Watertown is truly the place where Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds would have the greatest impact.