

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 Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council by **4:00 PM on June 14, 2017**. Submit your application as a Word Document to NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Mohawk Valley

Municipality Name: City of Utica

Downtown Name: **One World Downtown**

County: Oneida County

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

The City of Utica seeks funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to build upon its Downtown a regeneration effort which it calls One World Downtown. One World Downtown is a vision which celebrates existing assets, brings new life to underutilized spaces and brings all residents and visitors together on common ground. One World Downtown is activated by a set of strategies designed to catalyze simultaneous environmental, social, physical and economic change in a Downtown that is home to a constellation of education, employment and arts and culture destinations, activities and hubs.

The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees has resettled over 16,000 refugees from more than 31 nations (most residing in and around downtown) and the under-35 population in Utica is now more than 50% of the total. The City's effective growth management requires new housing, employment, education, and quality of life opportunities for new and diverse ethnic groups, ages and income levels. An award through the DRI will help ensure a long-term, cohesive plan for the downtown, leading to definitive measures in sustainability and viability, where residents not only live, but thrive.

Specifically, Utica seeks to: 1. Create an attractive and engaging downtown; 2. Build upon the "One World" theme directly speaking to Utica's multi-cultural identity as a place whose very fabric continues to be woven by its diverse residents and assets; 3. Improve accessibility to the downtown area and enhance its connection to the waterfront and 4. Increase downtown opportunities for commerce, cultural activities, artisans, and local food and beverage diversification.

Downtown Utica has demonstrated unprecedented momentum in its resurgence, public and private investment, and potential. Collaborating with the state's Downtown Revitalization Initiative will ensure a direct and strategic path forward, bolster local efforts, and elevate downtown Utica as an unquestionably ideal place to live, work, and raise a family.

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.

Downtown Utica represents the oldest and most densely developed area of the City. Characterized by historic structures, sidewalks, infrastructure, and broad diversity of residential and commercial space, Downtown Utica has the greatest potential for development. Investors are recognizing the overwhelming benefits of infill development, adaptive reuse of vacant and blighted structures, and creating a sense of place in the urban environment.

Three primary neighborhoods constitute Utica's One World Downtown:

Genesee Street/Downtown - this neighborhood is a central hub of finance, culture, education, and government affairs. Small businesses line the streets ranging from law offices, accounting and marketing firms to high tech companies, cafes and coffee houses. Downtown is home to the historic Fort Schuyler Club and some of the oldest institutions and historic churches in the region.

Bagg's Square - this is Downtown Utica's oldest neighborhood and an up-and-coming mixed-use destination. The streets comprise upscale dining, taverns, sports bars, cafes and coffee shops. The City's hometown hockey team, AHL Utica Comets, and over 50 small and large businesses bring employees and customers to the Square each day. The local newspaper is located here along with the Oneida County Public Market, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, US Federal Courthouse and the Adirondack Scenic Railroad.

MVHS Campus - the proposed site of the Mohawk Valley Health System's downtown medical campus is just a few blocks from Genesee Street and connects East and West Utica. The project includes the potential of 4,000 jobs and will transform a blighted 28-acre site in Utica's downtown.

Dedicated leaders, community stakeholders and academia have joined forces to complete a new Masterplan, Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan, Harbor Point Waterfront Plan, HUD Community Needs Assessment, Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative, Utica Auditorium Expansion Project and Downtown Hospital Plan. Cornell University's Rust to Green (R2G) Urban Studio has taken residence in City Hall to work with municipal staff and area stakeholders to connect all of these efforts to Downtown as they assist the City to regenerate Utica's commercial corridors with a focus on housing, streetscapes and entrepreneurial development.

Utica is ripe for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment. The City is on the brink of an exciting and unprecedented economic transformation and Downtown Utica will be front and center as the City continues to welcome new visitors, employees, businesses, and residents. The region will be able to draw inspiration and innovation from Downtown Utica – a nexus for the exchange of concepts, culture, and capital through community-driven planning, sustainable design, and creative placemaking, demonstrating the readiness to implement a \$10 million capital program and the momentum to sustain economic transformation.

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. 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 Utica encompasses approximately 300 acres in Utica's urban center, including the distinct mixed-use downtown neighborhoods described above. At the nucleus is Genesee Street, Utica's "main street" which is a regional hub of government, banking and culture. To the west is the future site of a new Mohawk Valley Health Systems downtown medical campus, which is bounded by Bagg's Square to the North, Genesee Street to the South and Bleeker Street to the East.

Please refer to the attached map (Exhibit A: Defined Downtown Area Map) to see a visual representation of the above-described downtown area.

The target area selection was based on the following:

- **Mixed-use Commercial Areas** that have exhibited recent growth in entrepreneurial enterprise and increased attraction of significant private investment
- **Strategic Development Areas** identified by the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) – to which the City has committed to implementing
- **HUD Target Areas** including Census Block Groups and mixed-use neighborhoods that have been identified and engaged by the HUD Community Needs Assessment, CDBG target area, and proposed HUD Promise Zone
- **Extreme Disinvestment** in core areas to be targeted for development – such as the MVHS downtown medical campus and public parking facilities
- **Community Assets** including anchor institutions and small businesses
- **Non-profit Community and Career Development Services**, especially those focused on low-to-moderate income individuals, New Americans, and returning Veterans
- **Historic Building Stock and Infrastructure** with the capacity to facilitate new growth and contemporary development
- **Mixed-income Housing Options** to ensure equity for Utica residents

- 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 Utica has been, and still is, the most important venue for civic life for residents of the City, the rest of Oneida County, and beyond. Public events such as parades, assemblies, and gatherings happen in Downtown Utica and special events, such as Utica Restaurant Week, the New York State Craft Brewers Festival, and multiple other food and cultural tours take place there. Moreover, it is the commercial hub where residents shop, dine, do business, and address health care needs.

Much of Utica's strength stems from its cultural diversity. Utica has one of the highest percentages of refugees of any city in America. Over 27% of residents in Utica speak a language other than English at home. The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRRCR) has resettled over 16,000 refugees from more than 31 nations since its establishment in 1979, and 46 languages are spoken by students in the Utica City School District.

Reversing a long trend of decline, the City has been growing in population, experiencing racial and ethnic composition changes. Over the past 10 years, the Asian population has grown from 2% to 8%; the African American population has seen a slight increase to 15%; and the Latino population has increased from 6% to 10%. Furthermore, the under-35 population in Utica has increased by 9.1% since 2000 and accounts for more than 50% of the total City population. The current population of the defined downtown is just over 3,100 (approximately 5% of the City's residents).

Downtown Utica is the connector to the City's Harbor Point waterfront and is home to the Utica Transit Center and Union Station. Rich in historic architecture, it is less than a mile from Utica College, MVCC and SUNY Poly campuses and the site of choice for commercial financial services.

Anchor institutions in Downtown Utica include Utica College's new downtown campus, Mohawk Valley Community College's thINCubator Innovation Hot Spot and the future site of the MVHS medical campus. Together, these institutions form a STEM support structure for technology entrepreneurs, biomedical professionals, and advanced industry supply chain workers. Many local and state planning documents have highlighted the importance of increasing STEM focus - elevating educational, commercial, and workforce opportunities which advance these fields. With Mohawk Valley's incredible STEM-related progress and job growth, this will be a critical area of concentration for both the City and its downtown.

Downtown Utica has experienced a growing concentration of entrepreneurs. Prolific growth in craft food establishments, technology firms, and investors in historic properties are inspiring ongoing economic evolution in this concentrated urban neighborhood. Students graduating from SUNY Poly, Utica College, Mohawk Valley Community College, and St. Elizabeth's School of Nursing are choosing to stay and invest themselves in Downtown Utica, providing an influx of new, younger, and educated workers. With the increasingly younger population of the City, and the reversal of 'brain drain', Utica's new community is setting novel standards for upstate urban living and affecting profound change in the demand for services and facilities.

There is an abundance of quality of life amenities that attract visitors from all over the region while consistently engaging residents, including, the Utica Memorial Auditorium with professional (AHL) and Utica College hockey, the Boilermaker, Saranac Thursdays, the Stanley Performing Arts Center, Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute and a multitude of restaurants and shops.

The sizeable population of downtown Utica's catchment area easily supports a vibrant, year-round destination while also serving as the epicenter for the population of Oneida County which, according to the U.S. Census Bureau was estimated to be 232,871 in 2014.

Additionally, surrounding county residents regularly seek services in downtown Utica including doctors, dentists, lawyers, financial advisors, and other professionals. Downtown Utica is easily reachable from a regional perspective as it is just steps away from the NYS Thruway.

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 Utica receives Federal CDBG, ESG, and HOME entitlement funding of which an estimated 90% is invested in the Downtown target area to seed projects. In addition to multiple State funds (DOS, DEC, EFC, ESD, etc.), private funding from the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, National Grid, Cornell University and others have made a powerful impact in Downtown.

Thanks to the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, the Mohawk Valley 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 within Downtown Utica target area alone have earned awards totaling more than \$15 million, leveraging more than \$140 million in new public and private investment.

Recent Investments in the One World Downtown target area include:

- \$500,000 in capital, job training, and Innovation Hot Spot grant funding of educational institutions to bring opportunities to urban core neighborhoods.
- \$5.4 million in grant funding towards downtown business expansion, as well as mixed-use redevelopment of vacant and blighted commercial buildings.
- \$3.1 million in funding to reconstruct aging and unsustainable downtown infrastructure.
- \$2 million for improvements to historic and culturally significant facilities at Union Station and Utica Memorial Auditorium
- \$1.7 million for the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired to expand its Downtown headquarters in order to offer a vision rehabilitation service center, agency administration and additional manufacturing space for the legally blind.
- \$500,000 for the City of Utica's One World Garden.
- \$400,000 for art exhibits at Munson Williams proctor Arts Institute.

The catalyzing force of the REDC funding has set in motion a multitude of private interest and investment in commercial, residential, and industrial projects, creating a wave of new family businesses, young

entrepreneurs, and ready and willing financial institutions which have added fuel to Utica's economic recovery, reimagining sustainable growth in Downtown and beyond.

Downtown Utica is the region's largest, most diverse, and most densely populated metropolitan center in the Mohawk Valley region. Sparked by new investments in the region, the City's downtown neighborhoods are reimagining themselves as urban entertainment, recreation, sports, and entrepreneurial destinations. Upscale residential lofts, mixed-use development in former factory buildings, a proposed medical campus, and a growing cultural vibrancy are contributing to Downtown Utica's emergence as a true year-round downtown.

These efforts and many others have been implemented in concentrated Downtown Utica, demonstrating the momentum the City's downtown revitalization efforts have generated. This momentum will allow the City to capitalize on these prior expenditures and catalyze future investments in the downtown area.

Please refer to Exhibit B: Recent and Future Investments Map.

- 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.

By far, the most profound and impactful initiative underway in the Mohawk Valley region is the development of the Marcy Nanocenter site at SUNY Poly. This 428-acre site is being developed for semiconductor manufacturing and supportive nano-technology uses.

Mohawk Valley EDGE is collaborating with SUNY Polytechnic Institute on this transformational initiative that has led to the commitment by General Electric and Danfoss Silicon Power to locate a Silicon Carbide Packaging Center on the site. Eventually, the company expects to employ 300 people at the site.

New York State has committed more than \$900 million toward the Marcy Nanocenter and Nano Utica projects to ensure a complete and lasting success. Full build-out of the Marcy site can attract \$14 to \$18 billion in investment and generate 4,000 to 5,000 direct and indirect jobs. Benefits to the local and regional economy will include new employment opportunities, median income increase, a larger tax base, and continued population growth and diversity.

In Downtown Utica, the planned MVHS downtown hospital will bring an influx of more than 4,000 employees to the new integrated health campus. Housing, commercial, retail, and entertainment venues are positioned to greatly benefit. The new hospital campus will also bring infrastructure upgrades and pedestrian and bike linkages throughout the downtown and the Harbor District.

The above-described recent and impending job growth located within, and in close proximity to, Downtown Utica 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.

The addition of quality market rate and income-based housing options will give employees the option of living downtown as well as enjoying numerous recreational and social opportunities in the defined downtown area. Downtown Utica 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.

It would be remiss for someone to visit downtown Utica and not form a positive memory of its many attractive attributes. With storied and truly wonderful architecture, downtown Utica is brimming with qualities that leave an impression. In a continued effort towards complete revitalization, improved quality of living, and transformation, the City of Utica continues to take cues from other successful and innovative downtowns throughout the country, adhering to proven and successful tactics: keeping housing affordable; making high-profile investments in poor neighborhoods; reducing red tape for neighborhood redevelopment; and improving walkability.

To further the City's efforts and embracement of its artistic and cultural strengths, in 2016, via a NYS Council on the Arts grant, the City was awarded just under \$50,000 towards its "One World Utica – Reimagining the Arts" planning vision. One World Utica - Re-Imagining the Arts, a creative placemaking and marketing strategy, will communicate, integrate, generate and illuminate downtown as destination for artists and their industries and residents and visitors looking for the vibrancy of a creative community.

Authentic Architecture

Many of the key architectural gems within the region have been preserved and the region's renewed economic activity provides opportunities to repurpose and reclaim other architecturally significant properties. Designed by the same architects as New York City's Grand Central Station, added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, and designated as one of the "Most Beautiful Train Stations Across America" in 2016, downtown Utica's Union Station is a sight to behold. Other structures, such as the flat-iron style Carlile Building, the First Presbyterian Church and its related McKinnon House which were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1988, the Grace Church which was added to the register in 1997, the Fort Schuyler Club, Stanley Theatre, and so many others significantly contribute to the attraction and distinction of downtown Utica. Many downtown 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. The City has initiated a CDBG-funded Commercial Façade Program which is currently improving buildings along Bleecker and Genesee Streets with design guidelines in mind.

Access to Transportation and Walkability

Over \$1 million in renovations in and around Union Station and even more at the Centro Transit Center are improving rail and bus experiences. The \$62 million Utica North-South Arterial Project is nearing completion and a significant amount of unsightly derelict buildings have been removed in Downtown Utica. Walkability has been improved and neighborhoods are connected via a pedestrian bridge. More access and mobility improvements in and around Utica are soon to be realized: the NYS DOT Oriskany Boulevard Greenway (Complete Streets) Project is a \$9 million reconstruction of Route 5S calling for new bike and walking trails, Erie Canalway trail connections to Harbor Point, an East-West Bagg's Square greenway, and a network of public parking spaces in Downtown Utica.

Inclusive Downtown Housing

The Oneida County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) has created specialized incentives to catalyze smart growth projects that create new housing opportunities – particularly, medium-to-large-scale adaptive reuse projects that target key buildings in Downtown Utica neighborhoods. Housing projects being considered which would greatly add to downtown's livability, affordability, and diversity include:

- More than 30 loft apartment units are proposed or underway for historic Bagg's Square on Hotel Street, including ground-floor boutique retail.
- The former ConMed facility will include 30 loft-style apartments adjacent to the expanded thINCubator and MVCC's Construction Trades Training Facilities.

Downtown Utica's commitment to expanding each of the aspects above contributes to its overall attractiveness and livability for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. As a home to small businesses galore, from law offices, accounting, and marketing firms to high tech companies, cafes, and coffee houses – downtown has a healthy variety of commerce to support its local workforce while offering a well-rounded mix of attractions to residents and visitors alike. Restaurants like The Tailor & the Cook and Ocean Blue are attracting individuals from across the region and over 50 restaurants open their doors in Downtown Utica – Thai, Chinese, Italian, German, Polish, Irish, Japanese, Greek, and American cuisine venues line the streets. Entertainment, including ice skating and hockey at Utica Aud, summer Saranac Thursday outdoor concerts, Main Street for the Holidays, Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute shows and festivals, Oneida Square One World Flower Fest, Boilermaker Road Race, Broadway at the Stanley Theatre, puppet shows at the Children's Museum, Levitt Concert Series in the Park, St Patrick's Day Parade, downtown trail walking, biking, and running solidify Utica as a year-round destination. Above all, success stories and highlights of downtown revitalization, such as the heavily lauded Landmarc Utica (a former abandoned building transformed into 31 luxury loft apartments and an upscale rooftop restaurant), are setting a new standard for urban living in Utica and realizing formidable shifts in regional mindset.

- 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.

Utica has approached downtown development in recent years through expanded community engagement, a HUD Community Needs Assessment, comprehensive planning, and sustainability strategies in an effort to identify policy to enhance the City's quality of life. Some of the City's ongoing efforts include:

Community Engagement

Cornell University's Rust2Green Urban Studio acts as a facilitator and liaison between the government and the community, helping to identify, activate, grow, connect, and assemble inherent and potential assets. This type of place-based and research-oriented approach involves a process of engagement that is aimed at creating innovative decision-making and action. The City of Utica has also signed a contract with the Department of State to spearhead a Mohawk Valley Regional Main Streets Pilot Program. Utica will facilitate Main Street planning efforts in the City's Downtown neighborhoods to be replicated by other municipalities in the Mohawk Valley region.

Community Needs Assessment

During 2014-15, Utica conducted a Community Needs Assessment with input from residents, students, stakeholders, community members, local nonprofits, businesses, and city officials. The year-long project provided Utica with invaluable feedback and a data-to-decision two-year action plan that aligns with regional and downtown investment strategies.

Code Green

Code Green refers to the City of Utica's current Zoning Update. The most recent City of Utica Zoning Ordinance Update occurred in 1994. During development of the Utica Master Plan (2011), the Mohawk Valley Regional Sustainability Plan (2012), and Utica's Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study (2014), the City recognized the need for updated Zoning Ordinances to align regulatory tools with the goals of these more recent planning efforts.

The purpose of updating the zoning regulations is to provide opportunities for innovative approaches to development - including sustainable design and smart growth - to become a more economically viable and sustainable community. An important aspect of the zoning update is the participation of the local community. All members of the community are strongly encouraged to express their ideas and provide input on the zoning update. To aid in this process, there will be public meetings soliciting input and explaining the zoning update process over the course of the project.

A critical goal of the zoning update will be to aid the City in its efforts to increase its walkability and bikeability. The zoning update will look at ways to consider public transit, walking, and biking as viable modes of transportation. Getting around the city safely should not be limited only to those able to afford and operate an automobile.

Additionally, the zoning update will adhere to the City's vision for its increasingly diverse and global community. A wide-ranging demographic mix calls for diverse housing opportunities. Zoning regulations should help ensure that all Utica residents have access to safe, secure housing that fits their lifestyle.

Smart Growth

Utica and its Cornell R2G Urban Studio are using Smart Growth America's seven-step approach and engaging community residents and stakeholders to focus new investments in Downtown Utica:

1. Utica is Understanding its Downtown – a HUD Community Needs Assessment helped the City to recognize and understand its unique cultural assets, changing demographics and diverse stakeholders.
2. Utica is Creating Attractive and Walkable Places – The Mayor’s Clean Sweeps are making Downtown Utica neighborhoods cleaner and safer, while neighborhoods are activating empty spaces. Intelligent, functional, and attractive pedestrian and bike infrastructure is connecting neighborhoods within the core.
3. Utica is Diversifying Downtown’s Economic Uses – Downtown Utica envisions a 24/7 destination for jobs, higher education, housing, and retail. Unparalleled opportunities for upper-floor housing will increase the tax base, enhance property values, and strengthen the consumer base for downtown restaurant, retail, and tourism destinations.
4. Utica is Planning for Equity - The City is considering financial incentive programs to reverse the trends in poverty and disinvestment. Utica is targeting CDBG funding to expand economic opportunity by supporting small and locally-owned businesses, housing rehab, job training, and social enterprises.
5. Utica is Improving Government Regulations and Processes – The City’s Code Green Project is underway to update its Zoning, Development Codes, and related ordinances while a Master Plan Committee is assisting to update the City’s comprehensive plan. This will effectively streamline processes, encourage creative design, and incentivize investment in the core.
6. Utica is Financing Projects – In addition to more than \$15 million in REDC funding for the core, Utica Industrial Development Corporation (UIDC) recently received designation as a CDFI – translating to expanded financing options to support reinvestment in the target area.
7. Utica is Establishing On-going Place Management – The City is in the 3rd year of a 5-year contract with R2G and has initiated the Mohawk Valley Main Streets program – both of which are helping to plan public spaces; pursue redevelopment opportunities, and work with business owners.

Sustainability

Since 2010, the City has systematically deployed green infrastructure for more effective, environmentally-sound storm water management. The City has also developed a partnership with the City of Rome to share best practices in green infrastructure, urban forestry, and parks management. In 2013, the two cities were awarded a joint tree planting grant by the NYS DEC, and recognized by the NYS Urban Forestry Council for advancing urban forestry partnerships and government efficiency. Recently, Cornell University professors and students have completed a Phase I analysis of the multi-block portion of Downtown Utica’s downtown containing the Stanley Theatre and Tabernacle Baptist Church as well as numerous restaurants, businesses and residences for a multi-million-dollar community heating, cooling, and green infrastructure district.

In 2016, the City of Utica was awarded \$50,000 from the Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program towards the creation of a Downtown Sustainability Plan. The City of Utica, with Cornell University, will create a Downtown Sustainability Plan considering energy, transportation, water, economic, residential, and business development, communications, food, waste, community input, green infrastructure, and urban design. The goal is to incentivize appropriate development and “green” residences, businesses, and governments to improve quality of life and attract new investors, entrepreneurs, workers and residents.

Climate Smart Communities Pledge

Utica has taken the Climate Smart Communities pledge and is part of a network of New York communities engaged in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience. Utica Common Council approved the Utica pledge on July 8, 2015.

Invest in U Project (IIU)

In collaboration with The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, R2G and the City are establishing a Partnership Fund to help leverage transformative capital to preserve Utica’s authenticity as its commercial corridors continue to evolve into robust and interesting centers of commerce and culture.

IIU will enable the community to “invest in itself” using private resources to help encourage growth in the City’s most visible and viable downtown neighborhoods. Projects might include commissioned public art, street trees and landscaping, innovative lighting, signage and banners and litter receptacles and planters, as well as special events – all things that make a strong visual impact, create a sense of place, and invite visitors to explore, celebrate, and honor Utica. The City of Utica will allocate a percentage of CDBG and HOME funding as matches over the next five years, to supplement proposed projects in each corridor.

- 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.

An extensive One World Downtown public engagement process has been underway in the City to identify both challenges and opportunities to preserve the City’s authenticity as its commercial corridors evolve into robust and interesting centers of commerce and culture. Public dollars are seeding change in Downtown and new and transformative private investments are starting to improve the collective Downtown districts, incorporating innovative approaches to rebuild and refurnish the most visible streets in the City. To continue this momentum, a local DRI Planning Committee will be comprised of City staff, community stakeholders and outside community and economic development professionals to be established by the Office of the Mayor of the City of Utica. The initial local lead will be the Mayor’s Chief of Staff. The Utica Industrial Development Corporation will serve as financial steward of the funding and the City’s Commissioner of Urban and Economic Development will oversee the initial planning efforts. The Rust to Green Urban Studio will assist with community engagement.

Local support and commitment from the public sector can be seen in the plethora of recent investments, initiatives, and efforts within the City and its downtown. While the City of Utica receives Federal CDBG, ESG, and HOME entitlement funding in addition to a myriad of State funds (DOS, DEC, EFC, etc.) - private funding (representing strong local support and advocacy for transformation) from the Community Foundation of

Herkimer and Oneida Counties, National Grid, Cornell University and others have also made a powerful impact in Downtown.

Indicative of wide regional support, the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council process has accelerated investment in downtown and the greater metropolitan area. The catalyzing force of the REDC funding has set in motion a myriad of private interest and investment in commercial, residential, and industrial projects, creating a wave of new businesses, young entrepreneurs, and ready and willing financial institutions which have added fuel to Utica's economic recovery, reimagining sustainable growth in Downtown Utica and beyond. These transformational activities and investments represent the strength in support for the local vision.

The City has been working for four years on a Downtown focus including the Downtown Utica target area. Over 3,000 residents and workers have responded to surveys, served on development committees, sponsored special placemaking events, and have assisted with redevelopment planning in each of the districts. County, state and federal representatives have given full support to the City to move its Downtown initiatives forward.

Please refer to Exhibit C: Letters of Support.

- 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 Utica and firmly root the City's vision for complete downtown revitalization and growth.

One World Utica Welcome Center

The City, in collaboration with the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, has proposed the One World Utica Welcome Center. The intent of the center is to foster and enhance the welcoming community climate in the Mohawk Valley and the City of Utica that supports community engagement, creates opportunities for workforce development, and ultimately cultivates a sense of community and inclusiveness for all newcomers and residents. The Welcome Center will include two private office spaces and a sitting area that would have two computer workstations with internet access available for public use. Additionally, there will be a semi-private enclosed conference area and a computer/educational training center that will include 20 computer workstations and educational space that can be used by MVRRCR and partner agencies to provide workforce training and educational opportunities.

The Welcome Center will provide a one-stop location for new arrivals to find information about various aspects of the community including housing, employment, education, arts and cultural events, and community services. The influx of refugees and immigrants has positively affected the City and its downtown revitalization efforts. The City is committed to assisting this project and creating initiatives that will increase the opportunities available for newcomers to integrate and fully participate in the greater community, enhancing both community and economic development in the City, Oneida County, and throughout the Mohawk Valley region.

Kempf Building

This historical building located at 248-250 Genesee Street is starving for investment. The building, which is 50,000 square feet and four stories, is mostly vacant today. The new contract owners (who are currently redeveloping the New Century Club across the street) intend to renovate this building into a vibrant mixed-use development project. The estimated budget for this major capital improvement project is \$5 million. The project would help transform this blighted property into a downtown anchor building featuring retail, commercial and/or residential space. It would also complement surrounding buildings that have recently been revitalized, filling an anchor block in the City's downtown with retail, commercial, and residential opportunities.

The Former Boston Store

The former Boston Store located at 131-147 Genesee Street is a cornerstone of Utica's geographical landscape. Residing on a massive corner lot at the entrance to downtown, the now empty building encompasses 140,000 square feet of architectural prowess and commercial opportunity. Rehabilitation needs to the building will span a variety of operation-critical components, to include replacing the exterior façade, interior renovations, new elevators, LED lighting, insulated glass windows, and a new energy efficient roof. The project will also include critically important improvements to the adjacent Utica Place parking garage to support the building's development as well as other surrounding projects. The renovations would make the building marketable to a wide range of potential users, eliminate an eyesore in the downtown landscape, and restore the building's potential to be an economic driver with the possibility of housing over 100 employees.

167 Genesee Street

The former Rite Aid building located at 167 Genesee Street comprises five-stories (including the basement) and 30,000 square feet. The planned mixed-use redevelopment of the currently vacant building will accommodate ground floor retail, three floors of upscale residential units, and a parking garage in the basement. This building is key to the progression of the redevelopment of Genesee Street's Central business district in the heart of downtown Utica and will complete renovations of an anchor block of buildings. Retail plans include a national chain sandwich shop, a fresh food market, and an art gallery wall in the lobby. The developers project the creation of 24 direct jobs in the first year the project is complete and moderate growth in subsequent years. The fully renovated building will assist in the economic and aesthetic resurgence of downtown Utica providing both residential and employment opportunities.

Broad Street Corridor Enhancements

The City of Utica will redesign and reconstruct Broad Street between NYS Route 5S and John Street to include complete streets components of a road diet, bike lanes, bump-outs, center turn lane, and new curbing, sidewalks, and landscaping. The project will complement NYSDOT's \$13M Route 5S Safety Enhancement Project nearby. This main arterial of downtown foot traffic serves as an important gateway to

the city center and its business district. The project will improve traffic flow, walkability, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, and general downtown beautification.

Cultural Venue Improvements

There are numerous anchor institutions in the downtown area that serve as City-wide and regional artistic and cultural attractions. Making improvements to these facilities can enhance their offerings, draw increased visitors, and ensure long-term viability. These such venues are in need of repair including the Utica Public Library, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute, and the Stanley Theatre. Necessary improvements to these facilities will ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, enhance programming, and solidify the institutions' sustainability well into the future. As the main center of cultural activity in the region, the City of Utica is committed to assisting these facilities. Making improvements will encourage visitors and residents to explore the neighborhood and linger longer in the hub providing exponential benefits to surrounding businesses.

These transformational projects and many other public and private investments such as those detailed earlier in this application exhibit Utica's readiness and momentum to achieve full revitalization. Together, these projects will transform downtown Utica in a perpetual and significant manner.

Please refer to Exhibit D: Transformational Projects.

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


The City's Department of Urban & Economic Development will be responsible for administration of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative upon award. The Department is fully staffed and has proven capability in managing multiple contracts, representing millions of dollars in State and Federal funds. The Department is responsible for the oversight and administration of nearly \$3 million in Federal entitlement funds (Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership and Emergency Solutions Grant) annually. Like the Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds, these funds are then allocated by the City to various community development and economic development projects and activities throughout the community. A staff of seven full-time employees within the Department ensures that the implementation of the various projects and activities are in full compliance with all applicable Federal rules and regulations.

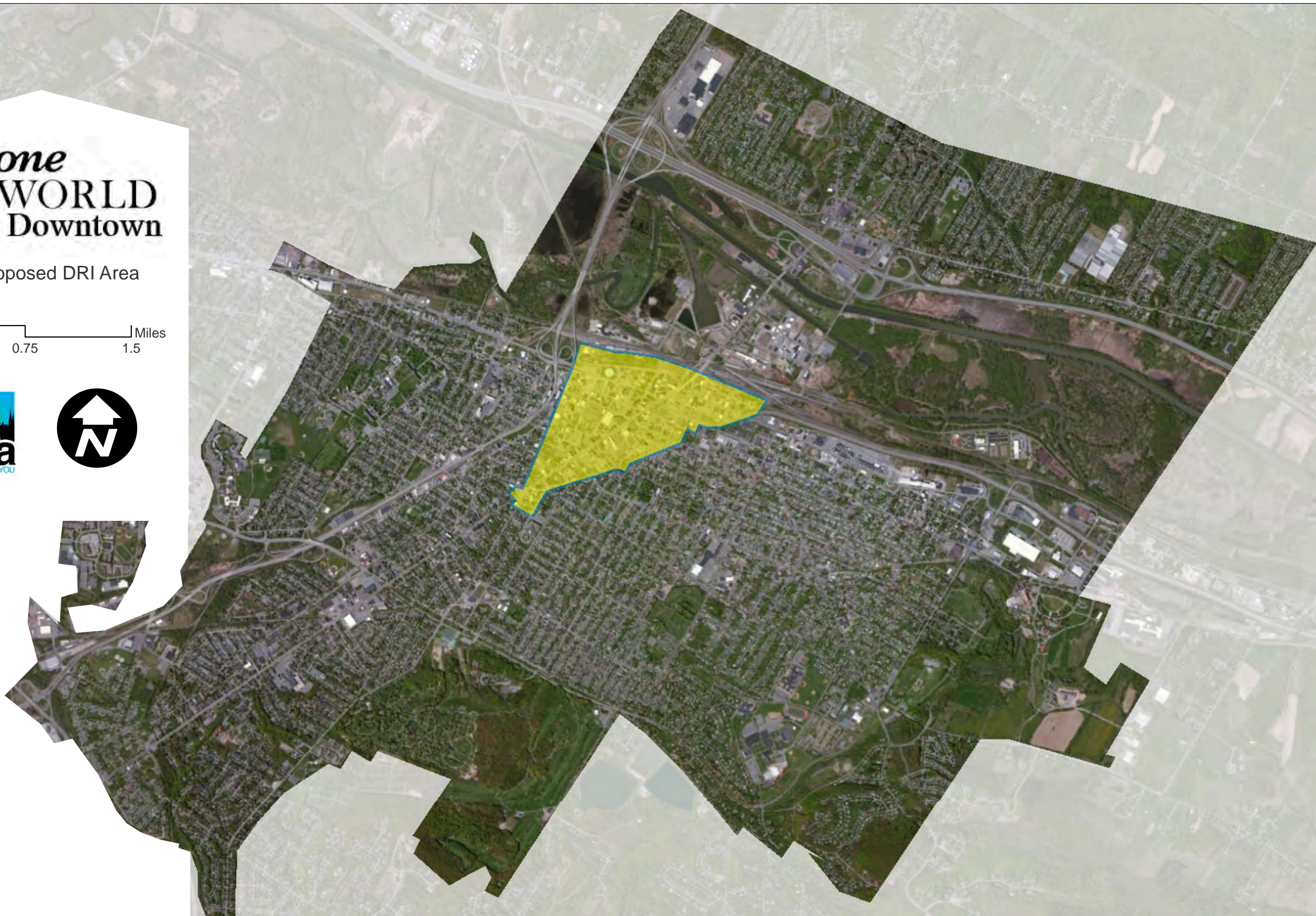
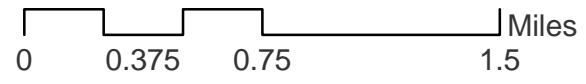
In addition to the Federal funds, the Department also has considerable experience in the administration and oversight of State funds. As noted earlier in the application, the City of Utica has successfully received over \$11 million of dollars in grant awards through New York State's Consolidated Funding Applications since 2011. The vast majority of these awards are administered by the City's Department of Urban & Economic Development staff, ensuring that all projects implemented with these grant awards are in compliance with all applicable State rules and regulations. Through these efforts, Department staff work regularly with staff from a variety of State departments, including Empire State Development, Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation, Homes & Community Renewal and the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.

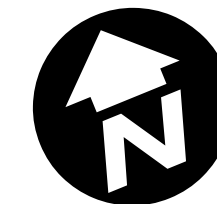
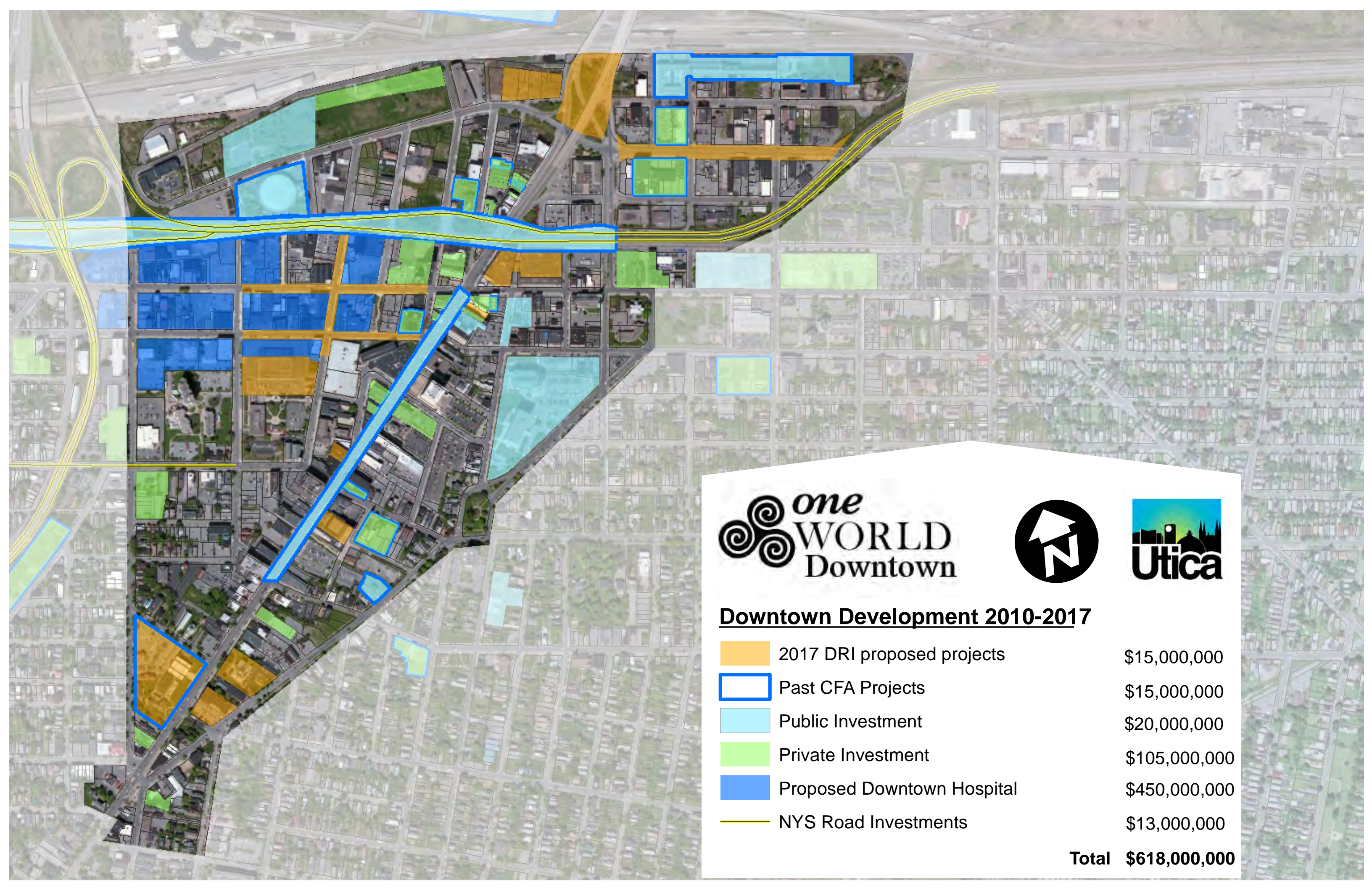
10) Other. Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

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one
WORLD
Downtown

 Proposed DRI Area

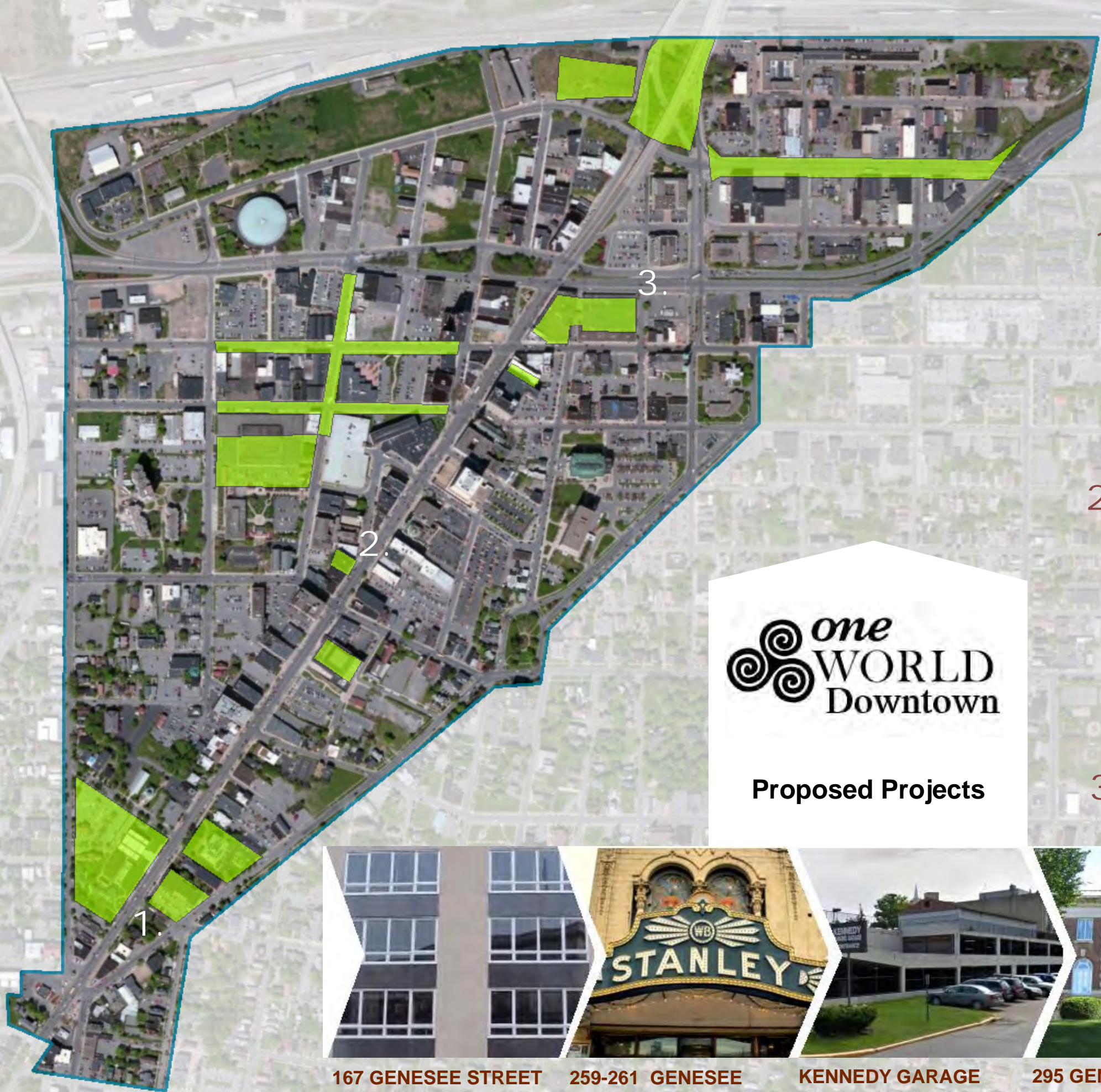




Downtown Development 2010-2017

	2017 DRI proposed projects	\$15,000,000
	Past CFA Projects	\$15,000,000
	Public Investment	\$20,000,000
	Private Investment	\$105,000,000
	Proposed Downtown Hospital	\$450,000,000
	NYS Road Investments	\$13,000,000

Total \$618,000,000



Proposed Projects



1.

MVRCR Welcome Center

MOHAWK VALLEY RESOURCE CENTER FOR REFUGEES WILL CONSTRUCT A WELCOME CENTER WHICH WILL SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, OPPORTUNITY FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTIVATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY & INCLUSIVENESS FOR ALL NEWCOMERS AND RESIDENTS.



2.

Kempf Building

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS WILL TRANSFORM THIS UNDERUTILIZED ANCHOR INTO AN IMPORTANT RETAIL NODE WITH DESIREABLE RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE MOST CENTRALIZED LOCALE WITHIN DOWNTOWN UTICA.



3.

Boston Place

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FACADE, INTERIOR AND ADJOINING MUNICIPAL PARKING GARAGE WITH 432 SPACES TO ENHANCE THE DESIREABILITY OF THIS NOW VACANT 140,000 SQUARE FOOT ANCHOR BUILDING LEADING TO 100+ NEW JOBS.



167 GENESEE STREET
MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT AND FACADE IMPROVEMENTS



259-261 GENESEE
CREATION OF NEW ENTERTAINMENT VENUE



KENNEDY GARAGE
REDEVELOPMENT OF PARKING GARAGE



295 GENESEE
EXPANDING ACCESS TO VISITORS



306 GENESEE
RESTORATION OF A MID-CENTURY MASTERPIECE



BAGG'S SQUARE PARK
INNOVATIVE PARK EXPANSION WITH ADDITIONAL PARKING