



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

APPLICATION

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 should be submitted as Word documents and must be received by the appropriate Regional Council by 4:00 PM on June 1, 2018 at the email address provided at the end of this application. Application guidance is provided in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook* found on the DRI website at www.ny.gov/dri.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Mohawk Valley

Municipality Name: City of Utica

Downtown Name: Bagg's Square Neighborhood

County Name: Oneida County

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

Downtown Utica, including the Bagg's Square Neighborhood, is Oneida County's gathering place. Over the last decade, strong and sustainable job and population growth in the region has increased the demand for housing and retail opportunities in the downtown. Under the DRI, Utica will build on recent investments, including at the Utica Memorial Auditorium, Utica Harbor, streetscape improvements, and renovation of historic buildings to enhance the up and coming Bagg's Square Neighborhood to serve the needs of local employees, residents, students and visitors. The focus will be on mixed-use infill development, a greater variety of retail and housing, expansion of entertainment venues, and providing an improved connection between the City's main commercial corridor and Utica's Harbor Point Development.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, 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.

The City of Utica is ripe for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment. Downtown Utica is a dynamic urban neighborhood that has seen a resurgence of energy and activity in its historic core. The City has long been the heart of the Mohawk Valley and continues to move the region forward with innovative City-led initiatives. The City is on the brink of an exciting and unprecedented economic transformation and the Bagg's Square Neighborhood is a central connection point for the City's new visitors, employees, businesses, and residents. The region will be able to draw inspiration and innovation from the City's resurgence. Focused on creating an attractive and engaging mixed-use neighborhood that balances mixed-income residential uses with commercial and entertainment opportunities, the City is concentrating resources on the Bagg's Square Neighborhood. Bagg's Square best reflects the character, diversity, infrastructure, and policies essential to build investor confidence and to market the area to an increasingly global workforce. Recognizing that professionals, millennials, empty-nesters, and artists are choosing urban life to suburban environments, Utica has been redesigning and re-strategizing to spark a local and regional economic resurgence.

The Bagg's Square Neighborhood stretches from "Broad to the AUD" (Broad Street and the Historic Union Station to the Utica Auditorium) and connects Utica's main commercial district with the Harbor Point Development district. It 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. Entrepreneurial enterprises – like Utica Bread, the City's newest bakery – are blossoming; evidence that developers, investors, residents, and small business owners see and feel the neighborhood's potential.

The Bagg's Square Neighborhood was strategically selected because of its unique location connecting Utica's main commercial artery, Genesee Street, and the Harbor Point waterfront development district. The Genesee Street neighborhood has exhibited recent growth in entrepreneurial enterprise and increased attraction of significant private investment while new developments catalyzing both public and private investments are on the horizon for the City's historically underutilized waterfront. Nestled between these two emerging downtown districts, the Bagg's Square Neighborhood is poised to become a transformational connection – providing a nexus of recreational, entertainment, residential, and commercial opportunities – and uniting the commercial corridor with the City's waterfront sustaining and leveraging the ongoing growth in Utica's downtown and beyond.

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 *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook*.

- 1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** 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 area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.

The boundaries of the City of Utica proposed DRI area fully incorporate the City's historic Bagg's Square Neighborhood. Bagg's Square is one of the City's first neighborhoods, having developed at a time when the original Erie Canal coursed where Oriskany Boulevard/New York State Route 5S is now located. The northern boundary of the Bagg's Square Neighborhood is generally recognized as being the CSX rail lines that run east to west, while the southern boundary is Oriskany Boulevard/New York State Route 5S. The eastern boundary is the intersection of Broad Street with Oriskany Boulevard/New York State Route 5S, while the western boundary is New York State Route 5/8/12, colloquially referred to as the North – South Arterial.

For the purposes of the City's proposed DRI, the southern boundaries of the DRI have been stretched the equivalent of one City block so as to incorporate both sides of Oriskany Boulevard/New York State Route 5S which is the focus of a \$13 million redesign/reconstruction project for which construction has just commenced. As such, the southern boundary now consists of LaFayette Street on the western side of Genesee Street and Bleecker Street on the eastern side of Genesee Street.

In terms of civic attractions within the above boundary, the City of Utica's proposed DRI area includes the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium, which is home to the AHL's Utica Comets hockey team and the Utica College Pioneers hockey team. The proposed DRI area also includes the historic Union Station, a major transportation hub for the Greater Utica area, where a number of bus and rail lines converge, including Amtrak, Adirondack Scenic Railroad, Greyhound and Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CENTRO). Additionally, the proposed DRI area incorporates a portion of the area in which Mohawk Valley Health Systems is proposing to construct a \$485 million consolidated health care campus, for which the State of New York has committed \$300 million; ground is expected to be broken next year for this transformational project.

In total, the area incorporated into the proposed DRI boundaries measures roughly 90 acres or slightly less than .2 square miles.

Please refer to **Attachment A** for a map that clearly delineates the proposed Downtown Revitalization area.

2) Description of catchment area. Outline why the proposed DRI area, 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.

Bagg's Square is the connector between the City's main commercial corridor and Utica'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.

Anchor institutions proximate to Bagg's Square 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 the City.

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 the City, 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 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 the City 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 DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, or catalyze future investments 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 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 Utica and the greater metropolitan area at a rate that the City has not experienced in at least a generation. During the past seven REDC rounds, projects in the City of Utica have earned awards totaling more than \$35 million, leveraging hundreds of millions in new public and private investment.

Recent Investments in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood include:

- \$1.5 million in capital, job training, and Innovation Hot Spot grant funding 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.
- \$1.5 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.
- \$325,000 for the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees to develop a One World Utica Welcome & Opportunity Center located in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood and provide employment training and services.

The catalyzing force of the REDC funding has set in motion a multitude of private interest and investment in commercial, residential, and industrial projects in Bagg's Square. Public investments totaling \$300 million in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood since 2011 have been met with over \$30 million in private investments - 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 the Bagg's Square Neighborhood 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 vacant or underutilized 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 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 and specifically in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood.

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

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. Nearly 300 workers will begin a new job at Danfoss.

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 City, Bagg's Square Neighborhood and the Harbor District.

The above-described recent and impending job growth located within, and in close proximity to the Bagg's Square Neighborhood 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, dining, and entertainment 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. The Bagg's Square neighborhood in 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 DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and 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 at-risk 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 a 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 Bleeker 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 HUB are improving rail and bus experiences. The \$62 million Utica North-South Arterial Project is nearing completion and a number of unsightly derelict buildings have been improved in downtown Utica in recent years. 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 \$13 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 in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood on Hotel Street, including ground-floor boutique retail.
- The former ConMed facility will include 25 loft-style apartments adjacent to the expanded thINCubator and MVCC's Construction Trades Training Facilities.

The City of 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 the 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 plan, 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. The new zoning

regulations will 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 appropriate niche 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. This will effectively streamline processes, encourage creative design, and incentivize investment in the core.
6. Utica is Financing Projects – in addition to more than \$35 million in REDC funding across the City, 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 4th 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 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. The 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) Public Support. Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. 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 DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

An extensive 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 the City and beyond. These transformational activities and investments represent the strength in support for the local vision.

The City has been working for five years on a downtown focus including the Bagg's Square Neighborhood 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.

8) Project List to Demonstrate Readiness: Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list 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 most 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 in the Bagg’s Square Neighborhood. These projects build on the unique history and assets of the neighborhood and firmly root the City’s vision for complete downtown revitalization and growth.

Potential Project	Total Project Costs	DRI Request	Other Funding Sources
Nexus Center	\$ 3,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	Bonding, private sources
Pedestrian Bridge	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ 4,200,000.00	Federal transportation funds
Bagg's Square Park	\$ 1,250,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	CDBG, City in-kind
Former Boston Store	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	Private owner financing
Broad Street Corridor	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	CHIPS funding, CDBG
TOTALS	\$ 13,750,000.00	\$ 9,700,000.00	

Please refer to **Attachment B** for brief project descriptions and depictions of the proposed projects.

Nexus Center

The proposed anchor project for the Bagg’s Square Neighborhood is the planned Nexus Center. Developed by the CEO of Mohawk Valley Garden, Robert Esche, the Nexus Center is a sports and recreation hub geared towards tournament-based recreation play. The Nexus Center project ties together an array of different interests and pastimes in a prime location next to the Utica Auditorium. With square footage space for three hockey rinks that can easily be transitioned to basketball courts, indoor soccer, lacrosse or rugby fields, The Nexus Center extends its reach to all seasons and all athletes. The venue will be combined with a one-stop-shop for all sports and recreation activity in the Northeast, stretching from Toronto to New York City to Boston and more. The Nexus Center will be a focal facility with an ability to cater to a very specific economic driver in tournament-based sports recreation play, coupled with innovative convention and event space. The project will create foot traffic and critical mass that increases sales tax revenue while supporting local hotels and restaurants.

Pedestrian Bridge

The City is proposing the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the CSX railroad tracks providing a physical pedestrian connection between the Harbor Point Development district and the Bagg’s Square Neighborhood and the AUD. The project would make the area safer for pedestrians and enhances the walkability allowing people to move more freely between the two development districts. The pedestrian

bridge will link the City's development on its waterfront with the up and coming Bagg's Square Neighborhood contributing to the revitalization efforts in both neighborhoods.

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.

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.

Bagg's Park project

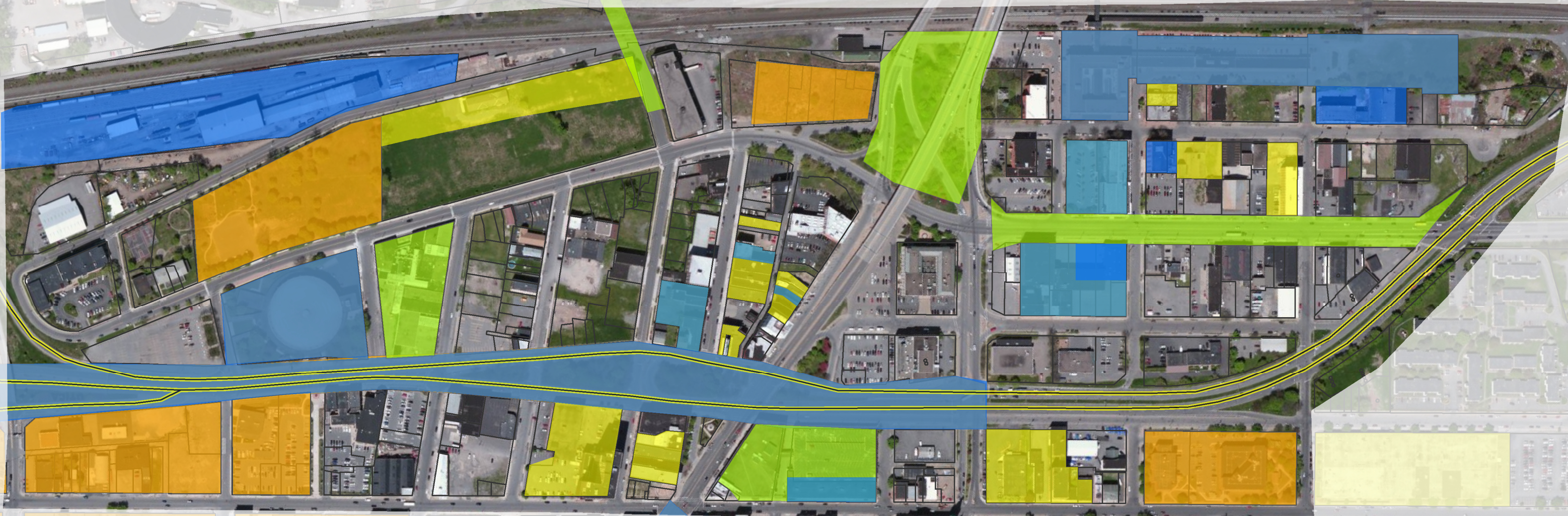
In the Spring of 2014, the City of Utica worked with Cornell's Rust2Green program and a capstone studio of urban planning and landscape architecture students from Cornell University to put together a plan for the Bagg's Square Neighborhood. The plan, which included significant input from the residents, property owners and business owners in the Bagg's Square Neighborhood, called for the establishment of Bagg's Square Park as a much-needed green space in the neighborhood. The Park utilizes a combination of City-owned vacant land, a small existing historic City park and underutilized State-owned space under the Genesee Street overpass to knit Bagg's Square East and Bagg's Square West together, thereby improving connectivity and pedestrian linkages within the neighborhood.

9) Administrative Capacity. Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award.

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. Projects in the City of Utica have received over \$35 million dollars in grant awards through New York State's Consolidated Funding Applications since 2011. Many 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.

ATTACHMENT A



2018 DRI TARGET AREA
Bagg's Square
Utica, New York

-  2018 DRI Projects
-  NYS Road Investments
-  Past CFA Projects
-  Private Investment
-  Public Investment

2018 DRI TARGET AREA

Bagg's Square

Utica, New York



Nexus Center

A sports and recreation hub geared towards tournament-based recreation play. The Nexus Center project ties together an array of different interests and pastimes in a prime location next to The AUD. With square footage space for three hockey rinks that can easily be transitioned to basketball courts, indoor soccer, lacrosse and rugby fields.



Pedestrian Bridge

A pedestrian bridge over the CSX railroad tracks providing a physical pedestrian connection between the Harbor Point Development district and the Bagg's Square Neighborhood and the AUD.



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 & landscaping.



Bagg's Square Park

The Park utilizes a combination of City-owned vacant land, a small existing historic City park and underutilized State-owned space under the Genesee Street overpass to knit Bagg's Square East and Bagg's Square West together, thereby improving connectivity and pedestrian linkages within the neighborhood.



The Former Boston Store

A 140,000 square feet of architectural prowess and commercial opportunity. 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.



THE CITY OF UTICA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

1 KENNEDY PLAZA • UTICA, NEW YORK 13502

ROBERT M. PALMIERI

Mayor

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June 1, 2018

Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council
c/o Empire State Development
Attn: Mr. Michael Reese, Regional Director
New York State Office Building
207 Genesee Street
Utica, New York 13501

RE: City of Utica Round III DRI Application

Dear Mr. Reese:

In the last six years that I have served as Mayor, with assistance from Governor Cuomo, Utica has made significant strides toward repositioning itself as one of the State's strongest and most vibrant urban centers – and nowhere is this more evident than in the City's downtown corridor.

With the renovation of the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium, the reconstruction of the North – South Arterial, the upcoming State Route 55 project and numerous City-owned properties sold to private investors, which has expanded the City's tax base, created new businesses and attracted young professionals to live in downtown, there is a strong sense of optimism and entrepreneurialism throughout the Greater Utica region.

Even with these achievements, more work needs to be done and we need the support of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council to continue to achieve results. The attached application seeks funding through the Governor's *Downtown Revitalization Initiative* program for the Bagg's Square neighborhood. As you will see, the application builds on the successful investments New York State and others have already made in Bagg's Square.

Expanding on the investments that have been made to the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium, the application seeks funds to advance the Auditorium's plans for the Nexus Center, which will cement the facility as a premier destination in the Northeast for sporting events and tournaments for a variety of sports for all age levels.

Adding to the investments that have been and are being made in our State highways surrounding the Bagg's Square neighborhood, the application seeks funds to completely re-design Broad Street, transforming the utilitarian vehicular highway into a more pedestrian-friendly transportation corridor that connects adjacent land uses.

Enhancing the investment being made to create a consolidated health care facility in downtown, the application seeks funds to improve a key anchor building, the former Boston Store. Offering over 140,000 square feet of available space,

appropriate renovations to the building opens the potential for the building to house professional offices that are anticipated to be interested in locating near the new hospital.

These projects, and others that have been included in the application, are absolutely critical to the further development of Downtown Utica and will go a long way toward making the City of Utica a destination for continued growth and development.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you or the members of the Regional Council have any questions regarding the attached application, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert M. Palmieri". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Robert M. Palmieri
Mayor
City of Utica