

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES WINNING PROJECTS FOR ONEONTA'S \$10 MILLION DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

New York Agencies to Collaborate With Regional Economic Development Council

Revitalize Downtown Oneonta, Create Jobs and Spur Local Economy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the winning projects selected for the City of Oneonta in the Mohawk Valley region as part of the state's \$100 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The DRI aims to transform local neighborhoods across the state into vibrant communities where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work and raise a family. Working together with state agencies and the Regional Economic Development Council, the City of Oneonta has built a strategic investment plan that identifies catalytic downtown projects consistent with the initiative's goals.

"With this critical investment and the region's laser-focus on fueling economic growth and job creation, the City of Oneonta will have an opportunity to reach its full potential," **Governor Cuomo said**. "These projects will help transform the city, helping to ensure the sustainability of the Mohawk Valley for generations to come."

"The Downtown Revitalization Initiative recognizes that vital central business districts can anchor the growth of an entire region," **said Lieutenant Governor Hochul**, who made today's DRI announcement in Oneonta. "Through the DRI, Oneonta will strengthen on its existing assets, repurpose underutilized spaces and connect its existing assets to build upon a walkable historic core."

The nine winning projects are:

- **Westcott Lot Mixed-Use Development**
Construct a new mixed-use building at 226-236 Main Street. The City will select a developer to construct the new building that will feature 4,000-6,000 sq. ft. of commercial space on Main Street, three levels of housing above, and a level of parking beneath the building. The new building will include approximately 27-30 one and two bedroom dwelling units. The site may also include a small public plaza and linear public pedestrian passageway that connects Main Street to South Main Street.
- **Fund for Small Business Revolving Loans and Sign Grants**
Provide small loans to owners of buildings within the DRI area to renovate existing retail and commercial storefronts and spaces, and improve business signage. Provide gap financing through a revolving loan fund to overcome the cost impediment older structures face to meeting contemporary standards. Uses may include improvements such as interior/exterior renovations, machinery/equipment, working capital, and rent subsidies. Micro-grants would be provided to individual owners for business signage.
- **Activate Upper Story Housing**
Provides grants to owners of existing buildings within the DRI area to renovate

upper stories for housing. Many existing residential properties located along Main Street are in need of improvements to attract new tenants, and the cost of renovating these older structures to meet housing demand is not fully covered by the current rental rates of the Oneonta marketplace. This project will allow necessary renovations to occur.

- **New Transit Hub and Parking Garage Renovation**

Renovate an existing public parking garage and add a new transit facility. The parking structure provides three levels of public parking and a bus station for intercity buses. Its current condition and façade are a blight on adjacent properties. Improvements include long-term maintenance and exterior renovations. The project also includes implementation of the new Transit Hub facility on the south side of the parking structure.

- **Muller Plaza Passage**

Establish a public pedestrian passageway between Muller Plaza and Water Street. The passageway will provide an important connection between Oneonta's most important public space and other points of the City. The connection will allow access to the plaza from the City's public parking garage, existing shops on Water Street, and ultimately to the new Transit Hub, and Foothills Theater.

- **Water Street Boardwalk**

Establish a public pedestrian passageway between Water Street and Market Street. The passageway, constructed of a boardwalk, will provide an important connection between Oneonta's most important public space, Muller Plaza, and other points of the City. The connection will allow access between the City's public parking garage, existing shops on Water Street, to the new transit hub, and Foothills Theater.

- **Market Street and South Main Street Improvements**

Make improvements to existing streets in downtown Oneonta. Renovate Market Street and South Main Street to increase pedestrian activity, provide an urban character consistent with Oneonta's downtown, and incentivize development of underutilized properties. Work will include numerous pedestrian safety improvements, streetscape enhancements, and infrastructure improvements. Improvements will also be made near the Foothills Theater and gateways at Main and Market streets, as well as James Georgeson Avenue.

- **Downtown District Signage**

Improve the visibility of businesses in Oneonta's downtown and advertise Oneonta to a broad region. The signage project includes signage design and a location plan, followed by placement of markers along major regional roads and at other regional destinations; new signage and wayfinding downtown; directional signage for groupings of stores; and wayfinding for public parking, public venues, and historic district signage.

- **Branding and Marketing Downtown Oneonta**

Improve the visibility of Oneonta's downtown and small businesses. The Branding Project will develop a marketing theme for the City, and a network with which to regularly disseminate the marketing materials for the downtown. The project will result in increased retail sales, commercial business opportunities, and improved perception of downtown.

New York Secretary of State Rossana Rosado said, "I would like to thank the Governor for his unparalleled vision in creating opportunities for communities across New York State. This investment by the state will boost the local economy and bring and keep people in our state. I congratulate the Local Planning Committee for its hard work in selecting projects that will greatly improve Oneonta's Downtown."

NYS Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said,"Governor Cuomo's DRI program was created to recognize and reward the best in hyper-local, well-planned growth that anticipates and balances the needs of the current residents with the promise of new mixed-use development. Helping communities embark on a path that embraces renewal, fresh employment and housing opportunities, recreational and arts enrichment, and creating a more attractive and livable community guarantees a more vital future for all New Yorkers."

Senator James L. Seward said, "Oneonta won New York State DRI funding thanks to a plan that exhibited a compelling vision for economic development and community growth centered on the downtown hub. These winning projects, conceived by local stakeholders, will help fulfill that vision and lead to new economic possibilities. Oneonta has a storied history and this transformational initiative has the entire region pointed toward a prosperous future."

Assemblyman William Magee said, "Otsego County offers unlimited potential for expansion opportunities, and these winning DRI projects will further our goal of boosting the economy and creating good jobs. I commend Governor Cuomo and all those involved for their spirit of partnership in creating a vision for an inviting, compelling, and livable downtown Oneonta."

City of Oneonta Mayor Gary Herzig said, "I thank Governor Cuomo for his vision and for his investment in the future of the City of Oneonta. The Governor's Downtown Revitalization Initiative will help to transform Oneonta into a vibrant downtown that is able to build on local and regional cultural, historic and agricultural resources to become a destination for both residents and tourists while also providing much needed new opportunities for quality housing and employment for the people of the City of Oneonta."

The City of Oneonta

With assets that include mixed-use housing, intermodal transportation, a vibrant culture and arts district including the future Food and Craft Beverage Innovation District, and anchor institutions, such as Hartwick College and SUNY Oneonta, the City of Oneonta, situated along the Susquehanna River, is poised to transform into a 21st century, regionally competitive community while maintaining its quaint, small-town essence. Under the DRI, Oneonta will focus on projects in the downtown area that will leverage significant private investment to promote sustainability and reduce the city's carbon footprint, provide new housing opportunities, and expand upon its economic potential as a regional center of culture and commerce.

Oneonta was selected as the winning DRI community in the Mohawk Valley after the local regional Council weighed seven criteria in selecting Oneonta as its nominee:

1. The targeted neighborhood should be compact and well-defined.
2. The downtown, or its center, should be of a size sufficient to support an active, year-round downtown and should have a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown.
3. The downtown should capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and surrounding areas.
4. There should be recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to the downtown that can attract workers to the downtown, support redevelopment and make growth sustainable.
5. The downtown must contain properties or characteristics that contribute or that could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown, including the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, commercial and retail main street businesses, including healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.
6. The downtown should contain or articulate how it can create policies that enhance quality of life, including the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development; and
7. Local and community support must exist for revitalization of the downtown. There must be a commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to build and implement a strategic investment plan for the downtown.

For more information on the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and how to apply for its second round, go to: <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov>.