

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

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Capital Region

Municipality Name: Village of Castleton-on-Hudson

Downtown Name: Main Street

County: Rensselaer

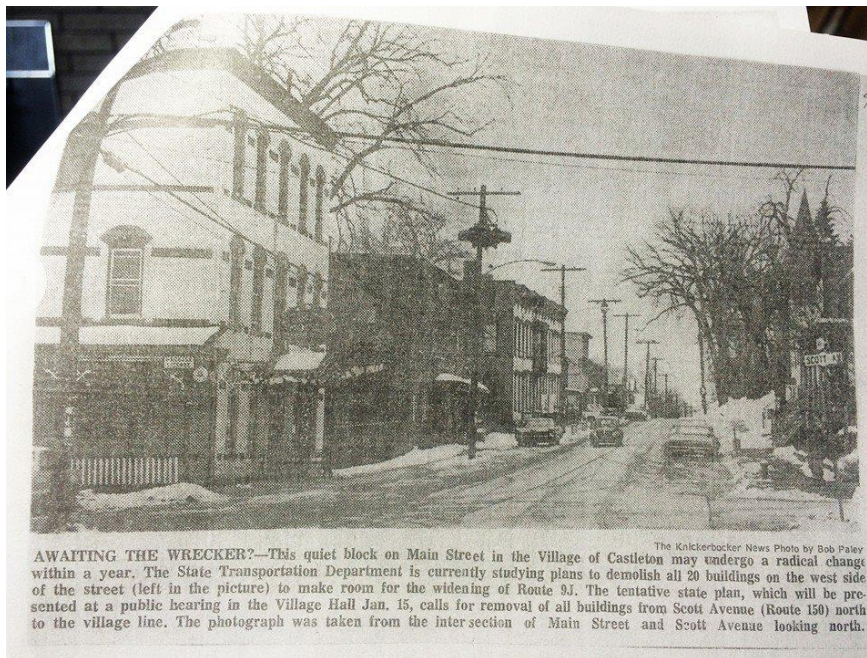
Vision for Downtown. Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.



The Village of Castleton-on-Hudson has had many visions for economic revitalization over the years. There is a drawer full of proposals and studies in Village Hall, with tantalizing titles that include "A Village Walk" (1977),

documenting the history of many structures on Main Street; "The Land and the River" (2000), which was presented to the Federal Coordinating Committee of the Hudson River; more recently, a 2015 addendum was written to the "Comprehensive Plan" (2005); and in 2016, the Village's DRI proposal was entitled "The Time Is Now." Granted, tantalizing may not be

an apt descriptor for the “Comprehensive Plan,” but at first glance, the other three do appeal, even to non-wonks.



RIP Brick Row

To long-time Village residents, the vision is one that looks back, rather than forward, to a time when the Village was vital, before the first injustice in 1970, when the state demolished Brick Row on North Main Street to widen Route 9J. The

downtown area was dealt the next blow in

1994, when Village leadership foolishly agreed to close the only public access point to the Hudson River at Scott Avenue and Main Street, in exchange for a piece of land to make the future Riverfront Park, and within a year, a pedestrian tunnel or bridge under or over the railroad tracks to access it. Unfortunately, what should have been a boon for the struggling Village turned out to be another death knell. The State did indeed put up a fence blocking the tracks and transferred ownership of Riverfront Park to the Village, but 23 years later, the overpass remains just a plan in a dusty file drawer, and the only access is (allegedly) illegal, by squeezing through the fence. A third setback to the Village came in May 2009, when the Capital District Transportation Authority discontinued Bus Route #34 Albany/Castleton, eliminating employment opportunities for residents and making the Village inaccessible to those who do not drive.



RIP Stewart's

The next piece of bad news made it clear that a new vision was imperative. This 2017 vision was born in October 2014, when Village residents were informed that the anchor of Main Street, a Stewart's Shop, would be closing after 40 years. This was the wake-up call that catalyzed a social movement, culminating 18 months later in March 2016 with the election of Robert Schmidt as Mayor and Gina Giuliano (me, the writer) as Trustee. As private citizens involved in the fight to save Stewart's, our advocacy did not persuade them to stay on Main Street, but it did convince them to lift the "no convenience store"

deed restriction on the site, and so a buyer who wanted to operate a general store and deli was eventually able to be found. The "fame" from the Save Our Stewart's campaign resulted in our election on an ambitious platform of gaining access to the Hudson River by securing the long-promised pedestrian overpass at Scott Avenue and North Main Street, revitalizing the downtown area, and changing the culture of the community. Last year's 2016 DRI was written just eight weeks after our terms commenced.

The vision described in "The Time Is Now" was for a downtown revitalization that included:

- the pedestrian overpass to Riverfront Park as its centerpiece;
- a sensitively restored Village Hall;

- a renovation and re-use for the old Curtis Noyes firehouse at 2 Green Avenue;
- crosswalks, underground wiring and new sidewalks on Main Street;
- rebranding the Village as artsy and touristy;
- demolishing derelict buildings;
- a new wastewater infrastructure;
- improvements and festivals at Schermerhorn Park;
- some sort of public transportation;
- and capitalizing on two businesses that were sprouting, a new convenience store at Stewart's, and a food manufacturer at the former Hamilton Printing.



We had already begun to change the Village's culture from defeatist to optimistic by starting a Facebook page, a community garden, a farmers' and artisans' market, hosting RiverKeeper Sweep, and enlisting volunteers to help in the efforts.

Obviously Glens Falls and not Castleton-on-Hudson was the DRI winner. However, this did not stop the Village from making huge strides, with very little money. One year after we boldly submitted "The Time Is Now," we have accomplished a lot, and new initiatives are constantly being implemented:

- The Castleton-on-Hudson Farmers' and Artisans' Market (COHFAM) had a wildly successful first year, and started its second round on June 2;
- The Castleton-on-Hudson Community Garden (COHCG) has also begun its second season, after a productive and rewarding summer last year;

- On South Main Street, the derelict 15-17 and 45 have been demolished and the cost re-levied on taxes;
- The Village Facebook page has 1273 followers (as of this writing) and the fifth improved issue of the Castletonian is out and is stunning;
- a Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association (COHMSA) was born as a non-governmental entity with membership from the Village and Main Street's catchment area. COHMSA is fundraising for a flagpole, exploring non-profit status, discussing community-owned businesses, and will host Main Street Day on September 9;



- the inaugural Repair Cafe will be July 15 at the Village Hall;

- a Girl Scout Silver Award project,

“River Rest”(benches on Main Street) is in progress, and funds have been raised to pay for the benches and donate to the Anchor (food pantry);

- the Boy Scouts are working on Eagle Scout projects at Schermerhorn Park;
- a local natural history study group is doing a plant survey at Riverfront Park in September;
- a second 5K run was held this year, benefiting the Leukemia Society (the first is the long-standing Clove Run);
- a historical marker has been installed at Mountain View Cemetery (in collaboration with the Town of Schodack and cemetery board);
- the second annual RiverKeeper Sweep and first Main Street cleanup were held (in partnership with Hudson River Foods employees and COHMSA);



The RiverKeeper Sweep Team



The COHMSA Team

- Delaware Engineering has been working on a State EPF grant for upgrading the wastewater treatment plant;
- Estimates for painting and replacing windows at the Village Hall are being gathered (there is about \$62,000 in the building fund);
- to help serve transportation needs, a plan to bring Uber to the Village is being developed;
- Hudson River Foods is on the brink of opening its organic food manufacturing facility;

- and the reason Mayor Bob and Trustee Gina got involved – Stewart’s closing -- is resolved with The Store's 3rd month anniversary in May.

There are signs of renewed interest and new investments on Main Street; for example, Scott Dobson, the owner of The Store, has purchased and is renovating 11 South Main Street, a historic building once occupied by Lawrence C. Hogaboom in the 1820s, then by Andrew Harter, director of the National Exchange Bank. After a fire across the street, the bank was relocated to the Hogaboom-Harter house. The building was used as a bank until 1923 (“A Village Walk,” 1977).

Mr. Dobson has also leased the first floor of 28-30 South Main Street and plans to open a diner and hardware store there, and he is interested in purchasing 14 South Main Street (the former Mahar’s) when it goes up for auction, and operating an upscale bar at the location.

Frank Palladino, a contractor, is restoring 65 South Main Street, once known as the old yellow store, which stood for at least 50 years on the dock at Schodack Landing. When the Hudson River Railroad was routed through its site in the early 1850s, the building was sold to Nathan Seaman and moved to Castleton-on-Hudson. One tradition has it that it was moved intact by barge, but it may have been taken down for moving and then rebuilt (ibid).

Mr. Palladino owns several vacant lots on Main Street, and he is interested in bidding on 15-17 South Main Street when it is auctioned by the County. He has plans to construct residential buildings.

However, for the vision to not just bud but bloom, rather than becoming yet another forgotten or failed plan or burst of activity by new investors that eventually dies on the vine, access to the Hudson River at Riverfront Park is crucial. It is our firm belief that no revitalization effort can be truly successful without it. Mr. Dobson, in particular, has been quite vocal that he is investing considerable resources in the Village, and he desires river access for the public at Scott Avenue and Main Street.

In the past year, we have submitted modest CFA proposals to NYSDOS, NYSCA and NYSOPRHP. All were not funded. I wrote to the Governor, and federal and state senators about river access (no response). I reached out to Amtrak, and while they are supportive, they did not offer much help, declining to put their verbal endorsement in a written letter. In November, we submitted a proposal to the NYSDOT Passenger & Freight Rail Assistance Grant. Given our 1994 Administrative Law Judge decision (and what I think was a high quality proposal, unlike two of the three CFAs that I confess were marginal efforts), I believed the pedestrian bridge and river access just might be within reach. Sadly, once more, our proposal was unsuccessful.

We do not see a way to raise anything close to \$3M to build the pedestrian bridge. This 2017 vision is informed by that reality, and is different from its predecessor. We still endorse the many worthy items in the 2016 list, but the centerpiece, and apparently, the stumbling block, has been re-envisioned with an additional approach to river access. “The Time Is (Still) Now,” but the added river access cry is “Open the Gate.”

There is no public access to the Hudson River in the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson, despite the Hudson being navigable-in-law. “The majority rule, the general rule in New York, applies the trust doctrine at waters which are navigable in fact, to all tidal waters, and to the lands under tidal waters” (Atkinson, 1996, “On the Wrong Side of the Railroad Tracks: Public Access to the Hudson River,” *Pace Environmental Law Review*, Volume 13 Issue 2, p. 769-770). According to NYSDEC (1991 & 2011), the public right of navigation is rooted in English common law and has been recognized by New York courts for more than 200 years (Public Rights of Navigation and Fishing, Section III.A). “The inalienable right of the general public to use coastal and navigable waters is the essence of the public trust doctrine... The public trust doctrine applies to the public's right to access the Hudson River” (Atkinson, p. 767).

Every community on the east bank of the Hudson has public access to the river. To name just a small nearby sample, there are grade-level vehicular and pedestrian crossings in Stuyvesant, Stockport Flats, and Tivoli. We are

not asking for vehicular access in the Village, just access by foot, but “Open the Gate” would go a long way toward achieving equity between Castleton-on-Hudson and neighboring communities. The State has failed to honor its commitment to the Village for 23 years, so to rectify this outrage, an inexpensive solution is to simply “Open the Gate.”



Wide Open Public Access in Stuyvesant



Conflicting Official Messages in Castleton-on-Hudson

To see a comparison of (non) access in Castleton-on-Hudson v. open access in neighboring communities, see:

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“The core public trust uses are fishing, commerce and navigation. However, other uses are also recognized as protected public trust uses. These include bathing, hunting, swimming, skating, cutting ice, watering

cattle, boating, and recreation” (Atkinson, 1996, p. 771).

We are submitting this revised DRI not because we think the odds of winning \$10M are in our favor, but because we need the power of the CREDC and ESD in our corner. We have expertise, enthusiasm and the ability to change culture. What we have done in one short year with the help of dedicated volunteers is a source of pride. River access is the one item that remains elusive, and unfortunately, it is also the single most critical element needed for the Village’s long-term economic success. Short of taking NYSDOT to court in an effort to enforce our ALJ decision (and we do not have any money for legal fees, although I am prepared to represent the Village in court, should it be required) or dismantling the barrier to Riverfront Park in an act of civil disobedience, we are out of options. We need the CREDC and NYS ESD to advocate for us.

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.

The Village of Castleton-on-Hudson’s downtown is being reborn. Main Street, or “down the hill,” as it colloquially known, still is fragile, but there are reasons for optimism. LendEDU released a study in May 2017 ranking the best places in New York to start a small business, and Castleton-on-Hudson is #28 in the top 100 (based on income and cost of living, as well as other factors). Two sites that had been derelict and dangerous have been demolished and can now finally be re-developed. A new business called The Store opened at the former Stewart’s, the owner has recently purchased the building next door to it, and leased another on the street with plans to open a diner. Hudson River Foods (Healthy Brands Collective, the DBA has been revised) is on the verge of opening at the former Hamilton Printing. COHCG and COHFAM are beginning their second year. An investor is renovating 65

South Main Street and has plans to restore or newly build other properties. A group called COHMSA has formed, and is endeavoring to bring “up-the-hill” folks and others in the Village’s catchment area to downtown. The excitement is palpable, and volunteers are plentiful..

The Village has a budget of only \$1M per year, and little surplus to fund improvements such as new sidewalks, street lighting or crosswalks. There are no funds for business incentives, or matches for grant awards. Still, with Herculean effort, things are starting to happen, and people are noticing. Yet there is no denying that Castleton-on-Hudson could use help in transforming the seedlings of hope on Main Street into a sturdy garden of vitality.

Access to the Village-owned land on the Hudson River would spark small business on Main Street, and enrich the lives of residents and tourists alike. In 2014, Chris Churchill wrote in the *Times Union*, “When I asked about river access, Janke offered to show me the hidden (and unauthorized) way. We slid through a gap in an iron fence, darted over the railroad tracks and made our way to a spot that Janke described as excellent for catching striped bass. There was garbage and glass at our feet, but the views up and down the water were inspiring. If the Village could only take better advantage of this, I thought, all those storefronts might not be empty. It seems so obvious: In Castleton-on-Hudson, shouldn't it be easier to get from Castleton to the Hudson? The river that made the Village could remake its future” (*More than Just a Store Set to Close in Castleton*, 24 October 2014).

It is our steadfast belief that access to the Hudson River within the Village is an essential ingredient in Castleton-on-Hudson’s revitalization. Securing access does not necessarily require a significant infusion of capital, as has been asserted since 1994, when the grade-level crossing at Scott Avenue and Main Street was closed and a pedestrian bridge was promised. While a pedestrian overpass would be nice, the immediate solution is very simple: Open the Gate and allow people to walk across to Riverfront Park and the shore. As Mr. Churchill noted, some people do this already, during striper

season especially. However, we cannot promote this illegal option, and besides, there is no way to fit a kayak through the gap in the fence.

“Improving public access turns the public face to the river and provides a plan to enjoy the river for what it offers today and tomorrow. Ready access to quiet spots where one can picnic, fish, or kayak, are precious, these functions are maximized when they do not provide the only access. Concern for public access is not new. Protection of access is embodied in the public trust doctrine, a tradition of law reaching into antiquity. The right to use a healthy river is implicit in the trust doctrine and measures that deny public use, through the removal of access or through the pollution of the river, are highly suspect under established principles of law” (Atkinson, 1996, p. 833).

For a modest sum, an attractive access point, park, and dock could be created. The Village already owns the land for the eventual park. What it will take, however, is another Herculean effort in terms of overcoming a barrier. This formidable impediment is not the fence, although that must be dismantled as well. The enemy of access is a policy barrier, one that unfairly denies Castleton-on-Hudson its navigation rights, while allowing all other communities easy access to the river. For equity, and to bolster the Village’s economic recovery, this must be changed, and Castleton-on-Hudson needs the backing of CREDC and ESD, and the publicity of the DRI to accomplish this.

Besides river access and performing a Main Street facelift with cosmetic and infrastructure improvements, DRI investment would provide funds for tackling two other projects: 1) Renovation of Village Hall at 85 South Main Street and 2) Restoration of 2 Green Avenue, the old Curtis Noyes firehouse/jail. The Village owns both of these properties, and is starting to explore replacement windows and a paint job for the Village Hall facade. The Village Hall houses the Village Offices and the Castleton Public Library. Boy Scouts meet upstairs, and the Repair Café will be held there. The old firehouse is architecturally significant. It needs restoration badly, but it is not threatened in terms of stability. It is used at present to store junk.

By investing in four projects: 1) Streetscape of Main Street (underground wiring, better lighting, new sidewalks, crosswalks); 2) Hudson River Access; 3) Village Hall and 4) Curtis Noyes firehouse, the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson's nascent revitalization would become a robust and everlasting transformation. This little Hudson River community could be the brightest light on the Capital Region map.

This DRI proposal for the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson addresses three of the five CREDC Strategic Goals / URI Capital 20.20 Themes (2016, *Progress Report*): 1) Gateway, Connecting Markets and Business; 2) Lift-Off, Accelerating Ideas, Entrepreneurs and Business; and 3) Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families.

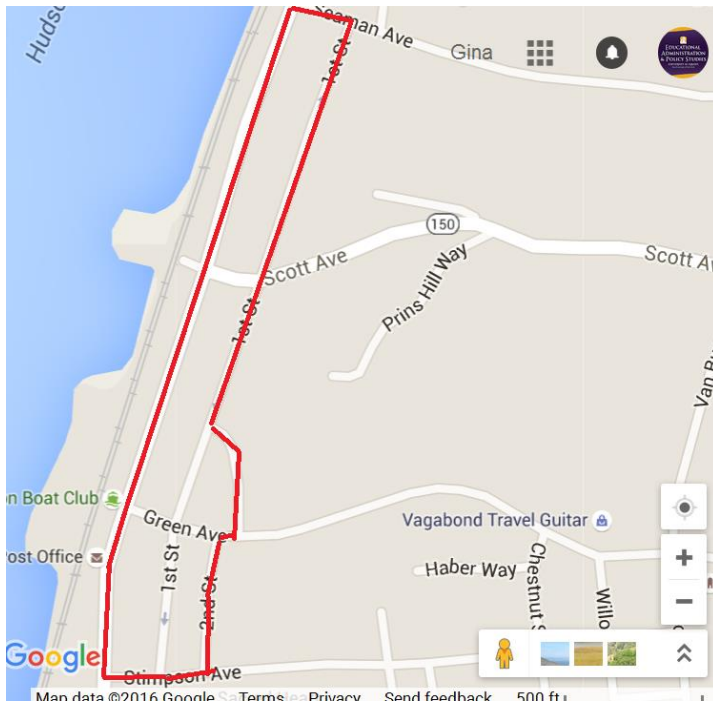
In addition, this proposal connects to the goal "Showcase Our Beauty" in *Success Today, Opportunity Tomorrow* (2011, CREDC) as well as the asset "Scenic and Natural History: From waterways and waterfalls to rural landscapes and scenic vistas, the area possesses an incredible range of scenic and natural wonders, many of which are accessible to the public" in *Heritage Tourism in the Capital Region Vision Plan* (2013).

Finally, In *The Village of Castleton-on-Hudson / Town of Schodack LWRP* (1995), Policy 20 concerns access to the Hudson River: "Access to the publicly-owned foreshore and to land immediately adjacent to the foreshore or the water's edge that are publicly-owned shall be provided, and it shall be provided in a manner compatible with adjoining uses. Such lands shall be retained in public ownership. Explanation of policy: In addition to active recreation facilities, access to the publicly-owned land of the coast should be provided, where appropriate, for numerous activities and pursuits which require only minimal facilities for their enjoyment. Access would provide for walking along the waterfront or to a vantage point from which to view the water. Activities requiring access would include bicycling, birdwatching, photography, nature study, beachcombing, fishing and hunting" (Section III-21).

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

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

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



The boundaries of the downtown neighborhood are North Main Street to the Village line, South Main Street to the Village line, First Street, Second Street, lower Stimpson Avenue (west of Second street), lower Green Avenue (west of Second Street), lower Scott Avenue (west of First Street), lower Seaman Avenue (west of First Street). The entire Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is .8 square miles, and the

downtown stretch of North and South Main Streets, from the northern Village edge to the southern Village border, is a distance of .8 of a mile in length. The most densely built part of Main Street, from Scott to Stimpson Avenues on South Main Street, is a distance of .3 of a mile.

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.

In the *Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan* (1995), Castleton-on-Hudson is described as “a compact urban setting with a mixture of residential types, businesses, industries and community facilities” (p. II-3). It is the closest downtown for residents of the Towns of Schodack and Stuyvesant, as well as for parts of the Town of East Greenbush, the Hayes Road area in particular. An estimate of the proportion of East Greenbush’s population that lives closer to Castleton-on-Hudson than Rensselaer is 25 percent. East Greenbush is a town that has seen population increases in recent decades.



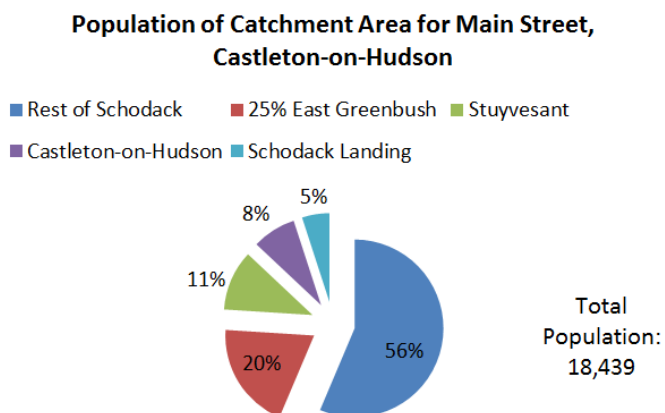
Considering the Village’s proximity to downtown Albany (10 miles), its geographical location on the Hudson River, its significance to both indigenous and Colonial history, and that its downtown is urban surrounded by pristine rural rather than suburban sprawl, it has the potential to routinely draw visitors from all over the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, and to be (at least) a regional tourist destination. The urban feel and naturally beautiful surroundings mean it also has the potential to be a highly desirable location for

Empire State Plaza is just up the river

year-round residents. In fact, the community’s undeniable charms

mean people who visit often want to move to the Village, regardless of the obvious challenges of the downtown business districts.

The population of the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is stable, and has not changed much over the years. A recent solution to water supply problems has resulted in the Village being able, once again, to issue water permits, and so new construction is now possible. Contractors are increasingly seeking permits so they can build, and modest growth in population is anticipated.



The current Village population: 1,473; the population of the hamlet of Schodack Landing: 923; the population of the Town of Schodack, minus the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson and the hamlet of Schodack Landing: $12,794 - 1,473 - 923 = 10,398$; the

population of the Town of Stuyvesant: 2,027; the population of the Town of East Greenbush: 16,473 (2010, US Census). A quarter of East Greenbush's population is 3,618. So the total catchment area for the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson's Main Street is 18,439 ($1,473 + 923 + 10,398 + 2,027 + 3,618$). This is of a sufficient size to support a vibrant year-round downtown.

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.

Leveraged Resources:	Public: \$5,000	Private: \$3,000
Prior NYS Funding/REDC	Amount: \$266,000 (Does not include	Amount: \$0

Funding:	\$1.5M for State park campsites)	
Please identify use(s) of prior funding:	\$7,500 for sanitary sewer system inflow and infiltration study \$3,000 private & \$2,000 public for COHCG, COHFAM, Repair Café, beautifying Main Street, & promoting Village \$250,000 could not be spent due to no access to park \$8,500 for Village Hall security window & system \$3,000 Village committed to COHCG & COHFAM has not been spent yet	

In 2003, the Village received \$8,500 Legislative member item, administered by NYSDOS to make the Village Hall ADA compliant. It was determined that it was not enough money for an elevator, and so eventually, it was revised to cover air conditioning and lighting upgrades instead, but it still went unspent. Recently, the funds have been used for a security system for the Village Clerk's Office.

In 2010, the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson received a \$250,000 commitment from the NYS Strategic Investment Program for a Village Park. Unfortunately, since the Village did not have access to the park property, the money could not be used, so it has not yet been received; if these funds are still available, they would be the source for creating the new Village Park on the Hudson River. We could also leverage them. I have reached out to the Assembly, and have received no response.

In 2015, the Village received \$7,500 from NYSDEC for a sanitary sewer system inflow and infiltration study. The funds were used to pay Barton &

Loguidice DPC. \$3,750 was the cash match, and \$3,750 was an in-kind match. This was an initial step in seeking funding to upgrade the Village infrastructure.

New York State has invested \$1.5M over the past few years in developing 60 campsites that opened in 2016 at Schodack Island State Park. The Village is seeking to leverage this investment in the town and generate growth downtown. New businesses, a vibrant street, river access and Riverfront Park will draw visitors from the campsites to Main Street.



Since April 2016, the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson has received a donation of seeds worth approximately \$800 from High Mowing Organic Seeds for the COHCG; Becker's Nursery in East Greenbush has discounted plants for beautifying Main Street; Curtis Lumber has donated wood for benches; the VFW has donated picnic tables; Dunkin' Donuts and Hannaford have donated refreshments for events; private citizens have donated \$100 for banners for COHCG and COHFAM; and approximately \$500 has been donated for Facebook advertising to promote the Village. Additionally, volunteers have donated time and talent to many new projects, and every day a new offer is received; most recently, COHMSA has raised \$1,150 (of their \$1,700 goal) for a flagpole on Main Street. Brad Rose Landscaping has offered to donate toward beautifying the Village; graphic artist Ben Karis-Nix has donated design services for COHFAM and COHMSA, three people have offered to contribute refreshments for Repair Café; and Padraic Ellis is the volunteer editor of the Castletonian newsletter. For its part, the Village has committed \$5,000 for COHCG and COHFAM.

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.

There are two existing large employers and a few small businesses located within the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson. A third large employer has just moved to the Village and will open soon. There is also a large industrial site in need of remediation that could house a fourth large employer. Opportunities for expansion, growth and increased retention are certainly possible if employers were able to draw from a larger pool of appropriately trained professionals. One of the benefits of having a more welcoming and serviceable downtown is to draw and retain professionals who are needed for the developing business climate.

The proposed DRI plan will also bring about additional jobs by providing new opportunities to encourage tourism and recreation. Additional shopping, dining out and retail on Main Street will foster more incentives for entrepreneurial activity and job creation.

Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing, located at 90 North Main Street, is currently the largest employer in the Village. It is an 80 bed skilled nursing facility that is available for short-term rehabilitation stays as well as long-term care and is generally fully occupied. The facility is under new ownership and is now operated as a proprietary facility. It features many amenities including semi-private and private rooms, pet therapy and restaurant-style dining. The CMS rated Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing with three stars to take into account that more staffing may be needed at nursing homes that have sicker residents than others.

The numbers below indicate the average number of hours worked by licensed staff each day per resident. This information was calculated by comparing the number of hours worked by the staff of Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing against the number of residents during the two-week period prior to federal inspection. (Staffing types such as clerical, housekeeping and administrative positions are not included.)

Staffing Hours Per Resident » Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing

	CNA	LPN	RN	Licensed Staffing	Total Nursing Staff
Reported Hours	2:35	1:05	29	1:35	4:10
National	2:28	51	51	1:41	4:09
New York	2:22	53	44	1:37	3:59
Rensselaer County	2:36	1:01	40	1:41	4:18

The staffing ratios above demonstrate that at least 65 FTE licensed nursing staff are required along with non-professional staff, administrative staff, maintenance and executive staff. The facility website is continuously recruiting for new entry-level and para-professional staff and offers training as needed along with a full benefit package. Workforce turnover could be reduced by offering a more inviting place to live in close proximity to where employees work.

When considering the possibility for growth and expansion, it is necessary to examine skilled nursing home bed availability at the county level. According to the NYSDOH nursing home needs assessment, additional growth in Rensselaer County is limited because the county is considered “over-bedded” by 219 beds. Generally, beds are concentrated in the northern and central regions of the county (i.e., Troy). By contrast, the county just south of Schodack Landing, Columbia County, is “under-bedded” by 52 beds. There is unmet need in Columbia County which is a

likely factor contributing to the high occupancy rate at Riverside. Other expansion opportunities for the facility include operating additional home care services out of Riverside. Home care is a growing trend to reduce costs and keep people in the community longer.

Castleton Elementary School is a K-5 school that is part of the Schodack Central School System and is located in the Village. In terms of job creation, expansion is contingent upon increasing enrollment. There are well over 60 staff who currently work at the school as teachers, administrators and in support roles.

Castleton Kids is a very successful after school program operated at the elementary school under the umbrella of the Village. The program provides a positive learning environment for children from the conclusion of the school day to the end of the work day. Castleton Kids employs 28 staff between both the school year and summer programs.



Castleton-on-Hudson Farmers' and Artisans' Market is a new open air market that started in 2016 and began its second season on June 2, 2017. It is open on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, and

there is live music at every market. COHFAM is an opportunity for incubator businesses to grow and mature and eventually secure retail space on Main Street. They are also a "Taste of NY Market" through NYS Agriculture and Markets. The organizers are seeking suitable retail space on Main Street for an artists' consignment shop.

Hudson River Foods (Healthy Brands Collective) from Connecticut has purchased the IBT Hamilton property for an undisclosed sum. It was initially

listed on the market for \$1.3M. The plant is located at the northern border of the Village on North Main Street. The plant had been vacant since the book printer closed in 2015. Hamilton employed 160 workers when producing at maximum capacity. Healthy Brands is renovating the existing 100,000-square-foot building and plans to construct another 40,000-square-foot building.

Health Brands Collective product lines include Cell-nique drinks, sold in stores such as Whole Foods and Wegmans; Yumnuts, Living Harvest Tempt, Cherrybrook Kitchen, European Gourmet, Bites of Bliss, High Country Kombucha, Funky Monkey and Lisa's Kitchen organic frozen vegetables.

Capitalizing on the growing trend for healthy and organic foods, this is an innovative business with tremendous growth potential. Healthy Brands Collective worked with Rensselaer County and NYS to acquire Excelsior tax breaks. They also participate in the Start-Up NY program through Hudson Valley Community College. On 11/20/15, the president of HVCC submitted an amendment to the SUNY Chancellor to add Hamilton Printing to the Start-Up NY campus plan.

Healthy Brands Collective had \$13M in annual revenue as of 2013; the company previously planned on going public but is still privately held. The initial phase of the operation is estimated to provide 80 new jobs at the facility.

The Fort Orange Paper Company plant shut down in 2000. In 2012, Castleton Paperboard LLC, an affiliate of MiniMill Technologies of Syracuse, planned to purchase the mill from Rensselaer County for \$600,000. MiniMill is a global company with operations in India that focuses on the packaging and tissue manufacturing industries. The plan was to raze the existing factory and construct a new mill on the 102 acres for \$250M. Anticipated grant funds did not materialize and the sale fell through.

Preliminary cleanup was to occur under New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program, a redevelopment program that oversees the cleanup of sites deemed contaminated by NYSDEC.

Estimates at the time stated that construction of a new recycling plant would create 400 to 500 jobs for about 18 months. The new facility would then employ 80 to 100 factory workers and managers. Rensselaer County planners and officials are still actively shopping the site for a new buyer.

Castleton Energy Center is a 67-megawatt gas-fired power plant on Route 9J at the Village line on property adjacent to Fort Orange. Castleton Energy Center was originally built as a cogeneration power plant that provided steam for Fort Orange. The power plant is now owned by an investment fund managed by a Minnesota private equity firm called Wayzata Investment Partners. The availability of steam makes the former Fort Orange site attractive to new business. The facility continues to operate and employs a staff of approximately 13.



The Store is a new small grocery store that is located at the site of the former Stewart's Shop at the southeast corner of Scott Avenue and Main Street. They provide basic access to healthy foods and fresh vegetables in an upscale environment. They are serving the everyday needs of

residents beyond the traditional convenience store. The Store employs 10 people.

Schodack Island State Park Campsites opened at the beginning of the 2016 spring season. According to John Lowe, Director, many weekends are fully-booked. That means up to 60 new families every week and weekend throughout the summer months camp at the park. Castleton-on-Hudson is one mile from the entrance to the park and three miles from the boat launch at the park. This regular influx of new people provides entrepreneurial opportunities for the Village. A study (2009) on park economic activity estimated the average overnight visitor spends \$35 per person per visit locally.

Prins Agency is an insurance agent on Main Street that has two employees.

Grant's Auto Repair is at the corner of Main Street and Green Avenue.

The Castleton Public Library in the Village Hall at 85 South Main Street employs a director and four other staff members.

The Village Inn is a venerable institution on Main Street. It serves cocktails and bar food, sometimes has live music, and employs four people.

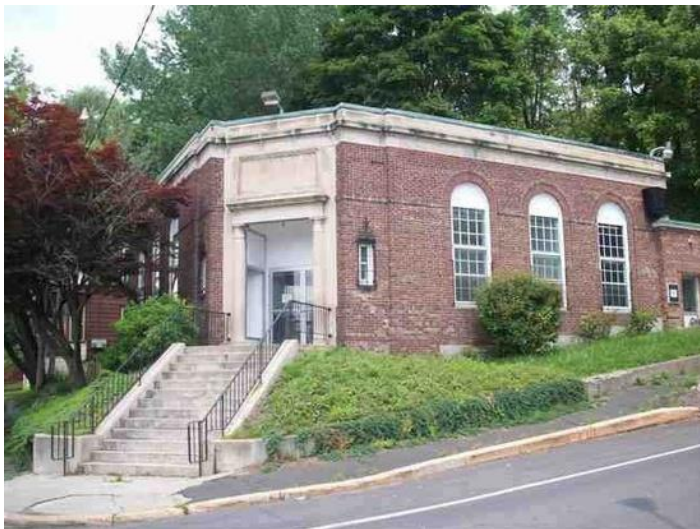
"Up the Hill"

Scarnato's is an Italian restaurant located just outside the Village. In existence for about 25 years, it has been operated by its third owners for the past few years. It is a popular place for celebrations and Kiwanis Club meetings, and sometimes has live music. It employs 7-10 people.

Jiff-E Mart is a gas station located just outside the Village.

Walt's is a car repair shop across the street from Jiff-E Mart.

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.



2 N Main Street

The Main Street area of the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is a compact downtown that is easily walkable. It offers stunning views of the Hudson River; a charming Village Hall that also houses the Castleton Public Library; a post office; Prins Agency Insurance, Grant's Auto Repair; and The Village Inn, a friendly local tavern. The Castleton Boat Club is a private

membership organization located on the Hudson River at Green Avenue and Main Street (they have their own private grade-level crossing and do not permit public access). There are multi-family houses, upscale apartments in three of the buildings, as well as inexpensive flats located in other buildings, some of which are in need of rehabilitation. There is new

residential construction planned, and two buildings are currently being renovated. There are two public parking lots.

There are many vacant storefronts that could house new businesses, and some vacant lots that could be used for parking and/or future construction. The Anchor Food Pantry, located at the Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing at the north end of the Village, and Schermerhorn Park, at the south end of the Village, are Main Street's two bookends.

Up the hill from Main Street are avenues lined with beautiful, economical Craftsman bungalow, foursquare, temple and shotgun houses dating from the early 20th Century. The Village is home to two churches, one Roman Catholic on Stimpson Avenue and one Lutheran on Green Avenue, and the outstanding Castleton K-5 Elementary School on Scott Avenue. Castleton Kids offers well-regarded after school and summer programs, both Boy and Girl Scouts troops are active in the Village, and the volunteer fire company has healthy membership. Castle Hill at 114 Green Avenue is an affordable housing community for seniors age 62 and over. There are two peaceful and picturesque cemeteries where people and dogs often walk, Mountain View on Scott Avenue, and Sacred Heart on Catholic Way (Stimpson Avenue).

Across from the Castleton Fire Company on lower Green Avenue, the Village owns a historic building, the Curtis Noyes firehouse, in the DRI area. It is much in need of renovation, but it could be used eventually to attract a private partner or as a museum or other public space. Starting in 2016, COHCG and COHFAM have been located on North Main Street.

The Store, located at the former Stewart's Shop, opened in February 2017, returning much-needed groceries to Main Street. The Store sells fresh produce as well as convenience items, prepared foods and fishing supplies.

The entire Village is served by both Time Warner Cable and Verizon DSL broadband internet, and cell service from Verizon is stable, with few or no dead spots. (It would be great to have FIOS, however.) The Castleton Public Library provides free WIFI.

6) Quality of Life policies. Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plans, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

In 1995, the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson and Town of Schodack adopted a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan*. Last year, new members were appointed to the LWRP Committee to represent the Village.

The Village has a Downtown Historic District, with special zoning laws pertaining to Main Street appearance and development. One law that was passed in recent years prohibits converting Main Street storefronts into apartments.

Over the years, various efforts at planning have been attempted. “A Village Walk” (1977) documents the history of many structures on Main Street. In 2000, “The Land and the River” was presented to the Federal Coordinating Committee of the Hudson River. In 2015, an addendum was written to the “Comprehensive Plan” (2005), and at that same time, a survey about Main Street was piloted (n = 34).

Schermerhorn Park is part of the Rensselaer Land Trust.

NYSDOT has created plans for the Scott Avenue and North Main Street pedestrian overpass.

Landmark Consulting prepared a Historic Preservation & Architectural Study for the Village Hall.

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (2016 & 2017) documents the most recent planning efforts in the Village.

In Spring 2017, a new non-governmental organization known as Castleton-on-Hudson Main Street Association started with membership from the Village and its catchment area.

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.

Beginning in 2014 when Stewart's closed, a focused effort has been made to advocate for the Village's recovery. Advocacy via social media, community organizing, and traditional local media outlets have all played a role, and resulted in Stewart's lifting their "no convenience store" deed restriction, and paving the way for The Store to open. Networking has been pursued with new and potential investors as well as environmental organizations. Gradually a change in culture started.

Here are supporters:

Dan Amodeo, Coach, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
John Amodeo, Coach, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Mary Amodeo, Hostess, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Katherine Ashby, Co-chair, COHFAM
Judith Breselor, Rensselaer County Legislature District Four - Towns of Sand Lake, Schodack, and Nassau
Marianne Carner, Deputy Mayor, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Jeanne Casatelli, Landowner, Southern portion of Campbell Island
Mark Castiglione, AICP, Acting Executive Director, [Hudson River Valley Greenway](#)

Suzanne Cecala, Member, LWRP Committee, Member, COHCG, & Member, COHMSA
Nate Dingman, Member, COHCG
Scott Dobson, Owner, The Store, 1 South Main Street
Sue Donnelly, Member, COHMSA
Dennis Dowds, Supervisor, Town of Schodack
Padraic Ellis, Editor, the Castletonian
Jennifer Felts, Owner, Our Towne Magazine & Member, COHMSA
Adam Figorsky, Vice Chair, Castleton-on-Hudson Planning Board
Gina Giuliano, Trustee, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Stacy Hand, Hostess, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Maryann Hannay, Leader, Girl Scouts troop
Nathan Hans, Chair, COHMSA
Karine Hilton, Partner, The Store, 1 South Main Street, & Member, Friends of Schodack Island State Park
Michael Hiser, Member, COHMSA
Ben Karis-Nix, Member, COHFAM
Olivia Karis-Nix, Member, COHFAM
Barb Kelp, President, Friends of the Castleton Public Library
Rachel Kerner, Co-chair, COHFAM
Andrew M. Klein, Owner, 2 North Main Street; Managing Member, Castleton Office Center LLC
Ken Malloy, Member, COHCG
Sharon Martin, Trustee, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Laurie McCarroll, Coach, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
George Papas, Owner, 33 South Main Street, Member, COHCG, Member, COHMSA, & Coach, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Frank Palladino, Owner, Palladino Construction
Jan Posnanski, Owner, The Village Inn, 100 South Main Street
Jenifer Pratico, Trustee, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Paul Puccio, Member, LWRP Committee
Dan Ratner, Co-owner, Hudson River Foods

Donna Ratner, Co-owner, Hudson River Foods
Linda Robbins, Member, COHCG
Robert Schmidt, Mayor, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Michael Scorsone, Co-owner, Scarnato's Ristorante, 133 Scott Avenue
Tricia Scorsone, Co-owner, Scarnato's Ristorante, 133 Scott Avenue
Alexander A. Shannon, Vice Chairman, Rensselaer County Legislature
District Four - Towns of Sand Lake, Schodack, and Nassau
Carol Stockman, Member, COHMSA, & Chair, Village of Castleton-on-Hudson Planning Board
Melissa Tacke, Director, Castleton Public Library
Linda Underwood, Member, LWRP Committee
Megan Van Alstyne, Co-owner, The Riverview Café, Stuyvesant, NY, & Coach, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Linda von der Heide, Principal Planner, Rensselaer County Economic Development & Planning
Bruce Wheeler, Host, Castleton-on-Hudson Repair Café
Kristina Younger, President, Rensselaer Land Trust

- 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.**

Project 1. Access to the Hudson River

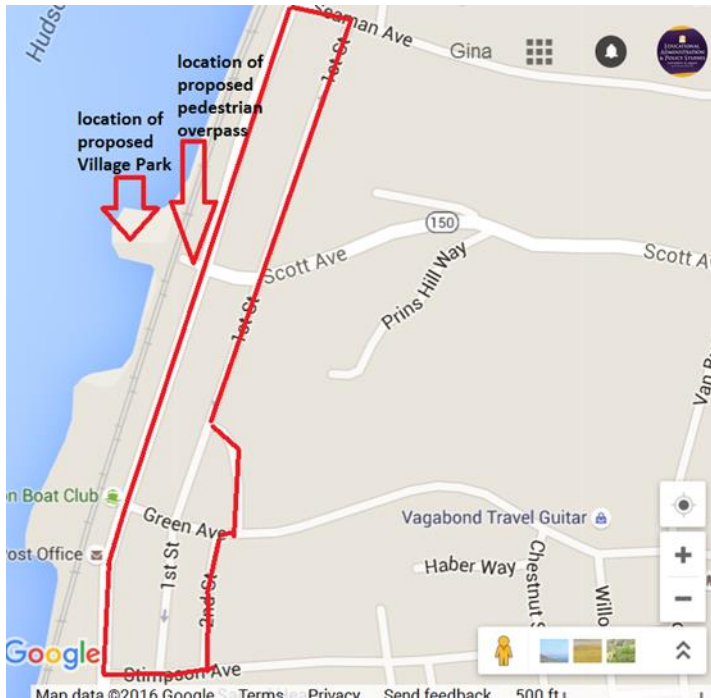
Main Street faces one hurdle that, if remedied, would clear the way for market forces to transform this quaint but crumbling Village into a vibrant center for recreation and tourism. There is no public access to the Hudson River in the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson, despite the Hudson being "navigable-in-law," and "on-Hudson" being the Village's surname. There are two options proposed for Hudson River access in this revised 2017 DRI.

Both options connect to three of the five CREDC Strategic Goals / URI Capital 20.20 Themes (2016, *Progress Report*): 1) Gateway, Connecting Markets and Business; 2) Lift-Off, Accelerating Ideas, Entrepreneurs and Business; and 3) Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families.

In addition, they both address the goal "Showcase Our Beauty" in *Success Today, Opportunity Tomorrow* (2011, CREDC) as well as the asset "Scenic and Natural History: From waterways and waterfalls to rural landscapes and scenic vistas, the area possesses an incredible range of scenic and natural wonders, many of which are accessible to the public" in *Heritage Tourism in the Capital Region Vision Plan* (2013).

Finally, In the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson / Town of Schodack *LWRP* (1995), Policy 20 concerns access to the Hudson River: "Access to the publicly-owned foreshore and to land immediately adjacent to the foreshore or the water's edge that are publicly-owned shall be provided, and it shall be provided in a manner compatible with adjoining uses. Such lands shall be retained in public ownership. Explanation of policy: In addition to active recreation facilities, access to the publicly-owned land of the coast should be provided, where appropriate, for numerous activities and pursuits which require only minimal facilities for their enjoyment. Access would provide for walking along the waterfront or to a vantage point from which to view the water. Activities requiring access would include bicycling, birdwatching, photography, nature study, beachcombing, fishing and hunting" (Section III-21).

Option A. The Pedestrian Overpass, Scott Avenue & Main Street



In a 1994 order, Administrative Law Judge Bernard Heller wrote, “Castleton will acquire a parcel of land which is separated from the main area of Castleton by the Conrail tracks; to reach that property it is now necessary to transverse the Scott Avenue crossing. The property, formerly used for commercial purposes, is now vacant. And will be purchased by Castleton with the financial assistance of the Department. The land will be made into a park for

which Castleton residents will have access by means of a pedestrian underpass. When this project is completed, a permanent barricade will be erected to close the Scott Avenue crossing.”



Throughout the rest of the 1990s and into the 21st Century, the Village and NYSDOT discussed various alternatives for safe, ADA compliant Hudson River access. In 2009, NYSDOT

determined that the best option was not an underpass, but instead the alternative of a pedestrian overpass, and they created plans for the project. In 2016, the estimate for the cost of the pedestrian overpass was \$3M, but NYSDOT insisted the agency had no funds for it. They have also indicated they would be willing to build it, if funding could be secured. It was the heart of last year's unsuccessful DRI, and the focus of the November 2016 proposal to NYSDOT for an award from the Passenger & Freight Rail Assistance program (also unsuccessful). CFA funding amounts are not that high, and the match for such a significant number would be unrealistic anyway. We might be able to raise a few thousand dollars, but \$1.5M? Although I dislike being pessimistic, it is important to be clear about what is possible. To see plans, maps, and other literature about this project, visit:

<https://app.box.com/s/00lqddtx09nv4tqzkoai5vi1sotkapkf>

Option B. Open the Gate, Scott Avenue & Main Street:

Pragmatism drives this second alternative for river access within the Village. Investors on Main Street, including Scott Dobson, owner of The Store, have told us that they want public access to the Hudson River. This conforms to

our own vision for what it will take to fully revitalize Castleton-on-Hudson.

This re-envisioned plan for Hudson River access within the Village is very simple. Entitled Open the Gate, it would allow people to walk across to Riverfront Park and



the shore.

The cost would be low: improved signage and upgraded signals. We are ready to hit the ground running the minute the physical barrier is removed, but to add in some brainstorming (for the eventual CFA pitch), a dock at Riverfront Park for kayaks is on the wish list (there is interest from a local business in providing rentals at the site). Picnic tables, benches, flowers, and an informational kiosk (about the ice industry) would be nice. Absent State funding, many of these could be done with volunteers and small donations; we just need the gate opened. For plans and other information about the dock, park, and enhancing safety at the grade-level pedestrian crossing, see here:

<https://app.box.com/s/yq3z174boq6bzaighilt2wx61z7j9eak>



The overlook has been scaled down to a flagpole, and is a project of COHMSA



After a 1899 fire, a newspaper account noted that it afforded the Hudson River Railroad Company the opportunity of erecting a passenger and freight depot at the southwest corner of Scott Avenue and Main Street. The building, which contained a station, store, and apartments, is shown in an old photograph. A 1932 fire destroyed the top of the station (“A Village Walk,” 1977).



The old RR station today

The building, 10 South Main Street, is still extant, not in bad shape, right next to the location of the pedestrian overpass or Open the Gate, and its owner is asking \$75,000 for it. It could be purchased and then renovated, eventually housing

a railroad museum, with a private partner sought to open a store and/or café. Scott Dobson, owner of The Store, has expressed interest in this property. Good Buy Books in East Greenbush is shopping around the idea of selling the contents of their business to someone interested in moving the store to the Village; perhaps this could be the location? There is serious discussion within COHMSA about how to make this happen.



Side view of 10 South Main Street,
showing proximity to (closed) public
grade-level crossing & Riverfront Park

Project 2. 85 South Main Street, the Village Hall



The Village Hall could use an infusion of capital to restore it and make it ADA compliant. Currently the Village has about \$62,000 set aside to pay for replacement windows and exterior paint. It could also be a match for a CFA grant award (although at 50% it still is not much money, but even so, the CFA would help and will be pursued). This project connects to the Strategic Goals / URI Capital 20.20 Themes Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families (2016, *CREDC Progress Report*).

The Castleton Elementary School was built in 1866, on the site of a prior school building. The land was donated by Catherine Van Buren in 1837. It served as a school until 1924, when the present Castleton Elementary School was built at Scott and Campbell Avenues (“A Village Walk,” 1977).

It is now the Village Hall, and houses the Village Office and Castleton Public Library on the first floor. The second floor is used for meeting space, and is wonderfully unchanged from its former life as four Common School classrooms. More than simply a Village Hall, it is a significant historic structure on Main Street, and is the Village's community center. Unfortunately, access to the upstairs is not ADA compliant and the rear entrance ramp downstairs is shopworn. Several years ago a Landmark consulting report estimated the cost of renovations to be \$750,000. To see the plan, click here:

<https://app.box.com/s/w6x0fd0awfwdh07ghrrp77b5y4rolzxv/1/8574673889>

Project 3. 2 Green Avenue, Curtis Noyes Firehouse



In 1871, after a severe fire in the Village, a fire company organized and built this engine house on land donated to the Village by William Curtis Noyes for educational purposes. A steam engine was secured which was in use for over 30 years. In 1897 it became Citizens Hose Company No. 1. According to "A Village Walk" (1977), "Tour takers can note the jail cell at the back of the building, plus its bunk for vagrants." The building is owned by the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson. It should be renovated, and perhaps a private partner could be found who would be interested in leasing it to open a business. The plan for the firehouse is still only a dream. The initial step toward realization would be a building condition report, and if a match can be scraped up, a CFA application may be submitted. To view google maps and photos of the Curtis Noyes firehouse and the Village Hall, see:

<https://app.box.com/s/eiqvqka8wgwp6ribbqy7a0ap0kzzqbo0>

Renovating this building and attracting a private partner connects to two of the Strategic Goals / URI Capital 20.20 Themes (2016, *CREDC Progress Report*): Lift-Off, Accelerating Ideas, Entrepreneurs and Business; and Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families.

Project 4. Main Street Streetscape



This project also addresses Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families (2016, *CREDC Progress Report*). Main Street needs a facelift! New sidewalks, underground electrical wires, attractive new street lights, and four crosswalks (at Seaman, Scott, Green and Stimpson Avenues) on Main Street would make the DRI area more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists, and all in the catchment area.

The Village's DPW supervisor, in discussions with NYSDOT (since Main Street is also Route 9J, a State road), estimates the cost of a single crosswalk to be \$5,000. Unsurprisingly, given that agency's apparent view of Castleton-on-Hudson simply as an impediment to an unrestricted 55 MPH speed limit on a highway, NYSDOT has indicated that they are unwilling to provide the crosswalks, but that the Village could install and pay for them. At present, DPW believes we may be able to afford one. To view pictures of Main Street, click here:

<https://app.box.com/s/e9i985acok22k8urjc658thfq34urm26>

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

The Village has a small DPW staff that maintains the roads and operates the water system and wastewater treatment plant. It also has a tiny staff in the Village Office, comprised of the Treasurer and Deputy Clerk. The Mayor and four Trustees are part-time, practically volunteer, positions. If the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is awarded the 2017 DRI, a full-time grant manager would have to be hired; perhaps someone with MPA or similar credential.

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

Let us begin by outlining why the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is worthy of State support. We have already demonstrated success in meeting **CREDC Strategic Goals / URI Capital 20.20 Themes** with nothing more than a few small donors, a tiny amount of the Village budget, and a lot of hard work. COHFAM alone has accomplished Gateway, Connecting Markets and Business; Lift-Off, Accelerating Ideas, Entrepreneurs and Business; and Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families. COHCG and Repair Café align with Metro, Building Vibrant Cities for Business and Families (2016, *CREDC Progress Report*). The Main Street cleanup and RiverKeeper Sweep connect to the goal “Showcase Our Beauty” in *Success Today, Opportunity Tomorrow* (2011, CREDC) as well as the asset “Scenic and Natural History: From waterways and waterfalls to rural landscapes and scenic vistas, the area possesses an incredible range of scenic and natural wonders, many of which are accessible to the public” in *Heritage Tourism in the Capital Region Vision Plan* (2013). The Store already has created 10, and Hudson River Foods will create 80 more new jobs, clearly displaying Gateway, Connecting Markets and Business; and Lift-Off, Accelerating Ideas, Entrepreneurs and Business (2016, *CREDC Progress Report*). That it still would be a risk to choose Castleton-on-Hudson for the DRI is undeniable, but the Village would prove to be worth the gamble.

I am going to use the remaining space to reiterate that we need the political will of the CREDC and ESD to secure legal public access to the Hudson River within the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson, and it is

imperative that it happens this summer, not two or five or ten years in the future. The Time Is Now – we have a large cadre of not just supporters, but volunteers, people willing to roll up their sleeves and work more than merely their mouths. We also have the seeds of an economic recovery that were planted a year ago. What has blossomed on Main Street includes a community garden, a farmers’ market, Repair Cafe, and new private investment. The Store opened, and a diner and hardware store are planned. An organic foods manufacturer is on the verge of opening. There are whispers of a bookstore. Several Main Street buildings are being renovated, and entrepreneurs are committing to Castleton-on-Hudson. In truth, funding is secondary. We can live with overhead wiring and transformers. They could be seen as cool and “gritty” rather than ugly. We will find a way to beautify Riverfront Park and make attractive signs to address the safety of grade-level foot traffic. After reading this lofty visioning exercise, what we are asking, regardless of the outcomes of the DRI or CFA, is for CREDC and ESD help in forcing open the gate to Riverfront Park, so that we have equity with neighboring towns, access to what is our right as citizens of this Hudson River community, and the chance to experience full-blown economic health on Main Street.

***Don’t forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the downtown neighborhood. (See item 1.)**

