



# City of Utica

## Downtown Revitalization Initiative

### OPEN CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS TO THE UTICA DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

\*Amended version as of 12.20.2019 - text has been updated where noted from the version posted 12.13

The NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) provides state funding to New York communities to foster vibrant downtowns across the state. Each year, ten communities are selected for their significant redevelopment potential. The ultimate goal of the DRI is to fund projects that will help transform downtown neighborhoods into vibrant communities where New Yorkers want to live, work, and raise families.

In November 2019, Governor Cuomo announced that Utica's Downtown Genesee Street area will receive \$10 million in funding as the Mohawk Valley's winner of the fourth round of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The DRI program is managed by a Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprised of local stakeholders including community leaders, businessowners, and members of the public who bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The LPC will provide comprehensive oversight to the development of a Strategic Investment Plan which will identify, describe, and recommend transformative projects for DRI funding.

At this time, the LPC invites **the submission of project proposals to be considered for inclusion in the LPC's Strategic Investment Plan to New York State**. Members of the community are welcome and encouraged to submit project proposals which may include **not-for-profit or private projects**.

**Please fully review the information on project eligibility and requirements in this document before making a submission.** Submissions will be evaluated by the LPC with input from the public. Successful submissions will be included in the Strategic Investment Plan and recommended to the State for funding.

Please note that the **inclusion of a project in the Strategic Investment Plan does not guarantee funding** through the DRI Program. New York State reserves the sole right to determine which projects will be allocated funding.

DEADLINE FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:

**January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

## SECTION 1 ELIGIBLE PROJECT AREA

Projects eligible for funding **must be located with the proposed DRI Boundary pictured below.**

If a project is located outside of the proposed boundary, a thorough justification statement is required. Justification statements should clearly state why the LPC should consider a minor boundary change.



## SECTION 2 PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be included in the Strategic Investment Plan, relevant projects must be capital projects that will be transformative to the physical environment of the downtown area and can be implemented quickly. The projects must be one of three project types:

### ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES:

#### **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings**

Projects in this category may include development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use commercial, residential, or public uses.

#### **Branding and marketing**

Examples include downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors. Projects under this category must be one-time expenses.

#### **Public improvement projects**

Examples include infrastructure projects such as those related to broadband and communications connectivity, storm water, green infrastructure, streetscape improvements, transportation, recreational trails, parking, signage, open space improvements, public art, and other public-centric projects with transformative potential of downtown. For projects on public property, project sponsors will be required to consult with the City of Utica and other applicable government agencies.

### INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The following types of projects **DO NOT** qualify for DRI funding:

- Planning activities
- Operation and maintenance
- Pre-award costs (i.e. reimbursement of costs incurred before the DRI award)
- Property acquisition
- Training and other program expenses
- Expenses related to existing programs

## SECTION 3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each Project Proposal will be evaluated by the LPC using the following criteria. Additional criteria may be included at the discretion of the LPC with input from the public:

### 1. ALIGNMENT WITH THE GOALS OF THE DRI

The project is aligned with state and local goals and demonstrates strong community support.

Draft* City of Utica DRI Goals	State DRI Goals
Sustainably redesign the physical and social environment	Create an active desirable downtown with a strong sense of place
Leverage the power of Downtown anchors	Attract new businesses, high-paying jobs, and skilled workers
Foster arts and culture	Enhance public spaces for arts and cultural events
Promote inclusiveness and equity	Build a diverse population with residents and workers supported by different housing and employment opportunities
Stimulate economic development	Grow the local property tax base
Enhance walkability, bikeability, and vibrancy	Provide amenities to support and enhance downtown living and quality of life

*\*Subject to change based on input from the LPC and the public*

### 2. CATALYTIC EFFECT

The project will likely have a significant impact on the revitalization of downtown Utica by attracting other public and private investment.

### 3. PROJECT READINESS

The project has a well-defined timeline and is positioned to begin implementation in the near term. Potential challenges (site control, environmental constraints, regulatory issues, etc.) have been identified and feasible solutions are proposed.

### 4. CO-BENEFITS

Secondary benefits will be realized by the community and project developer, exceeding the scope of the primary goal of the project. The project will result in additional economic activity, including the expansion of the local tax base and improved quality of life downtown.



**5. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY**

The estimated cost of the project is reasonable, reflecting the effective and efficient investment of public DRI funds. When possible, additional sources of public and private funding are leveraged, generating broad benefits for the community.

**6. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN THE PROJECT**

The capacity and expertise to implement and sustain the project in the long-term through strategic partnerships and past experience is explicitly stated.

**7. NEED FOR DRI FUNDS**

The project provides clear documentation of the need for DRI funds.

## SECTION 4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION and CONTRACTING

### *Implementation* **\*\*Amended 12.20.2019**

After the Local Planning Committee (LPC) completes the DRI Strategic Investment Plan, the state will select projects to be funded from those proposed in the Plan. In total, \$9.7 million of DRI funds will be awarded to implement projects in each downtown. The LPC Utica aims to leverage the \$10 million DRI award into \$25 million through additional funding and/or owner equity.

In general, **project proposals will be evaluated according to the following financial guidelines:**

- For **private sector projects**, DRI funding may represent up to 25% of the total project budget. The most competitive projects will include an equity contribution of at least 10%.
- For **public and not-for-profit projects**, DRI funding may represent up to 100% of the total project budget. Projects that include matching funds will be considered more competitive.

**Proposals that leverage more than the minimum match and/or equity amounts required will be considered more competitive.** The LPC recognizes that each project is unique and reserves the right to revise or waive these requirements on a case by case basis.

Based on past rounds of DRI, funded projects will likely be announced by late summer 2020. **Formal contracting will likely begin in early 2021 and could potentially extend into Winter 2021 for some projects. It is important to note that any costs incurred before the awarded projects are announced will not be reimbursed by the State with DRI funds.**

### *Contracting*

Projects selected for a DRI award will be assigned to an appropriate state agency to manage the contract for implementation of the project. The state agency selected and method of contracting and funding disbursement will be dependent on the specific project. While there may be some variation between agency administration and the project type, in general awarded project funding will be provided on a **reimbursement basis.**

It should be noted that DRI funds may be used as match for other grant funding if permitted by the granting agency. However, the priority is to fund projects that are ready for implementation. Therefore, DRI funds will not be held as matching funds for other grants whose award or implementation cycles are in the out-years.

**DRI awards will be subject to all requirements typically attached to state funding, including but not limited to minority- and woman-owned business enterprise (MWBE) goals, competitive procurement, and prevailing wages, as appropriate.** For example, prevailing wages will be required where required by state law. Prevailing wage provisions would need to be met for public works projects (such as those projects subject to the Wicks Law, etc.) or if it is a requirement of a funding source (as it is for HUD CPD programs Davis-Bacon).

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## SECTION 5 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

This section describes the submission procedures, deadlines, and required information for all responses to this solicitation. Proposals that do not fulfill these requirements will not be considered for funding.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** extended to January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Project proposals can be submitted electronically or as a hard copy. Applicants can access the project submission form as a fillable PDF:

**Electronic Submission (preferred):** Download and complete the fillable PDF submission form online. Email the completed form and supplemental attachments to the address below with the subject line "Utica DRI Submission: [Project Name]". Please send large attachments (over 25 MB) as links.

**Laura Lourenco**  
[llourenco@elanpd.com](mailto:llourenco@elanpd.com)

**Hard copy submissions:** Hard copies of the submission form are available at Utica City Hall Office of Community Economic Development. This form can also be printed and filled in manually. Please mail or hand-deliver the completed form and supplemental attachments to:

**Attn: Brian Thomas, AICP**  
**Commissioner, Community and Economic Development**  
**Utica City Hall**  
**1 Kennedy Plaza**  
**Utica, NY 13502**

### QUESTIONS

Submit questions regarding this call for proposals in writing to: **Lisa Nagle** [lnagle@elanpd.com](mailto:lnagle@elanpd.com)

## SECTION 6 SUBMISSION FORMAT AND REQUIRED INFORMATION

Please use the following template to submit your project proposal, addressing each topic as thoroughly as possible and including relevant documentation. The LPC will use this information as they consider projects to be included in the DRI Strategic Investment Plan.

### 1. Project Sponsor

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email:

Project Title (10 words or less):

Project Address:

Property Owner:

### 2. Project Type

Please indicate your project type given the following categories:

- ☐ New Development, Redevelopment, and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings
- ☐ Branding and Marketing
- ☐ Public Improvement Project (in cooperation and consultation with the City of Utica and other government agencies as applicable for projects on public property)

### 3. Project Location

Please indicate the location of the proposed project. Projects should be located within the DRI boundary described in section 1. The LPC may consider minor adjustments to the proposed DRI boundary to realize the full potential of the initiative, while ensuring the boundary remains compact and focused on the downtown. If a project is located outside of the proposed boundary, a thorough justification statement is required clearly stating why the LPC should consider a boundary change.



#### 4. Project Description

Please provide a comprehensive overview of the proposed project's scope of work. Project descriptions should include:

- Existing Conditions of the project and site
- Size of the project (square footage, number of floors, acreage, etc.)
- How the project will positively impact downtown Utica
- Future use of the property

5. Investment and Budget **\*\*Amended 12.20.2019**

Please provide an estimated Project Budget, identifying all potential funding sources and clearly documenting the need for DRI funds. In addition, please note any past investment made and/or planned future investment outside of the DRI project. Please explain the status of any other funding sources, including grants and loans.

Please note: DRI funding may represent up to 25% of the total project budget for private sector projects, and up to 100% of the total project budget for public or not-for-profit projects. The most competitive private sector projects will include an equity contribution of at least 10%. Proposals that leverage more than the minimum match and/or equity amounts required will be considered more competitive.

Description	Cost	Funding Source	Status of Funds
<b>Total DRI Funding Request</b>			
<b>Total Funds from other sources</b>			
<b>Total Project Costs</b>			

If possible, please provide additional details below if a project has yet to develop cost estimates and/or identified sources of funding:

6. Property Ownership

Please identify the owner of the property on which the proposed project would be implemented. **The property owner must have legal authority to execute contracts with the State and oversee the project.** The project sponsor and/or subject property must be current on property taxes and any current/open code violations must be resolved in order to receive DRI funding. If property acquisition is a component of the proposed project, describe the need for acquiring land / buildings and status. Please note that while acquisition costs may be part of a total project cost, DRI funds may not be used for acquisition

7. Responsible Parties

Please identify all who will be responsible for the long-term implementation of the proposed project, explicitly stating the capacity of the responsible party or parties to implement and sustain the project.

8. Timeframe for implementation and project readiness

Provide a general timeline for the implementation of the proposed project. Please include any work that has already been completed to advance the project, including feasibility studies, market studies, preliminary site design, permits obtained, and/or funding or financing that has been secured. Append any studies, pro formas, preliminary designs, legal agreements, permits, documentation or site control, and/or documentation of funding secured as supplemental materials. Also include any known challenges, such as regulatory requirements and environmental constraints, and explain how these challenges will be addressed in a timely manner.



9. Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

DRI funding is allocated to transformative projects that provide extensive quantitative and qualitative benefits to downtown. Benefits may include but are not limited to creation or retention of jobs, improvement of the physical environment, new housing opportunities, diversity and inclusion, and quality of life improvements. Please thoroughly describe any and all revitalization benefits associated with the proposed projects, noting how the project will help attract other public or private investment downtown, any secondary benefits that will be realized by the community and project developer exceeding the primary goal of the project, how the project will result in additional economic activity including the expansion of the local tax base, and/or how the project will improve quality of life downtown.

#### 10. Public Support

Please state how your project is supported by the community.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

If available, please attach or enclose supporting documentation such as:

- ☐ Photos
- ☐ Project Plans / Floor Plans
- ☐ Design Renderings
- ☐ Studies / Reports
- ☐ Detailed Cost Estimates
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Please include these documents when submitting your response as separate attachments.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**