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## **DRI recap:**

It has been about a month since the Governor announced the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative. As the dust settles and the grant has become a reality, here is a recap of where we are and how we got here.

How we got here:

In late 2014, Dept. of State awarded the City funding to update the 2010 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The LWRP is a comprehensive look at the City's water front that stretches from the City beach to the Oval. A local Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was created to guide the process, work with DOS and the residents of the City to create an updated document that would guide waterfront development moving forward. Dock St/Durkee St is identified in the LWRP as an important corridor for development of a vibrant downtown.

The 2014 award and LWRP update leveraged \$1,933,770 (since 2000) of DOS funding which assisted in the redevelopment of Plattsburgh's water front (complete list of funding available in Draft LWRP, pg. 28 – 29). Over the first 8 months of 2015, the PAC, Dept. of State, and City of Plattsburgh worked with Saratoga & Associates to develop concepts for each of the identified areas in LWRP. In Oct 2015, the PAC and City hosted a public meeting at Stafford Middle School to explore the concepts for all the sub areas which included Dock/Durkee St sub area. After feedback was gathered in person, concepts were made available online and a survey was created to allow for further public input for those that could not attend. A second in person was held on Dec 12, 2015, to discuss the updated concepts (based on comments from Oct and online sessions).

At the same time, the City began a Durkee St feasibility study funded through an award from Empire State Development (ESD). A Durkee St Committee was formed and the project worked to create a vision for Durkee St development. A comprehensive market study was completed and concepts for the Durkee St site were developed. An initial concept for the site was submitted as part of the DRI application to show potential use. After feedback from the Durkee St committee the concepts have been updated. The next step of the process is to have public comment on the concepts. The first 2 sessions are scheduled for Aug 19<sup>th</sup> at downtown rising and Sept 10<sup>th</sup> at Battle of Plattsburgh.

The work completed by through the LWRP and Durkee St Feasibility Study put Plattsburgh in a great position to create a strong conceptual vision for the DRI application. The application built on 15 years of planning and 18 studies. The city was able to leverage prior investment to outline the plans for the future.

## **Where we are now:**

### **The DRI Concept:**

The City of Plattsburgh selected the Dock St/Durkee St. Downtown area as the target neighborhood for the DRI as identified in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. (LWRP, p. 28 - 32) At this time, the City of Plattsburgh does not have the specific regulations on how the funds can be spent. The DRI is an award winning concept but at this time it is just that – a concept. How that concept is put into practice will take much larger conversation but framed within the regulations the funding has in place.

The DRI focus was to redevelop the Durkee St Lot and transform the area into a City Center that will become the central gathering place, a recreational access space, a space to expand seasonal Farmers' Market to year-round, increased retail and multi-use housing to diversify the downtown.

### **Where We Are Now Continued...**

The concept is to leverage the developing arts programs and events at the Strand, expand the capacity of the Farmer's Market, allow for year round operation and potentially move it closer to the Food Co-op, which is expanding into additional space and equipment. This will provide downtown grocery shopping with the ability to offer more options. The combined Market and Co-op presents a unique solution to downtown healthy food availability.

The DRI will also look to continue to support accessible and affordable housing for residents. Using the successful model developed while working with Catherine Gardens and in partnership with the Plattsburgh Housing Authority the development at Durkee St. would create more mixed income housing in the heart of the City.

In addition, the DRI called for partnerships with the regions 2 colleges, CCC and SUNY and the creation of a business incubator downtown. The space would be more than a traditional incubator space, in that it would connect students and faculty to the City, allow for startups to access the expertise of multiple partners and provide a space for businesses to grow. The space would be flexible, creating a business pipeline from the incubator with SUNY programs in Cyber Security and Robotics to the Institute of Advanced Manufacturing at CCC. As a compliment to the Incubator, the Strand Center for the Arts would be an ideal location for a proposed makerspace in the Downtown Plattsburgh area.

### **Where we need to go:**

As next steps, the City anticipates the regulations and conversations with DOS to begin mid to late august. Those conversations will outline the process by which the DRI will roll out. While the DRI has a specific purpose for the funds as outlined in the DRI concepts, the funding will be used to leverage additional public and private investment. This will allow for tasks, such as the restoration of existing structures downtown, to be accomplished though perhaps not directly through the DRI funds.

A Local Advisory committee will be established to guide the process made up of public sector, private sector, nonprofit, business, community action agencies, public housing authority and faith based organizations. The purpose of the committee will be outlined as the regulations are discussed.

Public input is key to any project the City undertakes and is a vital part of any project through the Dept. of State. The 2 upcoming public input sessions regarding Durkee st are the end of the Empire State Development Project but just the beginning of the DRI. More opportunities will be scheduled as the process develops.