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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES 31 TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS IN THE FINGER LAKES AS PART OF DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE AND NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

Projects Announced in Waterloo, Webster and Macedon

Pro-Housing Communities Designation Ties Investment to Smart Growth

Projects Support Resilient, Sustainable Communities

[Project Renderings Available Here](#)

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced awards for a total of 31 transformational projects in the Finger Lakes region as part of two economic development programs: the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward. Thirteen projects were announced for Waterloo, the Round 7 winner of a \$10 million DRI award; 11 projects were announced for Webster, a Round 2 winner of a \$4.5 million NY Forward award; and 7 projects were announced for Macedon, also a Round 2 winner of a \$4.5 million NY Forward award.

"These 31 transformative projects are a testament to our unwavering commitment to strengthening communities across the Finger Lakes and all of New York State," **Governor Hochul said**. "Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward, we are empowering local leaders, driving smart growth, and creating vibrant, resilient downtowns where people want to live, work, and visit. This is how we build a stronger New York — one community at a time."

Village of Waterloo

The Village of Waterloo, viewed as a gateway to the Finger Lakes region along the Cayuga-Seneca Canal, envisions the transformation of its historic and walkable downtown area into a vibrant urban center that will attract residents, businesses and visitors. While tourism is a priority, the identified DRI projects demonstrate a true commitment to improvements for year-round residents and businesses.

The 13 Waterloo DRI projects, totaling \$9.7 million, include:

- **Upgrade Recreation Facilities at the Waterloo Community Center (\$1,658,000):** Build a year-round sports facility and enhance the recreation center to expand opportunities for recreation and community events.
- **Establish a Multi-Modal Hub and Gathering Place on the Southwest Block (\$1,372,000):** Redesign the southwest parking lot as a flexible, landscaped, multi-purpose space to support local events, tourism and retail activity.
- **Expand the Waterloo Library and Historical Society (\$1,271,000):** Build a new wing on the historic Waterloo Library to create new spaces for library services, community programming and displaying the collections of the Memorial Day Museum.
- **Reinforce Vern's Way as a Downtown Connector (\$1,119,000):** Improve Vern's Way with seating, lighting, landscaping and a ramp to enhance its role as an accessible connection between the canal and downtown.

- **Continue Main Street Public Realm Improvements (\$886,000):** Create curb bump-outs and rain gardens and install trees and street furniture to make Main Street more safe, attractive, sustainable and comfortable.
- **Revamp Retail Offerings in the Street of Shops (\$845,000):** Renovate five retail units on the ground floor of the Street of Shops to enliven the east end of Waterloo's Main Street.
- **Establish a Small Project Grant Fund to Continue Downtown Waterloo's Revitalization (\$600,000):** Create a fund to support smaller-scale building improvements to enhance the appearance of downtown, provide new housing and commercial space, support businesses and create public art.
- **Outfit the Upper Floor of 1 East Main Street into New Apartments (\$562,000):** Renovate the second story of a Main Street building to expand housing options and increase the number of people living downtown.
- **Develop the Grange Food Hall and Entertainment Hub (\$519,000):** Renovate the historic Grange Hall building as a restaurant, arcade, soda fountain and event venue to create a destination for locals and visitors.
- **Renovate 10 West Main Street to Create New Office Space (\$320,000):** Rehabilitate the third floor of a historic Main Street building to create new small-scale office spaces in the heart of downtown.
- **Strengthen Downtown Waterloo's Identity with a Branding and Wayfinding Initiative (\$250,000):** Refresh the Village's brand, develop a marketing strategy and install wayfinding signage to promote Waterloo as a place to live, visit and invest, and to connect people to key destinations.
- **Improve Community Facilities at the American Legion (\$200,000):** Upgrade the Hall at the American Legion to expand its capacity as a community facility and improve the building grounds as a gateway to downtown Waterloo.
- **Create an Artisan Shop at 39 West Main Street (\$98,000):** Renovate a Main Street building to create an additional retail unit and give the storefront a more traditional appearance.

Village of Webster

The Village of Webster envisions creating enhanced and expanded opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the benefits of small-town living within the broader metropolitan context. NY Forward projects identified focus on enhancing the public realm; rehabilitating existing buildings for commercial, residential and community purposes; marketing and branding the downtown; and creating a small project grant program.

The 11 Webster NY Forward Projects, totaling \$4.5 Million, include:

- **Enhance Veterans Memorial Park for Events and Community Use (\$1,100,000):** Make improvements to Veterans Memorial Park that will optimize it for use as a performance venue and enhance ADA accessibility in the park.

- **Optimize Harmony House for Performances (\$1,010,000):** Update the historic Harmony House to enhance ADA accessibility and make it more conducive to performances and events, strengthening the presence of performing arts in downtown Webster.
- **Create a Multipurpose Conservatory at Kittelberger Florist & Gifts (\$546,000):** Create a conservatory at Kittelberger Florist & Gifts that can be used for retail as well as workshops and educational programs to complement the existing business. Rooftop solar panels will also be installed to enhance the sustainability of the building.
- **Enhance the Visitor Experience through Wayfinding Signage (\$381,000):** Install wayfinding signage at key locations throughout the downtown core to provide directional and locational information to visitors and to strengthen downtown Webster's sense of place.
- **Create a Gateway to the North End Business District (\$310,000):** Enhance the connection between Main Street and the North End Business district by incorporating artistic lighting under the Route 104 bridge to create a gateway feature.
- **Establish a Small Project Grant Fund (\$289,000):** Create a matching grant fund to support smaller-scale improvements and renovations to enhance properties and businesses in the NY Forward Area.
- **Create a Hojack Trail Gateway (\$289,000):** Create a gateway at the intersection of the Hojack Trail and North Avenue to highlight the trail connection, create a sense of place and enhance safety for those accessing the trail.
- **Renovate Community Spaces at Immanuel Lutheran Church (\$255,000):** Enhance the community spaces at Immanuel Lutheran Church by modernizing the spaces and enhancing comfort to increase utilization by the community.
- **Modernize Commercial Spaces at 39 West Main Street (\$161,000):** Modernize and reconfigure the commercial spaces at 39 West Main Street to optimize the layout, right-size the spaces for the market, and enhance accessibility to attract future tenants to the downtown core.
- **Transform 7 South Avenue for Retail Use (\$89,000):** Renovate the interior and exterior of 7 South Avenue to optimize for retail use, bringing a new business into a vacant space and adding vibrancy to the Main Street Business District.
- **Invest in Marketing for Downtown Webster (\$70,000):** Develop a platform for information on parking, events, and promotions, along with digital marketing content and print collateral to promote downtown Webster and enhance awareness of businesses.

Town of Macedon

The Town of Macedon's "Historic Hamlet Business District" encompasses the Town's public parks and major employers and utilizes the Erie Canal and adjoining Empire State Trail as an alternative transportation corridor. The NY Forward projects offer an opportunity to further connect this area to new housing, public spaces, businesses, tourist attractions and community services.

The 7 Macedon NY Forward Projects, totaling \$4.5 Million, include:

- **Revitalize the Former Village Hall to Relocate Ambulance Services Downtown (\$1,250,000):** Renovate the former Village Hall building to be the new downtown headquarters for ambulance services in order to improve response times.
- **Create a Residential Campus at 2 West Street (\$920,000):** Construct new townhouse units to expand downtown housing options and grow the 2 West Street property into a larger residential campus with a variety of housing types and price-points.
- **Redevelop 103 Main Street as a Mixed-Use Downtown Anchor (\$915,000):** Redevelop the building at 103 Main Street into a downtown anchor, with a mix of uses including loft-style apartments and a ground-floor retail space for a food and beverage tenant.
- **Enhance Recreational Facilities at Gravino Park (\$740,000):** Expand recreational opportunities and amenities at Gravino Park to encourage increased utilization and diversify programming options.
- **Establish a Downtown Small Project Grant Fund (\$450,000):** Create a matching grant fund to support smaller scale improvements and renovations that will enhance properties and businesses throughout the NY Forward Area.
- **Activate 90 Main Street to Bring Auto Service Downtown (\$125,000):** Complete the final phase of facade improvements and renovations to allow 90 Main Street to re-open as an auto repair shop after years of vacancy.
- **Revitalize the Masonic Block B&B with a New Restaurant (\$100,000):** Fit-out the ground floor of the bed & breakfast at 96-98 Main Street to support the needs of a future cafe or restaurant tenant in order to activate this currently vacant space with a new business.

In the FY2025 Enacted Budget, Governor Hochul made the "Pro-Housing Community" designation a requirement for cities, towns and villages to access up to \$650 million in State discretionary programs, including the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and New York Forward. To date, more than 300 municipalities across the State have become certified. To further support localities that are doing their part to address the housing crisis, Governor Hochul is creating a \$100 million Pro-Housing Supply fund for certified Pro-Housing Communities to assist with critical infrastructure projects necessary to create new housing, such as sewer and water infrastructure upgrades.

New York Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley said, "When we invest in our downtowns, we're investing in the heart of our communities. Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward program, we're not just funding projects – we're fostering vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that spur economic growth, enhance quality of life for residents and preserve the unique character of each municipality and region. These signature programs exemplify our commitment to ensuring that every New Yorker, in every corner of our State, has the opportunity to succeed and thrive."

Empire State Development President, CEO, and Commissioner Hope Knight said, "The Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward programs are transforming communities across New York State by turning local visions into bold investments to generate place-based economic development. These projects will create new opportunities for businesses, support vibrant public spaces, and attract residents and visitors alike – laying the foundation for sustainable growth and stronger regional economies."

New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said, “All across this State, the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward programs are strategically prioritizing communities, growing economies with targeted awards, creating more housing opportunities that improve affordability for New Yorkers where it is most needed, and building on the diverse character of our neighborhoods. By working with local and municipal partners, these awards continue Governor Hochul's commitment to developing the full potential of our downtowns as economic drivers and attractive places to live.”

Wayne County Board of Supervisors Chair & Town of Macedon Supervisor Kim Leonard said, “As Supervisor of the Town of Macedon, we could not have been more excited for Governor Hochul's announcement for the \$4.5 Million NY Forward Award. Our town and business owners are “Shovel-Ready” to make the most of this incredible opportunity. All recipients appreciate Governor Hochul for entrusting Macedon to ‘invigorate and enliven downtowns in New York's smaller and rural communities.’ The projects chosen will provide Macedon with a much-needed increase in housing and business opportunities, enabling our downtown area to revive and flourish. This will complement Macedon with the recent Park Improvements made to ALL Town Parks, providing ‘Accessibility and Inclusion’ and ‘Canal - Connectivity’ for residents, visitors, and businesses. Macedon is a prestigious and historical Wayne County community, and our progress will benefit our neighboring communities as well. We are proud and humbled to be recently named as one of the places along the ‘Harriet Tubman Byway’ and we aspire to both build a future while we celebrate our past.”

Village of Waterloo Mayor Walter Bennett said, “On behalf of The Village Of Waterloo, I am deeply grateful for the DRI that was awarded to support our economic development initiatives. The investment into our downtown public, non-profit, and small business spaces will have a transformative impact on our community. This funding will enable us to host more community events, create new job opportunities, enhance resident quality of life and attract businesses. Our mission is to make a commitment to fostering sustainable economic growth and opportunity and the DRI funding will help us achieve that goal.”

Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs Bob Duffy, President and CEO, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. DeAnna R. Burt-Nanna, President of Monroe Community College said, “The FLREDC is incredibly proud to continue our to support the communities of Waterloo, Webster and Macedon and their exciting futures made possible through the Governor's transformative Downtown Revitalization and New York Forward Initiatives. These 31 selected, community-driven projects will benefit both residents and visitors alike, promoting economic growth and creating exciting and vibrant downtowns—places where people will want to live, work, and play for generations to come.”

DRI and NY Forward communities developed Strategic Implementation Plans (SIPs), which create a vision for the future of their downtown and identify and recommend a slate of complementary, transformative and implementable projects that support that vision. The SIPs are guided by a Local Planning Committee (LPC) composed of local and regional leaders, stakeholders and community representatives, with the assistance of an assigned consultant and DOS staff, all of whom conduct extensive community outreach and engagement when determining projects. The projects selected for funding from the SIP were identified as having the greatest potential to jumpstart revitalization and generate new opportunities for long-term growth.

About the Downtown Revitalization Initiative

The [Downtown Revitalization Initiative](#) was created in 2016 to accelerate and expand the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhoods in all ten regions of the state to serve as centers of activity and catalysts for investment. Led by the Department of State with assistance from Empire

State Development, Homes and Community Renewal and NYSERDA, the DRI represents an unprecedented and innovative "plan-then-act" strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation and results in compact, walkable downtowns that are a key ingredient to helping New York State strengthen its economy, as well as to achieving the State's bold climate goals by promoting the use of public transit and reducing dependence on private vehicles. Through nine rounds, the DRI has awarded a total of \$900 million to 91 communities across every region of the State.

About the NY Forward Program

First announced as part of the 2022 Budget, Governor Hochul created the NY Forward program to build on the momentum created by the DRI. The program works in concert with the DRI to accelerate and expand the revitalization of smaller and rural downtowns throughout the State so that all communities can benefit from the State's revitalization efforts, regardless of size, character, needs and challenges.

NY Forward communities are supported by a professional planning consultant and team of State agency experts led by DOS to develop a Strategic Investment Plan that includes a slate of transformative, complementary and readily implementable projects. NY Forward projects are appropriately scaled to the size of each community; projects may include building renovation and redevelopment, new construction or creation of new or improved public spaces and other projects that enhance specific cultural and historical qualities that define and distinguish the small-town charm that defines these municipalities. Through three rounds, the NY Forward program has awarded a total of \$300 million to 60 communities across every region of the State.

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MACEDON

NY FORWARD

\$4.5 MILLION AWARD



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