



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



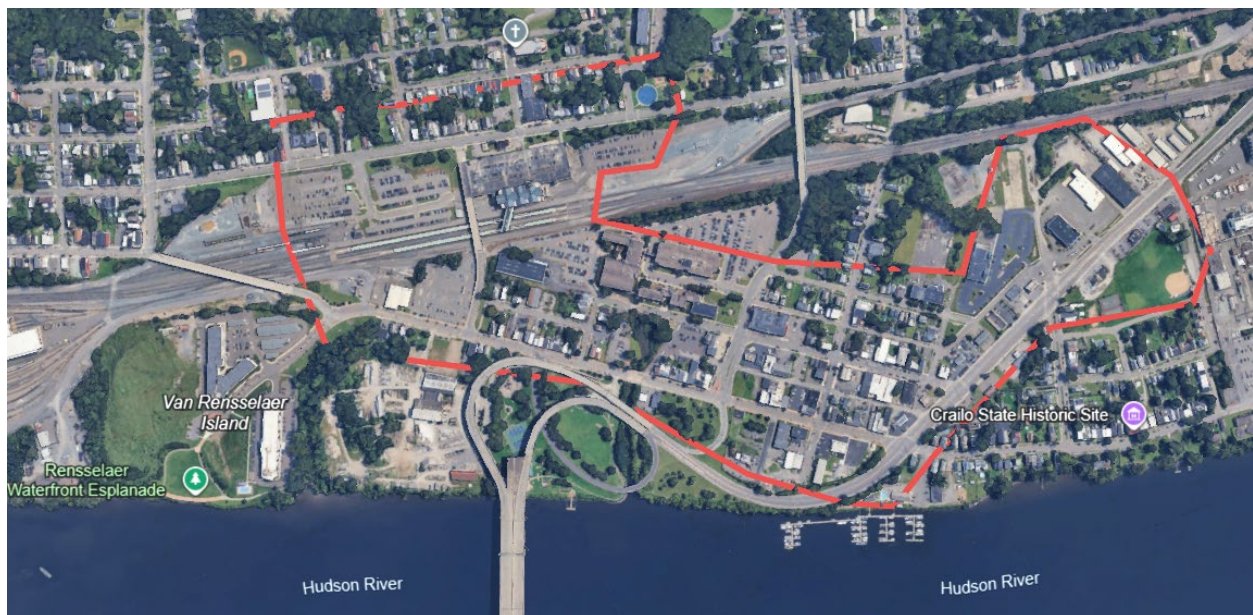
Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) /NY Forward Open Call for Preliminary Project Proposals

Released: August 19, 2025

Proposals Due: 3PM September 18, 2025

Discussion Session (Optional): September 3, 2025 3:00 – 5:00PM

Come to Rensselaer City Hall between these hours to discuss your project with city staff and consultants from LaBella Associates



The City of Rensselaer intends to apply to the New York State Department of State for Round 8 Downtown Revitalization (DRI) (\$10 Million) and/or NY Forward (\$4.5 Million) Funding. We are seeking transformative projects for an improved and expanded downtown. The expanded downtown area, shown above, includes parts of Columbia Street, Broadway, Herrick, East Street and areas in between. Adjacent and nearby transformative projects that will have a significant impact on this area will also be considered.

We expect to submit an application in the Fall of 2025 with awards announced in the Spring of 2026. If our proposal is accepted, this will lead to a final planning process with funding for projects available in the spring of 2027. More information about the Rensselaer DRI / NY Forward and the Preliminary Project Proposal Format are in this document.



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET

Planning (518) 462-4839

Building (518) 465-1693



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION / NY FORWARD

"DRAFT" VISION STATEMENT *

VISION INTRODUCTION: The City of Rensselaer will capitalize on the unique amenities and momentum within the city to enhance, expand and revitalize our downtown business area. Located on the Hudson River, with significant waterfront access and great views of the Albany Skyline, the city is home to the Joseph L. Bruno Amtrak Train Station, the 8th busiest train station in America. The Dunn Memorial Bridge connects Rensselaer's downtown to Interstate 787, making it an easy commute from Albany and all locations in and around the Capital Region.

VISION IMPLEMENTATION: Given recent and continuing residential growth, the time is right for Rensselaer's downtown to be expanded and revitalized. New businesses are starting to move into the properties along Broadway. These are being added to established businesses in the city including restaurants offering a variety of ethnic cuisines, convenience stores, hair salons and hardware/automotive retail establishments. Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and/or NY Forward Program new development will be attracted to the expanded Business Areas that extends from Columbia Street to East Street. The Columbia Street Commercial Corridor and Broadway Business District will be enhanced to make them more pedestrian and shopper friendly. The Herrick Street Bridge will connect Broadway to new residential and transit-oriented development on East Street around the Amtrak Train Station. The result will be a thriving City of Rensselaer downtown that is an attraction for the 800,000+ visitors to our region each year that come to us by train and a destination for regional and local residents.

** The Draft Vision Statement may be refined with input from the community during the planning process.*





CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



How to Submit a Project

1

Review the Eligibility Criteria

on page 4 to make sure your project is eligible
to be considered for DRI / NY Forward funding.

2

Review the Project Requirements

on pages 5-6 to learn about the requirements for projects.

3

Review the Evaluation Criteria

on page 7 to see how the projects will be evaluated.

4

Fill out the Project Proposal Submission Form

Separate Word document. Address each topic thoroughly and completely.

5

Submit your Completed Application

Submit your Completed Application (and any supplemental materials) electronically,
in- person, or by mail no later than 3PM on Thursday September 18, 2025.

Discussion Session (Optional)

**September 3, 2025
3:00 – 5:00PM**

Come to Rensselaer City
Hall anytime between
these hours to discuss
your project with city staff
and consultants from
LaBella Associates

To submit via email:

Email your completed application and
any supplemental materials to
Thomas Hulihan at
thomas.hulihan@rensselaerny.gov

You will receive a confirmation email
shortly after submitting. Please contact
this email as needed to arrange for
delivery of any large file attachments

To submit a hard copy:

Mail or hand-deliver to:

**Planning Department
DRI Preliminary Proposal
Rensselaer City Hall
62 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144**



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



Project Types & Requirements

It is expected that DRI and/or NY Forward funds will be used for capital projects (**generally \$100,000.00 to several million dollars**)* that will transform the physical environment of the downtown in ways that will benefit current residents and future generations. Certain non-capital projects or projects that may lead to capital investment may be considered to the extent that they will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown. the following is a description of eligible and ineligible project types.

**Please let us know if you have smaller projects and we will include them in our Small Projects Plan.*

Eligible Project Types

- **Public Improvement Projects.** These may include projects such as streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, wayfinding signage, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure, and other public realm projects that will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown.
- **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings.** Projects in this category may include the development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not-for-profit, or public uses. All projects should be capital investments or should lead to capital investments. They should have a visible and functional impact on the downtown, serving as transformative projects that will provide employment opportunities, housing choices, and/or services for the community.
- **Small Project Fund.** Following the open call, a locally managed matching small project fund may be proposed to undertake a range of smaller downtown projects (**less than \$100,000.00**) such as facade enhancements, building renovation improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces, business assistance, or public art.
- **Branding and Marketing.** Examples include downtown branding and marketing that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors. The costs eligible under this category must be one-time expenses, such as those to develop materials and signage. Ongoing operational costs, such as funding a downtown manager or maintaining a website, are not eligible.

Ineligible Project Types

- **Planning activities.** Following the preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan, all DRI and/or NY Forward funds must be used for projects that directly implement the plan.
- **Operations and maintenance.** DRI and/or NY Forward funds cannot be used for on-going or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property up keep.
- **Pre-award costs.** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the completion of the Strategic Investment Plan and the announcement of funding awards is not permitted.
- **Property acquisition.** The cost of property acquisition can be included in the overall project budget, but the acquisition must be funded by another funding source.
- **Training and other program expenses.** The DRI / NY Forward programs are a one-time infusion of funds and cannot be used for continuous costs, such as training expensed related to operations.
- **Expenses related to existing programs.** DRI funds cannot be used to supplement existing programs or replace existing resources.



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



*The following is being provided to assist you in completing your **preliminary project proposals** which can be brief summaries. More detailed information will be requested at a later day if your project is selected for inclusion in our DRI and/or NY Forward Plan and if we are selected by NYS for funding.*

Project Requirements

The following are the requirements for projects to be considered for DRI / NY Forward funding. Recognizing several requirements must be met to qualify for DRI funding, each project sponsor will have access to technical support from State agencies and a consultant team to assist with project development (i.e. construction cost estimates, renderings, climate resilient design, meeting decarbonization requirements, etc.).

- **Project Location (see next page).** Projects must be located within the DRI / NY Forward boundary. If your project is located near but outside the DRI boundary, please provide a brief description of how the project relates to the downtown and supports the stated goals. **Minor** boundary modifications may be considered.
- **Project Timing.** Projects must be able to break ground within two years or sooner of receiving DRI/NYF funding.
- **Project Funding.** Projects should have financing commitments largely secured or be able to demonstrate a clear path to securing sufficient financing. It is strongly encouraged that all projects, especially private projects, use non-DRI / NY Forward funds that leverage requested public funding. **The state requires 10% equity for private projects.**
- **Project Size and Scale.** Projects must be large enough to be truly transformative for the downtown area.
- **Project Sponsors.** Every project must have an identified project sponsor. Sponsors may be public, not-for-profit, or private entities with the capacity and legal authority to undertake the project.
- **Building Decarbonization.** For DRI/NYF communities, all public, private, and not-for-profit projects that meet the criteria for new construction, substantial renovation, or a building addition shall include decarbonization techniques. Each project that meets the criteria will be required to select a method of demonstrating that the project satisfies the requirements.

Have a general idea for downtown revitalization that does not meet the criteria for a DRI project? Please submit a comment and/or learn about upcoming public events by visiting <https://www.rensselaerplanning.com> or emailing thomas.hulihan@rensselaerny.gov.



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



Rensselaer DRI Boundary



The City of Rensselaer Round 8 Downtown Revitalization (DRI) Boundary is shown above. We are seeking transformative projects for an improved and expanded downtown. The expanded downtown area, shown above, includes parts of Columbia Street, Broadway, Herrick, East Street and areas in between. Adjacent and nearby transformative projects that will have a significant impact on this area will also be considered.



Questions regarding the Call for Preliminary Proposals can be directed to Thomas Hulihan at thomas.hulihan@rensselaerny.gov

Discussion Session (Optional): September 3, 2025 from 3:00 – 5:00PM

Come to Rensselaer City Hall anytime between these hours to discuss your project with city staff and consultants from LaBella Associates.



CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET

Planning (518) 462-4839

Building (518) 465-1693



Evaluation Criteria

The following are the State criteria by which each proposed project will be evaluated. The Local Planning Committee will use these criteria as a guide for local evaluation criteria.

① Alignment with State and Local Goals

DRI / NY Forward Goals

- Create an active downtown with a strong sense of place.
- Attract new businesses that create a robust mix of shopping, entertainment and service options for residents and visitors, and that provide job opportunities for a variety of skills and salaries.
- Enhance public spaces for arts and cultural events that serve the existing members of the community but also draw in visitors from around the region.
- Build a diverse population, with residents and workers supported by complementary diverse housing and employment opportunities.
- Grow the local property tax base.
- Provide amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support investments that are more resilient to future climate change impacts

② Catalytic Effect

The project is likely to have a positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment at a scale appropriate for the DRI community.

③ Project Readiness

The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI area.

④ Eligible Project Type

The project must be one of the eligible project types outlined in the Eligibility Criteria section and must meet all the requirements for that specific project type.

⑤ Cost Effectiveness

Investment of DRI / NY Forward funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

⑥ Co-Benefits

The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in healthier, more comfortable and productive environments in which to live and work.