



# WATKINS GLEN **20** **DOWNTOWN** REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE **17**

*Small Village, Big Potential*







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood ..... 13**
- 2. Catchment Area..... 17**
- 3. Past Investments and Future Investment Potential ..... 19**
- 4. Recent or Impending Job Growth ..... 33**
- 5. Attractiveness of Physical Environment ..... 36**
- 6. Quality of Life Policies..... 48**
- 7. Support for the Local Vision..... 51**
- 8. Readiness ..... 58**
- 9. Administrative Capacity ..... 59**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Village of Watkins Glen Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge the following community leaders, business owners, private citizens, and community organizations for their efforts to transform Watkins Glen into an area ripe for growth, with a vibrant neighborhood where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live and work.

- Finger Lakes Gateway Community Development Corporation
- Schuyler County Planning Department
- Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development
- Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce
- Project Seneca
- Schuyler County Watershed Department
- Schuyler County Legislature
- The Arc of Schuyler
- Catholic Charities of Schuyler County
- Watkins Glen Central School District
- Schuyler County Historical Society
- Schuyler County Highway Department

The Village Board of Trustees would also like to acknowledge the following for their contribution of pictures within this application.

- Stu Gallagher Photography
- Richard Owlett
- Phil Barnes
- Finger Lakes Wine Country
- Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce
- Norrie Cornelius
- GRAFT Wine + Cider Bar

# WATKINS GLEN: *Small Town, Big Potential*

The vision of the Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is to leverage the accessible Seneca Lake waterfront, famous wine trails, vibrant arts scene and internationally recognized racetrack with a storied auto-racing heritage, and world class State Park with progressive community development that retains and enhances our unique character to sustain a year-round innovative and prosperous economy that is supported by our community.

## DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

**REGIONAL  
COUNCIL:  
SOUTHERN  
TIER**

**COUNTY:  
SCHUYLER**

**MUNICIPALITY:  
VILLAGE OF  
WATKINS GLEN**

**Small doesn't mean simple!** Downtown Watkins Glen is a symbol of local quality of life; economic health, community pride, and history. Watkins Glen has a strong sense of place. This sense of place is not only felt upstate and statewide, but also nationally and internationally. Moreover, this sense of place has provided the necessary tools for maintaining sustainable growth through completed projects in the region. A great diversity of businesses occupy this space including shops, restaurants, local memorabilia, outfitters, banks, beauty salons, hotels, bed and breakfasts, motels and much more. Decatur Street runs parallel to Franklin Street (the primary road through downtown) and features its own eclectic mix of residential properties as well as various commercial ventures including a local coffee roaster, the International Motor Racing Research Center (motorsports enthusiasts and scholars locally and from around the globe have recognized the value of the museums mission, and for them it has become a travel and work destination), numerous churches, the redeveloped Middle School Apartments including the Watkins Glen Performing Arts Center, the Catharine Valley Trail, Finger Lakes Trail, Lafayette Park – home of the Watkins Glen Farmers Market, and even more in the works.

The growing commercial and residential activity in these areas is indicative of a thriving, expanding, and year-round downtown. So what is holding the Village back? What prevents it from making the leap from satisfactory to stellar? The answer is simple – **money**. For too long, the gateways to Watkins Glen as well as the overall downtown experience has detracted from the business opportunities, scenic beauty, great mix of attractions and businesses, and grandeur of the area. With funding from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), the Village can address these and many other problem areas, bringing Watkins Glen into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and fulfilling its true identity as one of the most promising small communities in the state.

## The Community

The Village of Watkins Glen, and Schuyler County as a whole already have substantial community support in place to ensure that future investment leads to sustainable success and a thriving economy.

The Village of Watkins Glen Mayor and Board of Trustees are forward-thinking. The Board is comprised of lifelong residents as well as new. This mix of new and old is important and creates an environment where new ideas can be melded with reverence and respect for the history and culture of the Village. The Village Board puts residents and the community first and foremost in its decision making, which ensures that long-term decisions being made today will have a significant and lasting community impact tomorrow – and well into the future. The Village has also established a successful partnership with Schuyler County. The Village and the County have not only been leaders in shared services, they have also *continuously* worked together to enhance the community. The County is hosting the lease for the operation and management of the Watkins Glen Performing Arts Center. The Center is located in the former Watkins Glen Middle School Auditorium. This building was recently redeveloped and transformed into senior housing facility. The Performing Arts Center will not only be a economic benefit to the community, it will also have a significant local benefit when it comes to arts and cultural opportunities.

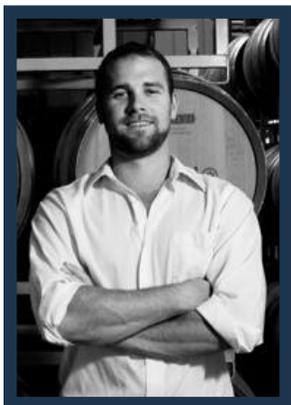
Beyond the local government agencies, the Finger Lakes Gateway Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a leading partner in economic and community growth in Watkins Glen. The FLX Gateway CDC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the economic well-being in Schuyler County and the region through a **community-driven, collaborative approach** that fosters economic vitality by attracting new capital investment; facilitating commercial and residential development; and creating sustainable, living wage employment opportunities. The FLX Gateway CDC has an eight-member Board of Directors with a super majority of the board under age 35.



As the County seat, Watkins Glen is an integral component of our efforts to position Schuyler County as a premier place to live, work and visit. With our tremendous yet under-utilized natural resources and strong sense of community, I firmly

believe Watkins Glen has the **potential to be one of the most vibrant communities in New York State...** There is a strong sense of collaboration and cooperation within Schuyler County that sets us apart from others. Public, not-for-profit and private interest are all working in tandem to bring projects to fruition. Having the funds to re-imagine the revitalization development in addition to a well designed implementation plan would be a very strong investment with a sizable return-on-investment.

Tim O'Hearn  
Schuyler County Administrator



My family instilled in me the importance of **service and involvement in my community.** After traveling and working around the world, I wanted to come back and make a positive impact on the community I grew up in. My hope is that our projects create exciting opportunities for the **talented young professionals** of this community so they too can build careers, lives, and families here in Schuyler County.

- Ben Stamp  
Assistant Winemaker at Lakewood Vineyards  
FLX Gateway CDC Board Member

# KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS



A prime example of the CDC's community driven, collaborative approach is a recent Village Clean-Up in Watkins Glen. Over 40 community members (even non-village residents!) turned out to spruce up the Village. The clean-up was just one part of the overall beautification effort being undertaken by the CDC. As part of these efforts the CDC has partnered with Watkins Glen International to fix a dilapidated retaining wall at one of the key gateways into the Village. Through this partnership, the retaining wall was rebuilt and revitalized, and a local sign painter will work with area high school students to create a "Welcome to Watkins Glen" message on the wall. This is just one example of how the CDC has worked with various community partners for the overall betterment of the village.

The CDC committees are currently working on the revitalization of the downtown areas and the redevelopment of existing properties. The CDC recognizes the need for additional housing for young professionals in Watkins Glen, as well as the need for market rate commercial space to be created from the grey fields and vacant properties.

**P**eople generally want to feel like they have the power to positively affect their community... In a **small community**, even a single voice can **inspire** movement in a positive direction.

Another community partnership is the entrepreneurial "Boot Camp", a monthly gathering of young entrepreneurs which leverages a partnership with the Southern Tier Start-Up Alliance, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development and two private entities (the owners of the Harvest Café and International Climbing Machines). This effort has created a safe and encouraging environment for nascent entrepreneurs, potential angel investors and entrepreneurially-minded professionals to collaborate on ideas, receive feedback on business models, and learn directly from mentors on a *monthly* basis, in a structured, supportive setting. This is where the seeds of tomorrow's business entities are being sown and the response has been remarkable.



Well-established and respected community partners fill a number of important roles including growth of employment and business networks, civic and volunteer opportunities, and more. These include:

- Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce
- ARC of Schuyler
- Watkins Lions Club
- Watkins Montour Rotary Club
- Watkins Glen Promotions
- Zonta
- Spirit of Schuyler
- Project Seneca
- Schuyler Planning Commission
- SCOPED
- Schuyler County IDA.

## Promotion of Downtown Watkins Glen

Watkins Glen is situated at the base of Seneca Lake where State Route NY-14 (a nationally designated truck route) joins New York State Routes 79 and 414. The Village of Watkins Glen is the county seat for Schuyler County which is the gateway to Finger Lakes from the Southern Tier. It has seen a surge in visitors, new business formations and international recognition. This growth has resulted in home appreciation of 0.6% over the last year. As Watkins Glen has stemmed the loss of population, we have a firm base from which to grow.

Recent efforts to market the area to lure investors and new residents include many partners working in concert to reiterate the message and spread the word that Watkins Glen is the place to be!

The Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce is another key partner in the success of Watkins Glen. They have dedicated professionals who are heavily vested in, and committed to marketing the community of Watkins Glen. They not only foster local commerce and regional growth, they market the incredible assets and attractions as well.

The Chamber of Commerce continues to post steady growth, adding over 80 new members in 2016. Many of these members hail from cities outside of Schuyler County, as a result of their desire to do business in Watkins Glen and Schuyler County. These businesses come from cities such as Elmira, Corning, Binghamton, Vestal, and Ithaca. Their investment with the Chamber indicates their belief that Watkins Glen is an important place to be and key to the success of their business. The Chamber of Commerce website posted a 52% increase in unique web visits from 2015 to 2016, indicating tremendous and continued growth in interest in the area.

Watkins Glen Promotions is a local 501(c)(3) organization that oversees the planning and execution of a number of hugely popular community events within the Village including: The Waterfront Festival, Cardboard Boat Regatta, the Grand Prix Festival, the Vintage Grand Prix Race, Village Christmas Parade and more. All of these events **attract tens of thousands** of people to Watkins Glen throughout the year.

The Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development "The Partnership" recently launched a new website ([www.flxgateway.com](http://www.flxgateway.com)) which houses volumes of information on jobs, housing, and so much more. It serves as an important resource to potential residents and investors.



**W**hat is truly remarkable about this region is that you don't have to go out of your way to introduce someone to this place and the people, it just happens organically. When an unknown person arrives in the Finger Lakes, there may as well be a line out the door of people waiting to introduce themselves and pass on one of their favorite local pastimes or watering holes. **The community is woven so tightly here,** which is one of the many reasons we love doing what we do, where we do it."

- Forge Cellars



- #1 Best NASCAR Track:**  
Watkins Glen International
- #1 Best Waterfront Hotel:**  
Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel
- #1 Best Wine Festival in US:**  
Finger Lakes Wine Festival
- #3 Best State Park in US:**  
Watkins Glen State Park

*\*We are the only county in the country to have 4 attractions in the top 3 on four separate lists.*

**One of the 55 Most Breathtaking Destinations in the World**



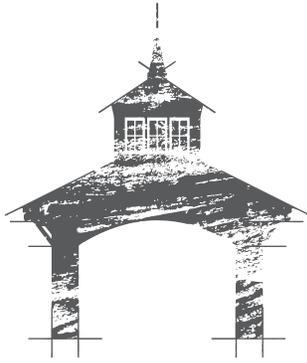
**Top Trending U.S. Attractions for Summer 2016:**  
**#9 Watkins Glen State Park**

**10 Best Travel Destinations in the World: Finger Lakes Wine Region of the Year 2014:**

**Finger Lakes**



**Zagat published "8 Reasons to Drive the Finger Lakes" with over half of the list comprised of stops in Schuyler County.**



# projectseneca®

Project Seneca is a world-class sustainable/livable community redevelopment effort which is driving regional economic growth through investment in targeted initiatives along the head of Seneca Lake. This public/private partnership funded entirely with private investment was initially conceived in 2012 as an effort to revitalize the Seneca Lake waterfront in Watkins Glen. It's first project, upgrading and relocating the wastewater treatment plant, became the impetus to enlarge the concept plan to include additional economic development efforts within the Village of Watkins Glen, along the Cayuga - Seneca Canal and into the Village of Montour Falls. Utilizing the planning efforts that have been completed to date, Project Seneca incorporated the various projects into its vision. As a result, Project Seneca has become the umbrella effort under which multiple initiatives will be implemented over a ten-year period.

In order to create a consistent, area-wide economic development message, Project Seneca is now a registered trademark and the brand for all economic development efforts in Schuyler County including initiatives within all four of the historic village downtowns, eight towns, Camp Monterey, economic clusters (fermentation, value-added agriculture and hospitality & tourism), the Schuyler County Business Park and the Montour Falls Business Campus. To date, Project Seneca has over \$103 million in investments completed or planned for the short term in downtown Watkins Glen alone.

## PROJECT SENECA ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Water Works Condominiums and Apartments**
- **Waterworks Art Gallery (Quintus Gallery)**
- **Brewery Apartments**
- **Relocation of wastewater treatment facility in progress, and expected to be completed in the Fall of 2019**
- **Site design and community engagement for reuse of land parcel to become available when the waste water treatment plant is relocated**
- **Redevelopment of housing along S. Madison Avenue**
- **Middle School Redevelopment a completed \$14 million project**
- **Watkins Glen State Park investment of \$6.5 million in progress**
- **Gateway improvements east Kayak/Canoe Launch which is in progress and expected to be completed in the Fall of 2017, northern gateway pedestrian and safety improvements Fall 2018**

Within the scope of Project Seneca there are many initiatives in the Village of Watkins Glen. Under the waterfront redevelopment umbrella, there are plans for improved access for residents and visitors to Seneca Lake; new mixed-use facilities, hotels, multi-generational housing, and beautification of Clute Park and Lakeside Park. These projects will complement those already underway including the waterfront/canal multi-purpose pathway, new affordable housing, and the development of a kayak/canoe launch. Other initiatives involve downtown districts of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls as well as the canal-way that connects the two Villages. These areas have initial plans to improve housing, employment opportunities, arts and recreation, environmental awareness, transportation-related traffic improvements and overall quality of life opportunities. Project Seneca incorporated a majority of the elements found in the Watkins Glen Comprehensive Plan to ensure the highest and best use of all land parcels in the village. This is vitally important in the development and execution of a comprehensive economic development and revitalization plan.

Additionally, the size of the village lends itself to ensuring that projects are completed in a timely manner and necessary changes are successfully carried out. Likewise, this size allows for the community to provide input and support toward improvement projects and each revitalization project has tremendous impact. More specifically, the Village of Watkins Glen has seen significant improvements thanks to the interest and motivation of the community to revitalize the downtown area. In 2012, Main Street funds equaling \$500,000 were used to foster mixed-use facilities including 11 upper story housing units and seven commercial spaces in downtown Watkins Glen. This was accomplished in partnership with Community Progress, Inc.

---

**T**he DRI is a great opportunity for us to build on the foundation that has been laid in the areas of Main Street redevelopment housing, transportation and other amenities. We need to use this opportunity to make the investments necessary to further attract and **retain young professionals seeking an active and vibrant downtown.** Watkins Glen already has a globally recognized name; and an investment of \$10million would bring additional prosperity to the area, region, and New York State.

**-Judy McKinney Cherry CEcD  
Project Seneca**

---

Part of the success of the revitalization projects lies in the presence of an ample amount of residents, business leaders, and community leaders who want to see positive change occur. Encouragement and support from the community has led to the successful execution of many projects in the area, such as the completion of 82 housing units, Quintus - a waterfront art gallery, a 700 seat music/performance theatre, brewery and beer garden, and a wine storage and cigar emporium.

Project Seneca is nurtured in a community this size because it provides the opportunity to complete transformational projects for the Finger Lakes region. This in turn leads to an immediate and dramatic impact for all families and workers within a five to ten mile radius of the Village. The revitalization efforts that have been completed thus far illustrate the importance and benefit the size of the community holds in ensuring strategic investments are successfully implemented and improve the community as a whole.

# 1. DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY

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 boundary for the DRI was chosen to take advantage of the walkable, compact character of the year-round downtown area of the Watkins Glen and to stretch successful revitalization from the Waterfront all the way to the edge of the Village to the south. The DRI boundary connects the downtown area as well as the transitional business and residential area between Franklin Street and Decatur Street to large employers, established residential neighborhoods, amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life, as well as arts and cultural attractions.

The boundaries of our proposed downtown neighborhood stretch between three primary gateways which lead into the Village of Watkins Glen. The Southern Gateway boundary line begins at the intersection of Decatur Street and Fairgrounds Lane. This southern boundary will then follow Fairgrounds Lane west towards State Route 14. The boundary then stretches northwest following Franklin Street (SR14) and including all properties that front onto Franklin Street up to Pine Street. At the intersection of Pine Street and Franklin Street the boundary moves west to incorporate the properties that connect to Madison Street. The boundary follows Madison Street north to Cross Street and then east across State Route 14 (Northern Gateway).

The boundary then moves east to incorporate the properties along the “S” curve out to the Seneca Harbor Park. The downtown boundary parallels the lakefront shoreline until reaching the Eastern Gateway at the Village boundary line north of Cass Road.

---

**D**owntown Watkins Glen is a symbol of the local quality of life, the community economic health, community pride, and history.

---

The boundary then follows State Route 414 West (Fourth Street) and includes properties that meet State Route 414 up to the Finger Lakes Rail Tracks that transverse State Route 414. At the Intersection of Magee Street and Franklin Street (State Route 414) the boundary moves South to encompass 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The boundary then follows Fifth Street west to Decatur Street and includes all properties that adjoin Fifth Street and Decatur Street. The line then travels South to the point of origin (Fairgrounds Lane and Decatur Street).

The areas within the boundaries of the Village encompass just under two square miles and a year-round population of approximately 1,900 people. The entirety of the DRI boundary area can be easily accessible within a 20 minute walk from the main intersection in Watkins Glen. There are over 150 businesses within these boundaries. These businesses and the residents who are part of the neighborhood are ready for progress. This area is ripe for investment and the gateways are each lacking a sense of arrival and identity to the potentially vibrant community for our residents and workers of tomorrow.



# DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY



## WHAT MAKES WATKINS GLEN UNIQUE?

- Watkins Glen is within a five-hour drive (approximately 300 miles) of 25% of the U.S. population. The potential for new audiences and expansion is, for all intents and purposes, limitless!
- Our streets are the birthplace of American road racing.
- The Seneca Lake Wine Trail (of which we are the southern gateway) boasts the largest concentration of wineries in New York State.
- We are minutes away from the only national forest in the state, and one of only three in the Northeast.
- There are agricultural treasures abound with a culinary bounty

# PRIMARY GOALS - WATKINS GLEN DRI

## Downtown Living

- Neighborhood Services, Amenities and Retail
- Walkable
- Range of Housing Types
- Mixed-Use Buildings
- Strong Sense of Place

## Cultural/Entertainment

- Arts and Cultural Venues/Galleries/Theaters
- Regular Events/Festivals
- Restaurants/Bars
- Youth-Oriented Activities
- Tourism

## Economic Development

- Year-Round Local based Business
- Attraction of High-Paying Jobs
- Additional Skilled Workers
- Re-Population by Young Professionals
- Investment in Infrastructure

## Quality of Life

- Vibrant Community to Live, Work, and Raise Families
- Capture Strong Community Pride
- Clean, Safe Community
- Investment in Education

# SUPPORTING STRATEGIES - WATKINS GLEN DRI

**Create Employment in Downtown Area:** create co-working spaces or shared office space

**Establish a Facade Improvement Program:** provide financial incentives to visually improve exteriors

**Housing:** 2nd and 3rd floor apartments, development of townhouses and condos, single family housing

**Develop Additional Downtown Programming:** art markets, performance festivals, expansion of "First Friday"

**Activate Empty Spaces (short term):** create "pop up" shops, allow temporary uses

**Invest in the Streetscape:** sidewalk repair, benches, bikeracks, pedestrian friendly lighting, trees with a healthy canopy

**Invest in Winter Recreational Amenities:** develop ice rink similar to Canalside in Buffalo

# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Catalytic Development Sites

1 1 N. Franklin St.

4 Schuyler Redevelopment Site

2 Current WWTP Site

5 15 N. Franklin St

3 715 Franklin St.

6 602 Franklin St.

## Opportunity Sites

1 VanSkiver Lots (801 Franklin St.)

6 Clipper Inn Site

2 2nd St Vacant Lots

7 500 N. Franklin St.

3 Elmira Savings Bank (501 4th St.)

8 3rd St Parking Lot & Adjacent Properties

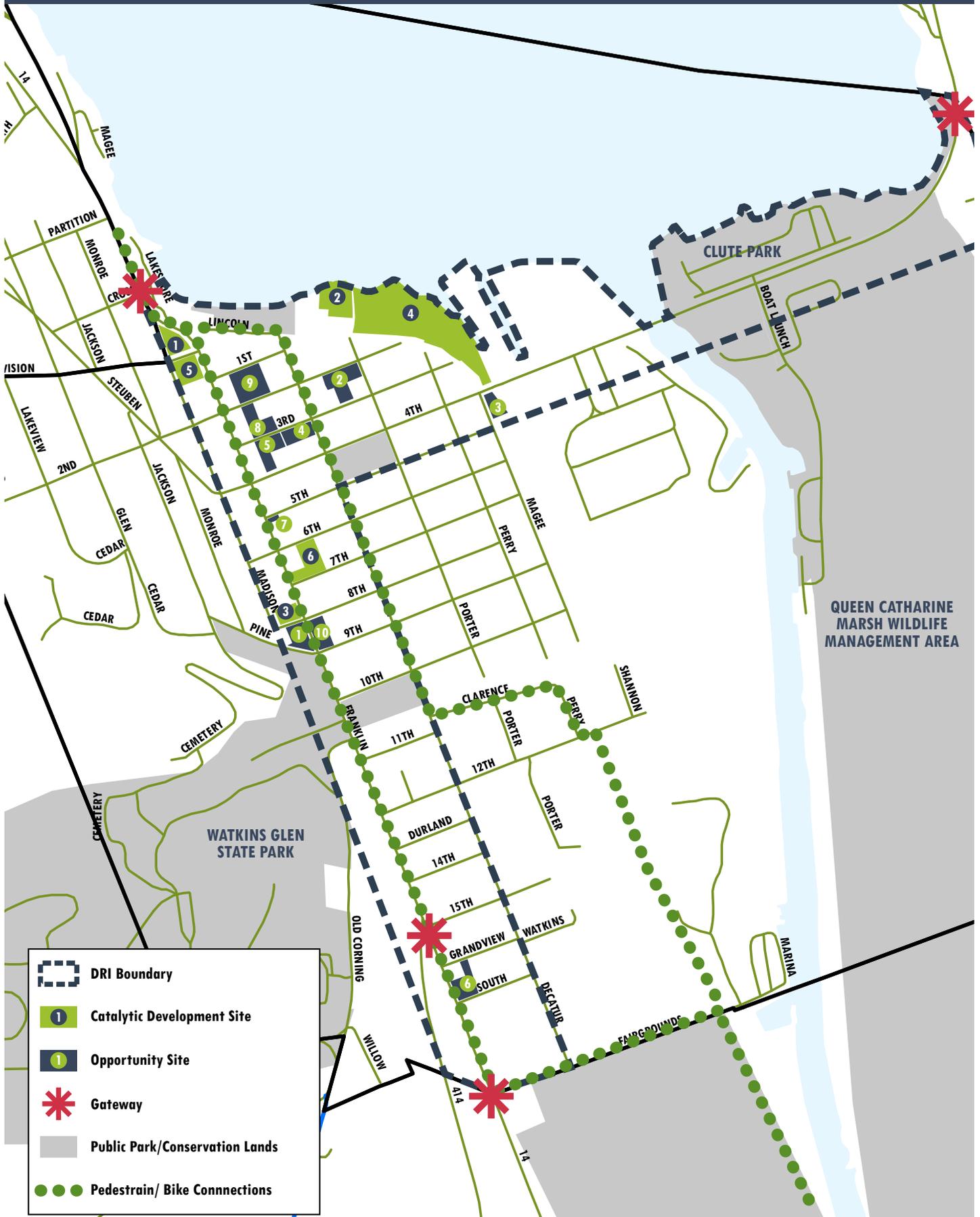
4 3rd St. - Carriage House

9 Guthrie Building & Parking Lot

5 Villager Motel

10 Franklin St Plaza & Sunoco Lot

# DRI AREA OPPORTUNITY MAP



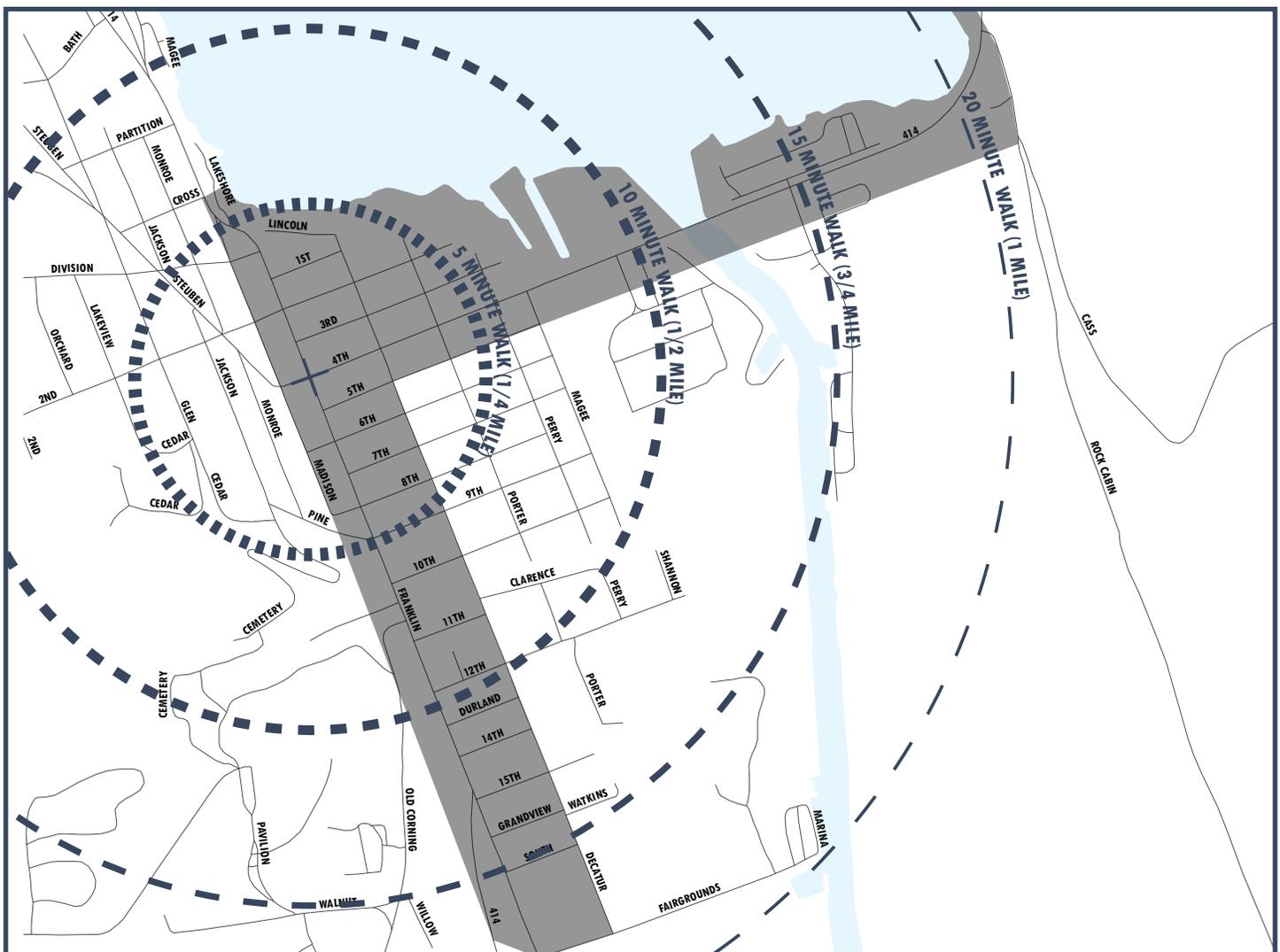
## 2. CATCHMENT AREA

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.

Watkins Glen is an ideal size to have the DRI impact *each and every* family, worker, business and service organization not only within the Village but within a ten-mile radius. For the Governor, State of New York and Regional Development Council **the size of Watkins Glen ensures that the results are measurable and clearly recognizable** on the regional, state and global stage. Ensuring that improvements and initiatives are not obscured by other community concerns, Watkins Glen has the perfect asset base to create very specific and implementable initiatives, track progress and adjust course, if necessary. Watkins Glen is the primary downtown for over 10,000 residents, many of whom have moved here from large urban areas along the East and West Coasts.

Watkins Glen is also within a five hour (approximately 300 miles) drive of 25% of the U.S. population. It is less than an hour's drive from many other popular cities in the region including Corning, Elmira, Ithaca, Geneva, Canandaigua, and Hammondsport.

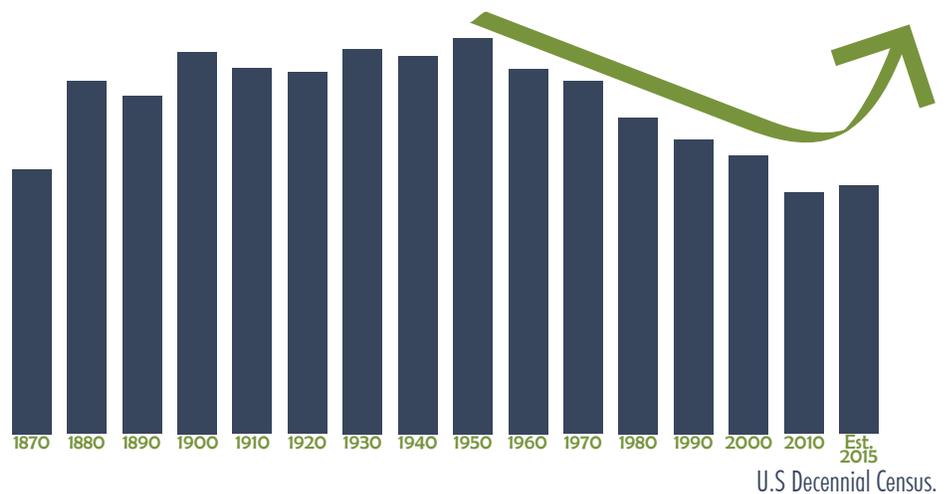
The DRI boundary area we have identified is the perfect size to encourage a “live, work, play” environment that millennials and baby boomers alike will gravitate toward. Our entire DRI area is within a 20 minute walk from the primary intersection of Watkins Glen, creating a completely accessible environment for those working and living within the DRI Boundary Area.



Astoundingly, beginning in 2014, Watkins Glen has experienced an **increase in population** since its historical high of 3,052 in the 1950 census. According to the U.S. Census estimates for 2015, Watkins Glen has 1,912 residents living within a total area of 1.9 square miles which includes 0.4 square miles (21%) of water, with a density is 1,006 people per square mile.

Many upstate New York communities, without institutions of higher education in close proximity, are experiencing a loss of population in dramatic numbers. Since the 2010 Census, Watkins Glen’s loss of residents has begun to stabilize and is estimated to be increasing.

Many new residents see Watkins Glen as an area of exciting growth and palpable potential. They want to be a part of the area’s resurgence. Still others have ties through education and employment such as Cornell University, Ithaca College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Corning Incorporated, World Kitchen, and Cargill.



Watkins Glen, while admittedly small in population and land size, provides an infrastructure that is unprecedented in a rural community. A comprehensive public transit system is provided for the general population as well as those with special needs. It is exemplary and runs consistently on a predictable year-round schedule and also connects Watkins Glen with surrounding communities. Watkins Glen also has an extensive broadband infrastructure to ensure there are no limitations for those requiring the digital highway to be prosperous now and in the coming decades. An interesting side note, Watkins Glen has several long distance commuters who prefer to live and play here while traveling weekly to distant cities including Boston, Massachusetts and Jacksonville, Florida as well as other long distances for their regular employment.



**W**atkins Glen is a very livable community, uniquely situated in the heart of the Finger Lakes... It has a lot to offer for **upwardly mobile professionals** who want safe schools, and a relaxed lifestyle. This initiative is a great opportunity for our community to build on what has already been accomplished in areas of housing, employment, transportation and other amenities, and further attract and retain young professionals seeking an **active and energetic downtown**.

- Jeannette Frank, Executive Director, Arc of Schuyler

# 3. PAST INVESTMENTS & FUTURE 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.

## PAST INVESTMENTS

Past and current efforts to revitalize the community and downtown area of Watkins Glen are coming to fruition. Many of the recent investments were identified in the 2010 roadmap (a visionary plan). The recent investments made in and around the Village have been significant, and the DRI can provide a catapult for Watkins Glens' future.

Watkins Glen is seeing growth from an economic and demographic perspective. This began with one of the first catalytic development projects within the village, the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel. A \$13 million investment that opened 2008. The construction of this hotel raised the awareness of many local residents, investors, and visitors to Watkins Glen. The hotel, in concert with the local business community, has been instrumental in extending the tourism season and bringing in large numbers of visitors during what was traditionally considered the off-season. Some believed the new hotel was only meeting its business goals by catering to the weekly WGI race team clientele. However, this was proven otherwise during the summer and fall of 2015 when the occupancy rates continued to surge despite no race team-related visits to Watkins Glen International Speedway. Beyond visitors, the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel has proven itself an invaluable community asset offering important meeting space for local organizations and hosting unique, year-round events for all to enjoy, especially in its incredibly popular sell-out event, Ice Bar, held each February.

The Village of Watkins Glen has successfully ensured that it has the adequate infrastructure to accommodate new residents, housing, new businesses and visitors alike with the development of a new Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant which will be built with an additional 30% capacity.

Coupled with a increase in the wastewater capacity the infrastructure for energy is also being upgraded throughout Franklin Street in 2018.

## ALIGNING THE DRI VISION WITH REGIONAL STRATEGIES

### Infrastructure

- Broadband Project (STN Network)
- Waterfront redevelopment planning
- Inflow & Infiltration Project
- Water Treatment
- LED lighting replacement

### Clean Water - Regional Waste Water Treatment Plant

#### Shared Community Services

- Regional Waste Water Treatment Plant - Joint Project Committee for shared systems with multiple villages and towns

### Livable Communities

- Catharine Valley Trail extension
- Recycling & Composting
- Public Transportation
- Increased Housing

### Promoting the Southern Tier's Innovative Culture

- Branding and tourism marketing for Watkins Glen International, Watkins Glen State Park,
- Year-round wine trails & festivals.
- Iconic Seneca Lake Gazebo is strategically placed on nationally syndicated sitcoms.
- Entrepreneurial Boot Camp
- Seneca Film Festival.

### Globally Relevant - Resurgence

- Local wineries are internationally exporting
- Locally created products can be found in major motion pictures, movie shorts and sitcoms.
- International visitors through tour groups from China, India, & Canada

The Village of Watkins Glen has exceptionally competitive energy rates due to a power purchase agreement for hydro-power. This renewable energy is not only environmentally friendly it is also cost effective. The agreement allows for the rate to remain fixed while increasing capacity for economic development projects. This provides a sustainable incentive for business and resident to come and remain in the Village.

### Average Commercial Electric Rates

United States - 10.48¢/kWh

New York - 13.42¢/kWh

Watkins Glen - 4.49¢/kWh

Over the past five years, more than \$108 million worth of investments has been made, or are in progress, because of the proximity to Watkins Glen. Several projects successfully leveraged state and/or local assistance in a positive manner which has been mutually beneficial to the downtown area and community as a whole. These projects leveraged public investments from the state in a very positive manner. The state agencies that have provided assistance for redevelopment and set the foundation for stimulating private investment *without* assistance, include: Department of State (DOS), Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), Empire State Development (ESD), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Office of Parks and Historic Preservation (Parks), and Canal Corporation. On the federal level, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), U.S. Department of Commerce including the Small Business Administration and the EDA.

All of the projects and related investments fit within the strategic plans for the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, the Southern Tier Central Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Schuyler County Comprehensive Plan or the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development Strategic Framework.

FOUNDATIONAL  
(PAST) INVESTMENTS

**Housing: \$22.5 million**

- Watkins Glen Middle School Apartments
- Waterworks Apartments & Condos
- Watkins Brewery Apartments
- Seneca Terrace Apartments
- Watkins Glen Villa Apartments

**Manufacturing: (Non-disclosable)**

- Cargill
- Taylor Precision

**Tourism Destination: \$14.6 million**

- Watkins Glen International Speedway
- Watkins Glen Elk Preserve
- Community & Performing Arts Center
- Quintus Waterfront Art Gallery
- Watkins Glen KOA Resort
- Single Island Shores
- Inner Peace Floats
- Seneca Sol Glamping

**Culinary/Libation/Dairy: \$14.5 million**

- Bergen Farms
- Roosterfish Brewing
- Grist Iron Brewing Co.
- Ryan Williams Winery
- Anthony Road Wine Company
- Hobbs Selbach (JPV)
- Heavily Brewing Co.
- Seneca Lake Brewing Company
- Castel Grisch
- Catharine Valley Crackers
- Seneca Sweets
- GRAFT Wine & Cider Bar
- Lakewood Vineyards
- Elf and the Oak

**Public Infrastructure including Schools: \$56.5 million**

- Watkins Glen High School Expansion
- Shared Services Building
- Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Inflow & Infiltration Projects

20 **Village of Watkins Glen:** Small Village, Big Potential

# PAST PUBLIC INVESTMENT



## FUNDING SOURCES:

-  Empire State Development (ESD)
-  Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
-  Department of State (DOS)
-  Other: Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)  
Parks and Historic Preservation (Parks)  
Canal Corporation (Canals)



## PROJECT LIST

### Village of Watkins Glen

1. Local Waterfront Revitalization Program - \$15,000 (DOS)
2. Main Street Development Project - \$150,000 (HCR - NYMS)
3. Planning for Middle Marina - \$106,750 (DOS -LWRP)
4. Watkins Brewery Redevelopment - \$800,000 (ESD)
5. Watkins Glen Middle School Project - \$2,900,000 (HCR-SHTF)/ \$900,000 (ESD)
6. Kayak Launch - \$500,000 (Parks)
7. Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Design/Environmental Analysis - \$1,250,000 (ESD)  
\*Project Seneca - Initial Feasibility Study for Establishment of Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant - \$150,000 (ESD) / \$150,000 (DOS)  
\*Study of Economic Efficiencies between Watkins Glen & Montour Falls - \$43,900 (DOS)  
\*Village of Watkins Glen Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation - \$30,000 (DEC)  
\*Planning and Acquisition Costs - \$550,000 (ESD)
8. \*Project Seneca-Strategic Planning & Implementation - \$2,183,000 (DOS- LWRP)

### Watkins Glen International/Town of Dix

9. Modernization Project - \$250,000 (ESD)
10. Racetrack Repaving Project - \$2,000,000 (ESD)

\*Denotes a study or project which has countywide impact



Photo Credit: Stu Gallagher Photography

## Watkins Glen International

Watkins Glen International (WGI) has made a \$10 million investment over the last two years and is already seeing the amplification of state investment to date. Due to the repaving (and the state's 20% match), WGI successfully competed and won the relocated Boston, Massachusetts INDYCAR Race. This resulted in a three year commitment by INDYCAR to continue racing at WGI. The excellent reputation of WGI coupled with the new asphalt resulted in record-making attendance at the NASCAR event when most NASCAR tracks are experiencing dramatic declines.

Numerous **international investments** have been made in the past five years including French, English, German and Chinese investments into vineyards, wineries, breweries and accommodations. Watkins Glen is now home to those who see such promise and potential, that they are coming from other coasts – and other *continents* – to invest in the area. Famed California winemaker Paul Hobbs, along with German winemaker Johannes Selbach, purchased 75 acres which have been planted as a Riesling vineyard on the southeast shore of Seneca Lake, within sight of downtown Watkins Glen. In addition to Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Selbach, others have also made investments in the recent years; Louis Barroul of the Rhone Valley's famed Chateau de St.-Cosme launched Forge Cellars with local investors and winemakers. While Daniel Lai from China invested in Castel Grisch, the Manor House B&B and vineyards.



## FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

### Impact of Anchor Institutions

Watkins Glen benefits year-round from several anchor institutions in close proximity to the downtown, including education, healthcare, government, and the state park, just to name a few. The State of New York Fire Academy is not only a large employer in the community, they also conduct classes and special conferences throughout the year, which results in an economic boost to local restaurants, accommodations, and retail businesses. Similarly, the healthcare providers, namely Schuyler Hospital, Guthrie, and Arnot Health all have significant year-round impacts on the local economy.

Cargill which is located within the DRI area is a premier anchor institution within the Village of Watkins Glen. Cargill continues to increase employment and make investment in their production and manufacturing processes, they are also expanding production in the next two years. However, Cargill is more than just a strong employment center, they are also the key philanthropic component for non-profits and education within the DRI catchment area. Over the past



five years the Cargill Cares Committee has given nearly \$500,000 back to the community, over \$200,000 to the community through employee giving campaigns which Cargill provides a matching donation to. Not only does Cargill give back through monetary donations their employees serve their community by volunteering hundreds of hours per year.

Watkins Glen Central School District is another anchor institution that continuously provides the community with quality educational opportunities, jobs and many cultural opportunities to enjoy.

Watkins Glen is also fortunate to have the Village of Watkins Glen and Schuyler County Government Offices located in the heart of its downtown district as, this allows many employees the benefit of a live, work, play environment and also draws employees (who reside outside of the Village) and users of these public services into the downtown area. Government workers who come each day to a downtown public building will spend between \$2,500 and \$3,500 annually, according to Place Economics, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm. These offices also provide consistent year-round well-paying jobs at multiple salary levels and entry levels. Between the two agencies over 130 people are employed year round within the DRI Boundary area.

Watkins Glen International and Watkins Glen State Park are also anchor institutions which both have tremendous impacts on the downtown from April through November of each year. Their visitorship combined is over 1.1 million annually.

## Leverage & Amplification of Future Projects

### **Scheduled Upgrade of State Route 14 (Main Highway through proposed downtown) - 2018**

The State of New York Department of Transportation has planned a \$5 million extensive road project and aesthetic upgrade for State Route 14 through Schuyler County. Franklin Street, the main thoroughfare for Watkins Glen is scheduled to undergo a complete reconstruction including all new ADA sidewalks beginning in the spring of 2018. The Village and the FLX Gateway CDC have additional projects and plans to leverage this project for a complete resurrection and revitalization of Franklin Street.

### **Northern Gateway Project - 2018**

This project included the construction of a median on State Route 14 entering the village, decorative lighting and a crosswalk for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road safely in what is currently a hazardous area. These improvements will completely change the northern gateway to the Village, resulting in a noticeable and immediate positive impact for local businesses. Pedestrians and cyclists will enjoy safer, better access to downtown from the north and the aesthetics will be vastly improved. This project will meet ADA-requirements while fostering an open, welcoming, and fully accessible downtown and lakefront.



## Watkins Glen State Park - 2018



Watkins Glen State Park (ranked by USA Today readers as the #3 state park in the country) is currently undergoing a major \$6.5 million major face-lift. This is a transformative project that will not only continue to bring nearly one million visitors to Watkins Glen annually, it will also be a catalyst for continued economic development for the region. The renovation will provide park visitors with rich, educational interpretation of both human and natural history; provide a redesigned and unforgettable gateway into one of the most powerful and scenic parks in New York State; and provide a new integrated Visitor Information Center in partnership with the Watkins Glen Area Chamber

of Commerce. The aesthetic improvements will also refresh the entire park area on Franklin Street and 10th Street. The addition and reconfiguration of parking and traffic signals will also greatly alleviate traffic concerns downtown, fostering for both locals and visitors alike.



## TRANSFORMATIONAL (5-YEAR FUTURE) INVESTMENTS

### Housing – Diverse Types & Affordability: \$31 million

- Condominiums along Waterfront
- Sunset Terrace Housing Development
- Satterly Heights Housing Development
- La Bourgade on Seneca

### Manufacturing: \$43 million

- Shared Wine Production Facility (Business Park)
- Taylor Precision
- Cargill
- US Salt

### Tourism Destination: \$40.8 million

- Watkins Glen State Park
- Chamber of Commerce Satellite Visitor Center
- New Hotel(s) – Waterfront and Franklin Street
- 3-4 story mixed-use building along Franklin
- International Racing Museum
- Harbor Hotel Expansion
- Watkins Glen International

### Culinary/Libation/Dairy: \$8.5million

- Atlas Pizza
- Finger Lakes Harvest
- Village Main Street Mixed-Use Redevelopment
- Castel Grisch

### Public Infrastructure including Schools: \$42 million

- Route 14 Major Repaving
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Site Redevelopment
- Fire Academy Expansion
- Watkins Glen Central School District Capital Project

### Community: \$18.8 million

- Schuyler Hospital Capital Projects
- Neighborhood Center

# WATKINS GLEN HAS...POTENTIAL

## Redeveloping properties in the Downtown

Over 75 parcels have been identified as “targeted for redevelopment”, including 52 parcels in the northern section of the Village of Watkins Glen and 26 parcels in the southern area of the targeted downtown district. Currently the parcels are in varying degrees of maintenance and use. In many instances, the highest and best use of the property is not being realized. Many of the targeted parcels include grey fields, vacant lots, abandoned housing units, and/or deteriorated commercial spaces. These parcels are significant as they set the tone for residents, investors and visitors. In our quest to resurrect an active, year-round downtown with a strong sense of place, we must approach the process strategically and with surgical precision with DRI funding, we can improve key properties. This will create the impetus for others to follow this lead.

The redevelopment of these targeted properties should diversify the current complement of 138 businesses. One specific project is the development of a shared-space for start-up businesses that are spin-outs from our nearby academic institutions as well as those relocating from outside New York such as “thirty somethings” who are seeking spaces to open a satellite office. The community needs this dedicated facility for year-round, high wage-paying employers seeking the space and lifestyle to attract and retain young professionals, our lifeblood for the future.



Additionally, Watkins Glen has developers interested in redeveloping North Franklin Street with mixed-use development. Unfortunately, this is stalled due to potential brownfield contamination concerns, costs associated with basic infrastructure. There are multiple developers interested in redeveloping these properties. One plans for mixed-use with structured parking while another has plans for a national flag hotel. With DRI funding, a revolving loan fund could be established to help bridge funding gaps.

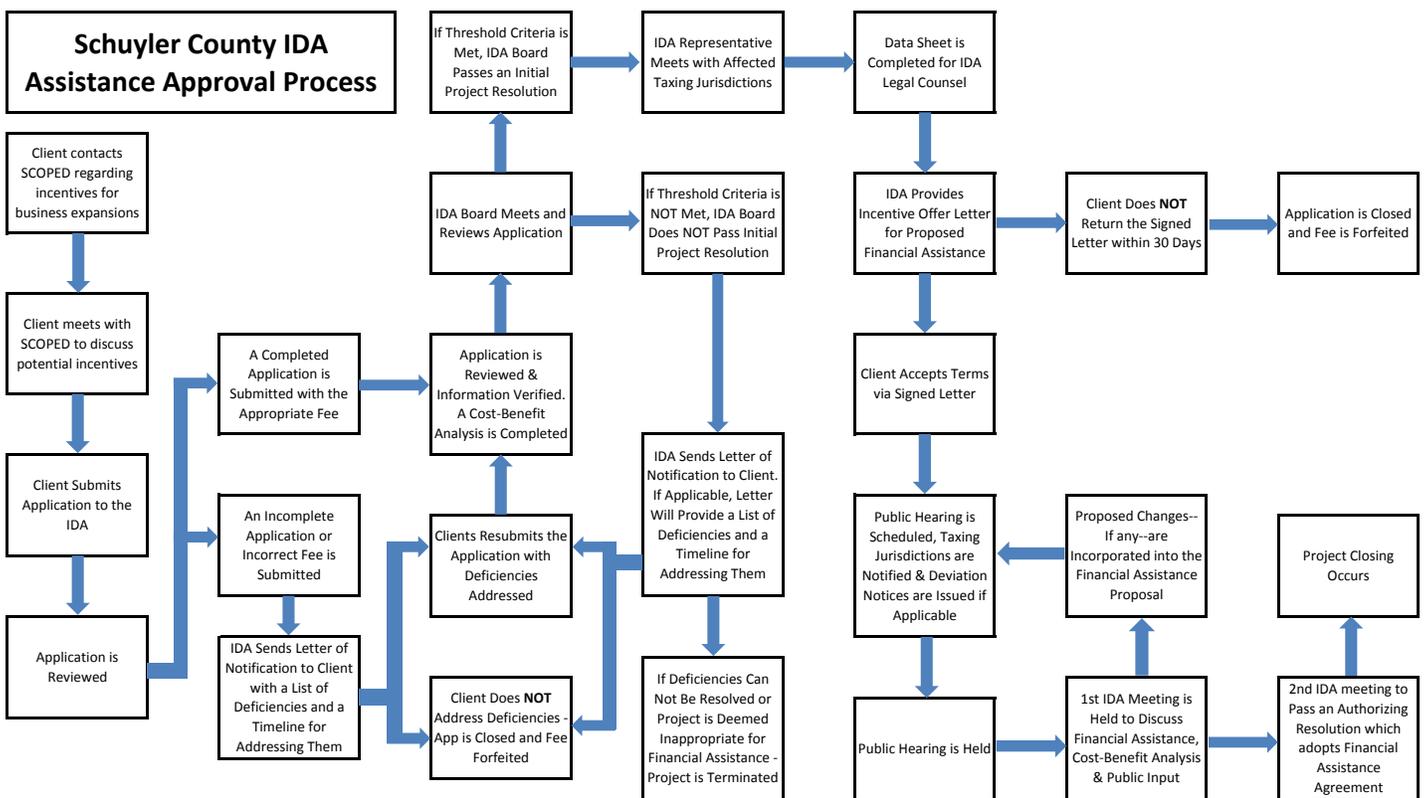
All of the properties that have been targeted will not require zoning changes for redevelopment, meaning projects can proceed without red tape and other bureaucratic obstacles. In other words, every dollar of DRI funding implemented in furtherance of these efforts will go solely toward the redevelopment of the properties, and will not pace any delays. The redevelopment of all 75 parcels will result in multiple significant benefits. The largest benefit is the catalyst to grow the year-round population while strengthening the employment base with quality jobs. The rejuvenation of the commercial spaces downtown coupled with affordable housing for all levels of income will provide incredible enhancement of the local real property tax base.

### **Watkins Glen Waterfront Transformation.**



The Schuyler County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) plays an integral role in the redevelopment of Watkins Glen. Nearly all projects related to housing redevelopment, lodging, and manufacturing have received SCIDA financial assistance. The SCIDA is taking a proactive role related to broadband wireless and last mile implementation in the Village, catchment area, and county. To ensure transparency and consistency the SCIDA has adopted an assistance approval process as illustrated below. This process provides a structured road map for all future development projects.

By developing an annual FAQ to inform the local residents/businesses of the long term savings related to local property taxes when new residents and businesses relocate to Watkins Glen, we can assure all newcomers including new Americans will be viewed as an asset and not a liability to our community. This effort, to inform and educate the community has already begun with public presentations indicating the importance of the international community to our wine, agriculture, education and tourism sectors. Watkins Glen has an excellent launch pad for creating opportunities for new Americans. This is evidenced by data that indicates nearly 9% of our downtown businesses are currently owned by non-native born Americans. These business owners have their origin of birth in Italy, China, Taiwan, India, Mexico and Guatemala. With the DRI funding we can continue this effort to diversify our businesses and population.



The following pages provide a short description of future projects, bot catalytic, current, and quality of life. Many are ready for implementation for more details read question 8 Readiness.

# CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## 1 N. FRANKLIN ST



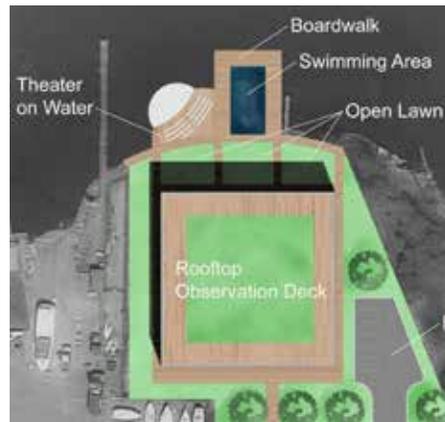
**Project Description:**  
A mixed-use building is proposed with a combination of retail and office space on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and transformation downtown residential apartments on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors with downtown character.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$3 million

**Project Schedule:**  
Fall 2019



## CURRENT WWTP SITE



**Project Description:**  
The reuse of the current Wastewater Treatment Facility will allow for a one-of-a-kind outdoor gathering space comprised of a theater on the water, outdoor lawn and recreation area and an observation deck for all ages.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$6 million

**Project Schedule:**  
Spring 2020



## 715 FRANKLIN ST



**Project Description:**  
A mixed-use building is proposed with a mix of commercial and residential space.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$3 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
2018/2019



# CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## SCHUYLER REDEVELOPMENT SITE



**Project Description:**  
An additional marina project is being proposed on a un-development parcel with walkable residential condos and apartments looking over the lake.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$25 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Spring 2020



## 15 N. FRANKLIN ST



**Project Description:**  
A renovated and modern indoor/outdoor restaurant with the current historical character of the building.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1.5 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Summer 2019



## 602 FRANKLIN ST



**Project Description:**  
Boutique Hotel & Spa Development.

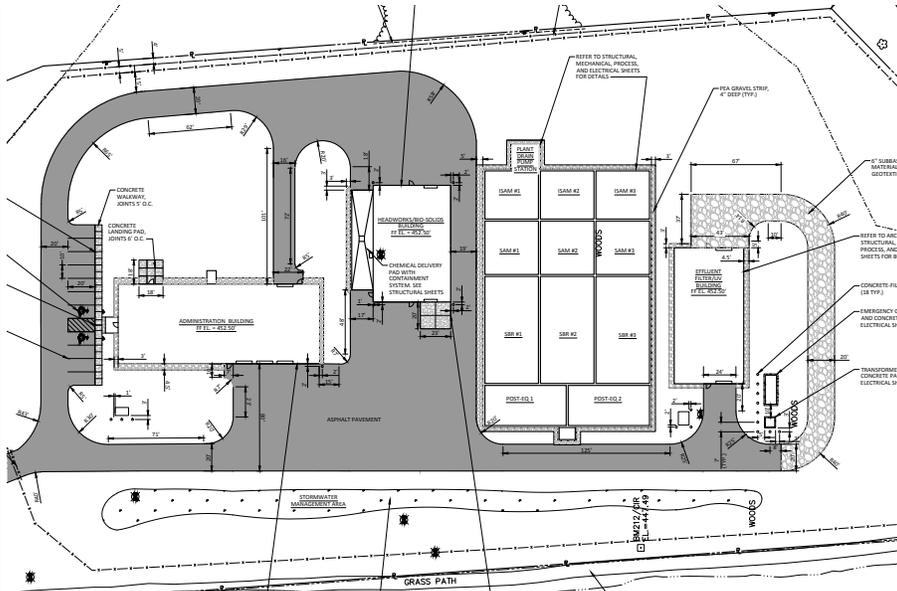
**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$5 million

**Project Schedule:**  
2019/2020



# CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## REGIONAL WWTP



**Project Description:**  
The creation of a Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant which has been designed to have an extra 30% capacity to accommodate future growth within the area.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$25 million

**Project Schedule:**  
Construction expected to begin in late Fall 2017

## BOUTIQUE HOTEL

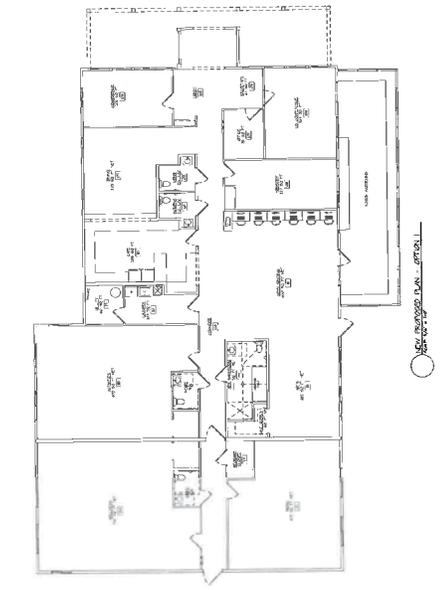


**Project Description:**  
The transformation of the old "Peele Building" at 214 N. Franklin St. into a Upscale Boutique Hotel.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Summer 2018

## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



**Project Description:**  
A neighborhood center and community space to meeting the communities space needs while acting as a launch pad for building social connections and volunteer/work opportunities within Schuyler County operated by the Arc of Schuyler

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1.8 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
2018-2019

# CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## SCHUYLER HOSPITAL CAPITAL PROJECT



**Project Description:**  
The hospital anticipates investing up to \$17 million including a \$10.5 million competitive grant and \$6.5 million in routine capital investment.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$17 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Spring 2018

## CLIPPER INN REDEVELOPMENT



**Project Description:**  
A redevelopment of Clipper Inn into a flag ship hotel that will offer new unique amenities in Watkins Glen.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$4 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Spring 2018

## MIXED-USE INCUBATOR SPACE



**Project Description:**  
The FLX Gateway CDC will develop a mixed-use incubator space on Franklin St. The building will include a 1<sup>st</sup> floor innovative incubator space providing community interaction on the street level. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor will be co-working space designed around young professionals/entrepreneurs with 3<sup>rd</sup> floor residential space to create a true, live, work, play environment.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1 Million

**Project Schedule:**  
Fall 2019

# QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECTS

## WATERFRONT MULTI-PURPOSE PATHWAY



**Project Description:**

Development of a multi-purpose lakefront pathway that connects the Waterworks Condo's to the Kayak/Canoe Launch.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1 million

**Project Schedule:**  
Spring 2018

## WINTER ICE RINK



**Project Description:**

Development of an outdoor ice rink that will accommodate ice hockey leagues, recreational ice skating, ice climbing and other winter activities.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$1.5 million

**Project Schedule:**  
Fall 2018

## PASSENGER RAIL



**Project Description:**

A proposed passenger and cargo rail transportation system from Downtown Watkins Glen to Downtown Geneva, a 2016 DRI winner, in cooperation with the Finger Lakes Railway that will provide an updated transit system to our community and easy access to Watkins Glen.

**Expected Total Project Cost:**  
\$6.8 Million

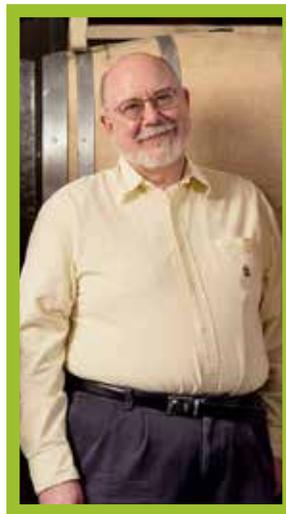
**Project Schedule:**  
Summer 2020

## 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.

The Village of Watkins Glen has benefited from new investment in and around our community, which have translated into new jobs. Since 2015, 25 new business were formed within the Village offering a broad range of services including: service-oriented businesses, retail businesses, and culinary and libation-related businesses. In the past three years, we have welcomed into the community health-related organizations, accommodations, and several eateries.

Nearby, we have experienced significant growth in business start-ups and related employment. All indicators support ample job growth. With continued investments into the Fire Academy, Cayuga Medical System, Watkins Glen State Park, Watkins Glen International Speedway, new wineries, vineyards, breweries, and expanded manufacturing facilities including dairy operations; we are certain of net new employment. To support these businesses, many young professionals are moving into the area and choose Watkins Glen for lifestyle reasons. They are working in a variety of professional fields supporting the build-out and operations of these new firms. This is supported by the number of new building permits for housing units issued within the Village in the past several years (75 permits). The architects, engineers, wine makers, brew masters, business managers, accountants and chefs, to name a few of the professionals, typically locate their families to this area as well.



**W**atkins Glen is the spark plug that fires the economic engine of Schuyler County and much of the Southern Finger Lakes Region. Downtown Revitalization in Watkins Glen will create a modern hub for activities and will act as a focus for the dynamic growth already occurring within the county. This hub will allow us to attract and retain the highly skilled young professionals

we require to form the entrepreneurial and professional base for our modern economy.

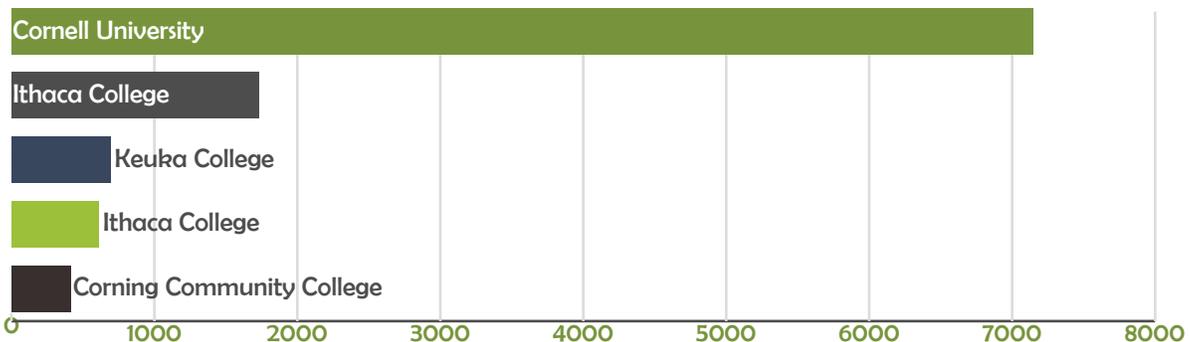
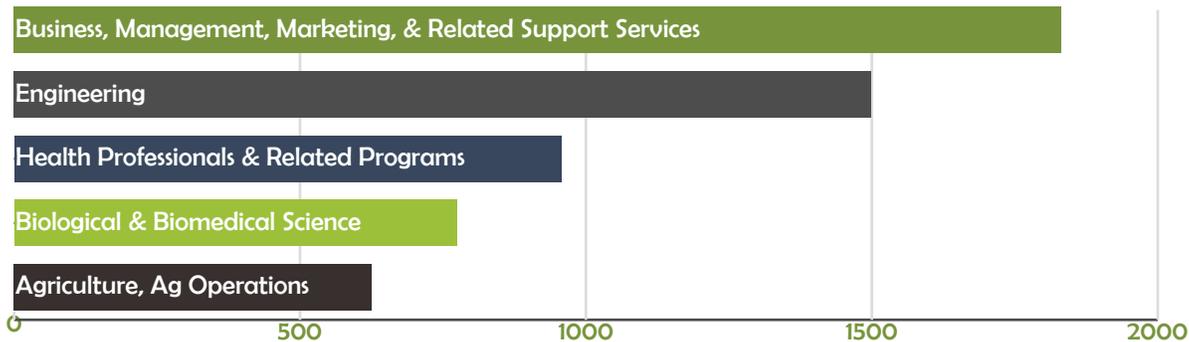
-Mark Rondinaro, Schuyler County Legislator,  
District 7

With the expected increase in production at Cargill Inc., the new shared wine facility at the business park, and expanded racing venues, we anticipate even greater year round job growth.

Total jobs within the Village of Watkins Glen area zip code (14891), saw an increase from 2013, with nearly every sector realizing gains in employment.

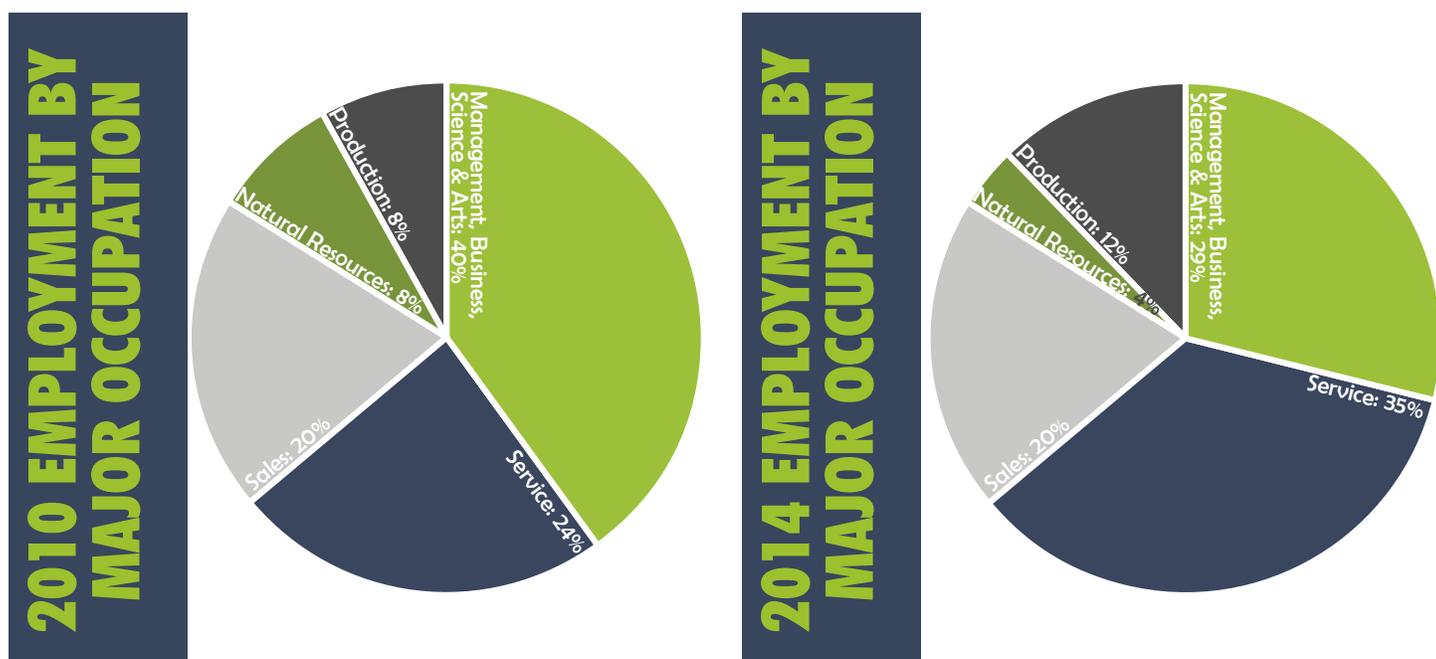
Watkins Glen is located in the heart of an educationally-rich region. The institutions of higher education offer Watkins Glen businesses an ongoing, ample supply of young professionals and a continually renewable workforce.

The top five institutions by size, within a short commute, include Cornell University, Ithaca College, Keuka College, Elmira College and Corning Community College. Research indicates that the top degrees being conferred annually that are of greatest importance to our local businesses include Business Management, Marketing and Related Support Services; Engineering; Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies; Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies; Personal and Culinary Services. The number of graduates within a 25 mile radius of Watkins Glen in these fields of study totaled 10,690 in 2015.



With the recently announced \$500,000 federal grant for the State Fire Academy, the continued investment in new construction, and the push to have the Montour Falls business park included in the StartUp New York program, we have an impetus for continued job growth. Moreover, with dedicated efforts to more closely align with Cornell University and Corning Community College, continued branding and marketing of the wine country and region, and a focused effort to attract trailing spouses to fill talent gaps and infuse entrepreneurial efforts, we firmly believe the foundation is in place for stellar job growth.

The diagrams below demonstrate the occupational mix within the Village of Watkins Glen. Our goal is to reverse the declining trend of the Management, Business, Sciences and Arts occupations and return them to the 40% level of the early decade.





# WATKINS GLEN IS GROWING...

Watkins Glen is on the verge of **explosive growth** as its popularity as a tourist destination continues to increase. Recent initiatives such as Project Seneca, coupled with local investment by residents and business alike are providing a **high level of energy and optimism for the future!**

-Tim O'Hearn,  
Schuyler County  
Administrator



## 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.

Watkins Glen exemplifies a truly remarkable confluence of natural, cultural, and recreational assets. The downtown area connects one of the most popular and spellbinding state parks in the country to an idyllic lakefront through a corridor of fine restaurants, breweries, boutiques, and historically registered buildings and sites. This accessible, walkable stretch of businesses, offices, shops and apartments also serves as the main hub for the award-winning wineries along the East and West shores of Seneca Lake. These attractions employ mostly local residents both seasonally and year-round. Many more work in surrounding towns and cities but choose to call Watkins Glen home because of the easy access to parks, waterfront, trails, farms and a vibrant downtown. For these residents, an evening hike through the gorge at Watkins Glen State Park is their daily vacation; a Sunday sail on Seneca Lake is their weekly escape; a casual lunch at Glen Mountain Market is their workday break; a two-mile stroll down the Catharine Valley Trail is their morning commute; a glass of local Riesling at Graft Wine + Cider bar or a live performance at the Glen Theater rounds out their weekend.

This tremendous wealth of accessible natural beauty deserves an appropriately accommodating and inviting downtown. Local businesses have worked alongside the Watkins Area Chamber of Commerce, Schuyler County Partnership, the FLX Gateway CDC, and the Village to create the inviting downtown atmosphere our town, residents and guests deserve; but we have a lot of work left to do. The downtown area must provide for not only our residents but the hundreds of thousands of guests we greet each year from all corners of the globe. This is a unique and expensive challenge, but the village is ready to tackle it with sustainable developments that seek to retain and enhance the unique character of Watkins Glen.

In downtown proper, a number of businesses have recently invested in renovating building facades and interiors including:

- GRAFT wine + cider bar – additional seating, new kitchen, upstairs special event space
- Atlas Pizza – purchase and renovation of current building to create a new eatery
- Rooster Fish Brewing – purchase and renovation of a previously vacant car dealership/garage to create a stunning brewery production facility, tasting room, and outdoor beer garden
- Beauty by Frenchies – purchase and renovation of a previously vacant store front (first floor) to create a hair salon and currently renovating the second floor to expand their service offerings and space
- Seneca Sweets Café – purchase and renovation of a previously vacant store front to create a new café and gourmet chocolatier
- The O’Shaughnessy Building has a previously vacant second and third floor space that is being converted to apartments, while a previously vacant space in the rear of the building now boasts a successful barber shop

These investments have created a more welcoming, cleaner, greener environment, but there are still a few blighted properties and empty lots that are a source of frequent complaints from residents and visitors alike. The FLX Gateway CDC is prepared to purchase, renovate, and reintroduce these properties as mixed-use spaces, providing important opportunity for business development and sorely-needed housing options downtown.

## **BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY + MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**

The challenge of delivering a downtown experience to rival the natural and cultural assets of Watkins Glen is being met business by business, block by block. Numerous storefronts, residences and commercial spaces long empty and neglected have come to life under the investments and careful attention of local and foreign business owners and community partnerships. From old car dealerships and maintenance garages springs a brewery, taproom, and regionally unique beer garden that plays host to year-round local charity events, theater reprises, and night festivals such as the annual Winterfest at Roosterfish Taproom and Beer Garden. From vacant medical supply shops on Franklin Street rises an upscale brick oven pizza restaurant in Atlas Pizza. In the heart of downtown, a boutique gift store expands into the adjacent storefront to create Seneca Sweets, offering handmade chocolates, candies, and a full breakfast and lunch menu in a spacious and inviting atmosphere with street views.

Each of these revivals is a victory for our downtown, enhancing the character and offerings for residents and guests and providing employment and pride for our community members. But with each victory, the neglected spaces become increasingly obvious. Some of these spaces will continue to be neglected as the community thrives around them. Without significant investment, these centrally located greyfields and vacant lots will be a millstone around the neck of economic development efforts in Watkins Glen.

The value of mixed-use space has been a prevalent theme in the strategic planning of the Village of Watkins Glen. Several sites have been identified for potential redevelopment into mixed-use commercial, residential, and retail spaces. The greyfield at 715 Franklin Street once housed a Pudgies Pizza but has sat vacant since the chain restaurant was demolished in the mid-90's. Within two blocks of the main entrance to the Watkins Glen State Park, this site fits the bill for a mixed-use development proposed for 2018/2019, providing modern commercial and residential space for young professionals and new businesses.

The ARC of Schuyler is planning a unique Neighborhood Center at 12th Street and Decatur to provide versatile space for collaboration of volunteers and workers with an eye toward recruitment and county wide volunteering and community involvement. This facility would further leverage the transportation and volunteer network the ARC of Schuyler has long coordinated for the entire county, in addition to providing job training for handicapped and non-handicapped member of the community.

Numerous other downtown commercial properties and lots (1 N. Franklin Street, 15 N. Franklin Street, 500 N. Franklin Street, 3rd Street Carriage House) have gone vacant and neglected for too long while progress continues around them. The downtown is hobbled by a lack of investment in key commercial spaces to update them for the needs of today's entrepreneurs.

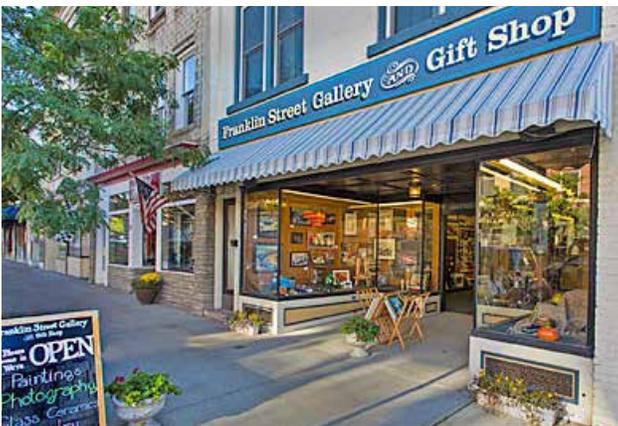
Luckily, planners have taken a proactive approach to zoning, so when funding is available these projects can skip the road blocks faced by most larger communities.



# COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL MAIN STREET BUSINESSES + CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT AMENITIES



Franklin Street, the portion of State Route 14 that runs through the village, is the main thoroughfare for commerce in downtown Watkins Glen. Various businesses occupy this space. Running parallel to Franklin Street, Decatur Street also features an eclectic mix of residential properties, historic buildings, and commercial ventures.



Entertainment options also abound in the Village of Watkins Glen. Franklin Street Art Gallery (operated by the Arc of Schulyer) offers openings. Visitors can admire the stunning works, and take classes in everything from fused glass to watercolors. Also nearby is the Quintus Art Gallery, which boasts a waterfront location with incredible art from local, national, and internationally-renowned artists and also provides a stunning event space, complete with an expansive deck on Seneca Lake. On any given day or night, you can also find live music on Franklin Street featuring local musicians and even those who come from a little farther afield.



The Village of Watkins Glen is home to the only beer garden in the region, the first farm brewery in the state (Rooster Fish), one of the most highly regarded wine bars in the region (GRAFT wine + cider bar), great antiques and shopping, street festivals, unique events, and so much more. For example, Hollenbeck Film and Experience Company recently created a new event series called "Night Market Watkins Glen" which is a dynamic nighttime experience, connecting people to the distinctive culture, community and creativity of the business district to animate a creative economy, spark interest, and inspire further exploration of the downtown.



The newly-minted Watkins Glen Performing Arts Center is poised to welcome acts and shows of all styles, sizes, and genres. Located in the heart of downtown, it will offer high-quality, affordable live entertainment in a clean and elegant facility. It will deliver a wide array of cultural, educational, entertainment, meetings and public gatherings to provide access to community groups and organizations.

In October 2017 Watkins Glen will play host to the Seneca Film Festival, a five-day film festival presented by the Finger Lakes Film Society. This festival will offer narratives, short films, and documentaries from around the world, as well as workshops and talks.

Downtown Watkins Glen businesses have proven themselves dedicated to not just growing commerce, but making the area a truly fun and unique place to live, work, and play. The Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce hosts a monthly First Friday event series year-round, bringing in wineries, breweries, distilleries, creameries, and more from throughout the region to offer tastings and samples inside of local shops. Recently, the Chamber has added art and live music to the event. With promising growth, this event series will continue to bring foot traffic into downtown Watkins Glen, generating sales and awareness for local businesses as well as adding to the great quality of life for the residents.



We chose Watkins Glen for the Seneca Film Festival, because it has an **international brand** and the potential to be a hub that naturally encourages people to migrate here to **work, live and play**. The charming business district and Franklin Street runs into a beautiful body of water.

That, coupled with the unique culture and close proximity to Ithaca, Corning and Elmira makes Watkins Glen a great place to do business. **It now sits at an ideal intersection of commercial opportunity and quality of life**. In practical terms, that means **Watkins Glen is an economic magnet** – by virtue of its concentration of beautiful state parks, lakes, waterfalls, wineries, breweries, hotels, and a world renowned race track. It certainly will help entertain our incoming guests that will be here for our festival. Those guests will include **filmmakers, actors, actresses, and movie lovers from around the world**.

I did not discover Watkins Glen on vacation or by accident. I grew up here, and it is one of my favorite places in the world. I’ve been gone for sixteen years, and I’m excited to be back to start the Seneca Film Festival and expand my businesses!

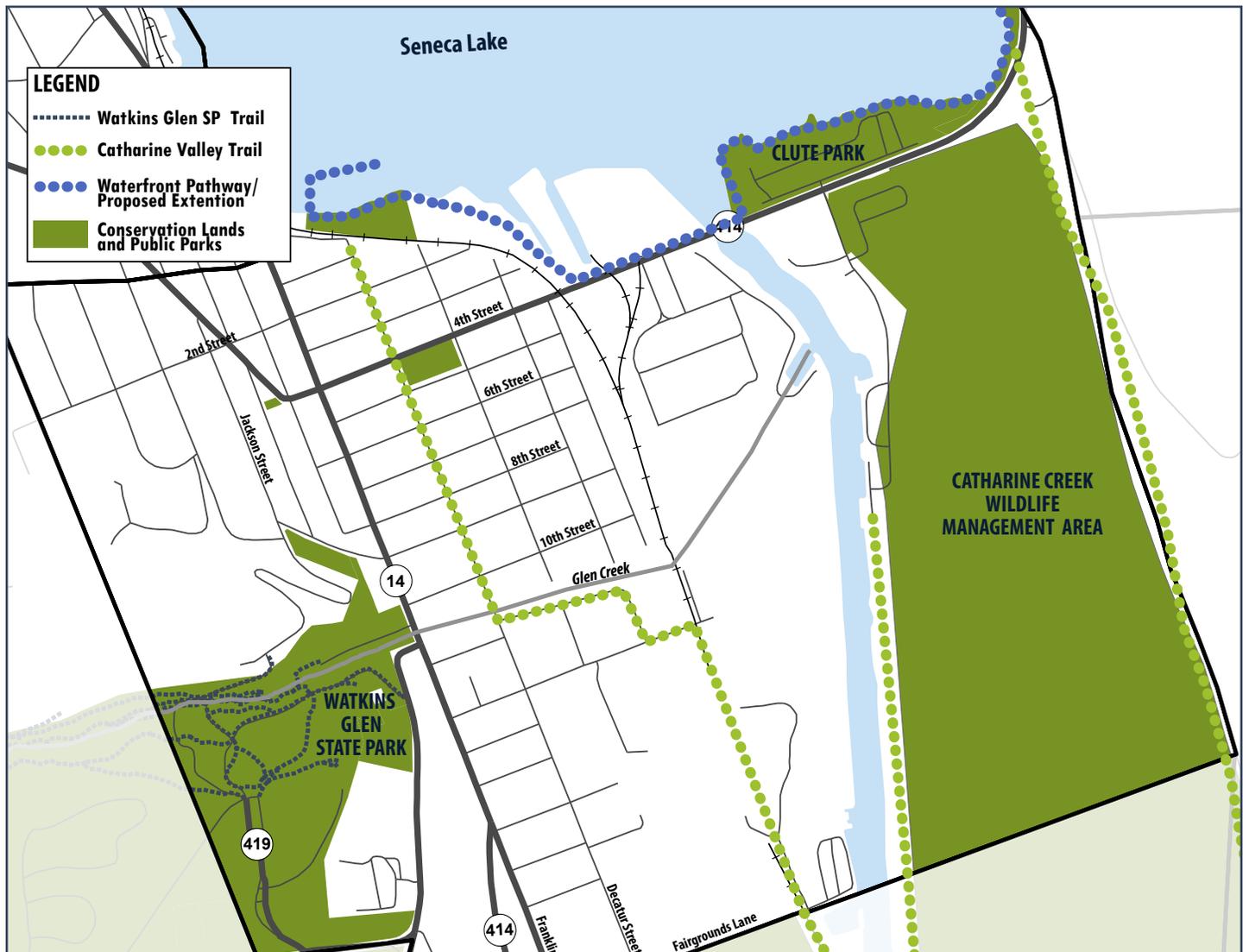
-Eric Hollenbeck  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Hollenbeck Film + Experience Company



# ACCESSIBLE RECREATION AMENITIES, WATERFRONT TRAILS, PARKS, AND GATHERING SPACES

The Village of Watkins Glen offers many recreation amenities, parks, and gathering spaces many villages only dream of. There is never a lack of things to do!

Watkins Glen State Park and the Seneca Lake waterfront anchor the recreational culture of Watkins Glen, but residents can choose from countless recreational options. One of the most exciting developments is the installation of a new handicap accessible kayak launch at the Southeast corner of Seneca Lake just past Clute Park. With approvals granted and construction imminent, the new kayak launch promises to provide accessible recreation to lake lovers who want to get safely on the water. This project represents a collaboration between the Village of Watkins Glen and the Department of Parks and Historic Preservation, investing \$500,000 towards the project which will include safe, off-street parking and will link the new kayak launch to the Waterfront Multi-Purpose Pathway via a new pedestrian bridge over the Seneca Lake inlet.



From the new kayak launch and multiuse pathway, land lovers can run, walk or cycle their way down Rock Cabin Road on the proposed Rock Cabin Road Scenic Trail running the Eastern edge of Queen Catharine Marsh. From the Southern terminus of the proposed trail, the Queen Catharine Marsh trails, operated by the NYS DEC, weave through the marsh and connect back to the Catharine Valley Trail via the Montour Marina. This network of trails creates a beautiful and educational loop and connects Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, serving the residents of both villages and providing access to the villages for hikers and backpackers along the Finger Lakes Trail which runs 584 miles from Allegany State Park through Watkins Glen to the Catskill Forest Preserve.

The Waterfront Multi-Purpose Pathway seeks to unite the new kayak launch, Clute Park, Lakeside Park, the marina, and the Waterworks apartments and condos through a safe and accessible pathway, opening up the *entire* southern lakefront for public access and serving to fully utilize the wonderful natural asset that we have in Seneca Lake.

The iconic Watkins Glen Pier House at Seneca Harbor Park watches over the many recreational opportunities on the lakefront. Fishing, boating and sailing are all enticing options from Seneca Harbor Park. If swimming is more your style, it can be done at Clute Park with the safety of lifeguard supervision. Clute Park also offers picnic and grilling areas, sand volleyball courts, basketball courts and an aging pavilion and bathhouse for public use. The amenities at Clute Park are set to receive a \$1 million upgrade in 2018 to accommodate year-round use through a partnership with Department of State, Local Waterfront Redevelopment Program. A unique event at Clute Park includes Movie Nights on the Lake which take place every Wednesday in July and August at Clute Park. Classic films are projected onto a screen where families can gather to enjoy an evening of relaxed entertainment – al fresco and *completely free* thanks to local business sponsors. The Clute Park Market, which also takes place every Wednesday from June through September, features local wine, craft beer, produce, cheese, food trucks, local ice cream and coffee, local art, and more.

The Olympic-size pool at the South entrance to Watkins Glen State Park offers swimming and diving throughout the summer as well.





Lafayette Park, centrally located in the village along the Catharine Valley Trail, is a popular gathering space for old and young alike. Weekly free concerts are held there, as well as the Watkins Glen Farmers Market. This clean, grassy, shaded area features a pavilion for events and a playground for children.

When the snow flies, residents have access to the indoor track and fitness center at the Watkins Glen Central School Field House. The indoor track is free to residents and guests and the modern, attended fitness center offers affordable memberships and drop-in fees as well as informal classes. The athletic facilities are a buzz of

community activity and exercise throughout the year, with student athletes and elderly residents sweating side-by-side. The field house also accommodates recreational volleyball and basketball leagues for the community and beyond, with some participants coming from Elmira and Ithaca for friendly weeknight competitions. The same is true for the soccer fields adjoining the school and Catharine Valley Trail. It's obvious, Watkins Glen has all of the natural, scenic assets that make this a beautiful place to live, we need the economic and business opportunities to match these assets – and with DRI funding, we can get there

## MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Schuyler County Transit operates a surprisingly comprehensive and affordable transportation service out of downtown Watkins Glen in partnership with the ARC of Schuyler. Handicap accessible buses serve the surrounding villages of Burdett, Montour Falls, Odessa, Hector, Valois and Reynoldsville. Ride fares cost \$1 per boarding or 50 cents for senior citizens and the disabled. Transportation to the City of Corning and Corning Community College campus, roughly a half hour ride, cost only \$2. Stopping at many employment centers and convenient locations, Schuyler County Transit serves Schuyler Hospital, the Guthrie primary care center, the Schuyler County Health and Human Services Complex, and multiple food markets and pharmacies. Beginning in the summer of 2017 the Schuyler Transit System will create an additional route to reestablish a connect to the Tompkins County Transit System with direct connections to large employment centers at the Cayuga Medical Campus, Cornell University, and Ithaca College.



The Schuyler County Transit system is currently working with Zagster, a national bike-share company, to develop a comprehensive bike share program that would connect employment centers with our downtown. The concept is to host bike share stations in locations that would allow residents to easily get from their place of work to the downtown area for lunch, or allow our visitors to take in our natural resources and fully experience the Village without the constraints of a car. A bike share program is an excellent option for enhancing transportation access within the Village and the DRI area. It adds value in the form of providing indirect marketing and branding service to the



downtown. The highly visible stations and riders, would broadcast a continual message to casual observers that downtown is an accessible place for recreation and entertainment. The recently widened shoulders along Route 14 encourage further access to the catchment area.

The Finger Lakes Railway has proposed a commuter rail service between the Watkins Glen waterfront and 2016 Downtown Revitalization Initiative winner Geneva at the North end of Seneca Lake. Watkins Glen is positioned uniquely between the past Downtown Revitalization Initiative winning villages of Geneva and Elmira. With the support of DRI funding, we have the potential to leverage a private investment of \$6.8 million from the Finger Lakes Railway to link three DRI winning villages by commuter rail, an unprecedented feat for the Finger Lakes region and the Southern Tier.

## HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE FOOD MARKETS

The Watkins Glen Farmers Market, held weekly throughout the summer and fall at the centrally located Lafayette Park on 4th and Decatur Streets, offers some of the freshest, healthiest, locally-sourced food available. Local small farms are able to offer premium produce at an affordable price because they retain all profits from the sale without having to sell to a retailer or distributor at a wholesale price. In addition the Market brings farmers and residents face to face. Local residents enjoy the opportunity to learn about how their food is grown and meet the farmers who create the celebrated bounty of the Finger Lakes.

Several wineries within the short driving distance from downtown also host weekly product markets open to the public, offering specialty foods that residents would otherwise have to travel 30+ minutes to find.

Tops Friendly Market and Walmart offer more conventional yet affordable year-round grocery options. Both are within the downtown area and walkable from all residences in the village. The Catharine Valley Trail can be accessed from the end of Fairgrounds Lane near the Schuyler County Shared Services Complex and less than a quarter mile from Tops Friendly Markets. This proximity to the main walking and biking avenue makes Tops accessible to residents of nearby Montour Falls as well as opening up the impressive Montour Falls Farmers Market to residents of Watkins Glen. In addition to being walkable, all markets listed above are stops along the Schuyler County Transit system.



# HOUSING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY AND TYPE

In the last few years, great progress has been made towards ambitious housing goals in the Village of Watkins Glen. Where housing options were limited largely to shabby upper level rentals or pricey homes, there now exists a wide range of new and well maintained housing options for most age groups and income levels. Improvements in waterfront accessibility and downtown business activity have spurred the recent execution of multiple private housing projects in the downtown area. **There is still work to be done but the best predictor of future growth is past success.**

The Waterworks Condos and apartments on Salt Point Road broke the mold for luxury lakefront housing upon their completion in 2014. The adjoining Quintus Art Gallery is icing on the cake for this burgeoning lakefront community that represents a \$3.4 million investment in housing infrastructure.

The nearby Watkins Brewery Apartments, recently completed, offer seven beautiful lake view townhouses to a high end clientele. This project displays a successful partnership between Watkins Brewery Holdings LLC and ESD, leveraging \$3.2 million of private/public investment in a previously derelict and dangerous lakefront building.

The Seneca Terrace Apartments are nearing completion near the Northern gateway to downtown Watkins Glen. Renting soon, these 22 market-rate units offer something for old and young between their lake view patios and downtown accessibility. This \$1.2 million

investment in housing came entirely from the private sector. The Watkins Glen High School, subsequently the former Middle School, is listed on the National Registry of Historical Places. In 2015 this vacant but iconic brick building on Decatur Street was renovated with support from HCR and ESD and now offers 48 units for low income adults aged 55 and up. This partnership with Two Plus Four Management Company has filled a much-needed gap in affordable housing in the village with handicap accessible, pet-friendly, affordable housing downtown and leveraged \$14 million towards meeting the housing needs of our residents. The historic auditorium and gymnasium facilities have been retained by the county and renovated to create the brand new Watkins Glen Performing Arts Center.

A 40-unit tiny house development and community on the hillside of Seneca Lake called "Le Bourgade" is being developed by Schikel Construction. This development will offer year round, long term leases with the first residents moving in June of 2017.

These new housing options are modern, attractive, and put Watkins Glen on the forefront of the regional housing market. However, there is still a demand for affordable housing options geared toward young professions. This presently unmet need continues to stymie new business development downtown. Plans to address it lack only funding.

---

...some residents who have moved on for educational or occupational reasons have the desire to return to their "home", but the lack of affordable and attractive housing limits the options...

---





# WATKINS GLEN IS VIBRANT...

"... there's no better getaway... it's known for its wine, lovely lakeshore scenery, and charming small town."

- Road Trippers

"How does this exist?!" I gasped as we stood on the overlook gazing at the slithering stone ravine below, the thundering waterfall ahead, and emerald tress above. Watkins Glen has become my new favorite park."

- Around the World

"L"....



## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FACILITIES



Our community is fortunate to have Schuyler Hospital, a world-class facility with hometown connections, as a crucial safety net for our residents and guests. In late 2014, it was announced that the hospital would merge with Cayuga Medical Center, to form Cayuga Health System. This afforded each facility increased purchasing power and efficiency in the oversight of clinical areas. Further, it supports a critical mass of patients for specialization that would not be feasible as separate institutions, such as specialized orthopedics and certain intervention cardiology practices. It also opens important affiliations to Schuyler Hospital including Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the Cleveland Clinic heart surgery

program, and the Heart Institute at Rochester General Hospital. Hospital leadership points to the impact on patients – the affiliation has allowed Schuyler County residents to travel less for medical care than ever before and has brought a wave of more specialized doctors and advanced programs and procedures into the Schuyler Hospital facilities. In addition to the proposed \$17 million investment over the next five years, Schuyler Hospital has made capital investments totaling \$6 million since 2014.

The Guthrie Hospital Network operates the Guthrie Clinic a comprehensive primary care facility including specialist in family medicine and cardiology, in the downtown area on First Street. Their physicians offer care for all ages. Both the Guthrie Clinic and Schuyler Hospital are part of the regular Schuyler County Transit routes and serve surrounding villages in the catchment area as well as Watkins Glen.

The Schuyler County Volunteer Ambulance Association operates four ambulances fully equipped for advanced life support. A not-for-profit organization, the SCVAA is based downtown on South Decatur Street in Watkins Glen and has been responding to emergency calls since 1969.

## EDUCATION

Watkins Glen Central School is located within the catchment area and is a hub of activity for the local community. It not only provides an outstanding, enriched educational experience for our youth, but is also a remarkable recreational asset. The Field House has a community-supported state of the art competition swimming pool and diving complex, physical fitness space, indoor and outdoor track, and courts for league volleyball and basketball. This field house is on par with some of the finest in the region and rivals even some small collegiate facilities.



Watkins Glen Central School, Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Ties to local institutions of higher education include Cornell University, Greater Southern Tier BOCES, Elmira College, SUNY Empire State College, and Corning Community College. These institutions provide training and resources to high school students, traditional college students, and non-traditional college students. They also draw a large population of future young professionals – many of whom are energetic, educated, excited Millennials – who visit Watkins Glen frequently, secure internships here and later, come back and work here. Further, as the cost of living increases in cities and villages of similar size and scope, the appeal of Watkins Glen only grows. These educated individuals are an untapped natural resource of the highest order and we have *nearly* everything we need to keep them here. The improvements that would be possible with the Downtown Revitalization Initiative **funding would transform the Village of Watkins Glen from simply appealing to flat-out convincing.**

# SUSTAINABILITY

Downtown Watkins Glen possesses characteristics that are second to none across New York State and across the globe.

From the soon-to-be constructed state of the art regional waste water treatment facility to the annual Green Grand Prix, the Village of Watkins Glen is embarking on a sustainable future!

Some “Cleaner Greener” Initiatives the Village is undertaking include:

- Newly installed, long lasting, and efficient LED Street lighting
- State of the art regional waste water treatment plant
- 70 newly planted trees in fall alone
- Bi-monthly curbside single stream recycling program
- Annual Village-wide dumpster day
- Low-flow toilets in all Village facilities
- Composting facility for local residents at Clute Park
- The encouragement of newly opened farm to table and solar operated eateries.
- Support of Solar Schuyler
- Creation of a community garden

Regionally our local wineries have invested in a number of small and large scale solar energy projects totaling over 130kW of solar energy within just a few miles of the Village of Watkins showing the commitment of local businesses to the preservation of and investment in our unique environment.

While Watkins Glen illustrates a diverse use of downtown facilities, progress has not kept up with demand. We need to advance to the next generation and strive for a sustainable and liveable future. Entrepreneurs are continuously searching for affordable space with Watkins Glen to invest; with this comes demands for the broader use of eco-conscious vehicles and EV charging stations; pressure for facilities that support work-life balance; and additional employment opportunities as well as additional housing options for generations X, Y and Z to prosper.



## 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.

The Village of Watkins Glen has a long history of proactively developing planning strategies to move the Village and downtown area forward. Which include:

- A new state of the art waste water treatment plant slated to come on-line in 2019
- ADA accessible sidewalks
- Public Transit improvements with a fleet of 9 handicap accessible buses
- Continuous collaboration with Schuyler County for project implementation and execution

In the past five years the Village has adopted several planning and development plans including an updated Comprehensive Plan, a Lakefront Management & Development Strategy, a Northern Gateway Improvement Strategy and several others.

### CLEANER GREENER INITIATIVES



### PROJECT SENECA



## Watkins Glen Business Improvement District (BID)

The FLX Gateway CDC is currently in the process of working with the Village of Watkins Glen, village business owners, residents, and the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce to implement a Business Improvement District (BID). It is expected that this effort will be completed in early 2018. The boundaries of the Business Improvement District match those of the DRI Boundary. This planning effort would be a perfect complement to the vision and strategies of the DRI effort.

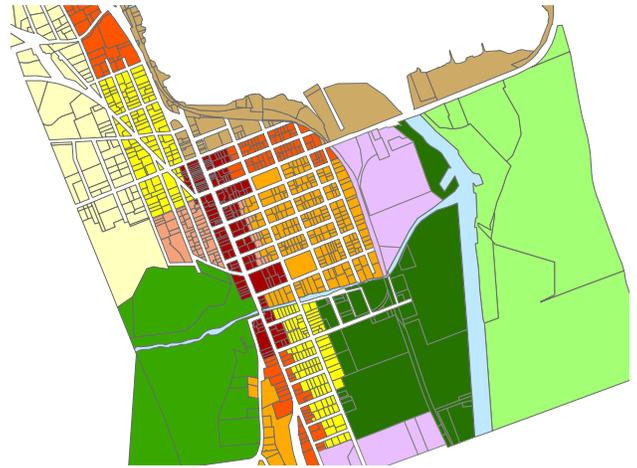
The objectives of the proposed BID include the following:

- Additional promotion of events on Franklin Street and downtown Watkins Glen
- Development of businesses with varying hours to develop a vibrant downtown neighborhood throughout the day
- Update parking – address the issues with current parking system and plan for the future
- Increased promotion of the walkability of the downtown area with improved signage and wayfinding throughout the district
- Addition of charging stations throughout the district
- Development of a downtown WiFi HotSpot
- Collaborate beautification and resource management

**Overall Theme for the District:** Inviting, Embracing of our Racing Heritage, Encompassing of our unmatched destinations in the Watkins Glen State Park, Seneca Lake, nationally recognized wineries, distilleries and breweries.

# Village of Watkins Glen Zoning Code

In 2016 the Village updated its zoning code to include modern development strategies and design guidelines aimed at developing a comprehensive and cohesive look and feel for the Village. Watkins Glen operates with a diverse zoning map. There are 11 zoning codes present which include different levels of residential zones, a business transitional zone, central business zone, lakefront development zone and others.



# Village of Watkins Glen Comprehensive Plan (2012)

## The Conceptual Plan

The Conceptual Plan was developed by studying the existing conditions, applying smart growth and sustainable community development principles that contribute to a vibrant community, including:

- Maintaining municipal and economic anchors downtown
- Maintaining architectural continuity
- Encouraging mixed-use development
- Improving transportation and linkages (landmarks, gateways, access to parking, way finding)
- Building and maintaining quality outdoor spaces
- Recognition of local history, and culture, i.e., branding
- Protection and/or sustainable use of natural resources
- Providing desirable residential options for entire community, and
- Supporting existing commercial and residential districts



Current image of the intersection of 6th and Franklin Street



Conceptual future improvements for the intersection of 6th and Franklin Street

# Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan - Adoption 2017

A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is a locally prepared comprehensive land and water use program for a community's natural, public, working waterfront, and developed coastal area. It provides a comprehensive structure within which to address critical coastal issues.

An approved LWRP reflects community consensus and provides a clear direction for appropriate future development. It establishes a long-term partnership among local government, community-based organizations, and the State. Also, funding to advance preparation, refinement, or implementation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs is available under Title 11 of the New York State Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP) among other sources.

# Waterfront Revitalization Program Policies

This section presents the Watkins Glen waterfront revitalization policies that guide waterfront actions to promote an appropriate balance between economic growth and environmental protection within the Waterfront

Revitalization Area (WRA). These policies take into consideration the physical, economic, environmental and cultural characteristics of the local waterfront.

The revitalization efforts of the Watkins Glen waterfront will focus on the following actions:

- Provide for the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized industrial and commercial land and structures in the Western and Central Lakefront areas.
- Develop improved public access and recreational opportunities in the waterfront park areas owned by the Village and the County and consider expanding these areas.
- Expand and capitalize upon the recreational boating opportunities offered by the lakefront and canal along with related residential and commercial development opportunities.
- Provide for development of land between the rail right-of-way and canal south of Fourth Street while preserving the environmentally sensitive features of this area and improving public access and recreational opportunities.
- Support efforts to provide for infrastructure needed to enhance and maintain allowable uses in areas where development is appropriate. Although the lakefront area predominantly consists of previously developed or currently developed lands, in some instances the existing infrastructure is inadequate for redevelopment or needs to be expanded to address identified needs.
- Support the preservation of historic and cultural resources found in the lakefront areas.

The following planning principles should be used to guide investment and the preparation of development strategies and plans for the waterfront:

- Scale development to be appropriate to the setting
- Design development to highlight existing resources and reinforce community identity
- Design the waterfront to increase public access to the area
- Provide connections and signage linking the waterfront and upland portions of the community;
- Integrate community and regional needs and market demands when making development choices
- Recognize environmental constraints as a limiting factor for development and devise ways to blend environmental preservation into site design, wherever possible, to achieve development without adversely impacting important environmental resources
- Restore environmental quality to degraded areas for both resource preservation and revitalization



**Example of new waterfront construction that is following the guidelines set forth in the LWRP**

## 7. SUPPORT FOR 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.

Many local community organizations have a deep history of supporting efforts within the Village, especially those related to improvements and livability. The result is a safe, welcoming environment. This current opportunity through DRI funding, to create an active, desirable, year-round downtown with a strong sense of place is very appealing to our stakeholders and community leaders.

The Village of Watkins Glen will designate the Village Superintendent as the initial lead. The Superintendent will work in close cooperation with the FLX Gateway CDC and Project Seneca. An inclusive committee will be created to ensure that all community voices are heard throughout the process as projects related to the DRI are undertaken and brought to fruition.

As indicated earlier in this application, both the FLX Gateway CDC and Project Seneca are ideal partners with which to share the workload, as both will help ensure inclusiveness and successful implementation. County and private organizations represented on the CDC and Project Seneca Steering Committee are already actively engaged with the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, ensuring adherence to the regional plan.

The support for downtown revitalization is conveyed through the numerous letters received from local businesses, leaders, and organizations. These letters are from partners in the private and public sectors who are supportive and also looking forward to playing an integral role with the DRI Planning Committee. Through the support in the letters found in Appendix A and B of this application it is evident that local entities realize the needs of the downtown area and are excited for this chance to have these needs addressed. Full letters of support can be found in Appendix B.

Based on past support for initiatives, we expect to have an array of organizations collaborating and supporting this effort. We anticipate full support and involvement of the following:

- Disadvantaged Workers
- Multi-generational natives as well as new residents to the region
- Legacy businesses and start-ups
- Nonprofits
- Civic Groups
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Local, Town and State Government
- Transportation related entities such as Finger Lakes Rail
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Schuyler County IDA
- FLX Gateway CDC
- CSS Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Board
- Organizations specific to community service, especially those working with new Americans.
- Foundational industries such as salt manufacturing and wineries



**B**uilding on the beautiful area and world renowned attractions like our wineries and international racetrack, DRI funding would enhance the downtown area and be a wonderful extension of our efforts to promote and **achieve healthy community** population goals. Watkins Glen, NY could provide more opportunities for healthy living encouraging more walking, biking, family activities, increased access to healthy eating options and quality healthcare, and community involvement... The revitalization in our downtown would **help us attract and retain young professionals, nurses, and physicians** to provide much-needed healthcare services to our residents. It would definitely go a long way in making the village a more desirable place in which to live, thrive, and be healthy.

Jim Watson  
President & CEO  
Schuyler Hospital

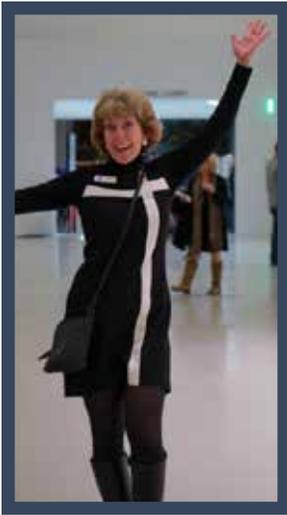
**O**ur greatest strength is our common goal – to improve Schuyler County for locals and visitors alike, and see that it soars into the future, solidifying its place as the **premier small town destination to work, live, and play in New York State.**

Brittany Gibson  
Tourism and Marketing Manager  
Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce  
FLX Gateway CDC Member



**T**he Village Board is respectful of our **Village traditions** and open to improvements that support economic development that would **improve the quality of the lives** of our local residents and business owners, while sustaining an equitable tax base for all... The Board supports the efforts to strengthen our tourist base and initiatives to provide **year-round employment** for our community. There is a strong interest in economic development while also sustaining green spaces in our neighborhoods

- Laurie DeNardo  
Trustee, Village of Watkins Glen



I have lived in the Finger Lakes Region my entire life and in Schuyler County most of my adult life. I love where I live, so it feels right to give of my time in support of the future growth of Schuyler County. It's an **exciting time**. We need to manage our resources – **natural, human and capital** – to ensure the Schuyler community is positioned for viable growth while maintaining the qualities and charm that make it unique.

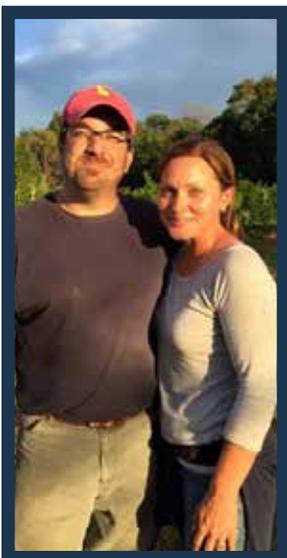
- Beth Duane

Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, Corning Museum of Glass  
FLX Gateway CDC Board Member

This program would be a boon for the Village of Watkins Glen and would complement the current \$6.5 million investment that the State is making in Watkins Glen State Park... The Parks project will help to anchor and create a destination gateway into the Village of Watkins Glen. Our **transformational project** will improve traffic flow along the north-south corridor of Franklin Street, improve the visitor experience to park visitors and will help stimulate the local and regional economy....

Fred Bonn

Regional Director, Finger Lakes Region  
NYS parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation



We have seen first-hand that this community embraces **responsible growth in a business friendly manner**. We are proud to call Watkins Glen our home and have invested out time, energy and money in this community because we believe in its future. With the DRI grant, the plan to build upon the foundation that has been laid by all of the hardworking small business owners and municipal community partners is unprecedented. Watkins Glen has the unique opportunity to stand out in Upstate New York as being the **"Village of Progress"**. The natural resources are here, the talent is here, the initial infrastructure is here, all we need is additional funding to pave the roadmap for the future.

Joshua and Lisa Navone  
Schooner Excursions, Inc.



**W**atkins Glen has communicated that it is willing to take up the challenge Governor Cuomo laid out in his remarks. That is “to have the vision and daring to transform itself” into a community that embraces and prepares for the future.... While Watkins Glen has had some resurgence in recent years, there remains a lack of adequate housing stock and insufficient commercial buildings. We are poised for potentially meteoric growth and \$10 million dollars would be exactly what is needed to reestablish the crown jewel that Watkins Glen once was in New York State. The DRI is **perfectly timed to accelerate the momentum that has been built over the past three years to revitalize the Watkins Glen Area** and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

Judy McKinney Cherry, CEC  
Executive Director,  
Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development

**W**ith the **climate of growth and development** our community is currently experiencing and investigating, the funding this grant provides can only enhance the opportunity for continuous improvement moving forward.

Thomas J. Phillips  
Superintendent of Schools  
Watkins Glen Central School District



**W**ith a targeted investment in revitalizing the gateways and main thoroughfares in Watkins Glen, I foresee an increasingly **vibrant community** with year-round residents living and thriving. I also envision a fully integrated workforce and business community with veterans taking active roles in community planning, leadership, small business start-ups and growth..Watkins Glen is a very desirable community and one that is on the **cusp of greatness**. This initiative could be exactly what the Village, Finger Lakes and State needs to stimulate the positive momentum the community has experienced in the past several years.

Joan E. Scott  
Director, Schuyler County Veteran Service Agency

# COMMUNITY INPUT



In an effort to ensure this DRI application was fully supported and driven by the Community, the DRI Committee held a Public Input meeting on May 31, 2017. In what was an overwhelmingly positive and forward-thinking meeting, attended by over 35 community leaders, business owners, residents and downtown users. The committee asked three important questions:

## 1. What is at the top of your wish list for Downtown Watkins Glen?

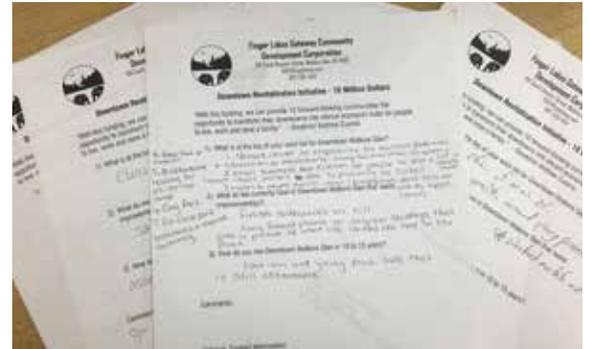
- **Family-friendly** activities and opportunities
- Ice skating rink
- **Winter activities**
- Little things matter
- Entertainment (evening, non-drinking related)
- Themes to tie in the rest of our area to downtown Watkins Glen
- Accommodations
- Need to **diversify our business offerings** and attractions
- Parking garage
- **Cater to young professionals and area universities/colleges**
- Apartment complexes, condos — **young professionals are leaving because they have to**, not because they want to...
- Attract light industrial jobs
- Business Center where people could have a “test kitchen” of sorts for their businesses — incubator
- Nature Center to welcome kids and families — guided tours, walking trails, etc.
- Would CCC set up a satellite here in our area based upon an environmental focus, wineries to focus on a viticulture/geology focus?
- **Community-wide Wi-Fi**
- Designated bike lane, become more bike-friendly
- Something to unify downtown. Tree pits to extend down the length of downtown
- Walkability and accessibility — key

## 2. What do we currently have in Downtown Watkins Glen that needs improvement(s)?

- Appearance
- Need additional foot traffic through businesses
- **Street lighting**, more pedestrian friendly lighting
- **Need to repair our blighted/empty storefronts**
- **Incentivize beautification efforts**
- Offer help to business owners for beautification/improvements
- Need to draw attention to crosswalks — **visibility**
- Lafayette Park is under-utilized, need more to do there
- Designated pavilion to utilize as an entertainment hub, to be used after dark — get people off Franklin Street and into the other small businesses.
- Need more attention on the fact that we are the home of American Road Racing.
- Need entrepreneurs/business owners who would go into an **incubator-type space**
- Rent control — need to **improve rent rates** in the area. Buying buildings and putting them back on the market at affordable rates would be a solution.
- Need entry-level properties for small businesses.

### 3. How do you see Watkins Glen in 10 to 15 years?

- Balanced, **affordable housing availability**. Need more family homes, places for people to live and stay here. Not as many vacation rentals/accommodations. **Young professional housing**, apartments.
- Rail service
- **Year-round**
- Boutique-style shops
- Take a train from Geneva to Watkins Glen and other surrounding towns/cities.
- Developed and accessible waterfront



## DRI Planning Committee

With the ultimate goal of the Village of Watkins Glen being selected as the 2017 Southern Tier DRI Community an initial DRI Planning Committee has been created. Work on the development of goals and strategies to accomplish the DRI Vision, and development of an DRI Action Plan will be facilitated by Watkins Glen’s DRI Planning Committee which will consist of a wide range of interest and experience, including representation from the Village of Watkins Glen, SCOPED, the REDC for the Southern Tier Region, Schuyler County Planning, the FLX Gateway CDC, Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, educational institutions, property owners and resident, and other stakeholders as necessary.

The Village of Watkins Glen has established the following DRI Planning Committee Members;

Representative	Title	Organization	Sector
Sam Schimizzi	Mayor	Village of Watkins Glen	Government
Gary Schmidt	Village Trustee	Village of Watkins Glen	Government
Laurie DeNardo	Village Trustee	Village of Watkins Glen	Government
Tim O’Hearn	County Administrator	Schuyler County	Government
Kristin VanHorn	Director of Planning	Schuyler County	Government
Judy McKinney Cherry	Executive Director	SCOPED	Non-Profit Community Development
Ben Stamp	Board Member	FLX Gateway CDC	Non-Profit Community Development
Brittany Gibson	Tourism & Marketing Manager	Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce	Business/ Tourism
Eric Hollenbeck	CEO	Hollenbeck Film + Experience Company	Arts/ Cultural
Jeannette Frank	Executive Director	The Arc of Schuyler	Services for the Disadvantage
Ken Wilson	Resident	-	-
Jon Beckman	Vice President Business Development & Partnerships	Watkins Glen International	Tourism
Keith Klug	Plant Manager, Cargill Salt	Cargill Inc	Manufacturing

It is anticipated that this Committee will be revised and updated following selection as the 2017 Southern Tier DRI Community and input from New York State and the Regional Council.

# Summary of Near\* and Long Term Projects

## Main Street Redevelopment Projects

**1 North Franklin Street**  
Cost Estimate: \$3,000,000

**715 Franklin Street**  
Cost Estimate: \$3,000,000

**15 North Franklin Street \***  
Cost Estimate: \$1,500,000

**602 Franklin Street**  
Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000

**Glen Resort**  
Cost Estimate: \$1,000,000

**Mixed-Use - Incubator Space**  
Cost Estimate: \$2,000,000

## Lakefront Redevelopment Projects

**Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant \***  
Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

**Redevelopment of Former Wastewater Treatment Plant Site:**  
Cost Estimate: N/A

## Housing Projects

**Waterfront Housing Project, Schuyler Redevelopment Site \***  
Cost Estimate: \$25 million

**Housing Stock Improvements & Appearance**  
Cost Estimate: \$300,000/ year

**2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Housing Conversions**  
Cost Estimate: 500,000/per building

## Streetscape Improvements Projects

**Increased Landscaping & Consistent Appearance**  
Cost Estimate: \$200,000

**Lighting Upgrades, Lighting Plan-Consistent Appearance \***  
Cost Estimate: \$150,000

**Sidewalk Upgrades and Repairs**  
Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

**Information Kiosks / Wayfinding**  
Cost Estimate: \$4,500 per kiosk

**Public Artwork**  
Cost Estimate: \$50,000/ year

**Northern Gateway Improvements \***  
Cost Estimate: \$400,000

## Open Space/Park Projects

**Catharine Creek Area Preserve Improvements**  
Cost Estimate: N/A

**Kayak/Canoe Launch at "Tank Beach" \***  
Cost Estimate: \$500,000

**Seneca Harbor Park Ice Rink \***  
Cost Estimate: \$1,500,000

**Clute Park Pavilion Reconstruction**  
Cost Estimate: \$1,000,000

**Trails and Linkages Projects**  
**Interpretive Trail through the Queen Catharine Marsh**  
Cost Estimate: N/A

**Improved Linkages to Long Distance Hiking Trails**  
Cost Estimate: \$120,000

**Lakefront Multi-Purpose Pathway**  
Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000

**Parking Improvements Projects**  
**Development of a Comprehensive Village Wide Parking Plan & Parking Structure**  
Cost Estimate: \$21,000,000

**Infrastructure Projects**  
**Shoreline Stabilization and Repair**  
Cost Estimate: \$75,000/ year

**Glen Creek Stabilization**  
Cost Estimate: \$900,000

**Cargill Shoreline Stabilization**  
Cost Estimate: \$900,000

**Passenger Rail Service - Finger Lakes Rail**  
Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000

**Pedestrian Bridge over Franklin Street at Watkins Glen State Park**  
Cost Estimate: \$1,000,000

**Community Projects**  
**The Neighborhood Center operated by Arc of Schuyler \***  
Cost Estimate: \$1,800,000

**Schuyler Hospital Capital Project**  
Cost Estimate: \$17,000,000

## 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.

There are over \$180 million of documented development projects planned for the immediate vicinity of the Village over the next five years. Of this amount, \$104 million could be invested within the next two years with DRI support. Later in this proposal are letters of intent from investors. Several of the projects have already started the local planning and zoning processes. Those with projects that could be leveraged by the DRI include interested investors, business leaders, current employers, local developers and out-of-state developers. The range of projects is diverse and offer both year-round and seasonal employment. The sectors covered by the projects include manufacturing, health, transportation, education, spectator sports, and hospitality. Seventy percent of these projects are under the site control of the developing party or have a willing property owner prepared to facilitate the development.

Specifically, planned investments in manufacturing facilities will be \$25 million in the next 18-24 months. The projects include an expansion for a new product line with a nearly 10 percent increase in manufacturing jobs at Cargill (located within the boundary area) as well as the renovation of manufacturing space (including new jobs) at US SALT (within the catchment area). The investment amount also includes a new production facility at the business park. Cargill is currently working through permitting processes and should be completed within two years. US Salt is working along the same timeline.



The Finger Lakes Railroad plans to make a nearly \$7 million investment in infrastructure to support its current clients (Cargill and US SALT) and to expand its service offerings. The expansion would include the upgrade of the track to support a year-round passenger excursion offering. Other investments in hospitality and spectator sports total \$20 million. These investments include the development of a branded hotel (currently in the zoning process), improvements at Watkins Glen International Speedway, expansion of the International Racing Research Center which has recently taken control of the new site, and improvements at the Harbor Hotel.



Housing projects (3) include over \$30 million of investment with an estimated 100 construction jobs and as many as 15 full-time permanent jobs. These projects include single family housing, apartment and condominium projects.



Other near-term investments include a major facility upgrade at the Watkins Glen High School in the amount of \$12 million and an investment of \$10 million for new facilities at the Schuyler Hospital.

Appendix A outlines several local and regional businesses planned commitment to continue to invest in the Village of Watkins Glen and the community.

## 9. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

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

The Village of Watkins Glen has the internal strength and fortitude to manage contracts as well as the amicability to work seamlessly with partnering organizations such as Schuyler County, Town of Dix, Town of Reading, Village of Montour Falls, the Schuyler County Industrial Development Agency, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development, and the FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation. Together, these organizations bring a deep experience base and capacity for the adept administrative management of public funds. These organizations also have extensive experience with ensuring a welcoming public input process and transparent decision matrix. There are many examples of the management of concurrent contracts as well as the management of complex funding sources with diverse and stringent reporting requirements.

Furthermore, community is well-versed in executing inter-municipal agreements for the management of services, contracts, and initiatives. A prime example of this is the \$25 million Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant project which has concurrent funding and reporting requirements for federal, state and regional grants and loans. The funding organizations have or will include, the NYS DOS, EFC, ESD, DEC, USDA, CDBG, EDA and the ARC. This project has a locally-developed Joint Project Committee (JPC) which meets monthly in public and includes representatives of multiple governments, subject matter experts, interested citizens and others to provide administrative support. This structure has afforded this project broad public support, timely decision-making, rapid course correction and consistency in managing unforeseen issues. The delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each organization provides an interlocking system of support that ensures thorough project management from establishment of policy and vision through initiation, implementation, on-going reporting, and final reporting upon completion.

The following chart outlines the roles and responsibilities of the primary economic development generators within the county and how they work together for the overall betterment of the community.

# Local Administrative Capacity

Category	Activity	Village of Watkins Glen	SCOPED	IDA	FLX Gateway CDC	Project Seneca
<b>Organizational Type</b>		Local Municipality	501(c)6	Local Public Authority	501(c)3	Independent
<b>Goals/ Focus Area</b>			Building a thriving and sustainable economy. To promote the formation, retention, expansion and attraction of target businesses in the area.	To promote the prosperity of its residents through the creation of jobs (new or retained), recreational, and economic opportunities in Schuyler County.	To improve economic well-being in Schuyler County and the region through a community-driven, collaborative approach that fosters economic vitality	Drive regional economic growth through investment in targeted initiatives along the southern shore of Seneca Lake and throughout the County.
<b>Policy</b>	Sets Economic Development Policy		X			
	Manages Regional Relationships	X	X			X
<b>Project Implementation</b>	Implements economic development initiatives	X	X		X	X
	Conducts Project management	X	X		X	X
	Engages community in initiatives (residents, entrepreneurs, businesses)	X	X		X	X
<b>Incentives &amp; Financial Assistance</b>	Provides Real Property Tax Abatement			X		
	Provides Sales Tax Exemption			X		
	Provides Mortgage Recording Tax Exemption			X		
	Provides Taxable Exempt & Taxable Bond Financing			X		
	Makes Low Interest Loans		X	X	X	
<b>Administration</b>	Applies for grants	X	X		X	X
	Convenes Project Advisory Committees	X	X		X	X
	Holds Public Forums	X	X	X	X	X
	Administers grants	X	X		X	X

**APPENDIX A**  
**WATKINS GLEN** **20**  
**DOWNTOWN**  
**REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE** **17**  
**LETTERS OF INTENT**

**this page intentionally left blank**

Schuyler Redevelopment LLC  
250 North Genesee Street  
Montour Falls, New York 14865

June 1, 2017

Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

We applaud and support fully the Village of Watkins Glen's application for Governor Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative \$10 million grant competition. Thank you for the opportunity to provide support and input into your application.

As real estate developers, local business leaders and active community members, we have a continuing interest in our history of investing in the Watkins Glen area. We are currently in the preplanning stage of developing our lakefront property East of the Village Marina. We anticipate this development will result in a total investment of as much \$25,000,000 over the next five years. The construction phase employment could be as high as 100. Permanent employment could be 5 to 10. Having the State's \$10M support in Watkins Glen would be critically important as we move forward.

Please feel free to contact us at 607-535-5400.

Best regards,

Stephen D Campbell  
A. Scott Welliver  
Partners  
Schuyler Redevelopment LLC

617 Dingens Street  
Buffalo, New York 14206  
Telephone: 716/893-6551  
FAX: 716/893-6517  
www.harthotels.com

June 6, 2017

Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

Please accept this letter of support for the Village of Watkins Glen's application for Governor Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative \$10 million grant competition. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your application.

As the current owner operator of the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, we have seen tremendous local growth in our industry over the last ten years in addition to an uplifting of the village spirit and entrepreneurial investment. We have interest in additional investments in the village of Watkins Glen. With the State's investment of \$10 million, this Village can recapture the international prominence it once enjoyed by transforming into a year-round destination that includes workforce housing, infrastructure for the increasing number of year-round residents, lodging and amenities for year-round visitors, village-wide WIFI, and facilities for young professionals and entrepreneurs to work within.

Having completed our initial due diligence we have projects estimated to cost over two million dollars over the next 1-3 years in a new business and enhancements to the hotel. We estimate the increase in employment at eight full time positions. Having the State's \$10M support in Watkins Glen would be critically important as we move forward.

Please feel free to contact me at 716-893-6551.

Best regards,



David Hart

President and CEO



610 South Decatur Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891-1613  
607-535-9044  
research@racingarchives.org  
www.racingarchives.org

#### GOVERNING COUNCIL

Bobby Rahal, Chairman  
John Saunders, Vice Chairman  
Archie Urciuoli, Secretary  
Scott Welliver, Treasurer  
Lawrence Auriana  
Mitch Bishop  
Evan Fay Earle  
Gregory G. Galdi  
J. Robert Henderson  
Laurence Kessler  
Robert M. Newman Jr.

Tony Parella  
David Porter  
Michael Printup  
Marolyn Rogers

#### CHAIRMEN EMERITUS

John Bishop  
Syd Silverman

#### DRIVERS COUNCIL

Mario Andretti  
David Donohue  
Hurley Haywood  
Scott Pruett  
Brian Redman  
Lyn St. James  
Rusty Wallace

#### HISTORIANS COUNCIL

Don Capps  
Will Edgar  
Karl Ludvigsen  
Michael Lynch  
Peter Sachs  
János Wimpffen

Thomas Weidemann  
Executive Director

The IMRRC is a  
501(c)(3) charitable organization

Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 N. Franklin St.  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

The International Motor Racing Research Center fully endorses the Village of Watkins Glen's application for the \$10 million grant program in Gov. Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to provide support and input into your submission.

As a thriving part of the Watkins Glen community since 1999, the Racing Research Center has a genuine interest in maintaining and enhancing its presence in the area. A planned investment in our future, coupled with confident and exciting steps to be taken by our neighbors, bodes well for Watkins Glen and Schuyler County.

The Center is unique as a research and archival library dedicated to the preservation and sharing of materials relating to the history of automobile racing, encompassing all types of competition and race tracks worldwide. Motorsports enthusiasts and scholars from around the globe have recognized the value of our mission, and for them we have become a travel and work destination.

With the state's investment of \$10 million, the greater Watkins Glen community will see its international prominence enriched with qualities important and attractive to residents and visitors alike, such as work-force housing; improved and expanded infrastructure, including villagewide Wi-Fi; entrepreneur work-site facilities; and lodging and amenities for year-round guests.

Having completed our initial due diligence, the Racing Research Center expects to undertake a major capital project to be completed within three years. It is estimated that the total project cost will be in excess of \$6 million. The project will greatly expand our facilities and capabilities to serve the international academic and motorsports communities. We will incorporate state-of-the-art archival standards in the construction to ensure the best environment for our collections as well as for visiting fans and researchers.

The Center's own growth will be greatly complemented by the state's critically important \$10 million support in Watkins Glen.

Please feel free to contact me at 607-535-9044 with any questions about the Center, its future and our commitment to Watkins Glen and Schuyler County.

Best regards,

Tom Weidemann  
Executive Director  
International Motor Racing Research Center



## FINGER LAKES RAILWAY CORP.

P.O. BOX 1099  
GENEVA, NY 14456  
Phone (315) 781-1234  
Fax (315) 781-2505  
[www.fingerlakesrail.com](http://www.fingerlakesrail.com)

June 7, 2017

Mr. Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

Finger Lakes Railway Corp. (FGLK) is a short line freight railroad that provides a necessary transportation option for rail customers in Watkins Glen, principally Cargill Salt and U.S Salt, that is both economically competitive and environmentally friendly.

With their current expansion plans over the next 5 years in Watkins Glen and to stay competitive in their respective product markets, our shippers need the ability to ship heavier loads to maximize the value of their transportation dollars. For the railway, ties, ballast, crossings and rail are in need of upgrading to support the 286,000-pounds design capacity of the newest railroad freight cars. That both salt companies need to stay competitive.

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative presents an opportunity to upgrade the rail line for local shippers and to provide a passenger excursion option for the community.

FGLK currently runs limited excursions, but not in Watkins Glen due to the current rail line's track conditions. The train operates below 10 MPH. To ensure an authentic, timely and pleasurable experience, the tracks need to be upgraded to FRA Class 2, which would provide for trip speeds up to 20-25 MPH and allow the timely schedule that would draw visitors to the trains, i.e. for families, a round trip schedule that will match their children's attention span.

Enhancing a freight rail line by adding a passenger excursion capability could be the starting point for later rail connections to an expanded rail excursion network. This funding could present Watkins Glen with expanded tourism opportunities in the fall and winter, such as "leaf peeping", snow shoe or cross-country skiing trains.

FGLK believes that when the communities we serve prosper, so follows our future. We are very supportive of the initiative on behalf of Watkins Glen and its surrounding communities.

Overall project cost estimate \$6,800,000.00 and one-year construction from time of award. Project could be broken into two or three phases, but would require one-year construction per phase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.V. Smith".

Michael V. Smith  
President

# *Seneca Signature Scents*

CREATE A SCENT AS UNIQUE AS YOU

June 4, 2017

Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Samuel Schimizzi,

Growth in the Perfume and Fragrance Store industry is projected to grow by 1.9% over the next five years (Ibisworld). In addition, tourism in the US has experienced steady growth over the past five years and is expected to continue increasing over the next five years (Ibisworld). Together, these facts support a decision to bring a new experiential opportunity to downtown Watkins Glen, an internationally known tourist destination that attracts people who enjoy being active.

By July 15, 2017, Seneca Signature Scents will open in downtown Watkins, where patrons will be invited to create their own signature perfume. Seneca Signature Scents will also offer a variety of Finger Lakes-inspired products that will initially be purchased for resale. Ultimately, Seneca Signature Scents will be expanded to include a production operation that will manufacture the products sold on-site.

Seneca Signature Scents will employ one person full-time and two people part-time. The experience is not weather dependent. Seneca Signature Scents hours will allow guests to include this experience in their vacation itineraries around other popular area attractions, such as wine tasting, hiking, biking, swimming, and auto racing.

The goal is to be open year-round, with at least one day that features evening hours. To facilitate this, Seneca Signature Scents will employ an aggressive, regional marketing campaign, which will also positively impact the area's economy. Financial projections are based on tourists from mid-April through mid-October and will draw from Corning, Horseheads, and Ithaca to maintain operation from mid-October through mid-April. Seneca Signature Scents will cater to females as the decision-maker, although options designed to appeal to other demographics – males, couples, and school-aged children – will be available. I look forward to developing partnerships with area school districts, tailoring the experience to state curriculum requirements, and will also look to bring in experts to offer classes during the off-season.

Seneca Signature Scents is a new endeavor for downtown Watkins. I understand the model has been tried locally, but believe that the location and decision to position the experience as a component of a day spent wine-tasting was detrimental to its success. When positioned as a stand-alone activity done in addition to other popular activities, similar – and successful – models can be found around the world.

- Scranton: <https://www.notefragrances.com/>
- London: [www.theperfumestudio.com/about-us/worlds-finest-blends](http://www.theperfumestudio.com/about-us/worlds-finest-blends)
- New York City: <https://scenterprises.com/>
- Brooklyn: <http://alchemologie.com/>
- New Orleans: <http://www.neworleansperfume.com/custom.html>
- Europe: [www.virginexperiencedays.co.uk/design-your-own-perfume-platinum-experience-for-one](http://www.virginexperiencedays.co.uk/design-your-own-perfume-platinum-experience-for-one)

Please let me know if you have questions. As always, I am open to your thoughts and recommendations.

Kindly,

*Stephanie*

Stephanie Specchio



**APPENDIX B**  
**WATKINS GLEN** **20**  
**DOWNTOWN** **17**  
**REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE**  
**LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

# Village of Watkins Glen

*“The Heart of the Finger Lakes”*

Sam Schimizzi, Mayor  
Anthony J. Fraboni, Trustee  
Laurie DeNardo, Trustee  
Kevin Thornton, Trustee  
Gary Schmidt, Trustee

303 North Franklin St.  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891  
Telephone: (607) 535-2736  
Fax: (607) 535-7621  
TTY: (800) 662-1220

Mark Specchio, Superintendent  
Of Public Works  
Gregory S. Larnard, Code  
Enforcement Officer  
Donna J. Beardsley, Clerk  
Naomi C Kingsley, Treasurer

June 12, 2017

The Honorable Rossana Rosado,  
Chairman  
Downtown Revitalization Initiative  
c/o Department of State  
123 William Street  
New York, New York 10038-3804

Dear Ms. Rosado,

As part of one of the most incredibly stunning areas of New York State, Watkins Glen with its natural beauty including New York’s flagship state parks, Seneca Lake; access to over 44 natural waterfalls, world-class wineries, craft breweries, the region’s first distillery and Watkins Glen International Speedway; there are endless opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, soak in amazing history, and visit internationally-acclaimed attractions in and around Watkins Glen, New York.

We have, and continue to be sought out by, wonderful investors who are increasing our local economy. Our community is built on many diverse ancestors who take great pride in what Watkins Glen means and brings to them personally and to those businesses who have invested in “us”! What’s missing? Our downtown has not kept up with the other extraordinary improvements and additions in the area. When visitors (and locals alike) visit the business district and downtown proper, they are often disappointed, and rightfully so. The surrounding area has set the bar so high – with its jaw-dropping waterfalls, renowned lake views, awe-inspiring vineyard vistas, state of the art speedway, soon to be updated New York State Park and so much more. It is no surprise that the village itself needs some attention. Whether you have a family connection or are new to the community (or are returning to “home”) we all agree that downtown lacks vision and needed improvements. We have the vision, but desperately need support.

Watkins Glen is home to a flourishing community of entrepreneurs and small businesses. In fact, dozens share their experiences, their ideas, and challenge one another to innovate at monthly entrepreneurial “boot camp” sessions. Beyond that, an astonishing diversity of local businesses are booming in Watkins Glen. From restaurants to one of the premier wine bars in the regions; a waterfront art gallery; sailing and boating companies; hospitality specialists; shopping... the list is ever-growing. But these business owners don’t just work here – they *live* here. They infuse the local economy with jobs and money, but equally as important, they infuse the local consciousness with their spirit, their zest for success – and it’s contagious!

The Village of Watkins Glen is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

We need sustenance and we need it **now**. Watkins Glen is poised for greatness – and the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award could be just what we need to launch.

On behalf of the residents, business community, non-profits and civic organizations, we thank you and Governor Cuomo for your vision and for this opportunity to compete for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

Sincerely,

*Samuel Schimiggi, Mayor*  
Village of Watkins Glen Board

*Anthony Fubon*

*Jan Schmidt*

*Jan Denard*

*Kurt*

# SCHUYLER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

105 Ninth Street Unit 6, Watkins Glen, NY 14891  
Phone (607) 535-8100

Dennis A. Fagan, Chairman  
District VIII

Michael L. Lausell  
District III

Barbara J. Halpin  
District I

James D. Howell, Jr.  
District IV

Philip C. Barnes  
District VI

Web [www.schuylercounty.us](http://www.schuylercounty.us) Email: [Legislature@co.schuyler.ny.us](mailto:Legislature@co.schuyler.ny.us)

Carl H. Blowers  
District V

Van A. Harp  
District II

Stacy B. Husted, Clerk/County Auditor  
Jamee L. Mack, Deputy Clerk

Mark F. Rondinaro  
District VII

*"An Equal Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer"*



June 13, 2017

Mr. Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
303 N. Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

RE: Letter of Support for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

I am writing to convey the Schuyler County Legislature's endorsement of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative plan submitted by the Village of Watkins Glen. The Schuyler County Legislature views the economic strength and cultural vitality of our region as paramount. Watkins Glen is the spark plug that fires the economic engine of Schuyler County and much of the Southern Finger Lakes region. Its growing visitor base is enhanced by world class destinations such as the Watkins Glen State Park, Watkins Glen International raceway and the Seneca Lake Wine Trail, all within a few minutes driving distance of downtown Watkins Glen.

Watkins Glen is also a historic village, with a vibrant cultural history celebrated through events such as the "Italian Festival", "Cardboard Boat Regatta" and "Grand Prix Festival". In addition to festivals focusing on the past, it has events that highlight future strengths, such as the inaugural "Seneca Film Festival" planned for October 2017.

Schuyler County is already working with Watkins Glen to leverage public funding and private investment to create an enhanced economic and cultural climate. Many of these efforts are detailed in the submitted Downtown Revitalization Initiative plan. Of special note is the newly created Watkins Glen Performing Arts Center, resulting from the repurposing of a former public school into senior housing using Federal and NYS funding. As part of this public / private partnership, the facility's auditorium was made available to Schuyler County under a long-term lease, and will be managed by a private operator while providing access to the venue for large community events. Watkins Glen's receipt of the DRI award would allow us to substantially ramp up projects like this, which will generate significant economic activity within the Village by hosting large scale music and performing arts events.

Downtown Revitalization in Watkins Glen will create a modern hub for activities and will act as a focus for the dynamic growth already occurring within Schuyler County. Our wineries are world famous, and our breweries, distilleries and creameries are rapidly gaining in stature. As an example, Schuyler County currently enjoys the

distinction of being the number one county in the state when measuring breweries per capita. Additionally, a refreshed and reinvigorated Watkins Glen will allow us to attract and retain the highly skilled young professionals we require to form the entrepreneurial base for our modern economy. It will make Schuyler County a magnet for agricultural value-added industries, and will enhance our attractiveness as a year-round community. Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding creates an opportunity for Watkins Glen to ignite an economic renaissance in Schuyler County and the neighboring communities.

The Schuyler County Legislature offers its strongest support of the Watkins Glen's Downtown Revitalization Initiative plan, and is certain that with the economic development momentum already present in the community, coupled with the level of organization and professionalism exhibited in the plan, that the transformative potential of this grant on a community the size of Watkins Glen would actually be realized. In offering this support, we have full faith in Watkins Glen's ability to bring it to fruition and stand ready to assist in implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis A. Fagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dennis A. Fagan, Chairman  
Schuyler County Legislature

Cc: Schuyler County Legislature



June 12, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

On behalf of Project Seneca, I am writing this letter to enthusiastically support your grant application to Governor Cuomo's second year of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The DRI has the potential to create the inducement for investments that will transform Watkins Glen from a nine-month community into a year-round community. Additionally, it is perfectly timed to accelerate the momentum that has been built over the past three years for our efforts to re-vitalize the Watkins Glen area.

Project Seneca's mission dovetails perfectly with the purpose of the DRI. Our goal is to create a world-class sustainable/livable community that drives regional economic growth. We will accomplish this through our efforts to develop more affordable and accessible housing in the downtown area that will be close to shopping, employment, transportation hubs, recreational facilities, and entertainment. We will also focus on creating entrepreneurial green houses and employment opportunities that have sustainable wages, with opportunities for advancement.

To date, Project Seneca has stimulated over \$70m of investment into the Village of Watkins Glen, serving as a catalyst for year-round vibrancy.

We have a lakefront and downtown redevelopment plan that includes specific projects that encourage job growth, foster the arts and culture in the area, and provide housing of varying types and affordability. Last year the Middle School Apartments were completed and an attached performing arts center was made available to the community

Recently, we worked with the Cornell University Design Connect team, who completed a community engagement project that identified creative uses of the current wastewater treatment facility site that will be available for redevelopment after 2019.

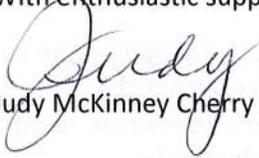
Watkins Glen is a very livable community, unique in its histories of health, recreation and global motorsports. The Village is centrally located to employment centers in Corning, Elmira, Ithaca, and Rochester. There is much a young professional would find appealing including a safe, stable community on a trajectory to success. A community they will be proud to call their own.

The DRI is a great opportunity for us to build on the foundation that has been laid in the areas of Main Street redevelopment, housing, transportation, and other amenities. We need to use this opportunity to make the investments necessary to further attract and retain professionals seeking an active and vibrant downtown. Watkins Glen already has a globally recognized name; and an investment of \$10mm would bring additional prosperity to the area, region, and New York State.

Without question, the community, Schuyler County, Towns of Dix and Reading, Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, non-profit organizations, IDA and the Village are working in tandem to bring projects to fruition. Having the funds to re-imagine the revitalization development in addition to a well-designed implementation plan, would be a strong investment – with a sizable return-on-investment.

We look forward to working with the DRI Planning Committee to bring the vision to fruition.

With enthusiastic support,

  
Judy McKinney Cherry CEcD



The Arc of Schuyler

203 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891  
607.535.6934  
www.arcofschuyler.org

Jeannette Frank, Executive Director  
United Way Agency

*Achieve with us.*

June 2, 2017

Mayor Sam Schimizzi  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 N. Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi:

On behalf of The Arc of Schuyler, I am pleased to express our strong support for the NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application submitted by the Village of Watkins Glen. The Arc has been an integral part of this community since 1978, providing supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc is a multifaceted nonprofit organization, working closely with governmental and other community organizations to address gaps in services for people with disabilities and other populations. I have been personally involved with The Arc for 38 years, and can attest to the areas caring and welcoming culture. It is the people who live and work here who make Watkins Glen such a friendly, safe and desirable year-round location to live, raise a family, and spend one's retirement years. I am pleased to see that projects that cultivate this asset are included in your planning.

### **Neighborhood Center Development**

This grant opportunity is well timed. The Arc is ready to launch new initiatives that address heightened State and Federal expectations for people with disabilities to have more community-based options and feel fully included. Renovation and reuse of property owned by The Arc of Schuyler at 210 12<sup>th</sup> St. in Watkins Glen to serve as a community neighborhood center is a key component of our organization's transformation plan. The Neighborhood Center is being designed as a public space to connect nonprofit organizations and interested volunteers with the needs of our community. It will serve as a hub of activities that foster and build on the already strong community pride that exists. Music, arts, wellness and enrichment classes are some examples of the activities the center will be involved in organizing, promoting and managing through volunteer and community agency partnerships. The center will be fully accessible and have flexible space reflecting the natural beauty of the area to provide a welcoming environment. The building is ideally situated in the heart of Watkins Glen on a public bus route and along the Catherine Valley Trail, a walkable and bike accessible recreational trail. We invite consideration of the Neighborhood Center as a potential hub for a bike-share location.

In addition to The Arc's current projects, I want to reflect on our experiences in the housing, employment, transportation, and arts and recreation areas to provide our perspective relative to the strengths and needs of the Watkins Glen community.

### **Housing**

Schuyler County has made substantial progress in recent years to provide more safe and affordable housing for young professionals and seniors. The renovation of second floor spaces of historic buildings on the Village's main street (Franklin Street) to create apartments using Main Street matching grants has added needed housing options. Redevelopment of the vacant middle school on Decatur Street into senior housing has also helped to fill a housing gap. Despite these efforts, there is still a lack of safe, affordable, and accessible housing in the downtown area that offers access to downtown amenities such as shopping, entertainment, and opportunities for employment. This initiative could help address this issue. As a major

*Supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

employer in the area, The Arc also has a need for affordable housing for our workforce, many of whom commute because they can't find suitable housing.

### **Employment**

The Arc of Schuyler has been providing job training for people with disabilities in a sheltered workshop setting, Glen Industries. In addition to providing employment for people who may be considered challenging to employ, we connect businesses from around the State with our area through contracted work opportunities. In accordance with changing expectations as noted above, we are updating our business model to operate as an integrated employment and training center with a focus on food processing. As an approved food co-packer, we help entrepreneurs scale their product and provide assistance of compliance with new food safety standards. The next phase of our development is for Glen Industries to expand our job training component to meet business workforce demands. People with disabilities and other eligible hard to employ populations would receive hands-on training and build skills transferable to occupations involving food handling, preparation, and production. The Finger Lakes area is experiencing a growing enthusiasm for the "eat fresh, eat local" movement. Glen Industries, with its food production and food safety focus, could be of assistance in planning development of healthy and affordable food markets.

### **Arts and Recreation**

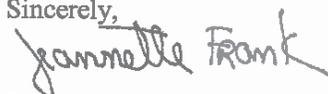
The Arc of Schuyler owns and operates Franklin Street Gallery and Gift Shop, a community arts center located on the Village's main street. This is an inclusive arts center that provides regional artists, with or without disabilities, with storefront access to a vibrant tourist community. The center draws accomplished artists interested in volunteer and paid opportunities to practice their craft. We see tremendous potential for the Village to tap into this artist community not only for its economic benefit potential, but also to enhance quality of life opportunities. A possible consideration to enhance the downtown business climate would be a study for a truck bypass to divert tractor trailers from the quaint downtown. Trucks can be noisy and dirty and contribute to traffic backlog, especially on busy weekends filled with festivals and events.

### **Transportation**

In 2010, The Arc of Schuyler was awarded a contract to serve as the public transit provider for Schuyler County. County officials saw the importance of establishing a public transit system to enhance quality of life for its residents. Schuyler County Transit provides looped transportation service connecting the Villages of Montour Falls, Odessa, and Burdett with the Village of Watkins Glen. In addition, a daily commuter service connects the Village with the west side of the County and the City of Corning, and a daily rural route service connects it with the east side of the County. A Dial-a-Ride service is also available on specified days, reaching more remote areas. The County has been allocated NYS Department of Transportation funds to develop additional commuter service in 2017 to expand people's access to job opportunities. These funds will be used to launch daily public bus runs to the City of Ithaca with bus transfer availability to Cornell University. The Arc of Schuyler also employs the County's Mobility Manager who is responsible for the centralized transportation information and assistance call center, Transportation Link-Line. Her other duties include ensuring community involvement in coordinated transportation planning. All types of transportation come under the mobility management umbrella including but not limited to use of volunteer drivers, Office for the Aging transportation, transportation for Veterans, support for improving accessibility to medical centers, and piloting innovative services, such as a new transportation voucher program. A subcommittee studying walk-ability/bike-ability community plans, identified the Catherine Valley Trail, a walk/bike path that runs through the Village of Watkins Glen, connecting parks and the Seneca Canal to the Village via 12<sup>th</sup> and Decatur Streets, as a community asset that could be enhanced through this downtown initiative.

In summary, Watkins Glen is a very livable community, uniquely situated in the heart of the Finger Lakes and central to job centers in Ithaca, Corning, and Elmira. It has a lot to offer for upwardly mobile professionals who want safe schools and a relaxed lifestyle. This Initiative is a great opportunity for our community to build on what has already been accomplished in the areas of housing, employment, transportation and other amenities, and further attract and retain professionals seeking an active and energetic downtown. We certainly want to be a partner in this initiative.

Sincerely,



Jeannette Frank  
Executive Director



Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development  
910 South Decatur Street, Watkins Glen NY 14891  
607-535-4341  
Fax 607-535-7221

[www.flxgateway.com](http://www.flxgateway.com)

June 12, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Schuyler Partnership for Economic Development (The Partnership), I am submitting this letter in strong support of your grant application to Governor Andrew Cuomo's second competition for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). *Excelsior: Ever Upward* was the theme of the Governors' State of the State address in 2017, when he challenged us to build a stronger, better New York. We can do that with an infusion of \$10 million to bring Watkins Glen back to the international prominence it had 40 years ago. Watkins Glen already has the sense of place that many communities are striving to create.

Watkins Glen has communicated that it is willing to take up the challenge Governor Cuomo laid out earlier in this effort. That is, "to have the vision and daring to transform itself" into a community that embraces and prepares for the future. The Partnership agrees that the best social program is a good-paying job and stands ready to bring whatever talent and resources are necessary to support the Village of Watkins Glen in this endeavor.

While Watkins Glen has had some resurgence in recent years, there remains a lack of adequate housing stock and insufficient commercial buildings. We are poised for potentially meteoric growth and \$10 million dollars would be exactly what is needed to reestablish the crown jewel that Watkins Glen once was in New York State. The DRI is perfectly timed to accelerate the momentum that has been built over the past three years to re-vitalize the Watkins Glen area and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

The Partnership has strong working relationships with businesses, business-related organizations, non-profits, and services providers. Some of these include the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, the Cornell Cooperative Extension Service, the Arc of Schuyler, and the Southern Tier Start-Up Alliance.

Specifically, we are engaged in an ambitious entrepreneurial partnership to create an eco-system for high growth start-up businesses and view the DRI as the tool to create the infrastructure today for tomorrow's economic success.

We are also actively supporting a newly formed Finger Lakes Gateway Community Development Corporation that is dedicated to improve economic well-being in Schuyler County and the region through a community-driven, collaborative approach that fosters economic vitality. This occurs by attracting new capital investment; facilitating commercial and residential development; and creating sustainable, living-wage employment opportunities.

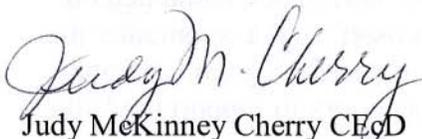
The business and civic organizations stand ready to work hand-in-hand with each other to bring long term, transformation growth to our area.

Watkins Glen is a magnet for disadvantaged workers in the region. This is due to the robust public transportation system that provides transport throughout the village and surrounding area coupled with the excellent support services being provided by our public assistance agencies and non-profit entities. The services being provided to assist people with developmental disabilities, hard-to-employ veterans and families living below the poverty threshold are delivered in a cohesive, collaborative, and non-duplicative system.

The DRI is a great opportunity for us to build on the foundation that has been laid in the areas of Main Street redevelopment, housing, transportation, and other amenities. We need to use this opportunity to make the investments necessary to further attract and retain professionals seeking an active and vibrant downtown. Watkins Glen already has a globally recognized name; and an investment of \$10mm would bring additional prosperity to the area, region, and New York State.

We look forward to working with the community, DRI Planning Committee, and the State of New York, to bring this vision to fruition.

With full support,

  
Judy McKinney Cherry CEO  
Executive Director

**Timothy M. O'Hearn**  
County Administrator



105 Ninth Street, Unit 37  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891  
Phone (607) 535-8106  
Web Site [www.schuylercounty.us](http://www.schuylercounty.us)  
E-mail: [tohearn@co.schuyler.ny.us](mailto:tohearn@co.schuyler.ny.us)  
[ptomassi@co.schuyler.ny.us](mailto:ptomassi@co.schuyler.ny.us)

**Peggy Tomassi**  
Confidential Secretary

**Office of**  
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

June 12, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkin Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

I am writing this letter to offer my support for your grant application to Governor Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The DRI could dramatically increase our efforts to accelerate the momentum that has been built over the past decade to re-vitalize the Watkins Glen area. As the County seat, Watkins Glen is an integral component of our efforts to position Schuyler County as a premier place to live, work and visit. With our tremendous yet under-utilized natural resources and strong sense of community, I firmly believe Watkins Glen has the potential to be one of the most vibrant communities in New York State. Initiatives such as the DRI are ideally suited to complement and further our efforts in this area.

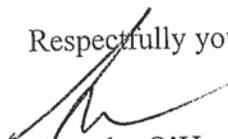
Watkins Glen is a very livable community, unique in its histories of health, recreation and global motorsports. The Village is centrally located to employment centers in Corning, Elmira, Ithaca and Rochester. There is much a young professional would find appealing including a safe, stable community on a trajectory to success. A community they will be proud to call their own.

The DRI is a great opportunity for us to build on the foundation that has been laid in the areas of Main Street redevelopment, housing, transportation and other amenities. We need to use this opportunity to make the investments necessary to further attract and retain professionals seeking an active and vibrant downtown. Watkins Glen already has a globally recognized name; and an investment of \$10m would bring additional prosperity to the area, region and New York State.

As you are well aware, there is a strong sense of collaboration and cooperation within Schuyler County that sets us apart from others. Public, not for profit and private interests are all working in tandem to bring projects to fruition. Having the funds to re-imagine the revitalization development in addition to a well-designed implementation plan, would be a very strong investment – with a sizable return-on-investment.

We look forward to working with the DRI Planning Committee to bring the vision to fruition.

Respectfully yours,



Timothy O'Hearn  
County Administrator

**Watkins Brewery Vacation Rentals**

Watkins Brewery Holdings, LLC  
106 to 118 Lakeshore Dr  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

June 12, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



**Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)**

Dear Mayor Schimizzi:

On behalf of Watkins Brewery Holdings LLC, I am writing this letter in full support of your grant application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Watkins Glen has experienced several private investments in the region over the past three years and the DRI can drive the additional investment necessary to carry this momentum forward.

Our seven (7) vacation rental units on the lake are now open and renting meeting a specific goal to connect more tourists with the downtown experience. Vacationers now have an option to stay in the village, on the lake and a very short walk from restaurants and shopping. Watkins Glen International, Glen State Park and Seneca Lake are huge draws to the region and we confirm that with our guests.

The Project Seneca initiative is helping to outline and organize the future projects and initiatives needed to continue the increased visitor trend and overall growth. People are finding Watkins Glen to be more than a family retreat and moving to our Village. The DRI fits nicely with this advanced planning making Watkins Glen a very sound investment for Governor Cuomo's initiative.

Your Village offices and the Watkins Chamber are very receptive and helpful with development and business start-ups. From experience I can tell you that a receptive posture can pay dividends as new project opportunities come forward.

We look forward to working with the Village to drive the DRI vision forward!

Very truly yours,  
Watkins Brewery Holdings LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel C. Bower".

Daniel C. Bower, Managing Member

607-725-0166  
[www.watkinsbrewery.com](http://www.watkinsbrewery.com)



Mayor Sam Schimizzi  
Village of Watkins Glen  
1005 N. Porter Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

214 N. FRANKLIN STREET, WATKINS GLEN, NY 14891  
T 800 607 4552 F 607 535 4300 F 607 535 6243  
WWW.WATKINSGLENCHAMBER.COM

SOMETHING SPECIAL AT *every* TURN

June 9, 2017

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

On behalf of the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Village of Watkins Glen's NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative application.

As the Tourism Promotion Agent for Schuyler County, our organization is on the forefront of marketing the Village of Watkins Glen and Schuyler County and is very aware of the importance of a booming village to foster the potential growth of tourism development.

Here in Watkins Glen and Schuyler County, we are home to not one, not two, but **FOUR** USA Today 10Best attractions. In fact, we are the *only* county in the country with four attractions on those lists. We have accolades and awards from other distinguished outlets including Travel and Leisure, Wine Spectator, Fodor's, Budget Travel, Wine Enthusiast, Smart Meetings, National Geographic, and more.

**WATKINS GLEN STATE PARK.** We often describe Watkins Glen as the place where Mother Nature meets Main Street. Watkins Glen State Park is in the heart of downtown Watkins Glen and offers breathtaking walking experiences of cliffs and waterfalls. Just last year, the park hosted well over 900,000 visitors!

**WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL.** The road course track at Watkins Glen International hosts today's pros from NASCAR to Vintage Cups to INDYCAR.

**BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICAN ROAD RACING.** The streets of Watkins Glen are the birthplace of American road racing. Having played host to international automobile road racing since 1948, the tradition continues annually with the Grand Prix Festival, when classic racecars take to the streets in Watkins Glen.

**SENECA LAKE.** The southern end of Seneca Lake nestles beautifully against the edges of the village. With a depth of up to 618 feet, Seneca Lake is the deepest and widest of the Finger Lakes. It is among the most popular of the Finger Lakes due to its natural, scenic beauty and its world-famous fishing, as well as its many attractions.

**DINING, SHOPPING, TASTING, and MORE.** Watkins Glen has quickly become one of the "hotspots" in the Finger Lakes region for its amazing farm-fresh and locally-sourced restaurant offerings, its unique shopping opportunities, and its obvious love for food pairings and libation tastings. We often encourage our visitors to dine like locals!

Mayor, you are already aware of these amazing things. It should come as no surprise that the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce fully supports this application.

Warmly,

Rebekah Carroll, IOM  
President & CEO



June 7, 2017

The Honorable Sam Schimizzi  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14895

RECEIVED

JUN 12 2017

VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN

Dear Mayor Schimizzi:

Schuyler Hospital is pleased to write in support of Watkins Glen's application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding being offered thru the NYS Regional Economic Development Councils.

The village is a central hub of activity not only for the residents but for the one million plus tourists and seasonal visitors that pass thru the area each year. Watkins Glen and Schuyler County are nature-blessed, with all the resources needed to make this a healthy community – state parks, trails, lakes, canals, beautiful landscapes, tight-knit neighborhoods and an abundance of caring residents and business leaders committed to continually improving quality of life.

A healthy community is vital to maintaining small town sustainability, and also aligns with New York State's recent population health initiatives and the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program. Our aging resident population suffers from many health issues like obesity and diabetes, as well as many other related complications. Building on the beautiful area and world renowned attractions like our wineries and international racetrack, DRI funding would enhance the downtown area and be a wonderful extension of our efforts to promote and achieve healthy community population goals. Watkins Glen, NY could provide more opportunities for healthy living – encouraging more walking, biking, family activities, increased access to healthy eating options and quality healthcare, and community involvement.

For Schuyler Hospital, the ability to draw young people and families of all income levels to this area to live, work, and play here is key to maintaining a thriving, healthy community. There are many colleges and nursing schools in the Finger Lakes area, however, statistics show that the majority of graduates are leaving this area for more vibrant city living. The revitalization in our downtown area would help us attract and retain young professionals, nurses, and physicians to provide much-needed healthcare services to our residents. It would definitely go a long way in making the town a more desirable place in which to live, thrive, and be healthy. Enhanced healthy living can also help alleviate chronic disease and depression which, in turn, could help with eliminating drug abuse and other systemic problems so prevalent in small towns.

The benefits of receiving DRI funding for the Village of Watkins Glen are far reaching. Whether you are a resident or business, the revitalization would bring along with it the vibrancy and renewed energy that is so necessary to keep a community viable. The potential economic opportunities in attracting new businesses and increasing tourism would provide the Watkins with a sustainable means of continuing development into future years.

On behalf of Schuyler Hospital, I fully support Watkins Glen's application for DRI funding, and I am more than interested in being part of the potential planning and implementation committee when the time comes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James B. Watson".

Jim Watson  
President & CEO

220 Steuben Street • Montour Falls, NY 14865 • (607) 535-7121 • [www.schuylerhospital.org](http://www.schuylerhospital.org)

A Member of Cayuga Health System

# Watkins Glen

Central · School · District

Thomas J. Phillips · Superintendent of Schools

June 7, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schmizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Dear Mayor:

I write this letter of support for the application to secure funding as a means of developing a vibrant, sustainable and welcoming environment throughout the Village of Watkins Glen. As you are aware, the Village welcomes over a Million visitors a year. While we host major auto racing events throughout the summer, the natural resources our community has to offer provides authentic renewable experiences unique to our visitors and residents. With the climate of growth and development, our community is currently experiencing and investigating, the funding this grant provides can only enhance the opportunity for continuous improvement moving forward. Walking and Biking trails, Seneca Lake, Fitness facilities the School District offers for community use and the State Park all provide opportunity for the promotion of healthy living and activities for our visitors. I strongly support application for this grant and am confident this funding can be a catalyst for our community leaders as we work collaboratively to develop a plan for sustainable growth and continuous improvement as a means of meeting future challenges.

Sincerely



Thomas J. Phillips  
Superintendent of Schools



**SCHUYLER COUNTY  
VETERAN SERVICE AGENCY**

323 OWEGO STREET UNIT 2  
MONTOUR FALLS, NEW YORK 14865  
(607) 535-2091  
(607) 535-6854 Fax

Joan E. Scott  
Director  
Service Officer

John R. Antes  
Service Officer

*"An Equal Opportunity -  
Affirmative Action Employer"*

June 6, 2017

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkin Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

The Schuyler County Veterans Service Agency enthusiastically endorses the Village of Watkins Glens' grant submittal to the Governor's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Our veterans and members of the armed forces as well as their dependents and survivors can be magnanimously impacted in a transformational way with the funding made available through the DRI.

We are overwhelmingly supportive of the approach the Village is taking in leveraging the positive growth, investment and sustainability of our community. Many of our clients live in and around Watkins Glen and take advantage of the services available through our cooperative agreements with private, public and non-profit partnerships. While our community is currently walkable and bikeable, it is not as safe as we would like it to be. With investment, we could establish better designated bike lanes, wheelchair access, enhancing quality of life opportunities.

With a targeted investment in revitalizing the gateways and main thoroughfares in Watkins Glen, I foresee an increasingly vibrant community with year-round residents living and thriving. I also envision a fully integrated workforce and business community with veterans taking active roles in community planning, leadership, small business start-ups and growth. This could be accomplished with the DRI. Some concepts that we believe could make for a sustainable economy and tremendous positive impact on our clients include: well-placed shared space for businesses, additional housing of multiple types that are affordable, development of controlled environmental agriculture (CEA) initiatives as well as system developments to enable veterans to work with farmers' markets, CSA's and other healthy food programs.

Watkins Glen is a very desirable community and one that is on the cusp of greatness. This initiative could be exactly what the Village, Finger Lakes and State needs to stimulate the positive momentum the community has experienced in the past several years.

Should the Village of Watkins Glen be selected, the Schuyler County Veterans Service Agency looks forward to being an active, integral member of the community planning effort identified in the DRI.

This is an excellent investment of State resources and will return tremendous benefits many times over in the coming generations.

Sincerely,

Joan E. Scott  
Director

**WATKINS GLEN** **20**  
**DOWNTOWN**  
**REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE** **17**  
*Small Village, Big Potential*