



**VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN  
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION  
INITIATIVE APPLICATION  
JUNE 9, 2016**





Photo Credit: Stu Gallagher Photography

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## 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.

- Schuyler County Planning Department
- Finger Lakes Community Development Corporation
- 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
- Finger Lakes Wine Country
- Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce
- Norrie Cornelius
- GRAFT Wine + Cider Bar

# 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

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Donna J. Beardsley, Clerk  
Naomi C Kingsley, Treasurer

May 31, 2016

The Honorable Cesar A. Perales  
Chairman  
Downtown Revitalization Initiative  
c/o Department of State  
123 William Street  
New York, New York 10038-3804

Dear Mr. Perales,

Our community has stunning 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.

But there's just one problem... sadly (but perhaps, expectedly), 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, and so much more. It is no surprise that the village itself needs some attention. Okay, we'll admit it... **a lot** of attention.

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!

In fact, 82 new members joined the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce in 2015. Of the 438 current members, 52% are located outside of Watkins Glen and Schuyler County. As one business owner (Dan Mori of Employment Solutions – based in Vestal, New York) put it, "We became a member of the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce because we were

looking to network and collaborate with like-minded professionals. Watkins Glen is quickly emerging as one of the brightest spots in all of New York!”

Speaking of bright spots, Watkins Glen is home to those from “the outside” who see such promise, such potential, that they are coming from other coasts – and even other continents – to invest in the area. Famed California winemaker Paul Hobbs, along with German winemaker Johannes Selbach, recently purchased 67 acres to plant a Riesling vineyard on the southeast shore of Seneca Lake, within sight of downtown Watkins Glen. This begs the question – why, when they could purchase property (and have purchased property) quite literally anywhere else **in the world**, would they choose Watkins Glen? The answer is easy – because we have something that no one else does – **exactly** the soil, in **exactly** the microclimate they were looking for. But it’s not just Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Selbach who love what this area offers in terms of viticulture. Louis Barroul of the Rhone Valley’s Chateau de St.-Cosme launched Forge Cellars with local investors and winemakers just a few minutes up the east shore of Seneca Lake. The draw of Watkins Glen goes beyond the region, the state, and even the shores of this great country. Ladies and gentlemen, we’ve gone **global**.

So. Here’s what it comes down to. 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,

  
Village of Watkins Glen Board









# Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

## DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD QUICK FACTS

**Regional Economic Development Council:** Southern Tier

**Municipality:** Village of Watkins Glen

**Downtown Name:** Watkins Glen: *The Transformation, plan perform, prosper - the opportunity is NOW!!!*

**County:** Schuyler

### **Downtown Description:**

Franklin Street is the main thoroughfare for commerce in downtown Watkins Glen. Various businesses occupy this space including shops, restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts, motels, antiques shops, local memorabilia, outfitters, banks, beauty salons, and much more. To the east, Decatur Street is a diverse north-south route featuring an eclectic mix of residential properties as well as various commercial ventures including a newly established local coffee roaster, the International Motor Racing Research Center (one of the most unique attractions in the area), numerous churches, the redeveloped and recently occupied Middle School Apartments, the Catharine Valley Trail, Lafayette Park – home of the Watkins Glen Farmers Market, and even more industry in the works!

The growing commercial and residential activity in these zones 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 approaches and gateways to Watkins Glen as well as the downtown experience has detracted from the scenic beauty, great mix of attractions and commerce, 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.

## Downtown Neighborhood Boundary

The boundaries of our proposed downtown neighborhood will stretch between the three gateways into the Village of Watkins Glen. The Gateways are the Southern Gateway located at the intersection of Fairgrounds Lane and New York State Route 14 (SR14); the Northern Gateway located at the intersection of SR14 and Cross Street and the Eastern Gateway, located at the Village boundary just north of the intersection of New York State Route 414 (SR414) and Cass Road.

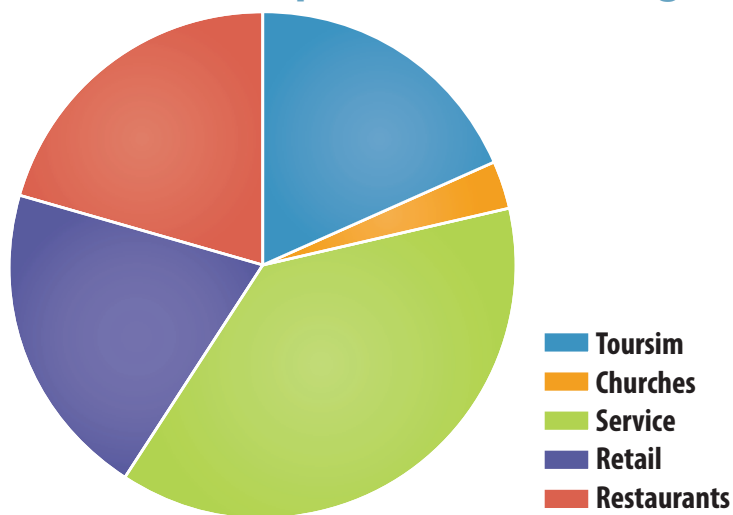
The Southern Gateway boundary line begins at the intersection of Decatur Street and Fairgrounds Lane. This southern boundary will then follow Fairgrounds Lane west towards SR14. The boundary then stretches northwest following Franklin Street (SR14) and including all properties that front onto Franklin 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 SR 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.

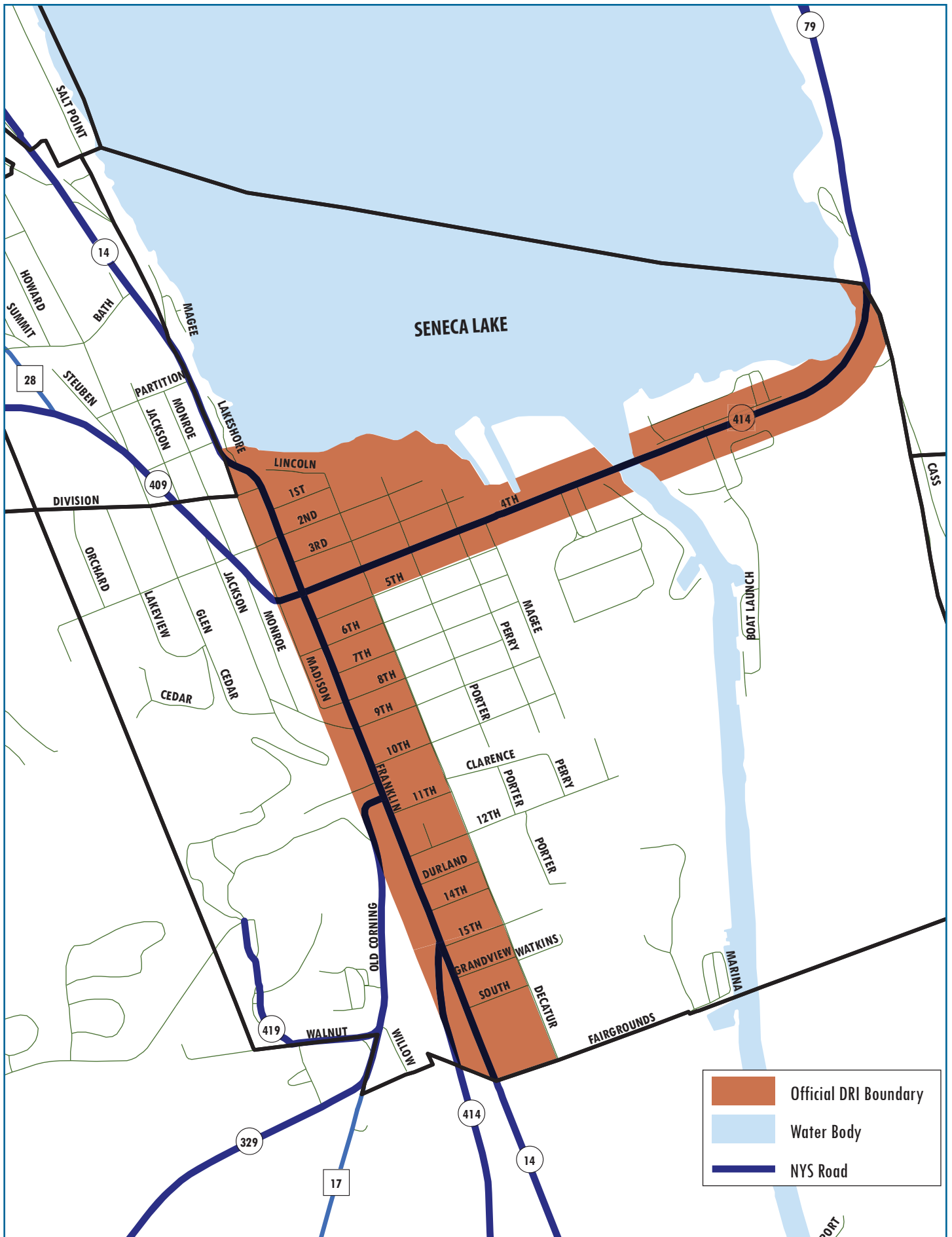
The boundary then follows SR 414 West (Fourth Street) and includes properties that meet SR 414 up to the Finger Lakes Rail Tracks that transverse SR 414. At the Intersection of Magee Street and Franklin Street (SR 414) the boundary moves South to encompass 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The boundary then follows 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 area within the boundaries is approximately 180 acres with a year-round population of approximately 880 people. There are 138 firms inside 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.

## Business Make up of Downtown Neighborhood



Source: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



# Size

## Size Matters!

Watkins Glen is large enough to have the infrastructure in place to ensure successful implementation of the DRI. The Village and her partners have governance structures, public-private partnerships, and service organizations already engaged with a track record of successful comprehensive plan project implementation.

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 five-mile radius. For the Governor and the State of New York, the size of Watkins Glen ensures that the impactful 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 situated at the head of Seneca Lake where State Route NY-14 (a nationally designated truck route) joins New York State Route 79 and New York State Route 414. New York State Route 329 and New York State Route 409 lead into Watkins Glen from the west leading to Watkins Glen International Speedway, the Farm Sanctuary, and the Watkins Glen Elk Preserve. New York State Route NY-14 leads into Watkins Glen from the north leading to one of seven KOA Resorts in the United States. New York State Route 414 leads into Watkins Glen from the south and east leading to the Seneca Lake Scenic By-way and many wineries and eateries along the Seneca Lake Wine Trail.

Census	Population	% +/-
1870	2,039	-
1880	2,716	33.2%
1890	2,604	-4.1%
1900	2,943	13.0%
1910	2,817	-4.3%
1920	2,785	-1.1%
1930	2,956	6.1%
1940	2,913	-1.5%
1950	3,052	4.8%
1960	2,813	-7.8%
1970	2,716	-3.4%
1980	2,440	-10.2%
1990	2,207	-9.5%
2000	2,149	-2.6%
2010	1,859	-13.5%
Est. 2014	1,883	1.3%

U.S. Decennial Census

Astoundingly, in 2014, Watkins Glen experienced its first increase in population since its historical high of 3,052 in the 1950 census. According to the U.S. Census estimates for 2014, Watkins Glen has 1,876 residents living within a total area of 2.2 square miles including 0.4 square miles (17.41%) of water, with a density is 1,176 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 Glens loss of residents has begun to ease.

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 for the Watkins Glen International Speedway and local wineries. 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 to grow from. It 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.

Like many urban centers today, Watkins Glen is a destination for those living within both a short commute as well as 50-60 miles away. With the recent renovations of several storefronts in the downtown district and a resurgence in tourism, the vibrancy found from May through November has expanded to late March through mid-January.



We are successfully converting visitors to residents. Many of our newer residents came for the scenic views, healthy active living opportunities including access to the deepest of the Finger Lakes (Seneca Lake), and the only National Forest in New York State. Those new to Watkins Glen continue to marvel at the architecture found in the compact space. There are eight structures and/or districts identified on the National Register of Historic Places. These include the A.F. Chapman House, First Baptist Church of Watkins Glen, Schuyler County Courthouse, St. James Episcopal Church, U.S. Post Office, Watkins Glen High School (now the Watkins Glen School Apartments), and the Watkins Glen Grand Prix Course 1948-1952.

Many new residents see Watkins Glen as an area that is globally recognized, is growing and has 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 & William Smith Colleges, Corning Incorporated, World Kitchen, and Cargill.

One of the objectives to accomplish with the DRI funding is the successful conversion of transient students to permanent residents and workers.

Complementing this, is the conversion of recently relocated

and native retirees into an economic force with their renewed energies and opportunities. In addition, Watkins Glen is a magnet for many residents in the region who are workers with disabilities and veterans. This is due to the quality and breadth of services that are made available to them through the Arc of Schuyler and the Schuyler County Veterans Service Agency. Collectively, we are united in our goal to proactively assist our veterans and disadvantaged workers as they move from services dependency to self-sufficiency.

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*Watkins Glen is a magnet for many residents in the region who are workers with disabilities and veterans.*

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Watkins Glen, while small in size, provides public transit for the general population as well as those with special needs. This transportation system is exemplary and runs on an excellent, predictable year-round schedule and also connects Watkins Glen with the surrounding communities. Watkins Glen 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 and travel weekly to Boston, Massachusetts and Jacksonville, Florida as well as other long distances for their regular employment.

Watkins Glen has welcomed many new residents with the completion of the Watkins Glen School Apartments which provide affordable housing for the 55+ population. To date, nearly all of the tenants are new residents to Watkins Glen. This recent housing project coupled with the additional 62 new housing units (of which 27 are market rate and have no public assistance) will continue our population stabilization in 2016 and beyond.



The Village of Watkins Glen has successfully ensured that it has the adequate infrastructure to accommodate new residents, housing, new businesses and visitors alike. The leaders have a strong history of planning and implementation through anticipation of future needs and foresight. An example of this is the ability of the Village to accommodate tremendous swells of visitors into the Village during the annual nationally-televised racing events, Grand Prix Festival, Cardboard Board Regatta, Libation Festivals, Winter Festivals, Summer Jam (1973), and the PHISH Magnaball concerts in 2011 and 2015.



To accommodate sustainable growth in the future, Watkins Glen has made investments in “Cleaner Greener” initiatives including 70 newly planted trees (2016), a new wastewater treatment plant, low-flow toilets in all Village facilities, composting for residents, bi-monthly curbside recycling, an annual Village dumpster day, encouragement of newly opened farm-to-table and solar powered eateries, and the promotion of the Watkins Glen International Speedways’ annual Green Grand Prix.



Another more recent example is Project Seneca, a \$200 million redevelopment effort for the Village of Watkins Glen and the Seneca Lake waterfront. This effort has already resulted in the completion of 82 housing units, an art gallery, a music/performance community theatre, brewery and beer garden, and a wine storage facility. In final stages of planning or under construction, are an additional 31 housing units (27 with no form of public assistance), a new regional wastewater treatment plant to accommodate future growth, new kayak/canoe launch, Seneca Harbor Park Ice Rink and a new satellite visitor center at Watkins Glen State Park.

## Past Investments & Future Investment Potential

### Success Is Contagious

Watkins Glen is beginning to realize the fruits of its efforts to revitalize the community. 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. The DRI can provide a catapult from this foundation for Watkins Glens' future.

Watkins Glen is seeing real growth from an economic and demographic perspective. This began with the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel's \$13 million investment opening in 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 the traditional off-season. Some believed the new hotel was only meeting its business goals by catering to the racing team clientele. However, this was proven otherwise during the summer of 2015 when the occupancy rates continued to surge and there were no racing team-related visitations to Watkins Glen International Speedway.

Over the past 4 years, more than \$90 million dollars worth of investments have been made or are in progress because of the proximity to Watkins Glen. Several projects either completed or in process have benefited from some

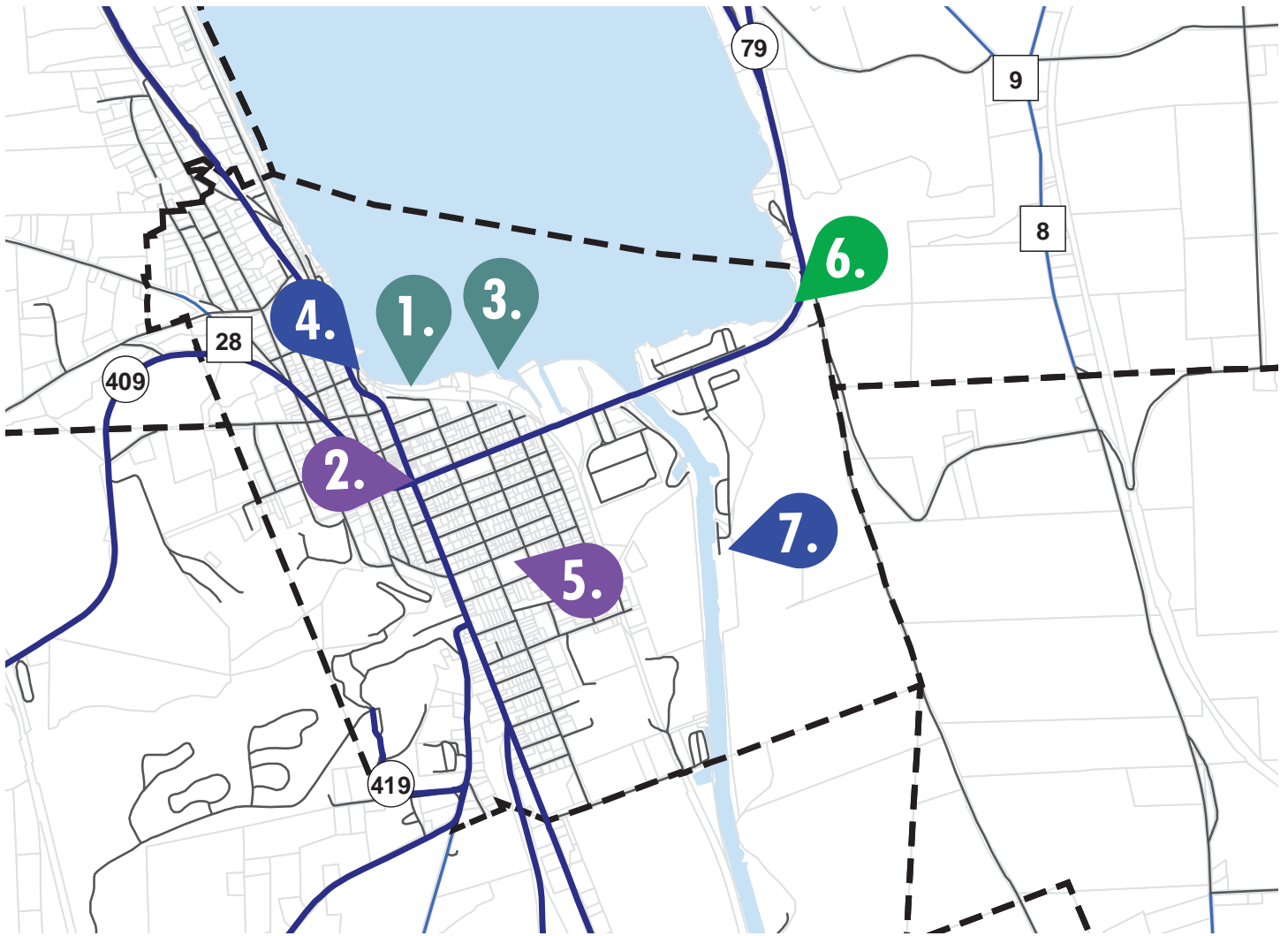
*Success is contagious and new business investors are taking notice of the assets that Watkins Glen has....*

state and/or local assistance. These projects leveraged investments from the state in a very positive manner. The state agencies that have provided assistance for the 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 economic development 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. Specifically, the following goals and projects were within the objectives of the Southern Tier Regional Council, ensuring continuity with the Regional Plan.

### Projects Aligning with Regional Plans

- Infrastructure
  - Broadband Project (STN Network)
  - Waterfront redevelopment planning
  - Inflow & Infiltration Project
  - Water Treatment
  - LED lighting replacement
  - Middle Marina Redevelopment
- 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
  - Catherine 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, Wine Trails.
  - Entrepreneurial-stimulation.
- Globally Relevant – Resurgence, Wiederaufleben



## Funding Sources



**Empire State Development (ESD)**



**Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)**



**Department of State (DOS)**



**Other: Dept 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 Holdings - Watkins Brewery Redevelopment - \$800,000 (ESD)
5. SEPP Inc. - 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 and Montour Falls - \$43,900 (DEC)
  - \* Village of Watkins Glen Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation - \$30,000 (DEC)
  - \*Planning and Acquisition Costs - \$550,000 (ESD)

*\*Denotes a study or project which has countywide impact*

International investments have been made in the past 5 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 even other continents – to invest in the area. Famed California winemaker Paul Hobbs, along with German winemaker Johannes Selbach, recently purchased 67 acres to plant 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 Chateau de St.-Cosme launched Forge Cellars with local investors and winemakers. While Daniel Lei from China invested in Castle Grisch, the Manor House B&B and vineyards, boarding Watkins Glen Golf Course.

**Success is contagious** and new business investors are taking notice of the assets that Watkins Glen possesses. In the past 12 months, Watkins Glen has been host to international distributors, nationally known tourism destination developers, business and travel writers, entrepreneurs, athletes, sportsmen, and artists. Our successes have been noticed by other communities (who, if they have lakefront property), are beginning to emulate Watkins Glen. This DRI candidate has the opportunity to bring best-practices for revitalization to fruition, be identified as a best-of-breed redevelopment project, and have a sustainable economy that includes attractive quality of life with corresponding high-wage, year-round employment with advancement potential.

## Foundational (Past) Investments

The following is a partial list of notable projects that comprise the \$90 million of investment by type.

### Construction Projects

**Housing – Diverse Types & Affordability \$22.5 million**      **Culinary/Libation/Dairy in catchment area 14.5 million**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Watkins Glen Middle School Apartments</li> <li>- Waterworks Apartments &amp; Condos</li> <li>- Watkins Brewery Apartments</li> <li>- Seneca Terrace Apartments</li> <li>- Watkins Glen Villa Apartments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bergen Farms</li> <li>- Roosterfish Brewing</li> <li>- Grist Iron Brewing Co.</li> <li>- Ryan Williams Winery</li> <li>- Anthony Road Wine Company</li> <li>- Hobbs Selbach (JPV)</li> <li>- Heavily Brewing Co.</li> <li>- Seneca Lake Brewing Company</li> <li>- Castle Grisch</li> <li>- Catherine Valley Crackers</li> <li>- Seneca Sweets</li> <li>- GRAFT Wine &amp; Cider Bar</li> <li>- Lakewood Vineyards</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

**Manufacturing (Non-disclosable)**

- Cargill
- Taylor Precision

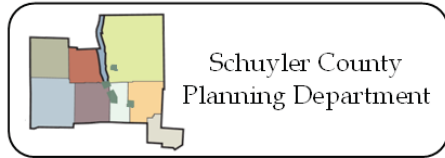
**Tourism Destination \$14.6 million**

- Watkins Glen International Speedway
- Watkins Glen Elk Preserve
- Community & Performing Arts Center
- Quintus Waterfront Art Gallery
- Watkins Glen KOA Resort

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

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

**Success is contagious.** Leveraging our recent investments as a springboard for the next series of investments is vitally important. There are multiple efforts underway to strengthen and diversify the local economy. These efforts include marshaling enablers, marketing, education, partnerships, cluster-related businesses, and funding streams.



### Enablers

Enablers that are already in place to ensure future investment leads to a sustainable economy include the establishment of the Finger Lakes Gateway Community Development Corporation (CDC), 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 Finger Lakes CDC has an eight-member board of directors with a super majority of the board under age 35.

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.

Another enabler is the entrepreneurial stimulation effort 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 location for nascent entrepreneurs, potential angel investors, and entrepreneurially-minded professionals to collaborate on ideas, receive feedback on business models and learn directly from a mentor in a structured environment on a monthly basis. This is where the seeds of tomorrow’s business entities are being sown and the response has been remarkable.

Watkins Glen is fortunate to have strong partnerships that can ensure forward progress and momentum. These include a partnership with the Seneca Lake Scenic By-Way organization which shares a vested interest in improving the Eastern Gateway into the Village. A similar organization, the Catherine Valley Trail has a terminus for it’s trail at Seneca Harbor Park in downtown Watkins Glen. Lafayette Park, the town’s most centralized park is also the site of the weekly farmers’ market in the Village as well as weekly concerts throughout the summer.

Enablers that are employment, business and civic-oriented partnering with the Village of Watkins Glen include the 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, SCOPE, and the Schuyler County IDA.

The Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce is a flourishing organization that clearly demonstrates through its membership that Watkins Glen is ready to spring forward. The Chamber has dramatically grown its membership, service offerings, and support for the local businesses.

## Marketing

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

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. The Partnership also recently produced a stunning new video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arOKVjP1KYI>) that visually communicates why Watkins Glen is the place to work, live, and play. Not to forget any aspect of promotion, they have also launched a YouTube Channel, they maintain a Facebook presence, and also communicate via a Twitter account.

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*“This pretty little village at the bottom of Seneca Lake is the perfect central spot to start your Finger Lakes getaway. We loved its historic main street, the easy access to Watkins Glen State Park, and the area’s choice of accommodation options are perfectly suited for small or large group getaways.”*

*-Dian Emery, Girls Getaway*

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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, but they market the incredible assets and attractions as well. The Chamber

is well positioned to lead commerce in the area. It has become so well known that businesses from far afield are joining the organization. In 2016, 52% of the Chamber membership is accounted for by businesses outside of Schuyler County. Partnering with other organizations to better the area are prerequisites to being involved with the Chamber. But their staff does more than talk the talk, they walk the walk. The President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce sits on the board of directors of The Partnership. The Tourism and Marketing Manager of the Chamber of Commerce sits on the board of directors of the Community Development Corporation. The Chamber provides the local connection that can be a conduit to success within the larger region.

Watkins Glen Promotions is a local 501(c)(3) organization that oversees the planning and execution of a number of hugely popular events including; The Waterfront Festival and Cardboard Boat Regatta, The Grand Prix Festival and Vintage Grand Prix Race, Village Christmas Parade, and more, all of which attract tens of thousands of people to Watkins Glen throughout the year. These events drive return visits to the area, generate an enormous economic impacts by way of gas and grocery purchases, souveniring and shopping in the quaint downtown, meals eaten at local restaurants, and overnights at local hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and campgrounds. The numerous amenities and opportunities in Watkins Glen create a natural “package deal” getaway and support the success of the Watkins Glen State Park, one of the busiest and highest rates state parks in the nation.

## Recent Accolades

- Watkins Glen State Park was voted the #3 best state park in the country in a USA Today Reader's Choice Poll.
- Just a few months later, Watkins Glen International was named the #1 NASCAR track in the country in a USA Today Reader's Choice Poll.
- The Finger Lakes was voted one of the 10 Best Travel Destinations in the world by Wine Enthusiast Magazine in 2015 and Wine Region of the Year in 2014. Seneca Lake is the most densely populated with wineries out of all of the Finger Lakes, and Watkins Glen is the southern hub to this busy corridor of commerce.
- Watkins Glen State Park welcomed a record setting 830,000+ visitors in 2015, shattering the previous year's attendance by nearly 100,000 visitors.

## What makes Watkins Glen Unique?

- 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.
- Watkins Glen is within a 5-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!
- The self-reliant, outdoorsy attitude of our residents strengthens pride in local community
- There are agricultural treasures abound with a culinary bounty

## Impact of Nearby Institutions

Watkins Glen receives a year-round impact from several institutions in proximity to the downtown, including education, healthcare, state parks, and Watkins Glen International Speedway. Include in this is the State of New York Fire Academy in Montour Falls which conducts classes and special conferences throughout the year. Similarly, the healthcare providers, namely Schuyler Hospital, Guthrie, and Arnot Health all have year-round significant impacts on the local economy. Watkins Glen International and Watkins Glen State Park both have tremendous impacts on the downtown from April through November of each year.

## Opportunities in (Future) Investment

### *Leverage & Amplification*

#### **Scheduled Upgrade of SR 14 (Main Highway through proposed downtown)**

State of New York Department of Transportation has a planned, extensive road project for State Route 14 through Schuyler County. Franklin Street, the main thoroughfare for Watkins Glen is scheduled to be under complete reconstruction in 2018. The Village has the plans, estimates and other related planning documents to provide for a complete resurrection of Franklin Street.

This would be an opportune time for extending the catalytic improvements through each of the gateways from the North and South. The DRI can leverage this planned investment and provide stunning improvements to this area. Upon completion, visitors who travel from around the world for our wineries and WGI can engage in a community befitting the international fame that Watkins Glen has. On more than one occasion, a notable visitor will remark that Watkins Glen fell below their expectations due to the condition of the Village. The DRI can change this, not only for the Village, but also for the region and the State of New York.



Photo Credit: Stu Gallagher Photography

**Watkins Glen International**

Watkins Glen International (WGI) 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 for this September. The excellent reputation of WGI coupled with the new asphalt should result in additional nationally televised events.

**Watkins Glen State Park**

Watkins Glen State Park (voted by USA Today readers as the 3<sup>rd</sup> best park in the United States) is scheduled for a major face-lift to begin in 2017! The Watkins Glen State Park Renovation is a transformative project that will not only continue to bring visitors to Watkins Glen but with this expansion, will be a catalyst for continued economic development for the Region. In summary, the renovation project will provide park visitors with rich, educational interpretation of both human and natural history; will provide a redesigned and unforgettable gateway into one of the most powerful and scenic parks in New York State; and will provide a new integrated Visitor Information Center in partnership with the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce.

**Construction Projects – Future (2017-2019)**

**Housing – Diverse Types & Affordability \$22.5 million**

- Condominiums along Waterfront
- Rabbit Run
- Satterly Heights Housing Development

**Culinary/Libation/Dairy in catchment area \$8.5 million**

- Elf in the Oak
- Village Main Street Mixed Use Redevelopment
- Castle Grisch

**Manufacturing \$5.0 million**

- Shared Wine Facility (Business Park)
- Taylor Precision

**Public Infrastructure including Schools \$18.0 million**

- Route 14 Major Repaving
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Site Redevelopment
- Fire Academy Expansion

**Tourism Destination \$19.5 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
- Inner Peace Float Therapy



Project Seneca is a world-class sustainable/livable community redevelopment effort that 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, New York. 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 in 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 \$70 million in investments completed or planned for the short term in downtown Watkins Glen alone.

In many circles, Watkins Glen is a globally known name, and this recognition is growing. A major contributor to the success in attracting strategic investments into the Village is the desirable size of the community. The nature of the community, coupled with the size and structure of the population, lends well to efforts such as Project Seneca being successfully implemented. The DRI is exactly the vehicle to accelerate the investment for the redevelopment of Watkins Glen.

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 better access for residents and visitors to Seneca Lake; new mixed use facilities, hotels, housing, and beautification of Clute Park and Lakeside Park. These projects will complement those already underway including the waterfront/canal multi-purpose pathway, Middle Marina redevelopment, 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 & recreation, environmental awareness, transportation-related traffic improvements and overall quality of life opportunities.

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 of the village. In 2012, Main Street funds equaling \$500,000 were used to foster mixed used facilities including 11 upper story housing units and 7 commercial spaces in downtown Watkins Glen. This was accomplished in partnership with Community Progress, Inc.

Part of the success of 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 & cigar emporium. Furthermore, there are many pending projects in their final stages of planning including an additional 31 housing units (27 with no form of public assistance), the new regional wastewater treatment plant to accommodate future growth, reconditioning of the sidewalks, lighting, and signage as well as other projects.

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*The Village of Watkins Glen is experiencing strong economic growth as it positions itself to take advantage of the burgeoning tourism trade. As a world renowned tourism destination attracting millions of visitors annually, the Village is investing in infrastructure improvements designed to better position itself to accommodate continued growth and increased quality of life for its residents.*

*-Tim O'Hearn, County Administrator*

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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.

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 from the Village.

Watkins Glen has a strong sense of place. This sense of place is not only felt upstate and statewide, but also nationally and internationally. Project Seneca is the beneficiary of a forward-focused village board. Moreover, this sense of place has provided the necessary tools for maintaining sustainable growth through completed projects in the region.

The Village is finalizing its design guidelines and refreshing its zoning requirements. Currently, Watkins Glen operates with a diverse zoning map. There are 11 zoning codes present in the village. These include different levels of residential zones, a business transitional zone, lakefront development zone, as well as others. Project Seneca also has access to a special energy rate program for new businesses, made available through the Village. This energy program allows eligible businesses, such as industrial, manufacturing, and research and development facilities to take advantage of exceptionally attractive energy costs. 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.

## **Project Seneca accomplishments to date (announced):**

- Water Works Condominiums and Apartments
- Waterworks Art Gallery (Quintus Gallery)
- Brewery Apartments
- Relocation of wastewater treatment facility announced and 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
- Future Satellite Visitor's Center at Watkins Glen State Park slated for construction in 2017
- Redevelopment of housing along S. Madison Avenue
- Middle School Redevelopment a completed \$14 million project
- Watkins Glen State Park investment of \$6.5 million announced
- Gateway improvements (Kayak/Canoe Launch) which is in progress and expected to be completed in the Spring of 2017

## **Watkins Glen and Project Seneca desired revitalization projects:**

- New accommodations & lodging including a five-star boutique hotel
- Shared small business space for entrepreneurs
- Extended bike lane markings along Decatur street
- Traffic calming and pedestrian-friendly improvements to gateways
- Redevelopment of available sites and grey fields along Franklin Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- Seneca Harbor Ice Rink
- Watkins Glen Dog Park
- New tourism destination attraction (indoor recreation facility)
- Parking structure with street level retail and/or office space available
- Period lighting with banners and planter baskets
- Bump outs at key intersections
- "Checkered Flag" crosswalk delineation
- Way finding signage
- Pedestrian connections to rear parking areas
- Public gathering nodes
- Outdoor dining terraces including roof tops
- Decorative paving at intersections
- Catherine Valley Trail Improvements
- Other Streetscape Enhancements
- Scenic By-Way Improvements
- Aunt Sarah's Falls Interpretive Center
- Transportation Linkages – large truck alternate route, reconfigure bus/commuter hub, rail improvements
- Street furnishings
  - Benches, street trees with tree guards, street art such as "Race Car Sculpture"
- Further gateway improvements
- Improve access points to rear parking (i.e. lighting, signage and landscaping)
- Improved connections between North and South Franklin Commercial areas
- Cohesive tourism theme surrounding racing, wine, and Seneca Lake

# Job Growth

## Catching Fire!

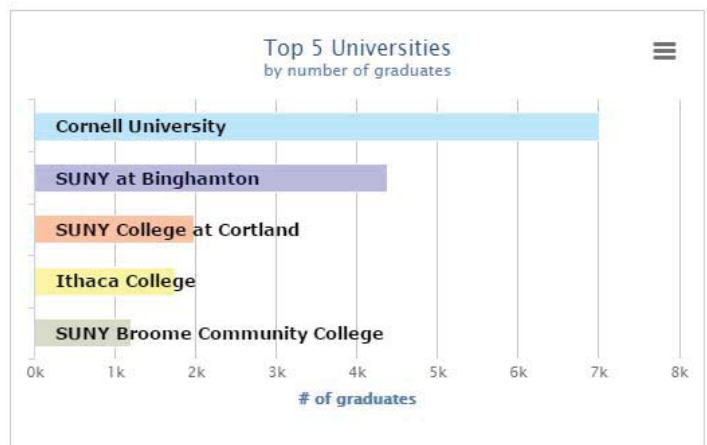
The Village of Watkins Glen has benefited from new investment in and around our community. These investments have translated into new jobs. In 2015, there were 20 new business formations within the Village of Watkins Glen. Some of these are service-oriented businesses, retail businesses, and culinary and libation-related businesses. In recent 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. Our size makes it difficult to enumerate a specific number of jobs but all indicators support ample growth. With the continued investments into the Fire Academy, Cayuga Medical System, Watkins Glen State Park, Watkins Glen International Speedway, new wineries, vineyards, breweries, 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 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 (70 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.

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 job growth.

Watkins Glen has the blessing of being 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, SUNY at Binghamton, SUNY College at Cortland, Ithaca College and SUNY Broome 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; Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities; Multi/interdisciplinary Studies; Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies; Personal and Culinary Services. The number of graduates in these fields of study annually total 6,086 (2014).



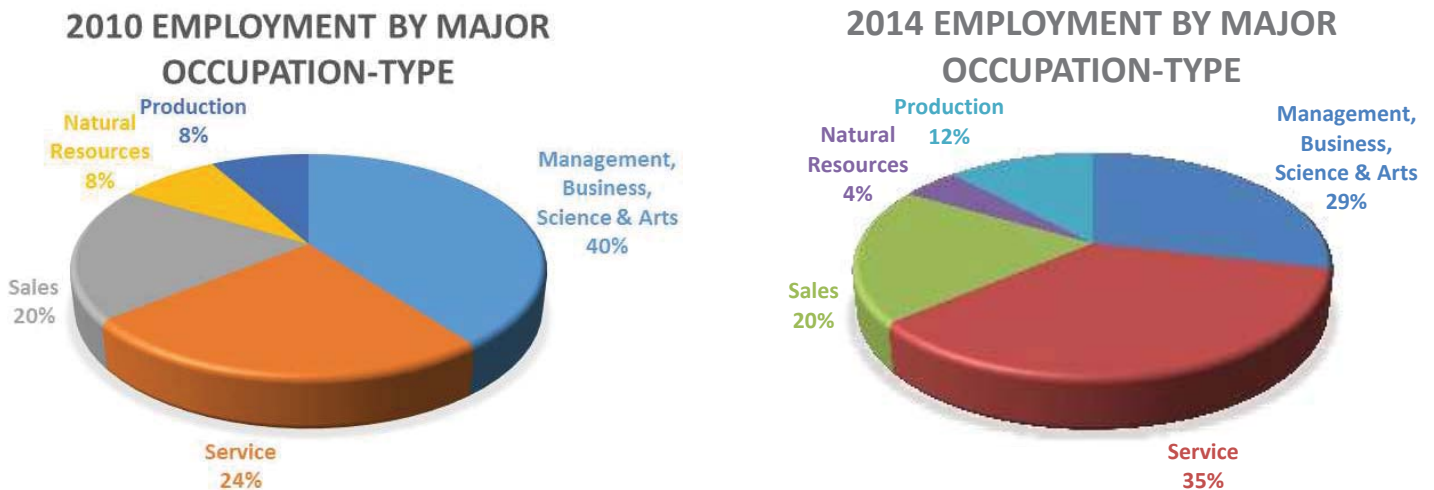
Total jobs within the Village of Watkins Glen area zip code (14891), saw an increase from 2013 after several years of decline, with nearly every sector realizing gains in employment. While a one-year increase does not indicate a trend, job gains coupled with the increased capital investments would indicate a continuing positive trend.

Fitting in well with the Governor’s focus on supporting agriculture as verbalized in his State of the State and Budget Address, employment in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining sector for the Watkins Glen zip code has grown consistently since 2011, with the jobs in this sector having grown by over 100 percent. The following three sectors have also seen consistent growth since 2011; Real Estate, Rental and Leasing; Administrative and Waste Management Services; and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and Accommodation and Food Services.

Specifically, within the Village’s incorporated boundaries, jobs have shifted from Management, Business, Science and Arts occupations (nearly 40% of total jobs in 2010 to 28.6% in 2014) to Service-related occupations (24.4% in 2010 to 35% in 2014).

With the recently announced \$500,000 federal grant for the nearby 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 a 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 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 trend of the Management, Business, Sciences and Arts occupations and return them to the 40% level of the early decade.



Another purpose for the \$10 million DRI award is to work with the State of New York to develop a strategy to improve the quality of the jobs with respect to wages. Watkins Glen has an interesting phenomena occurring related to the wage differential between males and females in the workforce. In 2009, the median annual wage for males was \$31,321 and for females it was just \$24,955. In the ensuing two years, the median wage for males rose to \$32,839 while the median annual wage for females fell 10 percent to \$22,621. From 2011 to 2014, wages fell for both males and females. The median annual wage for males fell to \$29,265 while the median wage for females fell alarmingly to \$16,621 (source: American Community Survey).

# WATKINS GLEN IS... GROWING



*The Village of 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**

## Attractiveness of Downtown

As travel writer Dian Emery of Girls Getaway writes, “This pretty little village at the bottom of Seneca Lake is the perfect central spot... We loved its historic main street, the easy access to Watkins Glen State Park, and the area’s choice of... options are perfectly suited for small or large group getaways.”

Dian is right. There is a reason so many travelers choose Watkins Glen as home base for their visit to the Finger Lakes – location, location, location. Watkins Glen is within a 5 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, Ithaca, Geneva, Canandaigua, and Hammondsport.

But beyond the location, the Village’s historic buildings, beautiful homes, walking trails, plus a state park that literally meets the main street, all make it an incredibly picturesque spot. But add to that the way that Seneca Lake opens before you at the northern end of the village, along with the iconic pier house, sailboats, beach, docks, restaurants, and a luxury hotel, and suddenly, the scales have tipped from picturesque to idyllic.

But there is more to attract people to downtown Watkins Glen than the obvious, natural beauty. There are historic buildings, quaint shops, a new beer garden and open air eateries including barbecue and an authentic gastropub, the region’s premier wine bar, an art gallery... and that is just a sampling.

Downtown Watkins Glen businesses have proven themselves dedicated to not just growing commerce, but making the area a truly beautiful place to live, work, and play. In fact, over two dozen have joined the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce in a monthly curb appeal contest. These shop owners have a vested interest in the beauty, the ambiance, and the success of their village – because they helped to build it, and because they will be the ones to carry it through to the future.



## HOUSING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY AND TYPE

Over the past five years there has been an infusion of investment in the village of Watkins Glen. Several new businesses have opened that one might not expect to find here including a waterfront art gallery and a renowned wine and cider bar. Housing is on the upswing as well with several new developments that appeal to residents across age

groups including Seneca Terrace Apartments a twenty-two unit market rate housing development funded entirely with private investment, and the Watkins Glen Brewery Apartments a seven unit waterfront short-term apartment

complex. 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.

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*...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...*

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## ACCESSIBLE RECREATION AMENITIES, PARKS, AND GATHERING SPACES

The Village of Watkins Glen offers many recreation amenities, parks, and gathering spaces. In short – there is never a lack of things to do! Our Village is affordable, accessible, and full of great amenities.



Unique events being offered include Movie Nights on the Lake which take place every Wednesday in July and August at Clute Park and involve projecting a movie onto a screen where families can gather to enjoy an evening of relaxed entertainment – al fresco. The Clute Park Market, which 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. Fridays on Franklin is an event series which features local wine, beer, spirits, and food – all sampled inside of downtown shops on the first Friday of each month.

Healthy and affordable food markets include The Clute Park Market mentioned above, as well as The Watkins Glen Farmers Market, which features local meat, cheese, eggs, produce, flowers, soaps, and more each Friday from May through October moving indoors in the winter. The Market takes place at Lafayette Park, just one block from Franklin Street (the Main Street of Watkins Glen) and it offers plenty of open space for families to picnic, stretch their legs, and enjoy the playground – all while shopping and supporting local farmers and small businesses. Lafayette Park also happens to be at an intersection of the Finger Lakes Trail and the Catharine Valley Trail – both of which offer walking and biking opportunities that tie directly into downtown Watkins Glen. Clute Park and Lafayette Park provide not just outdoor opportunities but the events being held in these locations offer great opportunities for people to simply get together – over a picnic or a drink, while enjoying a movie or picking out local produce, or just to enjoy a sunset – the options are there... and so are the people.



# WATKINS GLEN IS... VIBRANT



*“... there’s no better getaway... it’s known for its wine, lovely lakeshore scenery, and charming small town.”  
- Road Trippers*





Aside from Clute Park, Lafayette Park, the Finger Lakes Trail and the Catharine Valley Trail, there is the crowning jewel – Watkins Glen State Park – voted the #3 best state park in the country. Where Mother Nature meets Main Street, this park offers an absolutely breathtaking experience for locals and visitors alike. The Gorge Trail is a frequent site for morning walkers and runners. The improvements that are planned will only expand the green space – making it that much more vibrant and welcoming for those seeking the solace and beauty that only Mother Nature can provide.

The proof is there – locals and visitors alike love Watkins Glen. They want to get out and see it, feel it, taste it, touch it. This feeling of excitement is encouraging, but there is much more to be done. Sidewalks are crumbling, signage is lacking, the village while very walkable in size, is not so pedestrian-friendly in feel, benches are missing, store fronts are empty and those that are occupied need some attention. ***The potential is there – now is the time to harness it.***

Now is not just the time because of the energy and the feelings. Now is the time because we have the momentum, and the Downtown Revitalization Initiative could be the last piece to complete the puzzle. For example, the planned renovations at Watkins Glen State Park will completely transform that space. As Governor Cuomo said, “Watkins Glen State Park is one of New York’s greatest tourism success stories, and as more and more people visit the park each year, we must ensure it remains a premier destination.”

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*“‘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”....

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To that end, the \$6.5 million renovation will go a long way toward addressing concerns within the park, but what about the lead up to the entrance? What happens when you leave the park and find crumbling sidewalks, storefronts that are in disrepair, inconsistent signage, lack of hospitality expectations such as garbage cans, recycling receptacles, and benches? A gleaming, state of the art state park entrance cannot be the gleaming jewel of a rusty crown. The time is ripe to remove the rust, polish that crown, and offer a truly memorable downtown. One that is worthy of the incredible state park that visitors and locals alike have come to know and love.

### **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

Schuyler Hospital is a world-class facility with hometown connections. 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 area. 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.

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

Franklin Street is the main thoroughfare for commerce in downtown Watkins Glen. Various businesses occupy this space including shops restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts, motels, antique shops, local memorabilia, banks, beauty salons, car dealerships, computer stores, law offices, and much more. Decatur Street features an eclectic mix of residential properties as well as various commercial ventures including a newly established local coffee roaster, an insurance agency, and the International Motor Racing Research Center (one of the most unique attractions in the area).



Entertainment options are abundant in the Village of Watkins Glen. On Franklin Street there is The Franklin Street Art Gallery which is operated by the Arc of Schuyler where you can not only attend openings and admire the stunning works, you can also take classes in everything from fused glass to watercolors. Nearby is also the Quintus Art Gallery – a waterfront location that offers incredible art from local, national, and internationally-renowned artists and also provides a stunning event space, complete with an expansive deck on Seneca Lake.

Other options include a wide array of restaurants offering everything from barbecue to authentic Mexican, as well as Sushi, and even a gastropub. Even dining along the waterfront affords options – from classic American bar food to high end cuisine to dinner aboard a cruise boat – the choice is yours!

Beyond food, at nearly any of these spots you can also find live music 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 which is also home to the first farm brewery in the state (Roosterfish), one of the most highly regarded wine bars in the region (GRAFT wine + cider bar), great antiquing and shopping, street festivals, unique events, and so much more.

## EDUCATION

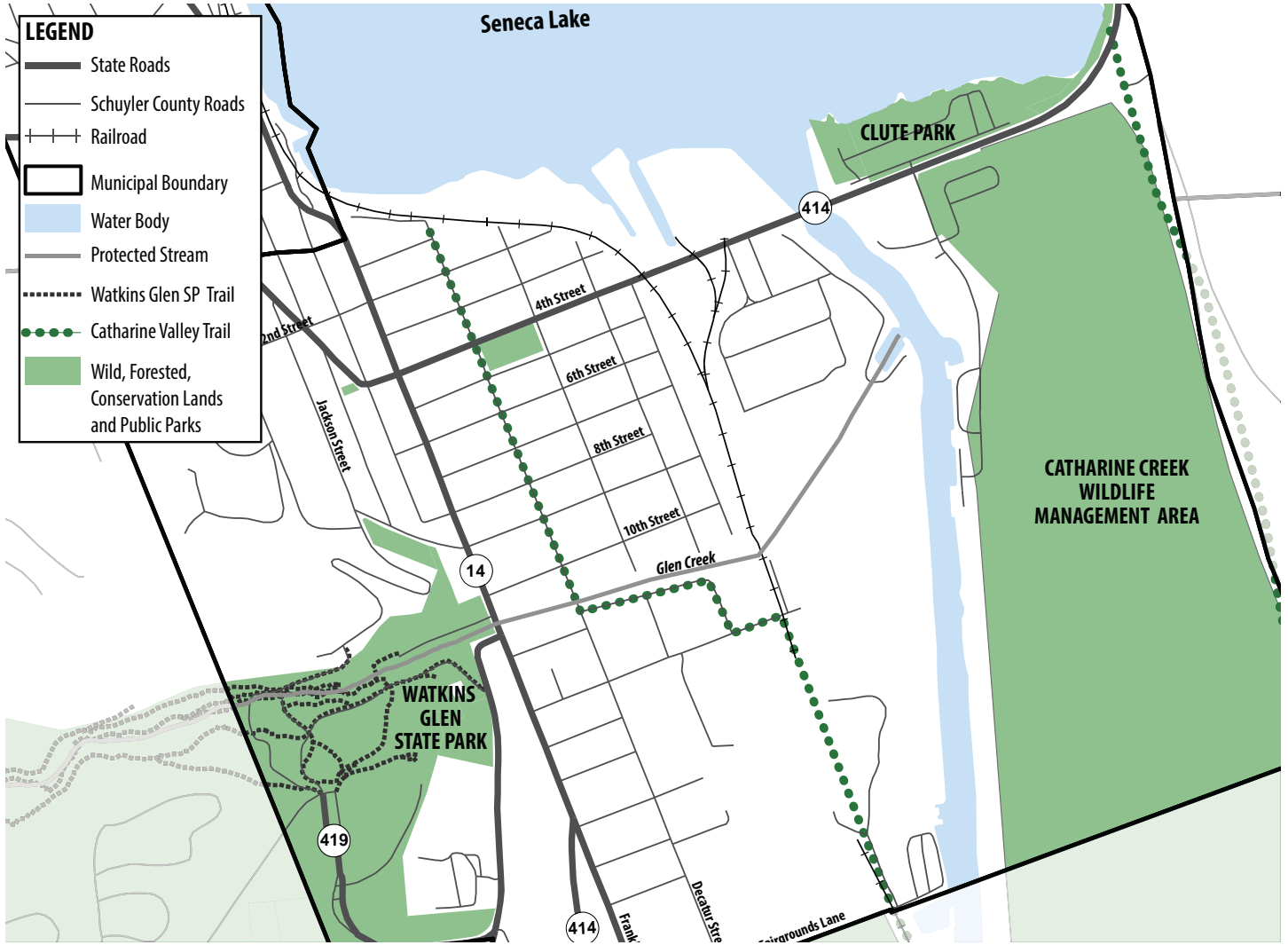
Watkins Glen Central School is located with the catchment area and is a hub of activity for the local community. It not only provides an outstanding, enriched educational experience for our youth, but it also is a remarkable recreational asset. The Field House has a community supported state-of-the-art 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!



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 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.**

# WATKINS GLEN IS... GREEN



## Sustainability

The downtown Village of Watkins Glen possesses characteristics that are second to none across New York State and across the globe. Surrounded by the rolling hills of beautiful Seneca Lake; Watkins Glen State Park, the most famous of all NY state parks; and the Watkins Glen International Speedway, the Village welcomes visitors from all over the world. The community is connected by the Catharine Valley Trail which is enjoyed by walkers, runners, bikers, and supports the canine community as well.

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 2016 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

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 has a diverse use of the 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 area always 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.

### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

**You can still drive the historic Grand Prix Race Track and each year in September there is a reenactment which attracts tens of thousands of visitors to the Village of Watkins Glen.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Within two miles, the Watkins Glen State Park Gorge stream descends 400 feet past 200-foot cliffs, generating 19 waterfalls along its course.**

### TRUE FLAVOR

**"... eating local has been the norm long before it was trendy...a wonderful place to hunt for epicurean treasures and truly embrace the farm-to-table experience...**

**– Anna Lee C. Iijima  
(Wine Enthusiast)**



# WATKINS GLEN HAS... POTENTIAL

## From Chrysalis to Butterfly

### *Redeveloping properties in the Downtown*

Over 75 parcels have been identified as “targeted for redevelopment”. There are 50 parcels in the northern section of the Village of Watkins Glen included in this inventory. In the southern area of the targeted downtown district, there are 26 parcels. The parcels are in varying degrees of maintenance and use. In many instances, the highest and best use of the property is not currently 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 of the Village residents, investors and visitors. In our quest for the resurrection of an active, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place, we must approach the process strategically and with surgical precision. We will improve the key properties that will create the impetus for others to follow this lead.

The redevelopment of these targeted properties should diversify the current complement of 138 businesses. Funding from the DRI would embolden our business owners and residents to make the investments necessary to prosper through future economic cycles. One specific potential 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 seeking space and relocating from outside New York. 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 had developers interested in redeveloping North Franklin street with a mixed use development. However, this is stalled due to potential brownfield contamination concerns, costs associated with basic infrastructure and assemblage of properties, and lack of a predictable, year-round focus for new residents.

All of the properties that have been targeted will not require zoning changes for redevelopment. Some properties are owned by the Village of Watkins Glen while most are privately owned.





**Watkins Glen Waterfront Transformation.** Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The redevelopment of all 75 parcels should 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 to the local real property tax base.

To bring many of the commercial and residential properties up to a quality that appeals to Millennials and new residents, the Village is interested in exploring and implementing new policies and programs. These programs and policies could be best-practices from other regions in New York or the U.S. or original concepts to be tested here. Some of the concepts that the Village would like to consider are those that provide inducements and incentives for investment in the properties, both inside and outside, preferably without the immediate increase in assessment and related tax liability.

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.

## Policies to Enhance Quality of Life

The Village of Watkins Glen has a long history of proactively developing planning strategies to move the village and downtown area forward. The Village recently undertook the planning effort to develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) which is in the final stages of adoption. The Village is also in the process of updating the existing Zoning Law to include design guidelines which will establish a cohesive look for the Villages primary downtown and waterfront areas. 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 which are detailed in the following sections.

### Village of Watkins Glen Comprehensive Plan (2012)

#### Vision

The Village of Watkins Glen will become a charming small-town community that has a bounty of activities; unique retail, family oriented activities, a world-class waterfront for all to enjoy, a vibrant arts scene, and a beautiful state park. The Village will strive to protect its natural beauty, celebrate its racing history, and maintain walkability for residents and tourists. The community will instill a sense of pride and satisfaction in living here, encourage its residents to vacation in place, and attract visitors to live here. The Village will be a walkable, quaint village that provides attractive, well maintained homes and that encourages year-round 18 hour activity to our businesses and attractions.

#### 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 integrity
- Encouraging mixed use
- Improving transportation and linkages (landmarks, gateways, access to parking, way finding)
- Building 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.



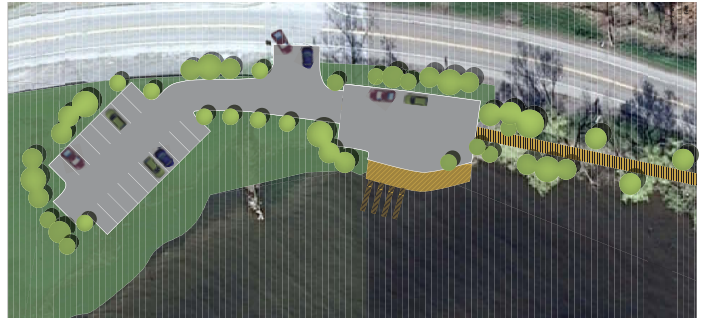
Current image of the intersection of 6th and Franklin Street



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

## Implemented Strategic Recommendations: Physical Improvements

- Support the development of water related businesses such as kayak and/or canoe outfitters
  - *Proposed Canoe/Kayak Launch with walking trail to Clute Park which is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2016.*
- Develop the multipurpose trail across the bridge to connect Seneca Harbor Park and Tank Beach.
  - *Proposed Canoe/Kayak Launch with walking trail to Clute Park which is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2016.*



conceptual kayak/ canoe launch proposal

## Access and Connections

- Provide an inter-municipal, integrated network of bicycle and pedestrian-friendly trail systems, including bike paths, trails, and sidewalks.
- Establish a trailhead for the Catharine Valley Trail on North Decatur Street, adjacent to Seneca Harbor Park. A kiosk with a trail map showing key destinations should be located at the trailhead.
- Construct a multi-purpose lakefront trail from Seneca Harbor Park to Tank Beach to promote waterfront access.
  - *Proposed Canoe/Kayak Launch with walking trail to Clute Park which is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2016.*
- Create and promote connections to local tourism excursion and events.
- Work with the water excursion providers to expand tourism opportunities.
  - *Schooner Excursions Inc. added a 2<sup>nd</sup> excursion boat the M/V Remedy which offers Eco Tours, History Tours, Custom Winery, Brewery, Distillery Tours and Sightseeing Cruises in the Spring of 2016*
- Amend the Village's land use regulations to incorporate the waterfront-specific design guidelines.
  - *The updated village zoning and newly created design guidelines are expected to be adopted by the village board in July 2016.*
- Coordinate appropriate easements for pedestrian connections across the rail-road with Finger Lakes Rail.
  - *The Schuyler County Industrial Development included three new crossings free from annual fees in the most recent ten-year extension of the Finger Lakes Railroad PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes). This condition for the PILOT was included in anticipation of redevelopment within the DRI neighborhood boundary.*



## Signage and Streetscape

### Design Guidelines, Site Planning, & Land Use Regulations

- Adopt streetscape standards and design guidelines for the downtown and waterfront.
  - *The updated village zoning and newly created design guidelines are expected to be adopted by the village board in July 2016.*
- Update the Village's Zoning Regulations to incorporate the land use strategies of this plan, including but not limited to higher-density, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).
  - *The updated village zoning and newly created design guidelines are expected to be adopted by the village board in July 2016.*
- Amend the Village's land use regulations to incorporate the waterfront-specific design guidelines.
  - *The Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) is expected to be adopted by the village board in July 2016.*
- Incorporate designs and colors that support a central theme for Watkins Glen's waterfront.

## Economic Development

- Encourage evening retail hours. With sidewalk activities, dining, and high quality lighting both residents and tourists can be encouraged to visit the Franklin Street area during evening hours. More open businesses will encourage more patrons, which will feed the cycle. Evening activities will tend to combine dining, shopping, and activities while strolling up Franklin Street.
  - *The Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce developed a Friday on Franklin event series which features local wine, beer, and spirits, along with local food sampled inside of downtown shops on the first Friday of each month.*
- Encourage a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities on the water-front. Housing opportunities on the waterfront should include a mix of single-family, two-family, apartment, townhouse and condominium style dwelling units.
  - *The Village of Watkins Glen has added several new housing projects that range from senior affordable housing to high-end waterfront condos.*
- Integrate housing into the waterfronts as a vital ingredient of an active space. Part of the key to the mix of uses and density is to maximize the edges of the open and green spaces so that the greatest benefit is derived. Promote 2<sup>nd</sup> story housing opportunities on North Franklin Street.
  - *The Village of Watkins Glen utilized "Main Street Grants" to create an additional eleven units of 2<sup>nd</sup> story housing.*

## Sustainability & Environmental Quality

- Reduce or eliminate the discharge of untreated sanitary flows to Seneca Lake.
  - *New Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is expected to be completed in 2019*
- Collaborate with environmental engineers to retrofit the sewage treatment plant in a manner that is sustainable and space-efficient. Space efficiency could be maximized through the design of a multi-story, mixed-use facility.
  - *New Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant is expected to be completed in 2019*

# Lakefront Management & Development Strategy (2010)

## Lakefront Management Plan - 12 Key Principles

- Be sensitive to environmental issues, including dredging the canal, protecting the marsh and protecting birding areas.
- Successful waterfronts build on their historic and cultural assets.
- Harbors should be integrated inland as extensively as possible.
- Harbors must plan for a 16-hour day and should be oriented to an active life style.
- Waterfronts must be planned for multi-use activities.
- Tourism can provide a significant economic boost to older waterfront areas; linkages between the waterfront and local/regional activities.
- The harbor is a great opportunity for recreational activity with a regional focus to encourage families to stay longer.
- Careful zoning, historic preservation, and site planning can add great value to waterfronts; water dependent or water related activities should be allowed.
- A physical, social, and psychological connectedness must be developed between downtown and the waterfront.
- Downtown waterfronts benefit significantly from open spaces such as parks, plazas, and trails.
- Harbors must be linked to key transportations systems and adopt traffic management polices.
- Make the waterfront an essential part of the downtown.

## Seneca Harbor/Downtown Conceptual Plan



# Clute Park/Tank Beach



# Seneca Canal



# Northern Gateway Improvement Project (2012)

## Proposed Gateway

The purpose of the proposed development is to provide an aesthetically pleasing entry from the North into the business district of Watkins Glen with improvements incorporate to address the following concerns identified during the meetings with the Village, SCOPED, and abutting business and property owners:

- Traffic calming
- Bus accommodation for loading and unloading
- Improved pedestrian mobility and amenities such clearly identified access points (bump outs, designated crosswalks, etc.)
- Where applicable, reduction in the size and or number of driveway access points while continuing to provide access to all parcels within the study area
- An easily identifiable focal point (landmark)
- Maintaining and preferably improving the view shed to the lake
- Corridor landscaping which improves aesthetics while minimizing the impact to visibility of the adjoining businesses.
- Where possible, incorporate elements to allow the project to tie into or avoid a conflict with any planned or conceptual ideas related to adjoining private development.



## Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) Expected Adoption 2016

A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program 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 critical coastal issues can be addressed.

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 that promote an appropriate balance between economic growth and environmental protection within 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;

All development or uses should recognize the unique qualities of the waterfront by:

- Using building and site design to make beneficial use of the waterfront locations and associated resources;
- Minimizing consumption of waterfront lands that does not meet the intent of this policy or that would result in potential adverse impacts on natural resources;
- Incorporating recreational activities, public access, open space and other such amenities into waterfront designs to increase visual and physical public access to the waterfront;
- Ensuring that design and local use of use of structures complement the surrounding community and landscape;
- Using indigenous plants as components of landscape design to improve habitat and water quality, and to lessen water demands; and
- Using appropriate signage and other amenities to promote tourist activities and ensure better wayfinding along the waterfront.

### **Waterfront Revitalization Program Policies**

- **Policy 1:** Foster a pattern of development in the waterfront area that enhances community character, preserves open space, makes efficient use of infrastructure, makes beneficial use of a waterfront location, and minimizes adverse effects of development.
- **Policy 2:** Preserve historic resources of the waterfront area.
- **Policy 3:** Enhance visual quality and protect scenic resources throughout the waterfront area.

### **Natural Waterfront Policies**

- **Policy 4:** Minimize loss of life, structures, and natural resources from flooding and erosion.
- **Policy 5:** Protect and improve water quality and supply in the waterfront area.
- **Policy 6:** Protect and restore the quality and function of the waterfront area ecosystem.
- **Policy 7:** Protect and improve air quality in the waterfront area.
- **Policy 8:** Minimize environmental degradation in the waterfront area from solid waste and hazardous substances and wastes.

### **Public Waterfront Policies**

- **Policy 9:** Provide for public access to, and recreational use of, waterfront waters, public lands, and public resources of the waterfront area.

### **Working Waterfront Policies**

- **Policy 10:** Protect water-dependent uses and promote siting of new water-dependent uses in suitable locations.
- **Policy 11:** Promote sustainable use of living lacustrine and riverine resources in the waterfront area.
- **Policy 12:** Protect agricultural lands in the waterfront area.
- **Policy 13:** Promote appropriate use and development of energy and mineral resources.

## Proposed Land and Water Uses and Projects

### Lakefront Redevelopment Projects

#### Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant

Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing for 15 years

#### Redevelopment of Former Wastewater Treatment Plant Site

Cost Estimate: N/A

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing for 15 years

### Streetscape Improvements Projects

#### Increased Landscaping & Consistent Appearance

Cost Estimate: \$200,000

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

#### Lighting Upgrades, Lighting Plan—Consistent Appearance

Cost Estimate: \$150,000

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

#### Sidewalk Upgrades and Repairs

Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing for 15 years

#### Information Kiosks

Cost Estimate: \$4,500 per kiosk

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing, with planning initiation in 2014

#### Public Artwork

Cost Estimate: \$50,000

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing, with planning initiation in 2014.

#### Northern Gateway Improvements

Cost Estimate: \$3,500,000

Proposed Timeline: 15year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

### Open Space/Park Projects

#### Catharine Creek Area Preserve Improvements

Cost Estimate: N/A

Proposed Timeline: Completed

#### Tank Beach Interpretive Area Improvements (short-term)

Cost Estimate: N/A

Proposed Timeline: Completed

#### Seneca Harbor Park Improvements

Cost Estimate: \$1,000,000

Proposed Timeline: Completed

### Trails and Linkages Projects

#### Catharine Valley Trail Section: Watkins Glen School to Seneca Harbor Park

Cost Estimate: N/A

Proposed Timeline: Completed in 2009

#### Interpretive Trail through the Queen Catharine Marsh

Cost Estimate: N/A

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

#### Improved Linkages to Long Distance Hiking Trails

Cost Estimate: \$120,000

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

#### Lakefront Multi-Purpose Pathway

Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

### Parking Improvements Projects

#### Development of a Village Wide Parking Plan & Increased Off-Street Parking Options

Cost Estimate: \$120,000

Proposed Timeline: 5-10 year planning period, with planning initiation in 2014

### Infrastructure Projects

#### Shoreline Stabilization and Repair

Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing for 15 years

### Housing Projects

#### Housing stock improvements & appearance (short-range/ on-going)

Cost Estimate: \$30,000/ year

Proposed Timeline: Ongoing for 15 years

## Additional Planning and Policy Efforts

### Villages of Montour Falls & Watkins Glen Downtown Improvement Strategy – 2004

In 2004, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPEd) was awarded a grant from the federal Appalachian Regional Commission and the New York State Governor's Office for Small Cities to develop a Downtown Improvement Strategy for the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls. The planning process was guided by a Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) composed of business-owners, residents, and agency representatives from both downtown districts. Specific issues to be addressed and studied during the project included the current mix of retail, recreation and entertainment, infrastructure, traffic flow, and retail growth opportunities.

The plan also examined the impact of regional retail plazas and the new Wal-Mart shopping center on both of the business districts. A marketing study was conducted, which reviewed economic indicators, demographics, the real estate market, and consumer income and spending potential. A survey was also distributed to employees of local establishments, merchants, and consumers. Additional public input was obtained through three public meetings. The mission statement and the main strategies of the plan were based on the results of a SWOT analysis conducted during the first public workshop.

The plan recommended that the Main Street Approach be used as a model to facilitate downtown improvements. Efforts were to be focused on five strategy areas identified during the planning process. The five strategy areas are listed below:

- **Economic Development:** Increase revenues of existing business owners while identifying new enterprises that may be beneficial to the downtown areas.
- **Marketing & Promotion:** Increase the popularity of the downtown areas to local residents and visitors through image development and special events.
- **Design:** Improve the physical appearance and function of the district.
- **Infrastructure:** Facilitate the ongoing investment in the facilities necessary to operate a successful downtown area.
- **Community:** Ensure the ongoing operation of the program, such as human and financial resources.

### Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls Area Transportation Study – 2009

In 2009, the Village of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls Area Transportation Study was conducted as a scoping exercise geared toward providing an inventory and planning-level analysis of existing conditions and future opportunities along the NYS Route 14 corridor. The study area extended approximately three miles along NYS Route 14 and also included a three-quarter mile segment of NYS Route 414 within the Village of Watkins Glen. The transportation goals of previously conducted reports and studies were reviewed and synthesized, as well as the results of various traffic counts and traffic impact statements.



As a result of the existing conditions analysis, eight viable projects/improvements were identified for further consideration and are listed below:

- **Safety Issues with NYS Route 414:** Address safety issues with NYS Route 414 involving the weight restriction and truck bypass.
- **Northern Gateway Improvements:** Implement traffic calming measures to remedy current issues, including a center median and road narrowing at the “S” curve.
- **Corridor-Wide Access Management:** Develop standards for setbacks, curb cuts, and shared access for the entire NYS Route 14 corridor within the Village of Watkins Glen and incorporate further south towards the Village of Montour Falls.
- **Development Coordination Group:** Establish a more formalized process for the review and coordination of projects between the Town, Village, County, NYSDOT, and regional transportation agencies.
- **Watkins Mill Crossing:** Conduct further traffic evaluation to determine the feasibility of extending the grid system over the creek through the creation of a new bridge.
- **Village-Wide Parking Assessment:** Inventory and assess on-street and municipal lots for their capacity and ability to meet current and future demands.
- **Improved Access to Salt Point Road:** Improve the connection through adjustments to the current roadway or explore the feasibility of a new connector.
- **Circulator Streetcar Bus:** Foster local and regional support for the concept and begin to identify what organization/agency is best equipped to pursue funding, conduct ridership estimates, plan routes, and determine ultimate project feasibility.

These projects would require more detailed engineering and cost/benefit analysis. Funding for additional evaluation or implementation was recommended to be obtained through the NYSDOT Access Management Program or the municipalities.

## Village of Watkins Glen Parking Census – 2009

The Village of Watkins Glen Parking Census was developed in 2009 by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County. The purpose of the study was gain a better understanding of parking availability in the Village. A study area was identified, which spanned north-to-south from the waterfront to 6<sup>th</sup> Street and east-to-west from Madison Avenue to Porter Street. The number of parking spaces within the study area was counted and occupancy rates were identified in order to determine if a parking problem existed.

Occupancy rates were established through a four - day parking census, which represented different times during the tourist season. Occupied spaces were also counted during three different time periods each day (8:30-10:30 am, 11:30-1:30 pm, and 5:00-8:00 pm). The study found that the parking spaces with the highest occupancy were concentrated within the Village’s business district between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets and Franklin and Decatur streets, as well as between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets and Madison and Franklin streets.

Overall, the study determined that there is adequate parking in the study area. Although there were areas of congestion in the study area, additional parking was available within a half-block radius. In order to eliminate perceived parking issues, the study recommended the following:

- Provide signage indicating the location of additional parking,
- Ask employees to park further from where they work to allow more space for patrons,
- Paint parking lines to help direct people how to park,
- Introduce lighting and streetscaping in order to create more inviting space away from downtown,
- Repave portions of the existing parking areas, and
- Maintain consistent enforcement of parking time limits.

## Local Support

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

The Village of Watkins Glen is designating the Village Superintendent as the initial lead who will work in close cooperation with the Finger Lakes Gateway Community Development Corporation and Project Seneca. We will ensure an inclusive committee will be created to guarantee the voices of our community will be heard throughout the process of revitalizing the downtown area.

As indicated earlier in this application, both the Finger Lakes Gateway CDC and Project Seneca are ideal partners with which to share the workload, 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 that we have received from local businesses, leaders, and organizations here in Watkins Glen. These letters are from partners in the private and public sectors who are not only supportive, but are also looking forward to playing an integral role with the DRI Planning Committee. It is evident through the support in these letters that local entities realize the needs of the downtown area and are excited for this chance to have their needs be addressed.

Based on past support for initiatives, we expect to have a full 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
- IDA
- Workforce Investment Board
- Organizations specific to community service, especially those working with new Americans.



May 31, 2016

Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkin 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 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The DRI 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 bring to fruition, within the Watkins Glen area, 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 wages sufficiently better than sustainable wage (with opportunities for advancement).

To date, Project Seneca has stimulated over \$50mm of investment into the Village of Watkins Glen, serving as a catalyst for year-round vibrancy.

With the \$12mm repaving project of the Watkins Glen International Speedway, the announced \$6.5mm improvement project at the Watkins Glen State Park and the over 100 net new housing units (increase of 10%) in the Village, there can be no question that our downtown is ready to surge.

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. This year the Middle School Apartments were completed and an attached performing arts center was made available to the community. Another arts-related space was opened in 2015 at the Water Works condominium and apartment complex.

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, available 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 \$10m would bring additional prosperity to the area, region and New York State.

Without question, the community, Schuyler County, Towns of Dix and Reading, Watkins 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 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.

With full support,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judy M. Cherry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "C".

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.*

May 27, 2016

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 Village of Watkins Glen's NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative application. The Arc has been an integral part of this community since its inception in 1978. I have been personally involved with The Arc for 37 years, and can attest to this being a caring and open community. As you know, The Arc of Schuyler provides supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The people we support feel safe, welcomed, and included in this community. This grant opportunity is well timed. The Arc is currently engaged in a strategic planning process to address heightened State and Federal expectations for people with disabilities to have more opportunities to live and work in most integrated settings. Watkins Glen's revitalization plan fits perfectly with this goal as the need for more safe and accessible housing, community-based employment, and transportation options has been identified.

The Arc is a multifaceted nonprofit organization located in Watkins Glen that has worked closely with government and other community organizations over the years to address gaps in services for people with disabilities and other populations. Our experiences in the housing, employment, transportation, and arts and recreation areas provide unique 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 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 assurance of compliance with new food safety standards. The next phase of our development is for Glen

*Supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

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. The Arc’s programs are located in an area zoned as “Canal Development” on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, off of Decatur Street, in the Village of Watkins Glen. In your planning, the Village could consider including the Canal Development Zone in the Village’s Downtown Initiative to expand potential partnership opportunities.

### **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 to study 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 often filled with festivals and events. Development of an arts culture and community would be another possible partnership opportunity.

### **Transportation**

In 2011, The Arc of Schuyler was awarded a contract to serve as the public transit provider, Schuyler County Transit, for Schuyler County. Though the County is small and rural in nature, County officials saw the importance of establishing a public transit system to enhance quality of life for its residents. The public transit system 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 east side of the County and the City of Corning to the Village, and a daily rural route service connects the West side of the County to the Village. 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. Use of these funds is under discussion.

The Arc of Schuyler also employs the County’s Mobility Manager who manages a transportation information and assistance call center. Her responsibilities include County coordinated transportation planning and is responsible for oversight of the County’s coordinated transportation plan. She is currently working on a specific project with neighboring Tompkins County to study opportunities to improve transportation options across county borders. Mobility Management also involves planning for alternate modes of transportation. This includes serving on committees that study and develop walk-ability/bike-ability community plans. The Catherine Valley Trail, a walk/bike path, runs through the Village of Watkins Glen, connecting parks and the Seneca Canal to the Village via 12<sup>th</sup> and Decatur Streets. The Village also has a free bike sharing program located on the lakefront, provided by the Southern Tier Bicycle League and maintained by the Boy Scouts. These are all assets that could be enhanced and promoted 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 as your plans develop.

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 6, 2016

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 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). *Built to Lead* was the theme of the Governors' State of the State address in 2016, when he announced his intention to invest \$20 billion in an economic development program for Upstate New York.

Watkins 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. 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, transformational 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 would provide an excellent opportunity to leverage the business community, pre k-20 education and workforce training programs, beautification efforts, entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the State of New York ESD to make a catalytic improvement in the community. The investment of the DRI would be a **solid no-risk investment on the part of the State** since the kernels of growth are already planted and are beginning to grow.

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.

We look forward to working with the DRI Planning Committee, the State of New York, and the Governor's Office to make the Governor's vision a reality.

With full support,

  
Judy McKinney Cherry CEcD  
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**

May 31, 2016

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.

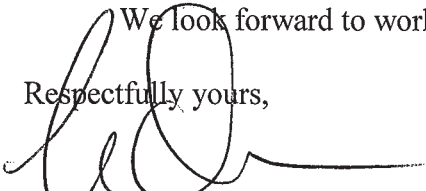
Watkins Glen is a very livable community, unique in its histories of health, recreation and global motorsports. The Village is centrally located to employment centers in Corning, Elmira, Ithaca and Rochester. There is much a young professional would find appealing including a safe, stable community on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



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

SOMETHING SPECIAL AT *every* TURN

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

May 31, 2016

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. In just the last year, our village has received incredible mentions in esteemed media outlets:

- *USA Today* readers voted Watkins Glen State Park one of the top three state parks in the country.
- Watkins Glen International was voted the best NASCAR Track in the country by *USA Today*.
- *The American Bus Association* names the Finger Lakes Wine Festival one of the Top 100 Events in 2016.

**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 838,000 visitors!

**WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL.** The road course track at Watkins Glen International hosts today's pros from NASCAR to Vintage Cups and most recently announced the INDYCAR series will return in September 2016.

**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 LaMoreaux, IOM  
President & CEO



## Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

**Andrew M. Cuomo**  
Governor

**Rose Harvey**  
Commissioner

**Fred Bonn**  
Regional Director

Finger Lakes Region • 2221 Taughannock Park Road, Trumansburg, NY 14886  
607-387-7041 • www.nysparks.com

June 7, 2016

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

Dear Hon. Schimizzi,

I am writing in support of the Village of Watkins Glen's application to Governor Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. This program, designed to transform downtown commerce centers across all of New York State, 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 to stimulate the local and regional economy by partnering with the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce on a new visitor information center located in the heart of the Main Entrance.

But the Village is still confronted with significant challenges, outside of the park renovations, that this grant award would be able to address. Vacancy rates along Franklin Street are numerous, second floor occupancy is challenging, and there is never sufficient parking during summer months and high tourism season.

Please let me know if I can help support this application in other ways. I was very excited to hear that the Village was applying.

Sincerely,

Fred Bonn  
Regional Director

**SCHOONER EXCURSIONS, INC.**  
215 South Madison Ave., Suite C  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891  
607-535-5253 P [www.sailtruelove.com](http://www.sailtruelove.com) 607-535-2999 F

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June 6, 2016

Honorable Samuel Schmizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14819

RE: NYS DOWNTOWN REVITILZATION INITIATIVE (DRI)

Dear Mayor Schmizzi,

Please be advised that Schooner Excursions, Inc. and Nav-1 Properties, LLC fully support the grant application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) for the Village of Watkins Glen. My wife, Lisa and I have operated our Sailing Charter business and Property Management and Rental business as well as my Law Offices out of Watkins Glen for several years and the opportunity for growth has been tremendous. 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 our 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 a being the "Village of Progress". The natural resources are here, the talent is here, the initial infrastructure is here, all we need is the additional funding to pave the roadmap for the future. Planning now for the waves of people and business that will eventually visit and re-locate here is an absolute must to stay competitive .

Please extend our full and complete support and interest in this grant application. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very Truly Yours,

  
Joshua & Lisa Navone



May 27, 2016

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

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 "Jim 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



**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

Service Officer

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Affirmative Action Employer"*

May 31, 2016

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

Central · School · District  
Thomas J. Phillips · Superintendent of Schools

May 27, 2015

Honorable Samuel Schmizzi, Mayor  
Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, NY14891

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



# Chemung Canal Trust Company

June 7, 2016

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

Dear Mayor:

Chemung Canal Trust Company strongly endorses the application for funding downtown revitalization of the Village of Watkins Glen. As a lifelong resident of 65 years of this village, I have seen the most positive changes in the past ten years. I believe the catalyst was the building of the Harbor Hotel at the lakefront. When strolling down Franklin Street from the hotel, it is apparent there is a need for a facelift to our main street. The number of visitors is continuing to grow each year at amazing rates. The attractions of the State Park, Seneca Lake, and the wineries, brings in an unbelievable number of visitors. This grant would certainly enhance the opportunity for necessary improvements to our infrastructure. As a community bank with 2 branches in Schuyler County we strongly support the application for this grant. These dollars would greatly assist in making critical improvements necessary for future growth and development

Sincerely,

Kenneth Wilson  
Vice President

*Building relationships since 1833*

Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender 



June 8, 2016



Village of Watkins Glen  
303 North Franklin Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891

Attn: Honorable Samuel Schimizzi, Mayor

Dear Mayor Schimizzi,

My name is Doug Hagin. I am a co-owner of E.C. Cooper Insurance Agency here in downtown Watkins Glen. I am also a local Rotarian; member of the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce and I sit on the Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporations (REDEC) Board of Directors.

I am writing in support of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. This grant will help with the redevelopment already in progress by keeping and attracting individuals and families who will live, work, play and grow in our beautiful community.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug Hagin', with a large flourish at the end.

Doug Hagin  
VP E.C. Cooper, Inc.



215 E. Church Street  
Elmira, New York 14901  
Phone: 607-734-9784  
Fax: 607-734-6588  
Website: www.cs-cc.org

*Help that works... Hope that lasts!*

*"A United Way Community Partner"*

May 31, 2016

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

Dear Mayor Schimizzi:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of your grant submittal to the Governor's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Catholic Charities is overwhelmingly supportive of the approach the Village is taking in leveraging the positive growth, investment and sustainability of our community. Should the Village be successful in winning the award, it could have magnanimous impact on the clients we are serving. Many of our clients live in and around Watkins Glen.

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 ....

Should the Village of Watkins Glen be selected, Catholic Charities looks forward to being an integral member of the DRI Community Planning effort going forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Nocera".

Charles Nocera  
Executive Director

Kathie E. Notarfonzo  
Inner Peace Floats  
111 W. Fourth Street  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

May 27, 2016

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

Dear Mayor Schimizzi;

As a new business owner in Watkins Glen, I would like to support the revitalization of our hometown. I'm a committed local to not only our beautiful area and our visitors, but more importantly to the people that reside here all year.

The business I'm in the process of offering our community is known as, "Floatation Therapy," (aka floatation tank, sensory deprivation tank, or isolation tank). It is a tank filled with water that has enough Epsom salt mixed in to allow a person to float on the surface. The water is kept at skin-temperature, making it imperceptible, and the tank is sound-proof and dark, creating a place for our bodies to be free from gravity and all stimulation from the outside world. Placing the float tanks in is just part of the equation as my overall goal is to create an environment whose purpose is to act as a counterbalance to every other interaction we have with the world around us. It is a pursuit of pure nothingness. A place of rest, a place to heal, and an environment that allows our bodies and our minds to sink away from the society that has been built around us, and to instead focus internally. A temporary escape.

Additionally, there are many health benefits to this practice, with scientific research, that I intend to target once I'm fully open.

#### PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

This is an exciting application for the float tanks because there are so few effective treatments for PTSD right now. Studies have shown that PTSD can be profoundly helped by floating. Although time alone in the tank can bring up traumatic memories, the floater's body is sending out signals via dopamine, reduced cortisol production, and physical relaxation that 'everything is okay.' As a result, they are able to process through experiences and remove them from their painful associations.

#### Addiction

Most physical additions are a result of certain drugs becoming our brain's main source of substantial dopamine release. As our bodies become more and more dependent on that drug, the dopamine released during our routine lives becomes less effective at satisfying that craving. The float tank

provides a natural source of substantial dopamine release in our brain. Having a healthy source for this gives an addict's brain somewhere to look other than addiction. In effect, the float tank weens the brain away from a drug dependency by enabling them to have a natural, internal alternative.

I could go on and on! I get excited when I think of all the wonderful ways to help people in our area!

Other benefits include support for, but not limited to, - pain relief, injury recovery, various medical conditions, pregnancy, athletic training, strengthened immune system, stress relief, emotional pain relief, enhanced creativity, and just overall well-being.

Please know that you have my support as a stakeholder in continued development of our community, and if there's anything that I can do to be a part of it, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathie E. Katarfouzo".

(607) 425-1042 – Cell

[marknkathie@gmail.com](mailto:marknkathie@gmail.com) - Email

