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12 projects in Albany part of $10m Downtown Revitalization Initiative

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Albany, NY Governor Andrew Cuomo announced 12 transformational projects for the city's Clinton Sq. neighborhood as part of the $10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award. The investments in Clinton Sq. will enhance the neighborhood's role in the Capital Region and highlight the area's natural landmarks and attractions, events and entertainment, and arts scene. The investments are part of the governor's ongoing efforts to revitalize the upstate economy and create more opportunities for the Capital Region.

"These targeted investments in Clinton Sq. will help strengthen the neighborhood's role as a historic gateway to the heart of the capital city," governor Cuomo said. "By investing in the infrastructure, affordable housing and business community, we can help attract even more new businesses, residents and visitors to Albany."

The Clinton Square neighborhood was named a DRI Round 3 winner in September 2018. The city will focus on making Clinton Sq. a welcoming gateway to the capital city. This compact and walkable area close to the Hudson River, is where five city investment zones converge. Clinton Sq. is poised to become a gateway district and hub that connects and catalyzes activity downtown and in the Warehouse District. The momentum will spread into the Arbor Hill and Sheridan Hollow neighborhoods through public infrastructure enhancements, private project development and arts and entertainment investments. The city envisions revitalizing Clinton Sq. to benefit both visitors and residents through infill development, corridor enhancements, and targeted housing revitalization projects.

The specific projects to be funded through the DRI include:

Improve the Pedestrian Experience along Clinton Ave.: Improve the visual appeal, function and safety of the Clinton Ave. streetscape leading to Clinton Sq. The project includes the design and construction of streetscape improvements and pedestrian safety enhancements from Broadway to North Hawk Street within the DRI boundary. The design will feature a neighborhood gateway element, sidewalk and bicycle improvements, pedestrian lighting enhancements, tree planting and landscaping, new traffic signals, street furniture or other amenities, trash receptacles, and other potential infrastructure enhancements. ($2.818 million)

Create Live, Work and Exhibition Space for the Capital Region Artist Community: Construct the Clinton Sq. Studio, a six-story, mixed-use building at the corner of Broadway and Livingston

consisting of 70 affordable live/work lofts exclusive to artists and ground floor retail and community spaces. The development will house performers and crew for the local Capital Repertory Theatre, attract artists from across the region, and provide a gallery and event space drawing visitors to Clinton Square's emerging entertainment scene. ($2 million)

Activate the Skyway with a Dynamic Linear Pop-Up Park: Construct a dynamic venue, Albany Happening, for pop-up events, rotating vendors, and active public use along the future Skyway. The Skyway is a transformative public realm project that will convert an underused ramp from Quay St.to Clinton Ave. into a distinctive linear park connecting downtown to the Hudson Riverfront. Located at the Quay St. ramp, this venue will build on and contribute to the Skyway's activity, drawing residents and tourists to the DRI area. Among the improvements will be pavers, lighting, seating, landscaping, and electric and water service. ($1.1 million)

Create the Clinton Market Collective at Federal Park: Renovate Federal Park to allow for the creation of a new market concept and proving ground for start-up businesses. The activities proposed by this project–diverse pop up retail, installments by local artists, signature events and enhanced pedestrian connections–anchor Clinton Sq.'s role as both an engaging destination and an introduction to unique and vibrant local arts and commercial venues. ($1 million)

Create a Distinctive Gateway to the New Skyway: Create an artistic, signature gateway to the Skyway, a new linear park connecting downtown to the Hudson Riverfront. The Skyway Gateway, to be located at the I-787 exit ramp at Clinton Ave., will include a decorative shade structure, pavers, lighting, landscaping, and a seat wall to create an iconic introductory moment to the park. ($800,000)

Enhance Connectivity and Pedestrian Safety throughout Quackenbush Sq.: Create an attractive, landscaped pedestrian corridor with improved sidewalks and crosswalks from the Quackenbush Garage to the Palace Theater. Improving landscaping, lighting, seating and wayfinding in Quackenbush Sq. and enhancing the pedestrian corridor between the proposed new parking garage entrance and Broadway will lead to a better resident and visitor experience with enhanced connectivity and safety, connecting potential DRI investments at the Quackenbush Garage, Federal Park, Palace Theatre, and the Capital Craft Beverage Trail at the Pumphouse. ($650,000)

Redesign Key Pedestrian and Vehicular Corridors for Safe and Stimulating Use: Design and install streetscape improvements along key pedestrian and vehicular corridors on Steuben St., Columbia St., and Livingston Ave. The streetscape design will feature sidewalk and bicycle improvements, pedestrian lighting enhancements, tree planting and landscaping, street furniture or other amenities, and trash receptacles. ($400,000)

Light Up Livingston Ave. with an Illuminated Pedestrian Underpass: Illuminate the Livingston Ave. railroad bridge underpass with lighting features to enhance pedestrian safety and create an entrance on Broadway. ($250,000)

Add a Vehicular and Pedestrian Entrance to Quackenbush Garage: Construct a second entrance-only access point from Montgomery St. to the Quackenbush Garage, facilitating increased and safer access to the Palace Theatre, Quackenbush Sq., the numerous dining and retail options in Quackenbush Sq., and the future Skyway. The additional entrance will increase the garage's entry capacity by 50% during off-peak hours and 33% during peak hours. ($250,000)

Provide Additional Units and Pathways to Stable, Affordable Housing at Ida Yarbrough Homes: Develop up to 10 new home ownership units at Ida Yarbrough Homes to provide pathways to home wealth-building and home ownership for lower-income households and contribute to the area's

vitality, cohesiveness, and shared sense of communal ownership. ($200,000)

Create Room for a Local Coffee Company to Grow into Its First Standalone Café: Construct a two-story building at 71 Livingston Ave. as Death Wish Coffee Co.'s first standalone branded café. The building will include street-level café space with outdoor seating, a retail component, and a tasting room. ($160,240)

Animate Clinton Sq. with Four Large-Scale Murals: Commission, complete, and promote four large-scale mural projects on highly visible walls within Clinton Sq. These murals will add character and visual interest to an important gateway to downtown and improve walkability by continuing the landscape of public art into Clinton Sq. ($71,750)

Albany developed a Strategic Investment Plan to revitalize its downtown with $300,000 in planning funds from the $10 million DRI grant. A Local Planning Committee made up of municipal representatives, community leaders, and other stakeholders led the effort, supported by a team of private sector experts and state planners. The Strategic Investment Plan for Clinton Square examined local assets and opportunities and identified economic development, transportation, housing, and community projects that align with the community's vision for downtown revitalization and that are poised for implementation.

The DRI projects are the latest example of governor Cuomo's ongoing commitment to Albany and the Capital Region.