

**Watertown Local Development Corporation (WLDC)  
2019 Annual Report**

**WLDC Mission:**

The mission of the WLDC is to foster an environment of cooperation between city governance, economic development agencies and the private sector with the goal of promoting economic prosperity and expansion in the City of Watertown. This is accomplished by using the WLDC resources to leverage other investment with the goal of job creation, retention and elimination of blight.

**Loan Programs:**

The WLDC has two loan programs which it offers to businesses in and around the City of Watertown. The first is the bank participation program. These loans are generally \$40,000 and over and are structured on a 50/40/10 basis. This means the bank would fund 50% of the project, the WLDC 40% and equity from the borrower of 10%. Under this scenario, the WLDC would take a subordinate lien position to the bank on collateral offered. The second is the Micro Loan Program. These loans are \$40,000 and under and can be done without a bank involved. Under this program, the borrower is required to contribute 10% equity into the project. Because there is no bank involved, the WLDC generally receives a first position on collateral being offered. Under authority granted by the Board of Directors, the CEO has the ability of making loans of \$10,000 or less without board approval. Same underwriting applies for these loans as they would for the Revolving Loan Fund and the Micro Loan Program.

From time to time, the WLDC has implemented special loan programs such as the Public Square Reconstruction Program and in 2016, the Factory Street Construction Loan Program. These programs offered loans up to \$10,000 to businesses impacted by street closures and traffic disruption. These loans were designed for easy access to working capital to supplement short term cash flow needs. Loans were made at 3% and require a clean credit history. These loans were unsecured. In 2019, the WLDC implemented a loan program intended to incentivize businesses to locate downtown. The WLDC Board of Directors approved an allocation of 10 loans to new businesses opening in downtown. These loans can be used for any business purpose and carry a fixed rate of 3%.

In 2019 a total of 12 loans were closed. These loans totaled \$1,089,484 and leveraged private investment of \$2,638,029.

**City Center Industrial Park (CCIP):**

The WLDC is responsible for marketing the CCIP. In 2003, the WLDC took over this responsibility from the City of Watertown by executing an exclusive option on the land in the park. At the time, there was one business in the park. Currently there are seven. Since taking on this responsibility, the WLDC has built two 20,000 sq. ft. spec buildings to stimulate activity. Both were sold to manufacturing entities creating over 80 jobs.

The WLDC markets this property through its website and has engaged Pyramid Brokerage to identify potential prospects. There was no land sales or construction in the Park in 2019. In 2019, the WLDC worked closely with major two employers in the CCOP, Renzi Brother's Inc. and Roth Industry, to assist with their expansion plans and to accommodate the need for rail spur access. This plan call for relocating the existing CCIP rail spur to a location easily accessible to Roth Industries. Additionally, by moving the rail spur, it will allow for additional land to be conveyed to Renzi Brother's for their future warehouse expansion. Construction is anticipated to start Spring of 2020.

**Franklin Building:**

In June 2002, the WLDC, as sole member of Public Square Developers, L.P. began to acquire, hold, improve and develop a parcel of real property in Watertown, NY known as the Franklin Building. In December 2009, the WLDC transferred 100% of the ownership interest in Public Square Developers, L.P. to Neighbors of Watertown, Inc. upon transfer of ownership, the development cost incurred by the WLDC became a loan receivable from Public Square Developers, L.P.

In total, the WLDC invested over \$1,380,000 in the redevelopment. \$636,500 was paid back at the closing for the permanent financing. \$744,000 remains on the books in the form of a loan receivable at 1% interest deferred until 2027.

On February 1, 2011, the WLDC entered into a master lease agreement with Public Square Developers, L.P. for the commercial space located on the ground floor of the building. The term of the lease is 30 years. The WLDC is responsible for the lease up of the commercial space. There is a total of 12 units which are all currently leased generating a total of \$86,357 in rental income. The annual master lease payment is \$47,577.

**Downtown Redevelopment:**

Over the last ten years or so downtown Watertown has seen a transformation as evidenced by the completion of the Public Square and Factory Street streetscape and infrastructure projects as well as the redevelopment of prominent historic buildings such as the Franklin Building, Woolworth Building and Lincoln Building. Over this time, the WLDC has continued to look for ways to promote development and investment in downtown. Several financial assistance programs have been rolled out. In 2016, these programs included the Factory Street Construction Loan Program, the Public Square Rent Assistance Program and the development of dedicated downtown website.

Rent Assistance Program: The goal of this program is to stimulate, enhance and create additional economic activity in the City Center and to spark private sector investment that contributes toward the revitalization of our downtown. The programs also aim to create jobs, increase foot traffic and improve the vitality of existing businesses in downtown. Through this incentive, it is hoped that new and diversified services will be introduced within the program boundary area. In addition, the program aims to attract new businesses to fill previously unoccupied store fronts or buildings that will have a positive economic impact on the downtown and the City of Watertown.

**In 2016**, the WLDC board approved a maximum of five projects or up to \$60,000 total program cost year one and \$30,000 year two. As of December 2016, a total of three projects were approved and funded. In 2017, the remaining two projects were approved. Additionally, because of the program's success, the board approved an additional allocation of \$57,000 to fund three more projects. It is estimated that the initial \$90,000 allocation brought 45 new jobs and 400 to 500 patrons a day to downtown Watertown.

**In December 2017**, the City of Watertown was awarded a \$10,000,000 Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant (DRI). The WLDC applied for \$600,000 to be used for continuation of the Rent Assistance Program and for downtown facades. The DRI Local Planning Committee charged with vetting the DRI projects recommended that this funding be included in the final submission to the State. Should the state approve the award, several facades in desperate need of repair will be addressed. Additionally, the continuation of the Rent Assistance Program will allow the WLDC to incentivize businesses to locate downtown.

At the end of 2018, the WLDC was awarded a \$600,000 Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant. A contract with the state was executed in early 2019. Of the funds, \$400,000 will be allocated to the continuation of the downtown façade program and \$200,000 for the continuation of the Downtown Rent Assistance program. Currently 20 applications for façade renovations have been submitted. Of those 15 have been approved by the DRI Committee for further investigation. One project was started in the fall of 2019. This is the Musselman Building on State Street. The project is approximately 80% complete and is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2020. A spring 2020 start is anticipated for approximately 5 projects.

Currently three applications for rent assistance have been received and approved.

In 2017, the Board approved engaging The Retail Coach. The service included analyzing the market area, retail trade area mapping, demographic and psychographic profiling, identifying retail gaps, identifying, analyzing and marketing downtown retail sites and the recruitment of retailers. The final analysis provided the WLDC the statistics needed to try and recruit the types of businesses identified in the Retail Opportunity analysis. This information will be used in constructing a marketing piece for recruiting businesses downtown. In addition, New York State view the engagement of The Retail Coach as a proactive step in downtown revitalization efforts and was a contributing factor in the City being awarded the \$10,000,000 Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant.

In the fall of 2017, the board decided not to renew the contract with The Retail Coach. It was determined that due to logistics, it was very difficult for an out of area consultant to successfully recruit businesses to downtown. Additionally, in late 2017, the WLDC was awarded a \$600,000 grant through the DRI. In 2018, the WLDC proceed to develop and Administrative Plan for these funds. It was determined by the board that the funds would be used to continue the Façade and Rent Assistance Programs. It is anticipated that project funding for these programs will begin in the spring of 2019.

In 2019, the WLDC held its second series of summer block parties. The WLDC initiated the block parties as a way to support downtown business owners by bringing people downtown for a night of entertainment. These parties have been extremely successful bring thousands of people to the center of Public Square. The WLDC has invested over \$45,000 in the block parties and anticipates investing an addition \$10,000 in 2020.

Financial Status as of 12/31/2019

Assets	
Cash and Cash equivalents	\$ 521,166
Investments	\$ 4,919,116
Loans Receivable	\$ 4,923,010
Other Assets	<u>\$ 35,151</u>
Total Assets	\$10,398,443
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 4,115
Security Deposits	<u>\$ 38,905</u>
Total Liabilities	\$ 43,020
Equity	\$10,355,423
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$10,398,443

Statement of Revenue and Expenses as of 12/31/18

Interest on Loans	\$ 214,440
Interest from Investments	\$ 133,711
Realized and Unrealized gains on Investments	\$ 262,434
Rental Income	\$ 86,357
Bad Debt Recovery	\$ 34,864
Other Income	\$ <u>10,981</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 341,020
Expenses	
Program Services	\$ 299,644
Management & General	\$ <u>156,154</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 455,798
Total Revenue over Expense	\$ 286,989