

# **Rezone Downtown Poughkeepsie**

## **Innovation District Policy Framework**

The Innovation District Policy Framework is the guiding document for successfully achieving a creative and inclusive economy in the City's central business district. More than just an account of best practices and case studies, the Framework contains policy recommendations specifically catered to the unique conditions and assets of Poughkeepsie. Each of the four policy areas listed below are currently under research and development by the City of Poughkeepsie. Once finalized and adopted, the Policy Framework will be utilized as a master plan for the district, helping the City to prioritize investments and infrastructure projects.

### **Building a Creative Economy**

A key goal of the Poughkeepsie Innovation District is to support local entrepreneurship in burgeoning creative fields such as applied arts, multimedia, design, and lite industry. The City's policy will be to support creative business and workforce development through the fostering of partnerships with the many excellent academic institutions that surround downtown Poughkeepsie. Repurposing commercial buildings within the district, which is supported through the rezoning initiative, will also create the physical spaces in which these industries can collaborate and thrive.

### **Ensuring Affordable Housing**

The first step towards ensuring the affordability of housing within the Innovation District will be to encourage developers to build projects with a diversity of housing types. Change in policy will allow residential development as-of-right and increase permitted building heights and densities to maximize the production of housing downtown. The City will require affordability through conveyances of land and pursuit of public and private financing for mixed income housing to promote the construction of affordable housing that is feasible, meets the income requirements of existing Poughkeepsie residents, and encourages the deconcentration of poverty through the integration of subsidized and market rate housing units.

### **Remediating Vacant Properties**

The Policy Framework promotes three key task for addressing the proliferation of vacant properties along Main Street and throughout the Innovation District. Enforcement of a vacant property registry is the first step in documenting and penalizing persistently vacant properties. The vacant property registry will also assist the City in actively marketing vacant properties to potential new owners who seek to see the properties rehabilitated and in use. Finally, the relaxing of zoning requirements along Main Street will help to streamline the adaptive reuse of properties by making it easier for property owners to repurpose their buildings without the high cost of a potentially lengthy land use approval process.

### **Connecting Downtown Poughkeepsie**

A foundational component of any innovation district is a reliable multi-modal transportation network that allows workers, residents, and patrons to get to and from the district in an efficient and safe manner. Thus, it is crucial that the City enact policies to provide frequent and reliable transit service along Main Street, the primary commercial corridor within the district. Additionally, enhancing the pedestrian infrastructure and public realm along civic corridors such as Market Street and throughout the district will encourage residents and workers alike to walk, shop, and socialize within the Poughkeepsie Innovation District.

### **Encouraging Quality Urban Design**

Optimizing street design for pedestrian and transit access will enhance street life, increase the odds of chance encounters, and facilitate public socializing that will fuel Poughkeepsie's innovation economy. Additionally, requiring active streetscape design with high transparency of ground floor windows and a continuous street wall will encourage pedestrians to stroll and shop in the retail establishments lining Main

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Street. Finally, the framework recommends policies to require well designed and programed public spaces as nodes of activity and refuge within the dense Innovation District.