

**2011
Community & Economic Development
Annual Report**

Community and Economic Development Grant Review

Grant Applications

The following grants were applied for by the City of Cohoes, written by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

- **AFG Grant: \$80,050 – AWARDS HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED**
 - The City of Cohoes submitted an application on behalf of the Cohoes Fire Department requesting funds purchase 35 sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), specifically “Turn Out” Gear for a total cost of \$85,050. If awarded, these funds will be used to issue new PPE Turn Out Gear that will outfit 100% of the department personnel.

- **NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: \$113,828 – not awarded**
 - The City of Cohoes applied for funding to repair and restore the windows at 58 Remsen Street, also known as the Historic 1874 Cohoes Music Hall. This building houses both the Cohoes RiverSpark Visitor’s Center and C-R Productions which is the managing company for the Cohoes Music Hall. The building is located in the Downtown Cohoes Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The project included the repair and restoration of 55 windows which are original to the building.

- **NYS Division of Community Renewal HOME Program: \$400,000 –not awarded**
 - The City applied for a fourth round of funding for home rehabilitation. We were not successful in this round.

- **MAIN Street Grant: \$200,000 - not awarded**
 - The City of Cohoes applied for a third round of MAIN Street funding for an additional \$200,000 to extend the current target area from Remsen to Congress Street. The grant was not funded.

- **New York DOS Brownfield Opportunity Area Program: \$150,015 – AWARDED**
 - The City of Cohoes applied for supplemental funding to the 787 nomination study. This study has been funded as a result of the successful completion of the Pre-nomination study. This additional funding will allow more market studies and traffic studies of the corridor.

- **NYS Division of Community Renewal CDBG : \$400,000 – AWARDED**
 - The City will execute a Downtown Gateway project targeted at low/mod income apartments in the area from Remsen and Howard to Columbia and Congress.

- **NYS Hudson Valley Greenway Trail Grant : \$10,000 – not awarded**
 - The City applied for additional sign money to further enhance the Heritage Trail system.

Grant Administration

- DOS LGEG Shared Service Grant 2009 (Fire Department Study): \$50,000
- Capital Projects Community Grant (Canestrari's Office-member item): \$120,000 In progress
 - Cohoes Multi-Service Senior Citizens Center Roof Replacement
- 2008 HOME Program: \$400,000 In progress
 - Final three apartments are receiving funding.
- 2005 EPA Trail Grant: \$203,000
 - South Delaware Trail - Completed
- 2005 NYS OPRHP – Trail Grant: \$100,000
 - North Delaware Ave Trail – Completed
- Bridge Avenue Bridge (DOT)– \$8,067,540
 - City of Cohoes working with DOT to complete funding
- Black Bridge Trail Project- (DOT) \$ In progress
- EPA Brownfield Grants (USEPA) Closed December
- Clintons Ditch (NYS DOT) In progress
- TEP Grant (NYSDOT) In progress
- Heritage Trail (Canal Corp) In progress
- 2007 MAIN Street Grant - Final Monitoring in February

Community and Economic Development Project Review

There are numerous Economic Development projects that are currently being worked on or monitored by the CED office. Many of these are having issues with financing as do most projects across the State and the Nation. Due to the drop in the housing market it is making it impossible to build Condominium projects. Most of the approved projects have been changed to apartments.

Housing

There are eight housing projects that are in different steps of the approval or building process in Cohoes. These apartments when complete will add an additional 1142 housing units to the City of Cohoes. In addition Community Builders are restoring 66 units of low/mod income housing stock in the City. If all of these projects are completed it will bring over \$80 million dollars of development to the City of Cohoes.

Remsen Street Business District

The business district is continuing to improve one or two businesses at a time. The commercial businesses all indicate that business is picking up. Several are adding new jobs over the next year. Retail business must rely on advertising and word of mouth, downtown cannot at this time provide enough walk in traffic to support a new business. But joint advertising and events can benefit all businesses.

Farmers Market

The Cohoes Local Development Corporation continued to work with the Cohoes Farmers' Market for a fifth year in a row acting as an intermediary in regard to promotional aspects of the market (i.e. news blasts, email distributions, promotional materials), and writing vouchers for vendors. The market was very successful this year and will be back in June for its 6th year.

Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings/Ground Breakings

- Inferno
- Community Builders
- Commercial Investigations
- Christopher Brian Salon
- Alpha Pregnancy Care Center
- The Foundry
- Waters View Apartments

Community Business Update

The City regularly updates our database with new registered businesses in Cohoes and maintains the database as needed. The CED department maintains an intake form for any telephone inquires in reference to business development in the city of Cohoes; this would include questions on available space, zoning requirements, and assistance with starting new businesses. Over 40 intake forms have been completed over the last year. This does not include direct inquires that may be made from developers that stop in the office or for inquires that are handled over the internet.

The Planner represents the City on the Capital District Transportation Committee's Planning Committee and the Transportation Improvement Program. The CED director sits on their Bike Ped task force. The CED director is also a board member of the Mohawk Valley National Tow Path. The CED office also coordinates the Riverspark Visitor Center at the Cohoes Music Hall. The CLDC staffs the Visitor Center that is open 20 hours per week. Last year approximately 3500 visitors came to the Center to find out about Cohoes and places in Cohoes to visit. In addition over 1000 students visited the Music Hall as part of the music in our schools program sponsored by C&R Productions and BOCES.

The CED office is also responsible for the Cohoes Industrial Development Agency and the Cohoes Local Development Office. In this capacity we work with the city on IDA development projects and interface with the IDA counsels. The CLDC is responsible for administrating the loan portfolio and any new applications for loans. The CLDC also is functioning as the review board of the HOME and MAIN Street programs and repayment of these grants will be through the CLDC. We will also be responsible for the reporting of the new CDBG grant.

The Authority Budget Office has continued to add new reporting responsibilities for their annual reports. It takes the better part of the winter to assemble and update the annual reports. All reports must be filed on line by 3/31/2012.

The Cohoes Local Development Corporation continued "CHOOSE COHOES", a multi-faceted campaign to bring new life to the City of Cohoes. The City has developed the CHOOSE COHOES web site. This web site promotes all registered businesses in the City. This program also worked with Brookfield power in installing a display board at the Cohoes Falls. This board includes a map of the community and flyers for upcoming community events. We also are responsible for the Concerts in the Park at Canal Square. Last year was our biggest year yet in the number of attendees and in the donations from the local community.

The CED office will continue work with the local business community to make 2012 a successful year to do business here in Cohoes.