



## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a not-for-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to help restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.

Ti-Alliance works within the Ticonderoga area, which includes the communities of Crown Point, Hague, Moriah, Putnam, and Ticonderoga. The Alliance has been working hard throughout 2019 to develop game-changing projects in the Ticonderoga Area that can kick start significant economic development.

### OUR STRATEGY

- Expand post secondary educational opportunities to drive and retain a younger population and skilled workforce;
- Encourage downtown businesses driven by motivated owners that support community needs and attract foot traffic;
- Develop downtown “anchor” buildings to host larger businesses and cultural attractions;
- Expand tourism access to bring year-round tourist dollars into our economy from outside the region;
- Attract non-retail and non-tourism employers to Ticonderoga area;
- Help prevent and remediate vacant and abandoned properties;
- Develop housing to accommodate new and working residents as needed; and
- Build public and private investment resources.

### Among our accomplishments in 2019 are:

- (1) Development of a comprehensive Trade Education Access Program to connect Ticonderoga students with careers and education in the trades. Our engagement with the school on this program will be continued through 2020 and beyond.
  - (a) Applied for and received a \$95,000 federal Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development Grant for Ti-High student BOCES tuition to CV-TEC vocational training.
  - (b) Created a one-page Quick Reference Guide to Trade Education in our Region. This brochure is being actively used in Ticonderoga High School to provide quick information to school counselors and detailed information for students and their families about the trade education and career opportunities available to them.
  - (c) Supported the spring Ticonderoga School career fair and expansion of their trade career displays.
  - (d) Launched summer internships in the trades – a program that will be expanded in 2020.
  - (e) Launched the “Contractors in the Classroom” program beginning in the Fall of 2019 and extending through spring 2020. This program will create a community-based project for the Ticonderoga High School Technology classes that will bring local professionals into the classroom to work with students, and expand their skills in a variety of disciplines. This

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- program will also likely include the history, music, and art departments in the future, as well.
- (f) Established a Trade Education Scholarship fund to help students that want an education in the trades to not be encumbered by financial hardship. The first awards will be made for the 2020/2021 school year.
- (2) Continued the Zombie and Abandoned Properties Project: This program supports the Code Enforcement Office (CEO) of the Town of Ticonderoga in identifying, categorizing, and remediating vacant and abandoned buildings in Ticonderoga. A variety of new approaches were instituted this year. A street-by-street survey of all residential properties in Ticonderoga markedly increased the CEO's caseload and scope of action for properties of concern. A new mechanism empowered the Town to mow and/or clean-up properties which the owner refused to do, and to bill the owner. Dangerously unsafe derelict buildings on two properties were demolished and cleared in a new partnership with the Essex County government. And six properties had asbestos surveys done to promote action to clear their unsafe structures. Ti-Alliance board members Lance Clark and Nancy Archer provided grant-writing assistance that helped the Town secure a second round of New York State funding for this program. This will include a small revolving fund to prevent the further decline of selected properties and to return them to the tax rolls. We look forward to continuing this work and to building up this fund in the coming years.
  - (3) Wrote two New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grants for annual CFA state grant cycle.
    - (a) Grant #1: \$25,000 – Community Visioning for a Revitalized Downtown Ticonderoga – would provide funding for facilitators to lead our community through a downtown visioning exercise and lay the groundwork for the next DRI application for \$10M in downtown redevelopment funding. (Was not funded)
    - (b) Grant #2: \$25,000 – Feasibility Study for three downtown buildings to explore the best uses and develop renovation cost estimates of this prime downtown space in the context of a comprehensive downtown plan. (Was funded)
  - (4) Coordination of a variety of activities behind the scenes related to an expanded downtown development of a five building section of downtown Ticonderoga. These include the Hacker Building, Rathbun Building, Trek Studios (existing), Cobbler's Bench hotel project, and Burleigh House. We are currently working with a variety of individual owners/investors and county entities to secure these properties for a consolidated renovation plan that will change the face of downtown Ticonderoga.
  - (5) Negotiated and financed the purchase of the Hacker Building in downtown Ticonderoga with Essex County for the purpose of selling the building to Trek Tours for an expansion of their franchise to include Star Trek – the Next Generation set tours and a theater.
  - (6) Raised the awareness of Ticonderoga with federal, regional, and state economic development funders as a community aggressively and creatively addressing systemic economic development in our area.
    - (a) Participated in multiple North Country Regional Economic Development Council workshops and meetings regarding state funding strategies.
    - (b) Participated and helped write Ticonderoga's first Downtown Redevelopment Initiative (DRI) grant application to the State of New York.

- (c) Participated in many regional and state meetings and seminars on rural economic development, including as an invited panelist/speaker at the Northern Border Regional Commission's annual conference in Albany in October.
  - (d) Established and maintained regular personal contact with key players in federal, regional, and state economic development entities, keeping them always up to date on developments in Ticonderoga.
- (7) Worked on a business incubation strategy to entice entrepreneurs of small tech and light manufacturing companies to locate their companies in Ticonderoga. This program was put in place, but not executed in 2013. We have received enthusiastic support from the leadership of the Innovation Workgroup (one of four initiatives of the North Country Regional Economic Development Commission) and other lenders/funders in the region for this project who are anxious to partner with Ticonderoga to refer incubated/incubating businesses to us for this program. We will be launching this program in 2020.
- (8) Researched and created a report on game-changing businesses to leverage our current tourism assets and expand our year-round tourist economy.
- (a) Identified six new businesses that could be game-changers for our tourism economy.
  - (b) Will be working with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to develop business plans for identified businesses and market them to Ti-High alumni who might want to return home to run a viable business in this area.
  - (c) Identified key marketing opportunities to significantly enhance our tourism economy.
- (9) Created an Entrepreneur's Fund to help meet the start-up financial needs of new businesses in Ticonderoga in the target industries of outdoor recreation, retail, food and beverage, lodging, tech, light manufacturing, and trade services. When we build this fund to \$50,000, it will become eligible for significant state and federal matching funds to provide significant working capital for our entrepreneur-based programs.
- (10) Completely rebuilt the Ti-Alliance website and Facebook pages to better service our goals, communicate with our constituents, and promote a professional and fundable appearance. It is now regularly maintained with updated information and project progress.