
B-2 | Establish the SUNY Cortland Institute of Applied Geospatial and Drone Technology

DRI Funding Request

\$100,000/\$150,000

Project Description

This project will establish the Institute for Geospatial and Drone Technology in downtown Cortland. It will be a resource for entrepreneurs, startup companies, Central New York and the Cortland community, including local municipalities, emergency services, non-profit organizations, and schools.

DRI funds would be used to purchase drones, software, hardware, and an outdoor permanently installed drone testing facility (mesh and pole structure). The headquarters for the Institute will also require interior renovation on an existing structure to establish a conference room and offices for faculty, students, staff, and start-up businesses.

Project Location/Address

Crescent Commons (165 Main Street)

Sponsor

SUNY Cortland

Strategies

- Invest in downtown destinations for residents, workers, and visitors, and to attract new businesses and residents;
- Establish programs to grow small business, and downtown retail; and
- Increase collaboration between downtown and local institutions.



Precedent image of a drone testing facility

Public Support

This project will provide services to local municipalities, government organizations, emergency services, non-profits, and schools. SUNY Cortland has worked and is working with numerous organizations on geospatial projects and will like to expand and grow these relationships. SUNY Cortland's existing relationships with NUAIR, CenterStateCEO, and other SUNY schools will support startup companies in the geospatial and drone fields. This project is endorsed by the Northeast UAS Airspace Integration Research Alliance (NUAIR).

Jobs Created (does not include construction jobs)

1 full-time job

Ownership of Property

Sponsor will lease space from the owners of Crescent Commons.

Acquisition of Real Property

N/A

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

This project will serve as the cornerstone for downtown Cortland's effort to become the leading center of excellence for the Central NY GIS and drone fields. It will partner with NUAIR and will work closely with CenterStateCEO and the Syracuse Tech Garden to mentor and foster development of new drone and other companies in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) field. It will also partner with the Cortland Downtown Partnership Business Incubator (40 Main St) and the SUNY Cortland Entrepreneur program to provide technical expertise and capabilities (including hardware and software) to assist startup companies in this field.

In addition, the institute will provide numerous benefits to the Cortland community by providing assistance with GIS and drone related projects. Many local municipalities do not have access, training, time, or personnel to use these powerful tools and the Institute will provide this support. Benefits include data collection, establishing and organizing the data into a GIS system, maintaining the GIS system, and providing analysis of the data to see new patterns and draw new conclusions. This will allow for a more cost-effective study of community problems. Instead of every municipality and organization purchasing their own equipment or software licenses, the Institute could provide assistance, services, and the skilled personnel to complete specialized projects.

This project will also provide geospatial support to other DRI projects including the Clinton Avenue Gateway project.

Future Use of Structure

Educational

Project Budget

\$150,000 - SUNY Cortland will provide the remaining \$50,000.

- Drones - \$40,690
- Software - \$12,300
- Hardware - \$37,010
- Drone testing facility - \$10,000



Precedent images of geospatial and drone education

- Interior buildout - \$10,000
- Furniture - \$15,000 (not to be funded through DRI)
- Staff and rent expenses - \$25,000 (not to be funded through DRI)

Feasibility and Cost Justification

This project will be closely tied into the growth of the drone industry in Central NY, and will support local municipalities with the GIS tools and technologies to support economic development. Drone technology has the potential to positively influence the economic health of the area and this Institute will attract the top talent in the geospatial field. The institute will provide education on the uses of drone technology and provide support across numerous fields, including infrastructure, agriculture, water quality, invasive species, etc. There are no companies in the area currently providing drone support and the Northeast UAS Airspace Integration Research Alliance (NUAIR) has expressed support for this project and the need for the expansion of drone technology in Central NY.

Geospatial technology is vital to supporting infrastructure maintenance and development, and it can provide the information to more rapidly and efficiently make decisions. SUNY Cortland has provided limited support to the Public Works Departments of the Village of Homer, City of Cortland, Village and Town of Dryden, Village of McGraw, and Town of Virgil and the institute will provide additional support. Moreover, this project will facilitate the potential development of private geospatial companies that could work alongside local municipalities in the future.



Precedent image of geospatial and drone education

Regulatory Requirements

None

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

- Commence building refurbishment [1-2 months];
- Purchase initial equipment and furniture [2 months];
- Purchase remaining equipment and furniture [7 months]

Project Reporting

The project will be directly monitored by SUNY Cortland faculty. The number and scope of each project will be tracked, and an annual report will be developed that discusses the number and type of projects completed and in process. Staff will also report the number of startup businesses that the Institute assists. During the first year, quarterly summaries of progress and projects, including budgetary impacts will be created. The advisory board will also provide feedback and guidance.