



Village of Gouverneur

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING #2 SUMMARY

Purpose:	Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #2
Date and Time:	June 17, 2025 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Location:	Village Court Room at the Gouverneur Municipal Building Offices at 33 Clinton Street
Attendees:	See Below
Agenda:	1. Welcome & Preamble 2. Project Schedule Update 3. Community Engagement Update 4. Downtown Profile Highlights 5. Vision and Goals Discussion 6. Call for Project Overview 7. Next Steps 8. Public Comment 9. LPC Walking Tour of Downtown Project Area

1. Welcome & Preamble

Discussion

New York State Department of State representative Mayor Ronald McDougall welcomed Local Planning Committee (LPC) members, State Partners, the consultant team, and members of the public. Dr. Zvi Szafran read the Preamble aloud as follows:

PREAMBLE:

Each Local Planning Committee Member is reminded of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest with respect to projects that may be discussed at today's meeting. If you have a potential conflict of interest regarding a project you believe will be discussed during the meeting, please disclose it now and recuse yourself from any discussion or vote on that project. For example, you may state that you, or a family member, have a financial interest in the project, or you are on the board of the organization proposing the project. At this time, are there any recusals that need to be noted?

Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises unexpectedly, and then recuse yourself from discussion or voting on the project.

As we continue through the planning process, recusal forms will be required from anyone with an identified potential conflict to be kept on file with the Department of State.



1. Welcome & Preamble
Discussion
Key Decisions & Outcomes
N/A

2. Project Schedule Update
Discussion
The consultant team presented the expected timeline for key milestones of the NY Forward Process, focusing on the month of June. <i>June</i> • Draft Downtown Profile • Visions, Goals & Strategies • Open Call for Projects
Key Decisions & Outcomes
N/A

3. Community Engagement Update
Discussion
The consultant team provided an overview of the ongoing Community Engagement components June 16-17 • Public Open House • Stakeholder Meetings • Open Call for Project Intro Q&A • Door-to-Door Business Survey Community Survey • Open May 21st – June 11th • 280 + responses NY Forward Website • 900 + visits • www.GouverneurNYForward.com
Key Decisions & Outcomes
N/A

4. Downtown Profile Highlights

Discussion

The consultant team review what the Downtown Profile is and its purpose: according to DOS guidance, “The Downtown Profile and Assessment tells a clear and concise story of the NY Forward community – where it is today, how it got there, and where it is going – and provides the logical basis for project recommendations.”

Require Components

- Description of the study area
- Demographic snapshot
- Regional and historic context
- Related recent plans and investments
- Physical setting
- Economic context
- Housing assessment
- Key observation

Population & Age

- There has been a decrease in population between 2010-2024 for both the Village and the County
- The median age of the study area is 37 which is younger than both the Village and County
- 20% of the population is under the age of 18

Housing & Income

- Less than half of the study area are homeowners, which is less compared to the county
- The median household income is \$50,000 which is twelve thousand less than the county

Education & Employment

- Almost 20% of residents of the study area have a bachelor’s degree or higher
- ¼ of the village are employed by the government which is the largest employment sector followed by retail trade

The consultant team then presented the draft existing conditions mapping:

Project Area

Existing Land Use

- Commercial land use accounts for over a third of the total land area within the boundary
- Transportation is the second largest use with a little less than 30% of the total area

Zoning District

- The NYF area falls entirely withing the Central Business (BI) District

Transportation

- The NYF area is very walkable
- A significant portion of the downtown area is dedicated to public parking

Historic, Cultural & Public Spaces

- Notable cultural spots include the Giant Lifesaver Roll, Town Justice, Rec Center, Public Library, Christian Life Fellowship Church, Gouverneur Museum, and Bible Baptist Church

Key Decisions & Outcomes



4. Downtown Profile Highlights

Discussion

N/A

5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

Discussion

The consultant team displayed and read aloud the refined Vision for the Village:

Gouverneur will capitalize on its historical charm, its vibrant and expanding downtown business community, its safe, friendly, and walkable environment, and its proximity to major regional employers to enhance quality of life, strengthen resilience, and increase economic opportunities for both current and future residents. Nestled along the Oswegatchie River, the village aims to attract visitors to experience its rich recreational, cultural, and retail assets, positioning the village as a regional destination.

The LPC noted that it would be helpful to include local context to the vision. The LPC Cochair encouraged including housing mixed with retail, and another member thought mentioning the influx of visitors in the summer months would be important to add.

The consultant team then introduced the Goals and Strategies. DOS guidance requires Goals to be realistic, clear and well-defined, and aligned with and supportive of the community's vision. DOS guidance requires Strategies to be actionable statements that are specific with local context, derived from opportunities and challenges, relate to the proposed NYF projects, clearly and concisely direct a type of action to help meet a specific goal, and guide the community on how to continue revitalization beyond the NYF projects.

Challenges

- Empty or underutilized storefronts
- Lack of variety of shopping and dining options
- Sidewalk and public parking lot conditions limit accessibility and safety
- Few activities for families and teens downtown
- Difficult for visitors to navigate (signage and wayfinding needed)

Opportunities

- Historic character and cultural assets (i.e. museum)
- Gouverneur Village Park
- Recently updated facades
- Downtown amenities and assets can be activated for activities and programs for families and teens
- Compact and walkable, but needs accessibility upgrades
- Location – proximity to jobs and destinations

GOAL #1: Strengthening & Expanding the Local Economy

Continue the momentum from the NY Forward grant awards and invest in downtown to bring all downtown storefronts into productive use by supporting building renovations, reducing barriers for

5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

Discussion

small businesses, and enhancing/marketing the appeal and economic vitality of Gouverneur's historic downtown.

Strategies

1. Explore potential programs that can help attract new business opportunities to the downtown.
2. Attract new business opportunities to the downtown to enhance and expand offerings to the residents and visitors.
3. Support the renovation of vacant or underutilized storefronts, especially historically significant buildings.
4. Encourage upper-floor residential conversions and renovations that bring more people downtown to live, shop, and work.
5. Create a more visually cohesive and appealing downtown that reinforces Gouverneur's identity, attracts visitors to downtown for shopping, dining, and events.

The LPC discussed implementing a rental assistance program similar to Potsdam, while this could not be funded by NYF, it could be added to the roadmap.

GOAL #2: Enhance Quality of Life & Community Resiliency

Improve public spaces, expand recreational opportunities, and strengthen downtown's role as a vibrant community hub.

Strategies

1. Invest in the visual appeal of downtown streetscapes and public spaces.
2. Support and maintain existing storefronts as well as public spaces.
3. Create family-friendly activities and amenities that encourage families to spend time downtown.
4. Partner with local schools and the library to engage teens in creating safe, welcoming spaces and activities that reflect their interests and foster a sense of pride and ownership in their community.
5. Promote a mix of housing types to serve a range of residents, with a focus on workforce housing.
6. Market the benefits of living downtown, like walkability, proximity to businesses and jobs, parks, and community events, to attract new residents and investments.

A LPC member and DOS noted that the LPC members are ambassadors to the program to help the public understand these funds are available and motivate property owners to invest in their community.

GOAL #3: Become a Regional Destination

Attract visitors to downtown by promoting local businesses, cultural assets, events.

Strategies

1. Activate downtown and its public spaces with more seasonal events to attract residents and visitors downtown, support downtown businesses, and celebrates downtown as a vibrant center of the community.
2. Enhance wayfinding and signage to make downtown easier to navigate and highlight historic and cultural assets.
3. Promote downtown businesses and cultural amenities to attract visitors to downtown.

5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

Discussion

LCP members discussed possible venues for events including churches or the library, with Greta Schrader offering to connect with the library for a possible project.

An LPC member offered to go door-to-door to inform businesses to the call for projects, another member posed the idea that the municipality could note buildings that are not up to code about this opportunity and make them aware of the possibility of funding.

GOAL #4: Improve Walkability and Connections Downtown

Create a safe, accessible, and connected network of sidewalks and walking paths that strengthen connections between key destinations.

Strategies

1. Improve wayfinding and signage to help people navigate to and between downtown destinations and public parking areas.
2. Strengthen connections between key destinations
3. Promote accessibility by ensuring improvements to downtown sidewalks, street crossings, and public spaces, are designed for all users.
4. Activate storefronts and encourage building uses in downtown that engage pedestrians

Key Decisions & Outcomes

MJ to make edits to vision, goals, and strategies based on LPC comments

6. Call for Projects Overview

Discussion

The MJ Team provided an overview of the Call for Projects process. The Open Call for Projects provides an opportunity for community members, property owners, and business owners to submit projects for consideration.

- All potential projects must complete a NYF submission form with required information through the Open Call, even if submitted in the NYF application
- The Open Call for Projects will run from June 17th to July 31st
- 25% locally match for private projects required by the program
- The total project cost must be a minimum of \$75,000 to submit a Project Form
- Projects <\$75,000 should submit a Small Project Fund Interest Form to demonstrate support for the fund
- Not all solicited projects will be selected

The MJ team noted virtual office hours (conducted via zoom) are available for project sponsors to discuss application details with members of the consultant team. Dates and times are as follows:

- Tuesday, June 17, 9:30 – 11:00 AM
- Anticipate 2 more virtual sessions (noon and evening) in mid-July

Project Evaluation

Alignment with Gouverneur's vision and goals will be used to evaluate all submitted projects. All projects will be submitted through the Open Call will be presented at LPC #3, then LPC evaluation will begin.

6. Call for Projects Overview	
Discussion	
<u>Potential local evaluation criteria:</u> • Potential to leverage additional private and/or public funds, above 25% • Public support • Transformative potential – elements that improve downtown and how it is perceived • Availability of alternative funding sources that are more appropriate than the NYF award The LPC have concluded that there will be a 25% match requirement, but more than 25% will be much more competitive	
Key Decisions & Outcomes	
N/A	

7. Next Steps	
Discussion	
MJ consultants then discussed the next steps for the LPC. Next Steps: • Open Call for Projects Available – June 17 at 9:00 AM • Draft Downtown Profile – July • Open Call for Projects Closes – July 31 at 4:00 PM • LPC Meeting #3 – August 6, 12:00 – 2:00 PM at the Gouverneur Community Center	
Key Decisions & Outcomes	
N/A	

8. Public Comment	
Discussion	
There were no public comments	
Key Decisions & Outcomes	
N/A	

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:
Melia Hema, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee



Local Planning Committee

Name	Present
Ronald McDougall, Co-Chair	☒
Dr.Zvi Szafran, Co-Chair	☒
Jacquelyn Kelly	☒
Bart Kidwell	☒
Brooke Plowman	☒
Clark Porter	☒
Greta Schrader	☒
David Spilman	☒

State Partners

Name	Present
Kylie Peck	☒
Jennifer Voss	☒
Stephen Hunt	☐

Planning Support

Name	Present
Kristina Ayen	☒

Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	☐
Jennifer Ceponis	M.J. Engineering	☒
Melia Hema	M.J. Engineering	☐
Dan Madigan	M.J. Engineering	☒