NEW YORK STATE

Department of State
Downtown Revitalization Initiative & NY Forward

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #1



NY FORWARD | STAMFORD

JULY 15, 2026

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Code of Conduct Refresher
3. NY Forward Program Overview
4. Roles & Responsibilities
5. Planning Process
6. Your Role as the LPC
7. Public Engagement
8. Open Call for Projects
9. Stamford's NY Forward Application
10. What's Next?

Thank you for serving on the Local Planning Committee for your community!

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS



STATE AGENCY TEAM

Department of State

Stephen Yerly, AICP
Stephen.Yerly@dos.ny.gov

Empire State Development

Omar Sanders,
Omar.Sanders@esd.ny.gov

Homes and Community Renewal

Taylor Disco,
Taylor.Disco@hcr.ny.gov

CONSULTANT TEAM

BFJ Planning:

Sarah Yackel,
s.yackel@bfjplanning.com

Suzanne Goldberg,
s.goldberg@bfjplanning.com

Michelle Gilman,
m.gilman@bfjplanning.com

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Co-Chairs

Robert Schneider, Mayor of Stamford

Peg Ellsworth, REDC

Members

Antonia Besculides, WCCRC

Salvatore Fabbella, Catskill Outpost

Linda Stratigos, Stamford Village Library

Cathy McKenna, Stamford Wellness Center

Patricia Heath, Stamford Village Improvement Association

Hannah Bradfield, T.P.'s Café

Letty Karlsen, Delaware County Department of Planning

Patrick Barnes, Roxbury Arts Group

Mary Skinner, Village of Stamford Planning board

CODE OF CONDUCT REFRESHER



NY FORWARD CODE OF CONDUCT

- Guidelines, standards, and procedures for Local Planning Committee (LPC) members to follow throughout the planning process.
- All LPC members are required to serve and act in the public interest.
- LPC members will receive and must sign the Code of Conduct for Members of New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward Local Planning Committees (Code of Conduct).

REMEMBER…

- Members should use the Code of Conduct to guide service and actions while on the Local Planning Committee:

D. **Disclose conflicts of interest**

A. **Act in the public interest**

D. **Disqualify as necessary**

DOCUMENTING CONFLICT(S)

- Members must identify if they have a potential conflict at the first meeting in which the matter giving rise to the conflict is discussed.
- When a potential conflict is identified, LPC members must complete and submit an official **Recusal Form.**
- LPC members may not vote, or attempt to influence, a discussion or vote on any project(s) where a potential conflict of interest exists.

Recusal Form

LPC Member Name _____ Date _____

DRI or NYF Name_____

Applicable Project Title(s)_____

_____

_____

Reason(s) for Recusal

(Check all that apply.)

☐ I or a relative or family member have a financial interest in the project. (Describe below.)

☐ I or a relative or family member have an interest as a board member, owner, officer, employee, or investor in the project sponsor. (Describe below.)

☐ I or a relative or family member have an interest as a board member, owner, officer, employee, or investor in a potential competitor of the project. (Describe below.)

☐ Other: _____

_____

_____

_____

Please provide a description of each conflict. (Be complete and specific. Attach additional pages if necessary.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Member Signature _____

DOCUMENTING CONFLICT(S)

- A list of recusals together with the recusal form completed by each recused member will be maintained for each project for the duration of the DRI and NY Forward planning process.
- The recusal list will be updated at each meeting.
- The LPC co-chairs will remind members of their obligation to recuse at each meeting of the committee.

VOTING ON RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- All LPC members will vote on a slate of projects to be recommended to the state for NY Forward funding.
- Voting will take place via an official LPC ballot to be submitted to the State.
- LPC members must recuse themselves from voting on individual projects where a conflict of interest exists.
- LPC members must follow the determinations made by the Ethics Officer in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other applicable laws.

PREAMBLE

- A Preamble will be read by a LPC co-chair at the beginning of every LPC meeting reminding members of their obligation to act in the public interest and recuse if necessary.

QUESTIONS ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

Any general or clarifying questions the project team can answer now?

If you do have specific questions, contact the DOS Ethics Office:

Anais Vasquez, Ethics Officer

(518) 948-0275

Anais.Vasquez@dos.ny.gov

NY FORWARD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE DRI & NY FORWARD?

- Two complementary programs with common goals
- State-wide investment to reinvigorate local and regional economies by revitalizing downtowns
- Programs recognize the differences in size and unique qualities of communities throughout the State



$200 million in total state funding!

DRI & NY FORWARD GOALS

Enhance downtown living and quality of life

Provide enhanced public spaces that serve those of all ages and abilities

Create an active downtown with a mix of uses

Create diverse housing options for all income levels

Encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Provide diverse employment opportunities for a variety of skill sets and salary levels



Grow the local property tax base

DRI & NY FORWARD PROGRAM – START TO FINISH

APPLICATION + SELECTION
Fall - Spring

- Communities prepared and submitted applications to REDCs
- REDCs nominated communities
- State announced winners

PLANNING
8-9 months

- Local Planning Committees (LPCs) are established
- Community vision and goals are refined
- Projects are identified + developed
- LPC recommends projects to State
- LPC assists with the preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan

YOUR FOCUS IS HERE!

IMPLEMENTATION
5-year timeframe

- Final Strategic Investment Plan is submitted to the State
- Projects are selected and awarded

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS IN OUR REGION









Gateway signage and recreation improvements in Watkins Glen (2017 DRI)

Source: LaBella Associates

Local businesses that opened with support of DRI funding in Owego (2018 DRI)

Sources: Owego Pennysaver, Binghamton Homepage

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS IN OUR REGION

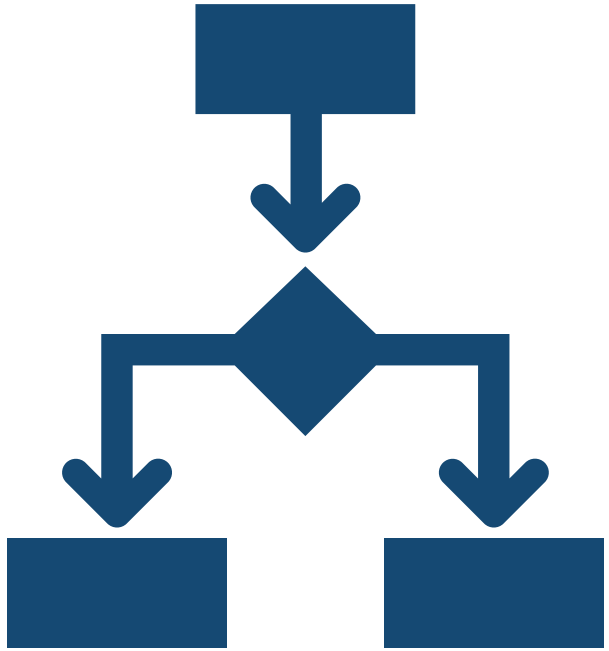








ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



STATE AGENCY TEAM

Department of State
Stephen Yerly, AICP Stephen.Yerly@dos.ny.gov

Empire State Development
Omar Sanders, Omar.Sanders@esd.ny.gov

Homes and Community Renewal
Taylor Disco, Taylor.Disco@hcr.ny.gov

- Provide guidance and support for the DRI / NY Forward planning process
- Manage and assist the consultant team
- Participate in preparation and review of DRI / NY Forward documents
- Engage other State agencies, when needed

CONSULTANT TEAM

Lead

BFJ Planning:

Sarah Yackel, s.yackel@bfjplanning.com

Suzanne Goldberg, s.goldberg@bfjplanning.com

Michelle Gilman, m.gilman@bfjplanning.com

Sub-Consultants

RES Group (Demographics and Economic Development)

EDR (Planning & Public Realm)

KB Engineering (Infrastructure, Cost Estimating)

Kevin Dwarka (Project Profiles)

- Lead all public engagement
- Prepare program documents
- Assist LPC with identification, development, and evaluation of potential projects
- Conduct research, as necessary

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Co-Chairs

Robert Schneider, Mayor of Stamford

Peg Ellsworth, REDC

Members

Antonia Besculides, WCCRC

Salvatore Fabbella, Catskill Outpost

Linda Stratigos, Stamford Village Library

Cathy McKenna, Stamford Wellness Center

Patricia Heath, Stamford Village Improvement Association

Hannah Bradfield, T.P.'s Café

Letty Karlsen, Delaware County Department of Planning

Patrick Barnes, Roxbury Arts Group

Mary Skinner, Village of Stamford Planning board

- Participate in LPC meetings
- Provide direction on planning efforts
- Provide feedback to consultant team and State
- Review documents
- Assist with community engagement and outreach

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

Municipal Staff

Robert Schneider, Mayor of Stamford

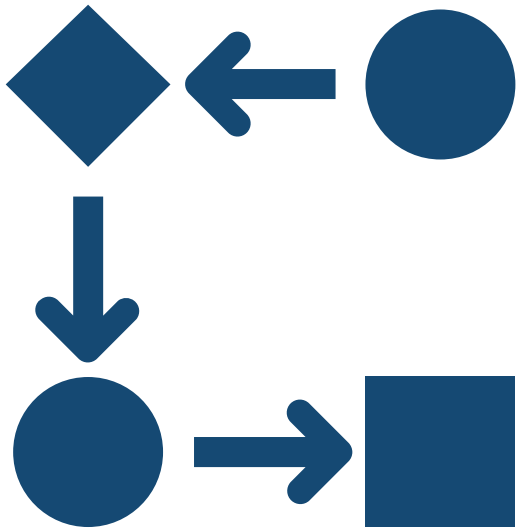
- Participate in core team meetings
- Provide crucial data, reports, plans, and documents to the consultant team
- Assist with public engagement outreach, logistics, and advertising

LPC MEETINGS

We would like to set a standing day and time for regular LPC meetings.

- LPC Meeting #2 is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 5 – 7 PM
- Is there a day/time that works best?

PLANNING PROCESS



PLANNING PROCESS



Visioning

Refine the community's future vision, establish priorities and gather input



Opportunities + Challenges

Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities



Project Development + Evaluation

Identify, develop, and evaluate potential projects



Project Recommendations

Recommend projects that align with the community's goals

9 Month Timeframe (June 2026 – April 2027)

- Each community is led by a consultant team who guides the planning process, works with sponsors to develop projects to recommend to the State, and documents the process/projects in the Strategic Investment Plan
- This process helps ensure all voices are heard and projects are carefully considered.

NY FORWARD TIMELINE

Month	Task
July 2026	• LPC Meeting #1 • Begin work on Downtown Assessment
August 2026	• First Public Workshop • Launch Open Call for Projects • Additional outreach, such as tour of NY Forward Area
August/September 2026	• LPC Meeting #2 • Open Call for Projects
September/October 2026	• LPC Meeting #2 • Begin project development with sponsors • Downtown Assessment finalized
November 2026	• LPC Meeting #4 • Public engagement to receive feedback on projects and gauge support
December 2026	• LPC Meeting #5 Development of project profiles and SIP
January 2027	• LPC Meeting #6 • Vote on final slate of projects
March/April 2027	• Final SIP due to DOS
Summer/Fall 2027	• Announcement of NY Forward awards

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES



Public Improvement Projects

Streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure and other public realm projects.



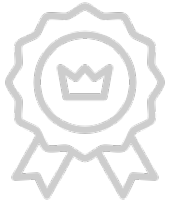
New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings

Development and redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not-for-profit or public uses. Development/redevelopment should result in employment opportunities, housing choices or other community services.



Small Project Grant Fund

A locally managed matching small project fund (up to $300,000-600,000) for small downtown projects, such as façade improvements, building renovations, business assistance or public art.



Branding and Marketing

Downtown branding and marketing projects that target residents, tourists, investors, developers and visitors.

INELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Planning Activities:** All NY Forward funds must be used to implement projects.
- **Operations and Maintenance:** Funds cannot be used for on-going or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property up-keep.
- **Pre-award Costs:** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the completion of the Strategic Investment Plan and the announcement of funding awards is not permitted.
- **Property Acquisition:** NY Forward funds cannot be used for property acquisition.
- **Training and Other Program Expenses:** NY Forward funds cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training costs and expenses related to existing programs.
- **Expenses related to Existing Programs:** NY Forward funds cannot supplement existing programs or replace existing resources.

HOW ARE PROJECTS IDENTIFIED?

Projects included in the community's NY Forward Application

Projects submitted during the Open Call for Projects

The LPC will evaluate all projects based on the state's program criteria and specific community goals. Not all projects will be included in the Strategic Investment Plan.

OPEN CALL FOR PROJECTS

- The Open Call for Projects provides an opportunity for community members, property owners, and business owners to submit projects for consideration
- Submission period will be open to the public for at least 4 weeks
- Applicants must complete a submission form with required information (available online or in hard copy at accessible locations)

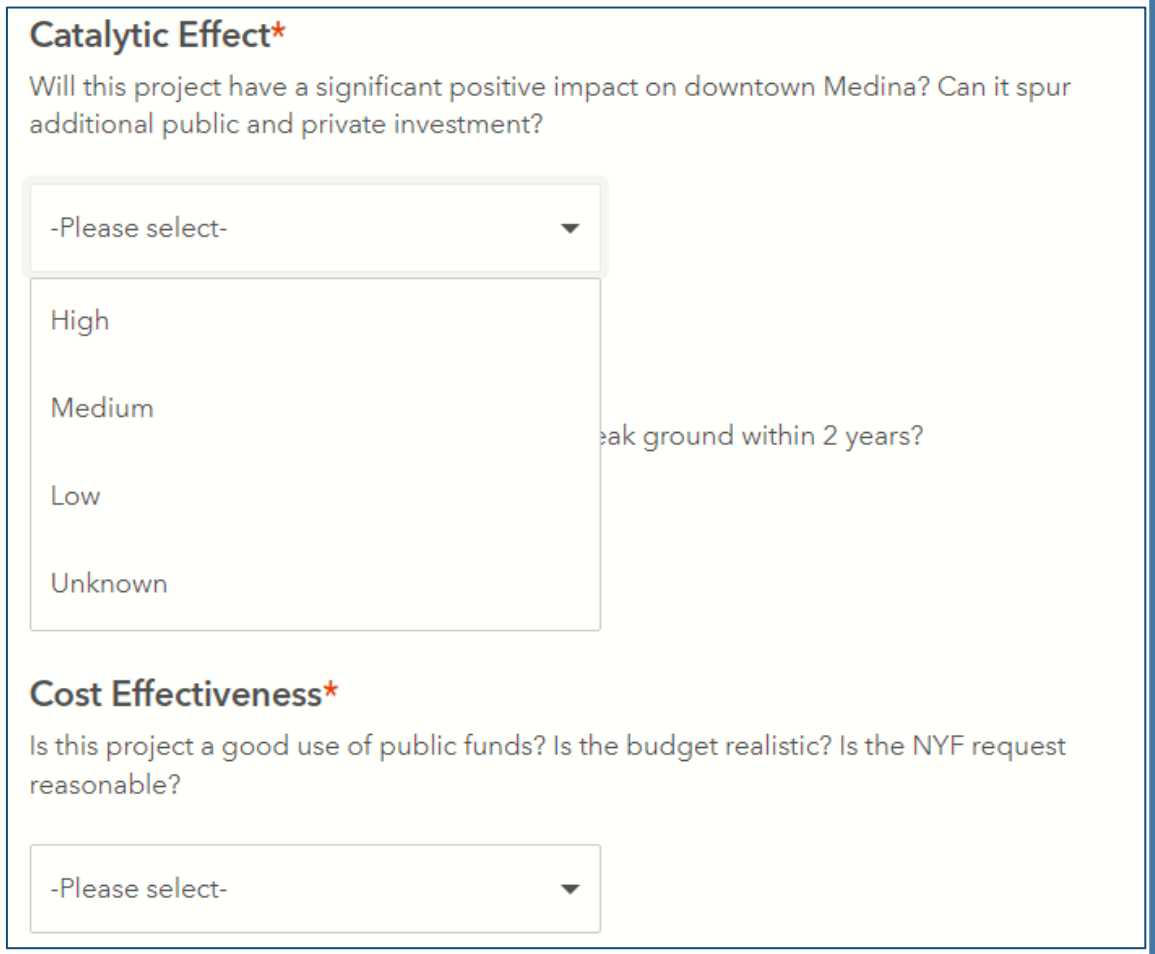
We are looking for projects that are ready to be implemented in the near-term, are transformational, and are feasible!

HOW ARE PROJECTS EVALUATED BY THE STATE?

- **Eligible Project:** Projects must be one of the eligible project types.
- **Alignment with Local and State Goals:** Projects must advance the goals established by the LPC for the NY Forward community and the State's overall program goals.
- **Catalytic Effect:** Projects must have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of downtown.
- **Project Readiness:** Projects should be well-developed and ready to proceed as soon as possible upon the funding announcement.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Projects must represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.
- **Co-Benefits:** Projects must result in benefits to the community, beyond just the project developer, such as: additional economic activity and improved quality of life.

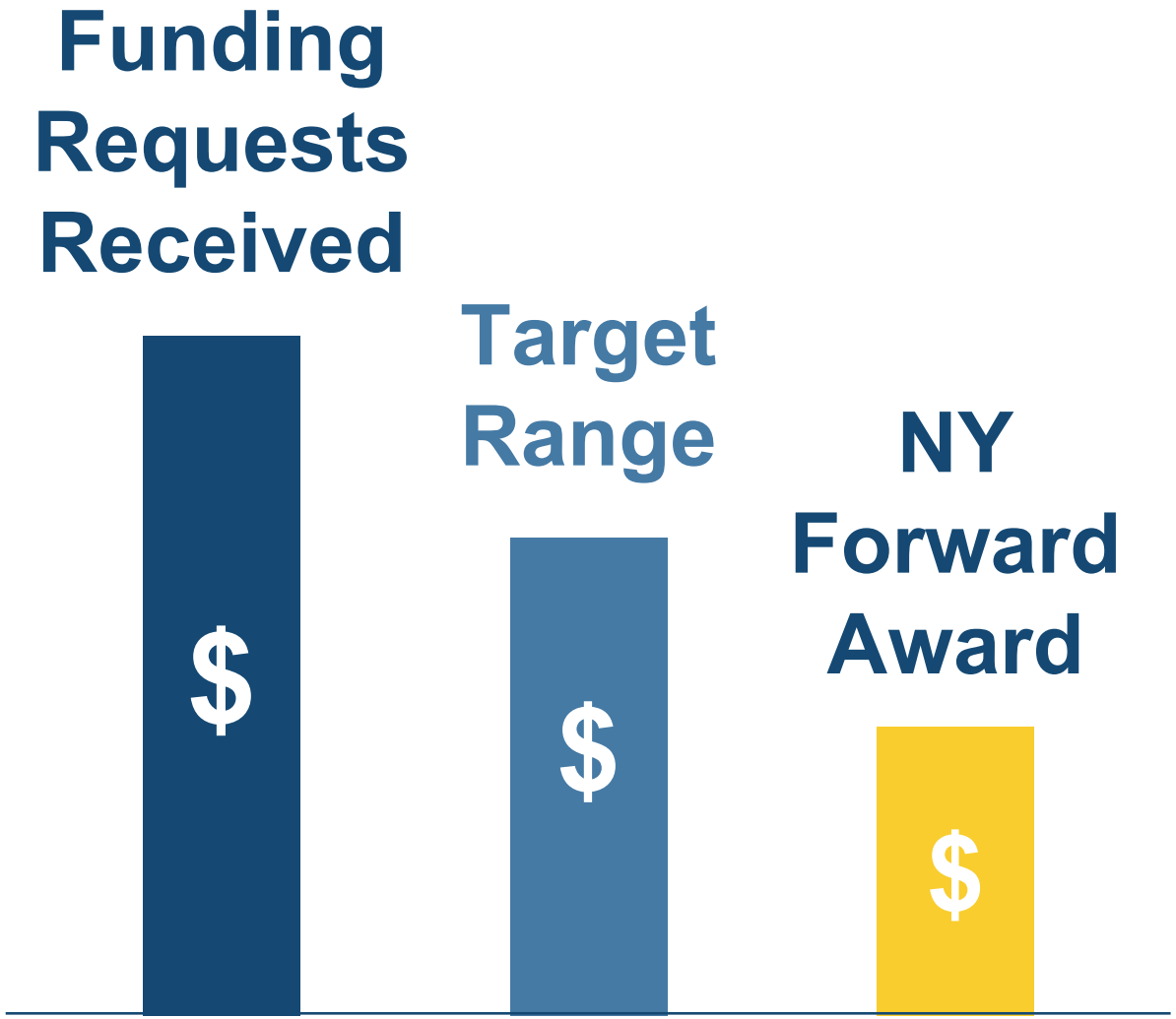
PROJECT EVALUATION WORKSHEET EXAMPLES

Yes	No	maybe	COMMUNITY SUPPORT
			The project is supported by the community and in line with its DRI vision.
Yes	No	maybe	PROJECT READINESS
			The project is well developed and poised to proceed in the near term in a way that will jumpstart the redevelopment of the neighborhood. The sponsor has the capacity to implement and maintain the project.
Yes	No	maybe	CATALYTIC EFFECT
			The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment.
Yes	No	maybe	CO-BENEFITS
			The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable and productive environments in which to live and work.
Yes	No	maybe	COST EFFECTIVENESS
			There is a demonstrated needs for DRI funds and investment of public DRI funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.



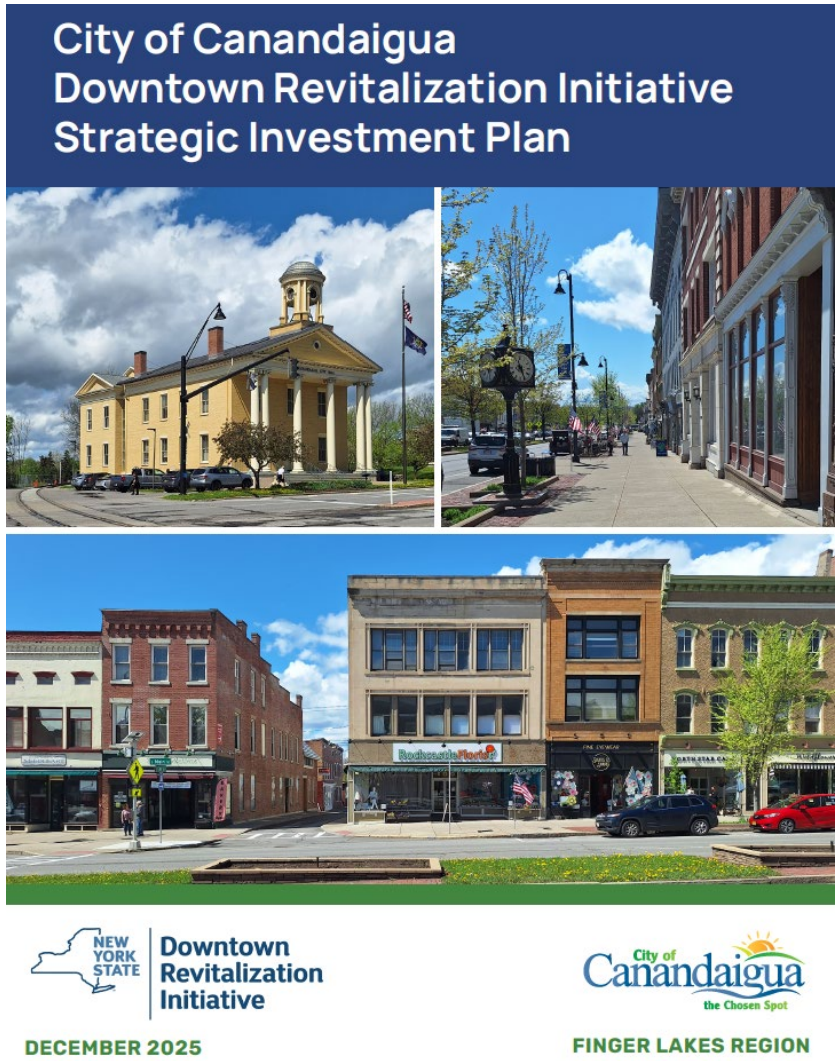
FINAL SLATE OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

- Final slate of projects takes into consideration feedback from the public and is finalized by the LPC
- The total amount of requested NY Forward funds will have a higher dollar amount than what will be awarded



WHAT IS THE END GOAL OF THE PLANNING PROCESS?

- Consensus on a recommended list of projects for funding
- Submission of a Strategic Investment Plan to the State containing a recommended list of projects
- Momentum and direction for downtown/community revitalization



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PLANNING PROCESS IS OVER

State Agencies Evaluate Recommended Projects → Funding Announcements are made by NYS → Contracts are executed between State Agencies and Project Sponsors → Project Implementation and Reporting

- Announcements are typically made in the spring following submission of the Strategic Investment Plan
- Projects begin implementation as soon as is feasible

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- All awards are provided as a reimbursement grant – project sponsors must complete work before monies are provided

- Project sponsors will likely need to secure bridge financing to cover costs while project is being completed

- All awards are subject to State requirements, including Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) goals, competitive procurement, etc.

YOUR ROLE AS THE LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE



WHAT IS THE LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE?

- Group of diverse community and regional stakeholders nominated by the community and others. Confirmed by NYS.
- Ambassadors of the NY Forward program and their respective communities
- Led by co-chairs – typically the local chief elected official and a Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) member/designee
- Ensures the community vision is met and the public interest is served



YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

- Identify best ways to communicate with and engage the community
- Recommend key stakeholders and groups/organizations we should hear from
- Provide guidance and direction on documents
- Help identify potential projects for funding



- Conduct project evaluation and recommend projects for potential funding

WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT?

- Generally monthly meetings approximately 2 hours in length, which are open to the public
- Regular emails from state representatives and/or consultants with meeting materials
- Assistance with and participation in public engagement sessions
- Provide input on documents prepared by consultants



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- What do you value most about living in Stamford?
- What types of amenities or services would you like to see added or improved in the downtown area?
- How would you like to see Stamford evolve over the next 10 years?




Lakers
Please respect the opinions of others, engage in civil discussions and be polite to all participants.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Critical component of the NY Forward planning process!
- Lead by the consultant team
- Takes place throughout the process and is tailored specifically to each community's needs
- Activities should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population





HOW DO WE USE THE PUBLIC'S FEEDBACK?

- Helps to craft/refine the downtown's vision, goals, and strategies
- Input on project types and community needs
- Feedback on proposed projects and transformative potential in downtown



PROJECT WEBSITE



Scan the QR code to visit the project website: stamfordnyforward.com

Email the project team: stamfordnyforward@gmail.com

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS

- LPC Meetings
- Open Call for Projects
- Public Engagement Sessions
- Surveys
- Online Engagement

Pop-Up at Summer Concert Series on July 16

Public Workshop #1 is August 10, 5-7 PM

Are there important community groups or stakeholders we should reach out to?

Do you have any advice on meeting locations, specific activities, notification methods, etc.?

OPEN CALL FOR PROJECTS



OPEN CALL FOR PROJECTS

- Private, nonprofit and public entities are eligible to submit applications
- Intended to ensure all business and property owners are given an opportunity to submit a project proposal
- Projects should have a clear scope of work and be ready to be implemented in the short term
- Application forms will be available both in-person and online
- Submission timeframe of at least 4 weeks

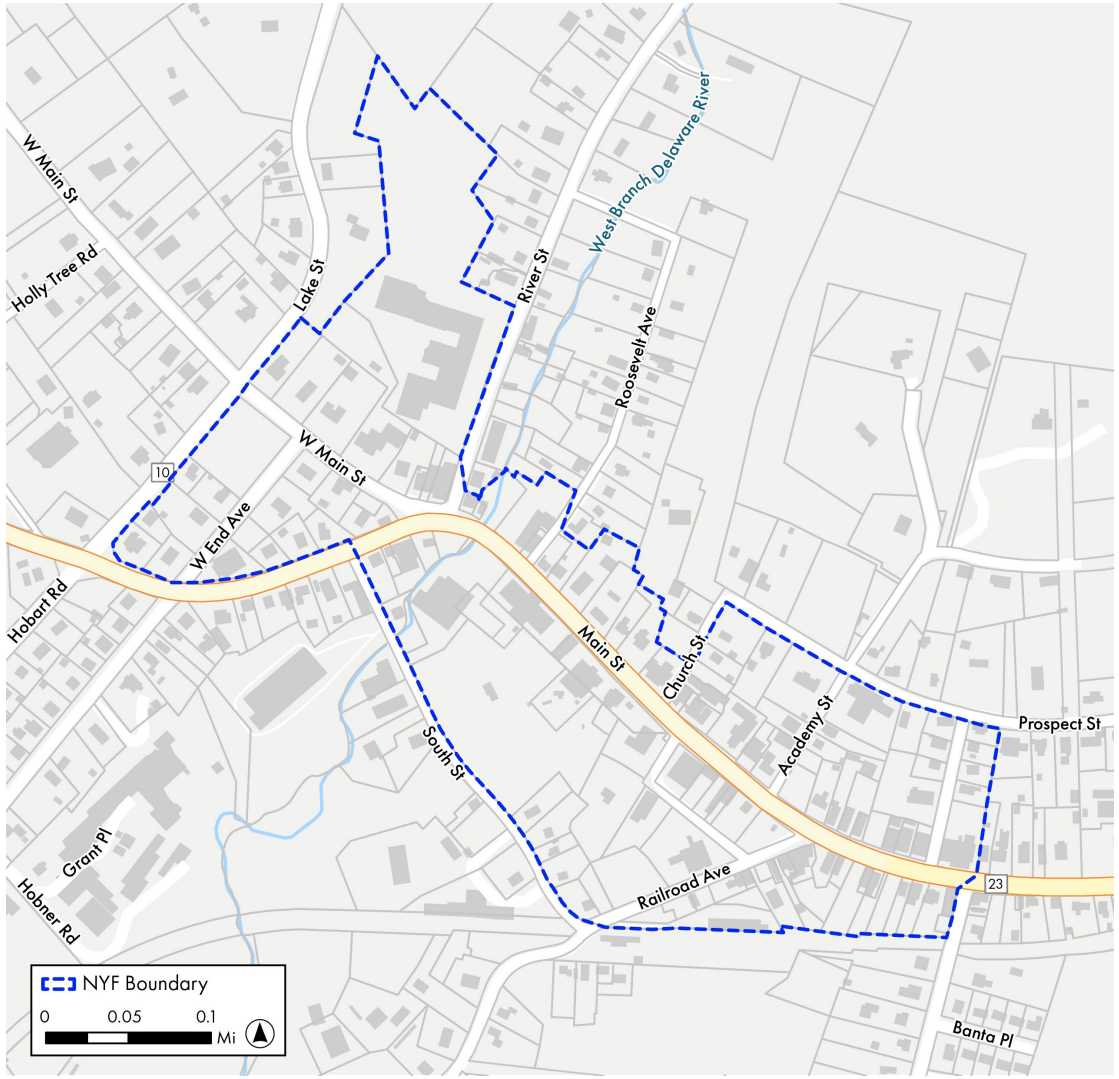
Open Call period is scheduled for July 16 – August 28

STAMFORD'S NY FORWARD APPLICATION



NY FORWARD BOUNDARY

- The NY Forward Boundary encompasses the Main Street commercial corridor (NY-23) from the intersection of North Delaware Street west to South Street, including one block north and south of Main Street to capture key civic, cultural, and residential anchors.
- The boundary also includes Indian Trail Park, the Robinson Broadhurst Memorial Pool, and Stamford Central School, recognizing their integral roles in downtown life, recreation, and community identity.



COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

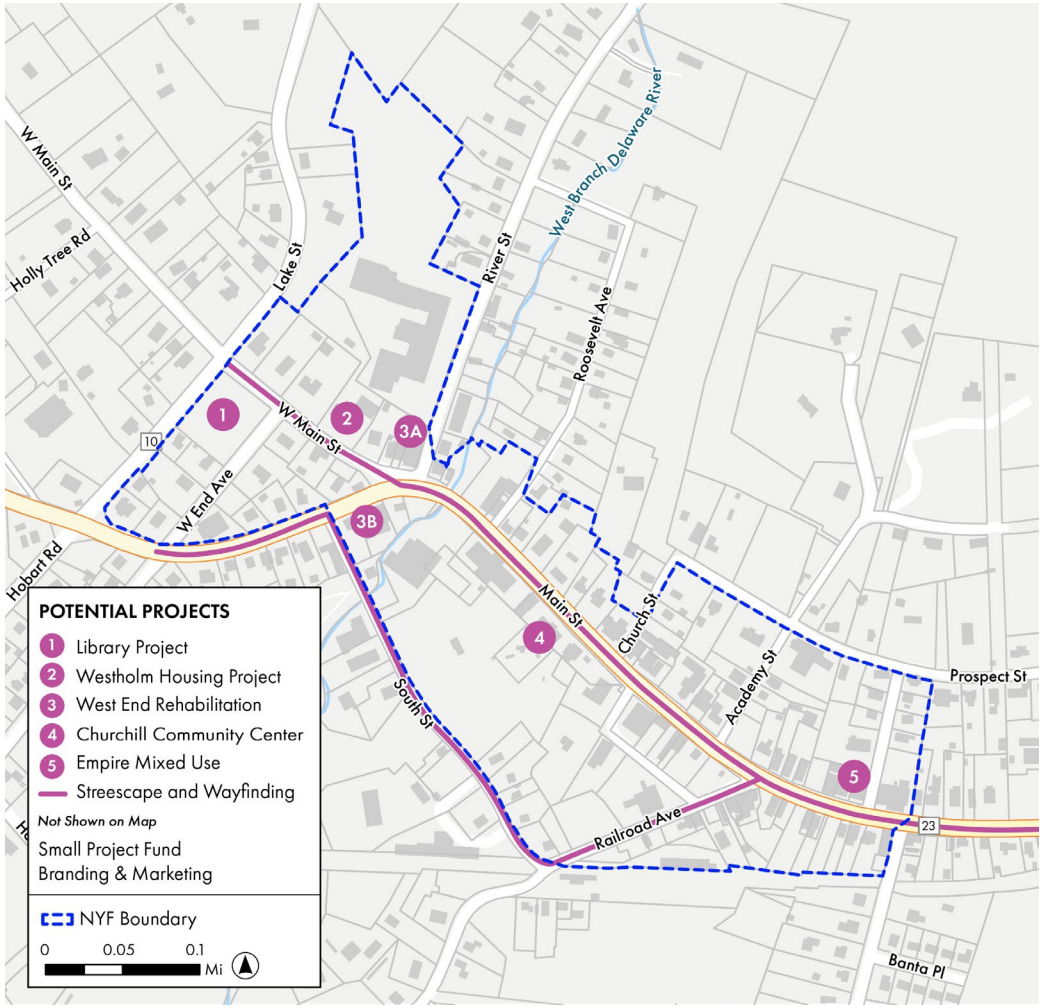
Nestled in the heart of the Catskill Mountains at the headwaters of the Delaware River, the Village of Stamford seeks to restore its legacy as the "Queen of the Catskills" by creating a vibrant, walkable, and economically resilient downtown that celebrates its historic charm and natural beauty. Through New York Forward, Stamford will enhance Main Street with cohesive streetscapes, improved accessibility, and stronger connections to local businesses and recreation. Guided by sustainability, inclusion, and community pride, Stamford envisions a thriving rural hub where residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs can live, work, and grow.

This vision is guided by a shared commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and economic opportunity. By leveraging partnerships with organizations like the Western Catskills Community Revitalization Council and regional foundations, Stamford will transform its historic core into a model of rural revitalization – honoring its legacy while building a prosperous future where the next generation will proudly call home.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROJECTS IN APPLICATION

These sites have been identified in the Village's NYF application as prime locations for implementation of a variety of initiatives.

1. A new library will serve as a community hub and social service resource
2. Redevelopment offering affordable home ownership opportunities
3. Property revitalization will preserve historic character and address code and environmental remediation needs
4. Creation of public space for all ages
5. Replace critical housing lost in the 2023 fire



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Thinking about our brainstorming earlier and the projects you just heard about…

- What other project ideas do you have?
- Are there are any projects you think are missing?



WHAT'S NEXT?



NEXT STEPS

- Review the NY Forward Guidance Document
- Review the community's NY Forward application
- Review, sign and return the Code of Conduct form
- Help promote the upcoming Public Workshop on August 10, 5-7 PM
- Open Call submission period July 16 - August 28

Webpages to visit:

DRI

https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative

NY Forward

https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Public comments will be reserved at the end of LPC meeting. Members of the public are invited to provide comments and ask questions.
- Visit the project website for more information and to stay up to date.



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