NY Forward – Capital Region - Watervliet

Subject	AGENDA LPC Meeting #3	Date	Thursday, September 24, 2026
Place	Watervliet Senior Center 1501 Broadway	Time	6:00-8:00pm

Distribution

Local Planning Committee
Charles Patricelli (Co-chair)
Amanda Vitullo (Co-chair)
Dylan Brickner
Shawn Burke
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Janet Cusson
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Tom Hulihan
Michele Jamrosz
Bob Passonno
Eli Sands
Dr. Donald Stevens (absent)

State Team
Matthew Smith, DOS
Gina DaBiere-Gibbs DOS
Mary Barthelme, HCR
Taylor Disco, HCR
Mary Elise Rees, ESD

Consultant Team
Ashley Dominguez, Buro Happold
Amy Stanfield, Buro Happold
Daniel D'Oca, Interboro

Meeting Summary:

Please see 'WAT_LPC Meeting 3_Slides_record" for the presentation shared during the meeting which parallels the discussion summarized below.

Action items are called out in ***bold-italic highlight***

Welcome and Agenda

Matt (DOS) welcomes the group to the third NY Forward LPC meeting. He briefly overviews the meeting agenda and reminds the room that these meetings are open to the public, but not intended to be public interactive workshops.

He then briefly overviews the meeting agenda.

Opening Remarks

Mayor Patricelli (LPC Co-Chair) highlights his excitement about the submitted projects.

Code of Conduct

Matt (DOS) reads the Code of Conduct preamble, and reviews key points from the Code of Conduct that LPC members are expected to abide by.

LPC is invited to submit any further necessary recusal forms. Paper copies are offered, and digital versions are to be shared following the meeting.

Updates: Planning Process & Engagement

Ashley (BH) review of what's been done so far and what is on the horizon (see slides).

Dan (Interboro) provides synopsis of the engagement done to date, including an update on responses to the digital survey regarding vision, goals, and assessment of downtown. Concludes by reviewing the upcoming engagement activities planned.

Vision, Goals, & Strategies

Ashley (BH) reviews the NYF area boundary and the vision and goals for downtown that were finalized at the prior LPC meeting. Proposed draft "revitalization strategies" are presented that will attempt to provide more fine-grained, actionable recommendations for the City of Watervliet that will anchor the "Community Roadmap" section of the SIP. Ashley explains that this roadmap will provide a place to tie the vision, goals, and strategies to prior and ongoing planning work happening in and around the City, as well as elaborate on findings uncovered throughout the NYF process that may not directly relate to projects recommended for funding in the SIP. The LPC will have the opportunity to review and provide comment on the Revitalization Strategies via digital feedback.

Project Evaluation Criteria

Ashley (BH) reviews the process and timing of evaluating the projects that have been submitted through the Open Call. LPC will provide their assessment of each project against all Evaluation Criteria via an online form that will be distributed by the consultant team. The results of the evaluation will then be reviewed at the 4th LPC meeting.

Submitted Projects

Ashley (BH) provides summary of the projects received: 22 primary projects total, from 19 distinct sponsors, with $10.7 million requested of NY Forward funds, leveraging over $22.2 million in total investment.

Amy (BH) and Ashley (BH) present each of the submitted projects in turn, with discussion among the LPC for each. The intent here was to broadly familiarize the LPC with the Projects submitted. LPC members have access to the full project application and supporting materials submitted by the Sponsors in order to make their full evaluation.

A. Enhance Streetscape and Walkability Along 2nd Avenue, 19th St, and Congress St Bridge
   - The LPC confirmed that the project includes modifications to 2nd Avenue and additional street trees along 2nd Avenue and 19th Street.
   - Sponsors provided conceptual drawings and renderings; final implementation is not required to exactly match the submitted renderings.
   - The LPC requested clarification on whether the project builds upon a previously awarded grant.

B. Expand and Modernize Clinton Park Playground
   - Members recognized the project's recreational and community benefits but noted that it is currently located outside the NY Forward boundary.
   - Discussion focused on whether expanding the boundary would be worthwhile to accommodate projects such as this.
   - Several members felt the project would likely move forward even without NY Forward funding due to its community value + project momentum already in place.
   - There was interest in understanding what boundary adjustments would be required and when a decision would need to be made.
   - Resident asked if there could be maintenance for the Clinton Park – State responded that maintenance is not part of NYF funding.

C. Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety on 23rd Street at Broadway

   - LPC members viewed this as a significant pedestrian safety improvement project.
   - Discussion highlighted coordination with NYSDOT and the state bidding process.
   - Taylor (HCR) mentioned existing planning efforts, including demonstration projects and traffic-calming concepts, were viewed positively.
   - Members noted the project's potential to improve pedestrian comfort and reduce crossing distances.

D. Construct a Community Boat House and Waterfront Amenities at Hudson Shores Park

- Clarification was provided that this would be a new boathouse rather than a renovation of an existing structure.
- Discussion included potential future uses, such as equipment rentals and expanded recreational programming.
- Existing restroom facilities would remain and be renovated. ADA compliant renovations.
- Members generally viewed the project as a valuable waterfront amenity that would strengthen Hudson Shores Park.

E. Establish a Downtown Small Project Fund for Façade Improvements

- Members and Matt (DOS) were impressed by the level of demonstrated interest, with more than $1 million in potential projects identified.
- Discussion focused on how the program would work and whether all properties within the boundary would be eligible.
- There was strong support for the Small Project Fund as a way to spread benefits across multiple properties and businesses.
- Several members suggested increasing the fund allocation beyond the proposed amount if possible.
- Business owners who submitted small project interest letters in person said their projects were not reflected on the small project list (The Flower Girl).

F. Redevelop Four Underutilized Parcels into Affordable Senior Housing at 19th Street and Second Avenue

- Questions were raised regarding site control, as the sponsor does not currently own the properties.
- Discussion centered on whether senior housing is the highest and best use for this prominent location.
- Some members expressed concerns about traffic conditions and the site's suitability for older residents.
- Additional information on property acquisition and implementation is needed.

G. Redevelop Four Underutilized Parcels into Housing and a Car Wash at 19th Street and Second Avenue

- Members discussed the redevelopment potential of the site but noted the lack of supporting plans and renderings.

- Concerns were raised about vehicle circulation, pedestrian safety, and how a car wash would function within the downtown environment. Concerns about where cars would pull in and out on a busy and dangerous street.
- Several members preferred a stronger housing-focused development rather than a car-oriented use.
- There was interest in exploring whether elements of this proposal and the senior housing proposal could be combined.

H. Construct Market-Rate Apartment Building on Second Avenue

- Members viewed the project as relatively advanced due to its approved site plan.
- Discussion focused on site design, particularly the placement of parking in front of the building.
- Several members preferred a more urban form with the building closer to the street but acknowledged that redesign could trigger additional approvals.
- The project was generally viewed as a realistic opportunity to add housing and expand the tax base.

I. Construct Mixed-Use Building to Anchor the Shopping Plaza

- Members recognized the site's prominent location and redevelopment potential.
- Questions were raised about the estimated project cost and whether it accurately reflects the proposed scope of development.
- Some members suggested the site could also accommodate senior housing due to its accessibility and available parking.
- Concerns were raised about pedestrian activity and circulation within the shopping plaza.

J. Construct Mixed-Use Housing and Bicycle Shop at 813 19th Street

- Members generally supported the concept and appreciated its connection to active transportation.
- Questions were raised regarding the bicycle shop's business model, including whether it would focus on sales, repairs, or both.
- Clarification is needed on whether the sponsor intends to operate the business directly or lease the commercial space.

K. Expand Essential Services and Create a Coffee Lounge in Watervliet

- Members noted the project is currently outside the NY Forward boundary.
- Discussion focused on site constraints, including parking impacts, lot configuration, and whether a partnership between property owners would be required.

- Members requested additional information about the coffee lounge concept and whether it would be a local business or part of a franchise.
- Questions remain about site layout and implementation feasibility.

L. Revitalize Black Bear Inn with Façade, Patio, Rooftop, and Kitchen Improvements

- Members generally viewed the project favorably and felt enhancing a known destination could strengthen 19th Street.
- Discussion focused on the rooftop deck, patio expansion, and potential to increase activity downtown.
- Parking availability emerged as the primary concern.
- Several members felt the project would attract visitors and complement other economic development efforts.

M. Rehabilitate a Vacant Building into Restaurant and Housing at 23rd Street and 6th Avenue

- Members supported the adaptive reuse concept but requested additional information on zoning, site readiness, and project costs.
- Concerns were raised that the proposed budget may underestimate construction costs.
- Members also requested more information about parking and surrounding land uses.
- The project's location outside the boundary may present an additional challenge.

N. Renovate Vacant 19th Street Building to Create Two Downtown Homes

- Members viewed this as a practical rehabilitation project that would add housing.
- Discussion covered reimbursement procedures, environmental review requirements, and implementation timelines.
- The project was generally seen as a strong complement to nearby revitalization efforts along 19th Street.
- Clarification was provided that market-rate housing is eligible for NY Forward funding.

O. Construct 3-Bay Auto Repair Shop

- Members questioned whether expanding auto-related uses aligns with the long-term vision for downtown Watervliet.
- Several people suggested the project might be better suited for the Small Project Fund rather than receiving direct NY Forward funding.
- Discussion centered on project scale and whether limited funding should be prioritized for more transformative projects.
- Concerns were raised about the strategic value of adding another auto repair business in the city.

P. Construct and Expand a Multidisciplinary Medical Facility
- [Due to an administrative error, this project was not included in the LPC-3 materials or discussion, but will be included in the LPC evaluation and the upcoming Public Workshop.]

Small Project Interest Letters

- The person proposing (j) Expand Community Space and Accessible Parking at 1855 12th Ave was in attendance and wanted to ask LPC to consider expanding the boundary to include projects nearby.
- Strong consensus emerged in support of expanding the Small Project Fund, potentially from $300,000 to $600,000.
- Members viewed the fund as an effective tool for supporting local businesses and property owners.
- There was broad agreement that the fund could generate visible improvements throughout downtown and leverage private investment.
- Several members preferred investing additional money in the Small Project Fund rather than expanding the NY Forward boundary

Projects Outside NYF Boundary

- The committee discussed whether the NY Forward boundary should be expanded but generally felt there are enough strong projects within the existing boundary to fully utilize available funding.
- Several members emphasized that supporting local businesses should be a higher priority than expanding the boundary.
- Members expressed surprise at the relatively small size of the proposed SPF and suggested increasing it from $300,000 to $600,000 or more if possible.
- While some projects outside the boundary were recognized as valuable, the overall consensus was that boundary expansion is not necessary if additional funding can instead be directed toward small businesses and property owners.
- Discussion also touched on perceptions of Uptown [which is local term used for the NY Forward downtown area], with one resident noting that despite its reputation, he does not personally feel unsafe living there.

Any Projects to be removed?

- Members suggested that smaller projects with budgets under $150,000 may be better suited for the Small Project Fund rather than receiving direct NY Forward funding.

- The proposed rehabilitation of a vacant building into a restaurant and housing project at 23rd Street and 6th Avenue received mixed feedback. Concerns included its location outside the boundary, uncertainty regarding project costs, and questions about overall feasibility.
- Members noted that building stabilization may need to occur before redevelopment can move forward and referenced former-Gino's [which is the building at 23rd St. and 6th Ave] as a potential example.

Additional Information

- Committee members were reminded that one-on-one meetings with project sponsors will be scheduled.
- Members seeking additional project information were encouraged to coordinate with the State and consultant team.
- The committee expressed interest in reviewing detailed budgets and supporting documentation to better understand project costs and readiness.

Local Planning Committee Q&A

- Members requested additional information on the competing proposals at 19th Street and Second Avenue, particularly regarding the shared site being considered for either senior housing or a car wash redevelopment.
- There was strong support for gateway improvements near the Congress Street Bridge. Members noted that this corridor serves as a primary entrance to the city and should create a positive first impression for visitors arriving in downtown Watervliet.

Public Comment

Clinton Park:

- A resident living near Clinton Park expressed support for the project, particularly the proposed dog park amenities, but asked how park cleanliness and maintenance would be addressed.
- The State clarified that NY Forward funds cannot be reserved for ongoing maintenance expenses.

- Questions were also raised about property acquisition related to the park expansion. The State clarified that property acquisition is not an eligible NY Forward expense.

Small Project Fund and Local Business Support:

- Multiple public comments emphasized that investing in small businesses generates economic activity and brings revenue into the city.
- Commenters argued that supporting local entrepreneurs can have a greater economic impact than focusing solely on physical improvements.
- Businesses located outside the core NY Forward boundary were highlighted as important contributors to the local economy and community identity, suggesting they should still be considered when evaluating projects.

Small Project Fund Process:

- Questions were raised about whether architectural drawings and stamped plans are required for SPF applications. The committee clarified that more detailed design documentation may be required later in the process.
- Public comments also sought clarification on the SPF timeline and award process. It was noted that applicants may ultimately receive a different funding amount than initially requested and can adjust project scopes after selection.
- The committee confirmed that individual Small Project Fund awards can range from approximately $25,000 to $150,000.

Next steps

LPC evaluations are due by October 15th. This gives the Consultant team time to incorporate the results into the presentation materials for the LPC-4 meeting on 10/29.

END OF SUMMARY