

NY Forward – Capital Region - Watervliet

Subject	MINUTES LPC Meeting #2	Date	Thursday, August 20, 2026
Place	Senior Center 1501 Broadway	Time	6:00-8:00pm
Distribution	<u>Local Planning Committee</u> Charles Patricelli, Mayor (co-chair) Amanda Vitullo (co-chair) Dylan Brickner Shawn Burke Craig Clermont <i>Janet Cusson (absent)</i> <i>Whitney Gitman (absent)</i> Tom Hulihan Michelle Jamrosz Bob Passonno Eli Sands <i>Dr. Donald Stevens (absent)</i>	<u>State Team</u> Matthew Smith, DOS Taylor Disco, HCR <u>Consultant Team</u> Ian Nicholson, Buro Happold Daniel D'Oca, Interboro <u>Public</u> ~15 individuals	

Meeting Summary:

Please see 'WAT_LPC Meeting 2_Slides_record' for the presentation shared during the meeting which parallels the discussion summarized below.

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

Opening Remarks

Mayor Patricelli (LPC co-chair) delivers brief opening remarks.

Code of Conduct

Matthew Smith (DOS) reads the Code of Conduct preamble, and reviews key points from the Code of Conduct that LPC members are expected to abide by, including conflicts of interest and recusal.

Updates: Planning Process & Engagement

Ian (BH) reviews the NYF timeline of actions since kickoff, including the website going live, the first LPC meeting, and the first public workshop. He also updates the LPC on sponsors that have attended

technical sessions to discuss potential projects. He then outlines the upcoming steps in the planning process, the next of which is the deadline for projects to be submitted on Sep 8th.

Ian also shares a calendar illustrating the vision of how the NYF program will proceed, placing today's meeting in context of the overall process.

Downtown Assessment

Ian (BH) presents research done for the downtown assessment and explains its purpose in the process and for the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

Ian (BH) reviews a map of the current NYF boundaries for LPC members to comment on. He informs members that they can modify boundaries during the next LPC meeting as well, while reviewing project submissions. The LPC is reminded that potential sponsors outside the boundary should be encouraged to apply, given that the LPC may revisit the boundary at the 3rd LPC meeting when projects are known.

Review of history & trajectory, recent plans and investments, alignment with REDC, geography & ecology, architecture & urban form, streets, circulation & parking, parks & open spaces, land use & zoning, socio-economic conditions, employment & commuting, and real estate market. Ian (BH) presents key observations drawn from the downtown assessment, emphasizing opportunities and challenges. LPC is invited to provide any feedback – there is acknowledgement that information presented seems broadly accurate, but LPC shared the following comments and suggestions:

- Should add Watervliet's status as TreeCity USA should be added to the recent planning efforts.
- There was a report noting that Watervliet was one of the most affordable housing markets in the country.
- Recent investments should include the money towards the Empire State Trail segment in the City.
- The total cost of the public pool investment was closer to \$8m.
- \$160m over 20 years feels like a lot, but generally agreed that it is probably accurate – multiple \$1m+ projects add up over that timeframe.
- The construction of I-787 resulted in the physical removal of a substantial portion of the City – this story should be told in this narrative.
- Broadway is the ONLY north-south connection between the 2 sections of Watervliet on either side of the Arsenal.
- There is a housing development project going thru Planning Board right now, market-rate. Supports the idea that there is latent potential in the housing market.
- The idea of the Arsenal as an economic engine or anchor is strongly contested: the vast majority of employees/workers at the facility either live on the base or out of town – very few

locals, and very little visitation to local businesses being driven by the workforce there. And as a US Government facility, it does not contribute to the tax base.

- Discussion about the concept of “neighborhood stability” and the role of absentee landlords in the deterioration of general cleanliness and order in the public realm, and the issue of code enforcement is raised. One LPC member suggests tabling discussions about policy, since NY Forward is a capital grants program that will not have ability to change policy.

Public Workshop #1 Overview

Dan (Interboro) provides a brief overview of the first workshop, explaining the overall purpose and structure of the workshop, including a description of the walking tour activity where participants wrote observations and thoughts on a foldout map. He also shares the number of participants (roughly 24) and the consultant team that attended the workshop. Photos from the workshop are shared.

The team received roughly 255 comments from the workshop participants, with the top three focused on pedestrian safety & infrastructure, streets & traffic, and parks, recreation & public space. Dan showed the comments placed on the maps to elaborate on which areas of the Village were prompting certain kinds of feedback. He also proposed implications from the comments for the 4 goals laid out in the NYF application.

Dan presents 3 overall takeaways synthesized from the activity:

- The strongest lesson from the workshop is that Watervliet does not lack assets. The challenge is that many of its assets are disconnected from one another.
- The LPC could consider strengthening the vision around connections and how the slate of projects could work together to enhance Watervliet’s existing assets.
- The workshop validated the direction of the four preliminary goals, but participants felt the goals could more specifically reflect the issues experienced during the walks, especially pedestrian safety, connectivity, destinations, and everyday quality of life.

Online Survey Summary

Dan (Interboro) provides a brief overview of the online survey that was launched on the day of the Workshop, so that those who could not attend the workshop in person have an opportunity to be heard. The results show a strong agreement with the provided draft Vision, with 75% marking “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” The public priorities found also align with the 4 draft goals:

- Beautification, property maintenance, infrastructure concerns

- Strong desire for improved riverfront access and amenities
- Calls for owner-occupied housing, better property upkeep, balanced housing mix
- Desire for better storefronts, more varied retail, events, nightlife, jobs

Visions and Goals

Ian (BH) presents the preliminary downtown vision from the NYF application. He presents two alternative vision statements for the LPC to discuss and workshop. LPC members all agree on preference for Alternative #2, particularly the first and last sentences. There is strong emphasis placed on keeping the language simple, direct, and minimal.

A finalized downtown vision is drafted collectively from this input:

“Watervliet is a thriving city where the Hudson River is once again part of everyday life and future generations can live with pride. We will emerge as a place families choose to stay, entrepreneurs choose to invest, and visitors choose to return.”

Ian (BH) presents the preliminary downtown goals adapted from the NYF application. The goals are compared to key themes identified at the workshop, illustrating clear connections between the two, as well as some differences. Proposed goals are offered by consultant team that attempt to incorporate feedback heard to date. Again expressing a strong preference for simple, straightforward language, the LPC members discuss themes that warrant inclusion in the goals, and also ensure that there are no superfluous words. Finalized goals are drafted from this discussion:

- **Make downtown more beautiful and livable.**
- **Improve pedestrian safety and comfort.**
- **Interconnect residents, amenities, businesses, and investment.**
- **Establish Watervliet as an economic and cultural destination.**
- **Enhance recreational assets and community spaces.**

LPC Q&A / Discussion

The discussion on the Vision and Goals was thorough and wide-ranging. The question of what “resiliency and sustainability” means in the context of the Watervliet NYF is discussed, and it is observed that the State level goals already include this theme. The question of how housing should or shouldn’t be incorporated into the goals is discussed extensively. The nature of what it means to “reconnect” the community and its assets. The desire to attract outside investment, but also the issues being experienced by absentee landlords.

Public Comment

Questions and Comments from the audience:

- There are miscellaneous minor suggestions offered during the discussion on the Vision and Goals, which the LPC considers and incorporates as appropriate.
- Observation that there are many types of businesses in the City that can often be overlooked that do bring a lot of visitation and foot traffic into the local economy.

Closing Remarks

N/A

END OF SUMMARY