



Department of State  
Downtown Revitalization  
Initiative & NY Forward



**Guidebook**

# Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward

APRIL 2026

# Introduction

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One of the most inspiring aspects of my job as New York’s Secretary of State is to help local community leaders transform their downtowns into vibrant, diverse, and resilient places with support from our Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward programs. These programs have fostered a renaissance in downtown revitalization. And now we turn to you; your participation in this round of the programs ensures that this momentum continues and even accelerates.

New York’s downtowns are the heart and soul of our regions. With their energy, diversity, and exuberance—as well as their artistic, cultural, and historical assets—our downtowns serve as catalysts for revitalization and economic development.

The DRI and NY Forward serve as cornerstones of Governor Kathy Hochul’s economic development strategy. Under my leadership these programs are effectively accelerating the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood centers by maximizing their potential as both centers of activity and catalysts for investment.

In addition to creating vibrant downtowns and expanding economic development opportunities, the DRI and NY Forward are addressing a myriad of other priority state issues, such as housing, affordability, childcare, an aging population, and climate change.

The DRI and NY Forward have advanced the Governor’s Pro-Housing Initiative by investing in over 5,000 units of housing throughout the State—over 40% of which are affordable or workforce.

Given the crippling effect the shortage of affordable childcare has on families and communities, the DRI has invested over \$9 million in 12 childcare projects, providing affordable childcare and training future childcare workers.

In support of Governor Hochul’s Master Plan for Aging, the DRI and NY Forward are creating safe, accessible communities for people of all ages and abilities.

And the DRI and NY Forward programs are helping mitigate climate change by building walkable, bikeable, and transit-accessible communities and supporting energy-efficient buildings.

I look forward to building on these remarkable achievements with this new round of DRI and NY Forward awardees as New York State continues to lead the nation in creating vibrant, healthy, and resilient communities for all New Yorkers.

Walter T. Mosley  
Secretary of State



| Project Ribbon-Cutting in Gloversville (DRI Round 5)

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# State Agencies and Authorities

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## New York State Department of State

The New York Department of State (DOS) plays a critical role in helping to reinvigorate the State's economy and make its communities more livable. The Office of Planning, Development, & Community Infrastructure (OPDCI) at the DOS increases resilience and sustainable growth of New York communities by advancing progressive land use solutions and community-based development. This is accomplished through effective plan-then-act strategies that result in catalytic investments that stimulate community revitalization and preserve, protect, and enhance the State's coastal and natural resources.

## Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York State's primary economic development arm. ESD's mission is to promote a vigorous and growing state economy, encourage business investment and job creation, and support diverse, prosperous local economies across New York State.

## New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal

New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) is the State's affordable housing agency. HCR's mission is to build, preserve, and protect affordable housing and increase homeownership throughout New York State.

## New York State Energy Research & Development Authority

New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) is a public-benefit corporation dedicated to promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. NYSERDA's mission is to advance clean energy innovation and investments to combat climate change; improve the health, resiliency, and prosperity of New Yorkers; and deliver benefits equitably to all.



| **Cooperstown** (NY Forward Round 1)

## **SECTION 1.0**

# **Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward**

## **In this Section:**

**SECTION 1.1 Purpose of this Guidebook**

**SECTION 1.2 Introduction to the DRI and NY Forward Programs**

**SECTION 1.3 Planning Process Overview**

**SECTION 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities**



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## SECTION 1.1

# Purpose of this Guidebook

*This guidebook provides a detailed overview of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward planning processes. It is intended to serve as a resource for Local Planning Committees, municipal officials and staff, project sponsors, and the general public.*

## Overview

This guidebook focuses on the planning process associated with the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward programs. The DRI and NY Forward programs use an innovative "plan-then-act" strategy. All communities awarded DRI/NY Forward funding will undertake a targeted, community-based planning exercise. The process begins with the development of a downtown vision and goals and an assessment of the downtown area, and then shifts to identifying and developing proposed projects.

At the end of the planning process, communities will identify a slate of projects that are aligned with the State's and locality's goals for the DRI/NY Forward program. These projects are then submitted to the State for funding consideration. With the support of several State agencies and a consultant team, each community will prepare a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP is the final plan that results from the DRI/NY Forward planning process. The SIP will describe the unique challenges and opportunities for the revitalization of the downtown; present the

community's vision for the future of the area; propose transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of DRI/NY Forward funds; and suggest additional activities for communities to help them realize their vision for downtown.

This guidebook is organized by the key activities that each community will undertake as part of the planning process and includes:

- Public engagement
- Downtown assessment
- Vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and downtown roadmap
- Project identification and development
- Project implementation

## SECTION 1.1

### PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

#### Who Should Use the Guidebook?

This guidebook is intended to be a resource for anyone involved in a DRI or NY Forward planning process, including the Local Planning Committee, municipal officials and staff, project sponsors, and the general public. The guidebook provides an overview of the planning process, describes key deliverables, and defines the State's expectations.

You can use the guidebook to:

- Understand what to expect once a community is awarded DRI or NY Forward funding
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of key participants in the planning process
- Learn about the different ways to become involved in the planning process
- Understand how a community will identify, develop, and ultimately select proposed projects to recommend to the State for DRI or NY Forward funding
- Learn more about the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) that a community will develop with the support of State agencies and a consultant team
- Learn what happens after the SIP is submitted and the State announces project awards



| Secretary of State Mosley Touring 108 Montcalm Street in Ticonderoga (DRI Round 6)

SECTION 1.2

# Introduction to the DRI and NY Forward Programs

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*The Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward programs focus on creating healthy, vibrant, walkable downtowns that catalyze sustainable economic development and accrue numerous economic, social, and environmental benefits to the locality, the region, and the State as a whole.*

Business and development leaders recognize that downtown communities, which offer a high quality of life and a critical mass of diverse public amenities and activities, can serve as catalysts for increased and sustainable local economic development. Investments that re-energize commercial cores attract a diverse population of new residents and visitors of varying ages, incomes, abilities, and interests, thereby strengthening the customer base for local businesses and providing the reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employers and grow the regional economy.

Government leaders recognize that focusing investment in commercial centers is also fiscally responsible. Compact development lowers the cost of delivering essential government services (police, fire, emergency medical) and reduces demand for costly new infrastructure, making local government budgets more efficient, while reducing the burden on taxpayers. Compact, mixed-use development is also energy efficient and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Focusing development in downtowns increases walkability and promotes the use of public transit. By reducing dependence on private vehicles, communities and individuals can reduce their carbon footprint.

**SECTION 1.2**

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

**DRI and NY Forward Program Goals**

The core goals of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward programs are summarized in the box to the right. As part of the DRI/NY Forward planning process, each community will use these goals as a starting point to develop its own set of localized goals that support its vision for revitalization. The State’s programmatic goals and the community’s local goals should guide the entire DRI or NY Forward planning process, inform project development and selection, and be clearly reflected in each community’s Strategic Investment Plan.



**DRI and NY Forward Program Goals**



Create an active downtown with a strong sense of place that reflects the community's heritage and culture.



Attract new businesses that create a robust mix of shopping, entertainment, and service options for residents and visitors, and that provide job opportunities for a variety of skills and salaries.



Enhance public spaces for arts and cultural events that serve the existing members of the community but also draw in visitors from around the region.



Cultivate a variety of housing opportunities that help build an inclusive and welcoming community.



Grow local tax revenue.



Provide amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds.



Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support investments that are more resilient to future climate change impacts.

**SECTION 1.2**

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

**DRI Program Overview**

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative was launched in 2016 to accelerate the revitalization of downtowns in the ten Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) regions of the State with the goal of downtowns serving as centers of activity and catalysts for increased local investment. As a cornerstone of the State’s economic development program, the DRI transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers that offer a high quality of life and become magnets for redevelopment, business growth, job creation, and economic and housing diversity.

The Department of State (DOS) administers the Governor’s DRI in close coordination with Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), Empire State Development (ESD), New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), and several other State partners.

**Community Characteristics**

In general, DRI communities typically:

- Are sizable downtowns with a regional draw;
- Include major employment centers or tourism attractions;
- Provide a walkable network of destinations;
- Are characterized by relatively dense urban development with diverse land uses; and
- Provide multi-modal transportation options (e.g., mass transit, bicycle infrastructure) or have the potential to increase multi-modal infrastructure.



I REDC Regions

## SECTION 1.2

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

#### **NY Forward Program Overview**

NY Forward was launched in 2022 to support a more equitable downtown recovery for New York's smaller communities, with a focus on hamlets, villages, and neighborhood-scale commercial centers. Similar to the DRI, the DOS administers the Governor's NY Forward program in close coordination with HCR, ESD, NYSERDA, and several other State partners. Through the NY Forward program, smaller downtowns receive planning and implementation support needed to attract more businesses, residents, and visitors, while also providing a higher quality of life for all residents.

#### **Community Characteristics**

In general, NY Forward communities:

- Provide important services to the local community/neighborhood in a mixed-use, walkable setting;
- Feature a distinct sense of place due to the presence of rich cultural, historic, natural, and/or agricultural assets;
- Usually have less dense development than a DRI community; however, NY Forward communities are still compact and walkable; and
- May include villages, hamlets, and neighborhood centers nested within a larger municipality.

**SECTION 1.2**

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

This table provides an overview of characteristics common to DRI and NY Forward communities. The list is not exhaustive given the unique attributes of the State's downtowns.

<b>Community Characteristics</b>	
<b>DRI</b>	<b>NY Forward</b>
Larger, walkable, more dense geographical areas with amenities that serve the regional community	Smaller, walkable, less dense geographical areas with amenities that serve the immediate local community
Multi-modal transportation, including mass transit options	More vehicle dependent; patrons mainly arrive by car
Employment center for the regional economy	Predominantly service-oriented businesses and employment opportunities
Larger, urban tourist center with more attractions spread out over several blocks of development — walkable between multiple nodes of activities/ attractions	Small-town charm with heritage, antiques, cottage, agriculture and other niche based tourism In NYC, Business Improvement District (BID)-scale residential-focused districts
Availability or potential for rail/bus/ferry public transportation making Transit Oriented Development possible	Vehicle dependent with limited public transportation potential. Residential, or rural agricultural centric development
Higher-density development: most buildings are three or more stories; buildings contain a number of uses and tenants; there is greater square footage of built space per acre	Lower-density development: most buildings are two to four stories; buildings contain fewer uses and tenants; and less square footage of built space per acre
Existing or potential for higher density buildings, multi-story buildings with opportunities for upper story housing	Two to four story buildings with opportunities for upper story housing

**SECTION 1.2**

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NY FORWARD PROGRAMS

The following table is an overview of the common types of projects and project characteristics for DRI and NY Forward communities and is intended to be a guide for communities. It is not an exhaustive list of project types or characteristics.

<b>Potential Projects</b>	
<b>DRI</b>	<b>NY Forward</b>
Larger private, mixed-use projects focused on new construction, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment to generate economic benefit for the downtown; creation of new public parks, plazas, and/or open spaces in the downtown	Smaller projects focused more on building renovation, adaptive reuse, redevelopment, or activation of upper-stories (ex: housing, additional commercial) rather than new construction; enhancements of existing public spaces
Projects that elevate urban- and employment-based downtown qualities and enhance the regional draw of the DRI area	Projects that elevate specific cultural and historical qualities that enhance the feeling of local charm
Wayfinding projects to connect the network of amenities and attractions distributed over several commercial corridors	Signage or markers in small commercial areas that can also highlight and enhance cultural heritage

## SECTION 1.3

# Planning Process Overview

## Introduction

Both the DRI and NY Forward programs employ an innovative “plan-then-act” strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation. Communities are paired with a consultant team and a project manager from the DOS who guide them through a targeted, community-based planning process focused on the development of an SIP.

The SIP will build upon the community's DRI/NY Forward application, including the preliminary community vision for revitalization and the proposed project list. The planning process will refine the vision; develop actionable goals, revitalization strategies, and a roadmap for the downtown's continued revitalization; and identify a slate of complementary and transformative projects to help the community achieve its vision for downtown revitalization.

In each community selected to participate in the DRI or NY Forward program, a Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprised of local and regional leaders, stakeholders, and community representatives, intended to represent diverse interests, is convened to oversee the planning process and the development of the SIP. Over the course of the planning process, the LPC — with significant support from the State team and a consultant team — will work closely with the local community to:

- Develop a clear and concise downtown assessment to articulate the story of the downtown and identify key challenges and opportunities.

- Review and refine the vision statement included in the DRI/NY Forward application.
- Establish goals, revitalization strategies, and a downtown roadmap to achieve the community's vision.
- Identify, develop, and evaluate projects that could advance the community's vision, goals, and strategies for revitalization.
- Develop detailed project profiles for each project that the LPC recommends for DRI/NY Forward funding (the LPC will identify a final slate of projects in excess of the available DRI/NY Forward funding).
- Undertake broad public engagement throughout the entire planning process to solicit input, shape the community's vision for downtown, identify projects, and build support for plan implementation.

A consultant team will compile the SIP, which will be submitted to the State. Following the final submission of the SIP to the State, a multi-agency State team will review each project recommended for DRI/NY Forward funding. A subset of the projects submitted in the SIP will be awarded funding by the State.

Following the review period, project awards will be announced by the State. Project contracts will be negotiated and executed between project sponsors and relevant State agencies shortly after the award announcements. The contracts will be administered by a variety of agencies and authorities, with the majority held by DOS, ESD, and HCR. In general, awarded project funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis.

**SECTION 1.3**

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

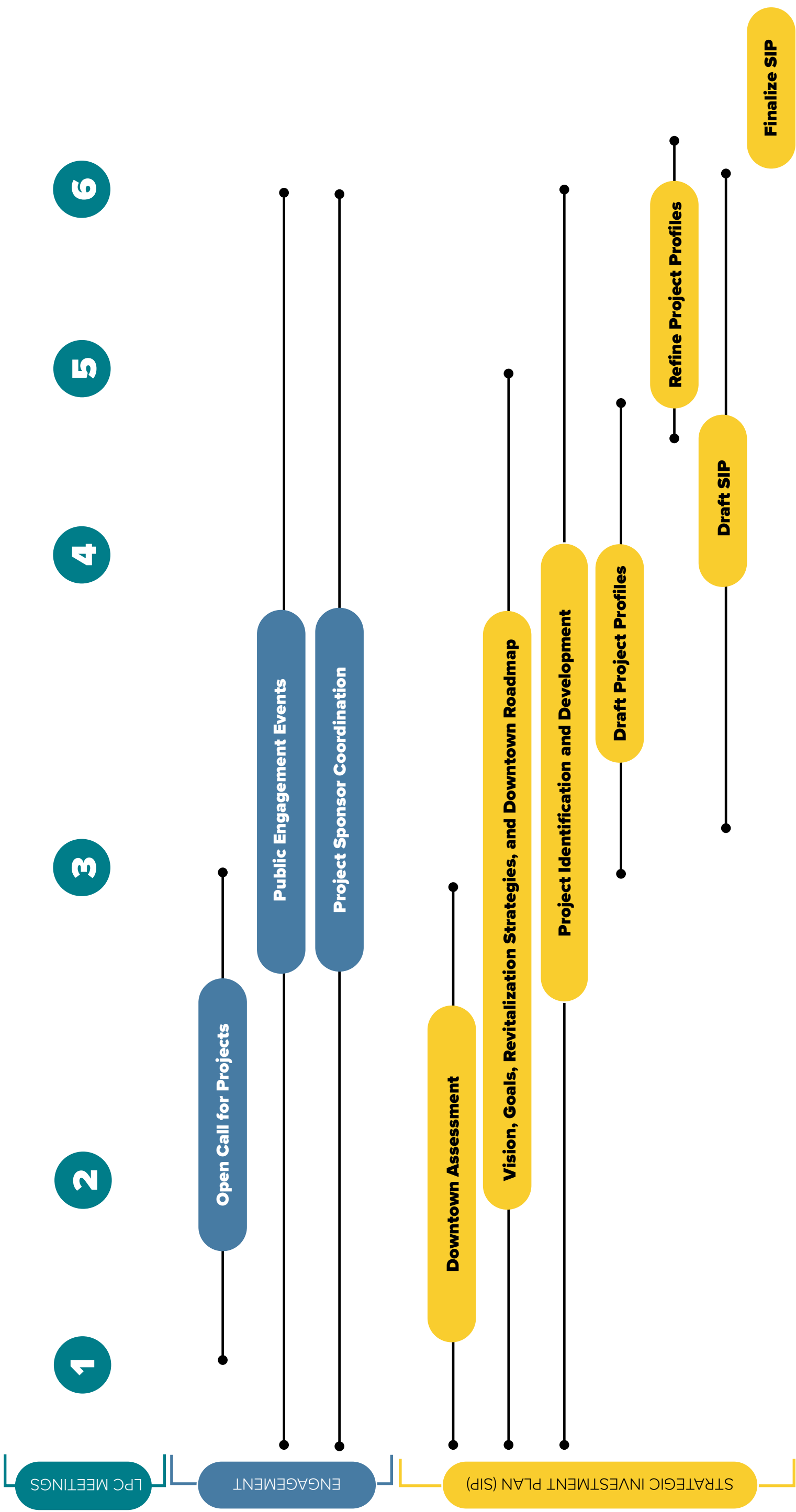
**Summary of Key Steps in the Planning Process**

*All deliverables associated with each step will be developed by the consultant team, with guidance from the LPC.*



# Typical DRI/NY Forward Planning Process and Key Deliverable Schedule

DRI AND NY FORWARD GUIDANCE



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## SECTION 1.3 PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

*The following sections provide an overview of the key components of the DRI and NY Forward planning processes. Detailed descriptions of each element are provided in Sections 2.0 through 6.0.*

### **Public Engagement**

Transparent, open, and ongoing public engagement is a critical component of the DRI/NY Forward planning process and the development of the SIP. Public engagement shall occur in an orderly manner throughout the entire DRI/NY Forward planning process to ensure community needs, opportunities, and challenges are identified; to determine potential projects; and to ensure the DRI/NY Forward revitalization efforts are locally supported. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 2.0: Public Engagement](#).

### **Downtown Assessment**

The downtown assessment shall provide a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates the conditions and story of the downtown area and describes the opportunities to revitalize the downtown. The assessment should allow the reader to understand why this downtown will benefit from the DRI/NY Forward program and provide a logical basis for the projects recommended for DRI/NY Forward funding.

The assessment will give the reader a sense of the downtown – its unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges. It is not intended to

provide a comprehensive technical description of the downtown, akin to what would be included in a comprehensive plan. The downtown assessment will contain a summary of the characteristics of the downtown, including but not limited to demographics, market conditions, and the physical environment. The consultant shall collect, analyze, and evaluate all of that information to ensure that the slate of projects included in the SIP is realistic and appropriate.

Further, the assessment should provide some analysis of the downtown area and highlight any relevant key factors or trends. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 3.0: Downtown Assessment](#).

### **Vision, Goals, Revitalization Strategies, and Downtown Roadmap**

Informed by the community’s DRI/NY Forward application and community input, the LPC will develop a vision statement with corresponding goals and revitalization strategies to guide decision-making about future development and investment in the DRI/NY Forward area. This process will also include the development of complementary activities in the downtown roadmap, which will provide the community with actions that would help to further downtown revitalization. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 4.0: Vision, Goals, Revitalization Strategies, and Downtown Roadmap](#).

## SECTION 1.3 PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

### **Project Development**

DRI/NY Forward projects can be identified in a variety of ways, including from the community's application, during an Open Call for Projects, through public engagement, or during the planning process as it advances. The consultant team will work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to develop and refine proposed projects.

The LPC will recommend a final slate of projects to the State to be considered for DRI/NY Forward funding. These projects are expected to have positive and transformative impacts on the DRI/NY Forward community and are sponsored by public, private, or not-for-profit entities. Detailed descriptions of each proposed project will comprise the majority of the SIP. The LPC will select the final slate of projects based on public input, LPC and community priorities, and evaluation criteria established by the LPC based on State requirements. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 5.0: Project Development](#).

### **Strategic Investment Plan**

The goals of the DRI and NY Forward programs should be reflected in the SIP and the projects therein. The SIP, which is prepared by the consultant team, is a compilation of the required deliverables described throughout this guidebook. The SIP will describe the unique challenges and opportunities for revitalization of the DRI/NY Forward area, present the community's vision for the future of the area, and propose transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of DRI/NY Forward funds.

### **Project Implementation**

Following the completion of the planning process is the selection and implementation of the awarded projects. Awarded projects will enter into a contract with the appropriate state agency and are expected to break ground within two years of award. During project implementation, municipalities will be expected to monitor all awarded projects. Communities can also continue the momentum of downtown revitalization by implementing the downtown roadmap. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 6.0 Project Implementation](#).

## SECTION 1.4

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Overview

The DRI and NY Forward programs accomplish their goals through a unique State and local partnership that includes the LPC, State staff, municipal representatives, and a consultant team. The LPC is responsible for representing the interests and priorities of the community, while the State staff ensures that the process and deliverables are consistent with the goals, priorities, and requirements of the programs. In addition, State and local staff, together with the consultant team, provide expertise, guidance, and technical assistance to develop an SIP that will achieve the vision and goals for revitalization of the downtown, as approved by the LPC.

## Local Planning Committee

Each LPC is led by co-chairs consisting of the local elected official(s) and a member of the Regional Economic Development Council (or their respective designees). General membership of the LPC will include a diverse group of local and regional leaders, community stakeholders, and representatives from interest groups and organizations as appropriate to the community.

These groups may include, but are not limited to:

- Local and regional government units;
- Neighborhood, homeowners, and renters associations;
- Property owners, local developers, and real estate agents;

- Chambers of Commerce, local business associations, and business owners;
- Community foundations and community loan funds;
- Local development corporations, housing corporations, industrial development agencies, and business improvement districts;
- Cultural institutions;
- Educational institutions;
- Local not-for-profit and advocacy organizations, such as environmental organizations and park conservancies; and
- Social and public service organizations, such as local public safety and health care providers, and faith-based organizations.

As representatives of a variety of interests within the community, the LPC members will be responsible for guiding the planning process and helping to identify the most appropriate range of community engagement approaches for the DRI/NY Forward area. The LPC members will also be expected to support public outreach and the identification, development, and selection of projects for inclusion in the SIP.

LPC members meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction and feedback to the consultant teams, review planning products, and discuss community engagement efforts. All LPC meetings that are open to the public should provide an orderly process and opportunity for

## SECTION 1.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

public comment. LPC meetings are working sessions and reserved for discussion and deliberations between the LPC, the consultant team, and the State team. The public can view discussions and deliberations but must be invited to join the discussion by one of the co-chairs. The LPC members, working with the consultant team and State planners, will determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time SIP. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 2.2: Local Planning Committee](#).

LPC members will be required to sign a Code of Conduct as a reminder that they must always act in the public interest in their role as LPC members. Any member of the committee with a real or perceived conflict related to a specific project will be required to recuse themselves from voting on or opining on any project that presents a conflict while still participating in decision-making for other projects.

### **Municipal Representatives**

Professional and administrative municipal representatives from the DRI/NY Forward community shall provide local assistance to the consultant team and State team when local resources or expertise are needed. Municipal representatives may be asked to:

- Provide existing data to assist with the development of the downtown assessment;
- Help develop publicly-sponsored projects by providing guidance regarding the municipality's project objectives/ preferences and providing studies, plans, or other documents related to project development;
- Identify any relevant municipal programs and initiatives and/or funding sources that could be leveraged;

- Help secure space for and advertise public engagement events and LPC meetings; and
- Serve as a local point of contact during the DRI/NY Forward planning process.

As appropriate, municipalities are encouraged to partner with the county or other local or regional entities that may be able to provide technical assistance or other resources.

### **Project Sponsors**

DRI/NY Forward funding may be awarded to public, not-for-profit, and private entities to implement projects included in the final SIP. Each project must have a project sponsor that has both the capacity and the legal authority to undertake the project and to whom the grant funds may be awarded. A project sponsor must be an entity and not an individual. A final determination will be made by the State following the award announcement as to the State entity that will hold the DRI/NY Forward project contract.

All project sponsors, including those for the projects that were in the community's application, are expected to provide project proposal information to the consultant team in order to be considered for DRI/NY Forward funding. During the planning process, project sponsors will work closely with the consultant team to provide information related to their proposed project, including, but not limited to, funding sources; the proposed scope of work and the tasks that will be accomplished with the DRI/NY Forward funding; and the project sponsor's capacity to implement and maintain the project. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 5.0: Project Development](#).

## SECTION 1.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Consultant Team

A consultant team, contracted by the State, will be assigned to each DRI and NY Forward community. The consultant team is able to provide expertise in an array of planning disciplines, such as public engagement, market analysis, communications, and feasibility assessments. The consultant team, in close coordination with State team and the LPC, will lead orderly public engagement, project identification and development, and creation of all components of the SIP.

At the outset of the planning process, the consultant team will work with the LPC to identify the best strategies for engaging with the community. Those engagement strategies will continue to be refined throughout the planning process. In addition, the consultant team will lead the preparation, orderly facilitation, and documentation of all LPC and public meetings/ events.

The consultant team will also assist the LPC in identifying and developing key projects for implementation using DRI/NY Forward funding and will work with project sponsors to prepare detailed project profiles and analyses that demonstrate the feasibility and potential impact of projects. As needed, the consultant team will conduct additional research, market studies, and outreach to develop and demonstrate the feasibility of proposed projects.

With direction from the State team, guidance from the LPC, and following the requirements articulated in this guidebook, the consultant teams will also prepare all program documents, including the:

- Downtown assessment;
- Downtown vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and downtown roadmap; and
- Project profiles;

The consultant team will compile these documents into a cohesive Strategic Investment Plan.

### State Team

Each LPC will receive support from a team of State staff. The State team, led by the DOS, will also include staff from HCR, ESD, and NYSERDA. This team will manage the consultant team assigned to the community, assist the consultant team and LPC in meeting preparation, and participate in the preparation and review of DRI/NY Forward documents.

- The DOS representative will bring planning and community engagement best practices to the process and be able to provide guidance and support for the DRI/NY Forward planning process, including Smart Growth and climate resilience strategies. The DOS representative will manage the consultant team and act as the liaison and primary point of contact for the State team. The DOS representative will also monitor LPC meetings to ensure that discussions remain orderly, fair, transparent, and aligned with the requirements of the program.

## SECTION 1.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The HCR representative will provide their knowledge of the community and expertise in housing development, Community Development Block Grants, and HCR grants and programs.
- The ESD representative will provide broad knowledge of past, present, and proposed development in and around the downtown and can provide information about a variety of other State funding programs that can support downtown revitalization.
- NYSERDA will support the planning process by providing technical assistance focused on identifying decarbonization strategies across multiple scales – from neighborhoods to individual buildings and sites. NYSERDA will also assist with identifying additional state and federal funding that can be used to achieve decarbonization efforts in DRI/NY Forward areas.
- Representatives from other State agencies may be engaged, as appropriate, to address the specific needs of each DRI/NY Forward community.



**Canandaigua LPC Meeting** (DRI Round 8)

## SECTION 2.0

# Public Engagement

## In this Section:

SECTION 2.1 Introduction

SECTION 2.2 Local Planning Committee

SECTION 2.3 Public Engagement Events

The background image shows a hallway with several murals on the wall. One mural depicts a man in a long coat holding a banner with a logo. Another mural shows a man in a hat with the word "Musketeers" written below. In the foreground, the backs of several people are visible as they look at informational posters on a table. The posters contain text such as "DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION", "CENTRAL DISTRICT RECREATION CENTER", and "PROVIDING SERVICES OF THE MIDDLE CONSULTANT CENTER".

**SECTION 2.4** Online Engagement

**SECTION 2.5** Project Identification

## SECTION 2.1

# Introduction

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*Broad, inclusive, and frequent public outreach is an essential component of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward planning processes, as public input plays an important role in the creation of the community's vision and goals and in the identification of projects and development of the Strategic Investment Plan.*

Public engagement will begin at the onset of the planning process and continue throughout the development of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Engagement must be orderly and tailored to the local community and may take a variety of forms. Engagement should include informing and educating the community about the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward programs; soliciting and receiving input on the community's vision, goals, and proposed projects; and building support for SIP implementation.

Engagement activities should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population, and the consultant team must design events that encourage openness and innovation. Public engagement events will be held at milestones during the planning process, as described in this section.

Local Planning Committee (LPC) members will play a pivotal role in public engagement by helping to identify key individuals and

organizations that should be involved in the planning and implementation process and by determining the best way to involve them. Inclusion and equity are critical to the public engagement process; therefore, outreach strategies must be employed to engage all impacted stakeholders and community members, particularly from often hard-to-reach communities.

**SECTION 2.1**

INTRODUCTION

**Public Engagement Minimum Requirements:**

**DRI**



**LPC Meetings**



**Public Engagement  
Events**



**Project Website**

**NY Forward**



**LPC Meetings**



**Public Engagement  
Events**



**Project Website**

## SECTION 2.1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Engagement Schedule

Public engagement should occur early and consistently throughout the entire planning process. The graphic to the right is an example of the public engagement events and the order in which they typically occur during the planning process. The timing of when these events will occur in the planning process will depend on the needs of the community.

As part of the planning process, the consultant team, with input from the LPC and State team, will plan and facilitate different types of engagement activities intended to engage a broad audience, including hard-to-reach populations (e.g., racial minorities, immigrant populations, low-income populations, the disability community, younger residents, and older residents). More information about each type of engagement activity is provided in the following sections.

#### Best Practices for Public Event Notification

- Advertise all public events with a variety of media, including but not limited to: flyers, postcards, newspapers, municipal mailings such as water bills, social media, the project website, press releases, and email blasts.
- Post all public events at public locations, including libraries, community centers, farmer's markets, etc.
- Provide at least two weeks notice in advance of every public event.
- Encourage LPC members to share public event notices with their professional networks

Example Engagement Schedule





**Dobbs Ferry Public Workshop** (NY Forward Round 3)

## SECTION 2.2

# Local Planning Committee

### Overview

As the steering body of the process, the LPC will meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to the consultant team, review planning products, discuss potential projects, and prioritize actions. The LPC members, working with the consultant team and State team, will determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time SIP.

### LPC Meetings

All LPC meetings are encouraged to be in person; however, hybrid or virtual-only meetings may be an option based on local considerations and in consultation with the State team. The meetings must be open to the public and held within an ADA-compliant facility. LPC meetings are working sessions and reserved for discussion and deliberation between the LPC, the consultant team, and the State team. Time will be reserved at each LPC meeting for public comment.

In general, LPC meetings will cover the topics outlined in the following list. Please note that each community's planning process will differ, and therefore, the proposed meeting topics may be adjusted to better meet the specific needs of a community.

**LPC Meeting #1.** The initial LPC meeting will introduce the program and planning process to the LPC and community. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Team introductions
- Overview of the DRI/NY Forward program, including planning process scope, timeline, and project requirements
- Community's DRI/NY Forward application
- Confirmation of the DRI/NY Forward boundary as compact, walkable, and well-defined
- Public engagement process, including outreach methods to engage stakeholders, hard-to-reach populations, and various constituent groups; Open Call for Projects; and key events/locations for outreach
- Downtown visioning
- Public comment

**LPC Meeting #2.** Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates, including Open Call for Projects
- Summary of past plans and recent investment
- Key findings from the Downtown Assessment
- Overview of characteristics of strong DRI/NY Forward projects and slates of projects
- Project evaluation criteria
- Vision and goals for downtown
- Public comment

## SECTION 2.2 LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

**LPC Meeting #3.** At this point in the planning process, LPC meetings typically shift to focusing on developing and evaluating proposed projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and roadmap for downtown
- Downtown assessment key findings and observations
- Project evaluation criteria
- Proposed projects
- Projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Proposed boundary amendments that may be needed to incorporate potentially transformative projects
- Public comment

**LPC Meeting #4.** Developing and evaluating the proposed projects will continue at this meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Project evaluation criteria
- Proposed projects
- Additional project information needed to inform decision-making
- Projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Public comment

**LPC Meeting #5.** Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Project evaluation criteria
- Proposed projects
- Additional project information needed to inform decision-making
- Projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Public comment

**LPC Meeting #6.** By the end of this meeting, the LPC should be prepared to finalize the slate of proposed projects recommended for funding. Ideally, only a few projects will need to be removed from consideration at this meeting to arrive at the final slate of projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Project evaluation criteria
- Proposed projects
- Projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Vote on the final slate of proposed projects
- Public comment

## SECTION 2.2 LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

### LPC Working Sessions and Working Groups

The LPC may hold working sessions, as needed, to dig deeper into an issue, sometimes with the help of non-committee members, such as local businesspersons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood advocates. Working sessions, which need not be open to the public, provide an opportunity for brainstorming and in-depth discussions focused on specific topics or projects. They also allow for better time management at LPC meetings. No decision-making may occur during these sessions, and information discussed in these sessions will be reported out at LPC meetings. Though not a requirement of the DRI/NY Forward planning process, working groups may also be developed around any topic, such as public engagement, developing projects, and reviewing and discussing proposed projects.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The LPC** is expected to:

- Attend each LPC meeting
- Review all available materials in advance of each meeting and come prepared for a productive discussion
- Actively participate in dialogue regarding all aspects of the DRI/NY Forward planning process, including project identification, development, and selection
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notices with colleagues and networks
- Assist in identifying and engaging hard-to-reach populations or representatives
- Disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including recusing oneself, as they pertain to project development

**Municipal Representatives** are expected to:

- Assist with securing a meeting venue
- Attend each LPC meeting and be prepared to provide information regarding proposed projects sponsored by the municipality
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notices with the public using municipal outlets

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all LPC meetings, including meeting logistics and meeting notices
- Develop all necessary materials to support LPC meetings and solicit feedback in an engaging, well-informed manner
- Facilitate all meetings
- Set up and break down for all meetings
- Collect public input and develop meeting summaries

SECTION 2.2

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE



**I Brooklyn LPC Meeting** (DRI Round 3)



**I Penn Yan LPC Meeting** (DRI Round 3)

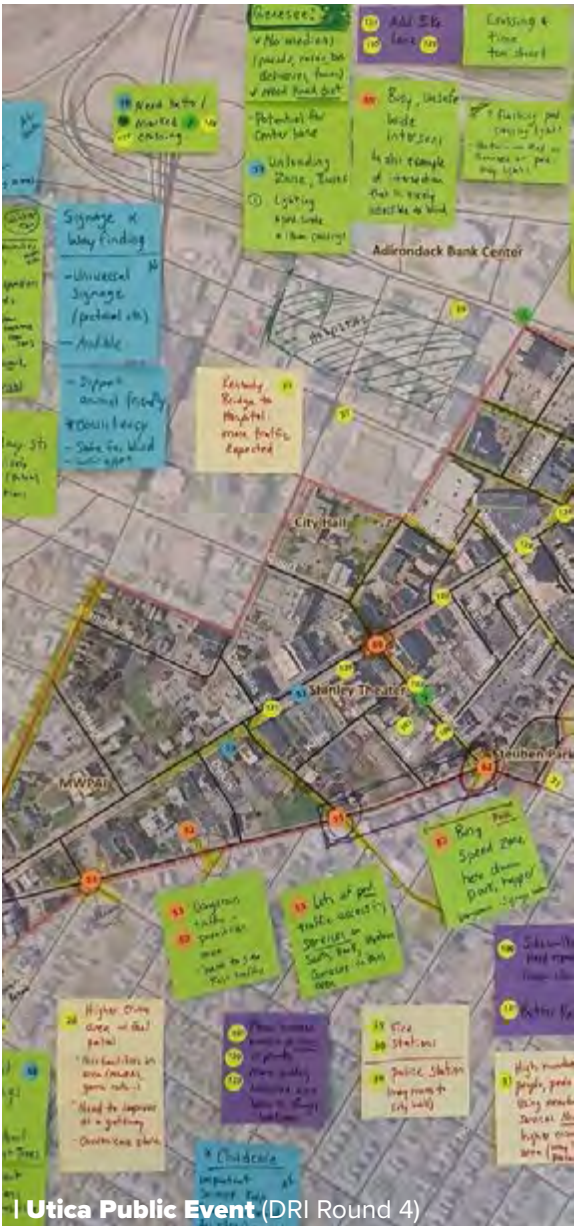
SECTION 2.3

# Public Engagement Events

## Overview

Engaging the public in the development of the vision and goals for downtown and the selection of projects is essential to a successful DRI and NY Forward process. Public engagement events can take various forms, including public workshops or local outreach events. These events should be designed and implemented to meet the unique needs of each community. The LPC will work with the consultant team, municipality, and State team to determine the most appropriate public engagement events and schedule to ensure high participation and meaningful engagement.

It is important to engage the community from the beginning of the DRI/NY Forward planning process. Engagement events early in the process help ensure meaningful participation that will build trust, educate the community on DRI/NY Forward, and ensure that the planning process results in a shared and broadly supported vision and goals for the downtown. These efforts will then help guide the successful implementation of selected projects and ongoing downtown revitalization. Public engagement events may include public workshops and local outreach activities, such as information sessions, design charettes, DRI/NY Forward area tours, pop-up events, or stakeholder meetings. The most common types of public engagement events are described in the following pages.



| Utica Public Event (DRI Round 4)

## SECTION 2.3

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

#### Common Types of Public Engagement Events

##### Public Workshops

Public workshops are designed to solicit ideas and feedback from the public at key milestones regarding various planning topics applicable to the preparation of the SIP. Such workshops take various forms and may include activities such as presentations, open houses, and design charettes. These workshops should have a complementary online component to allow the public to provide input outside of in-person workshops. Public workshops are intended to be interactive and engage attendees in creative and diverse activities.

The DRI and NY Forward planning processes usually include two to three public workshops, depending on the needs of the community. The following describes the topics that may be covered at each public workshop. However, please note that the number of workshops, as well as the format and content of each public workshop, will vary and should be tailored to ensure meaningful engagement is achieved.

**Public Workshop #1.** This typically occurs between the first and second LPC meetings in order to gather information to help the LPC formulate a final vision statement and goals. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Overview of the DRI/NY Forward program;
- Identification of needs, challenges, and opportunities that impact the DRI/NY Forward community’s revitalization;
- Solicitation of project ideas;

- An interactive component to solicit feedback on the community vision and goals; and
- Introduction of Open Call for Projects

**Public Workshop #2.** This usually occurs after the LPC has begun initial reviewed all proposed projects. This event will likely occur around the third or fourth LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Status update of the DRI/NY Forward process;
- Key findings from the downtown assessment;
- Description of the community vision and goals; and
- An overview of proposed projects, including an interactive component to solicit public feedback

**Public Workshop #3.** If a third public workshop is needed, this workshop may occur after the LPC has voted on the final slate of proposed projects, likely following the final LPC meeting. Alternatively, if the LPC would like public input prior to finalizing the slate of proposed projects, this may occur in advance of the final LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- An overview of the community’s DRI/NY Forward process;
- A review of the draft or final list of proposed projects recommended by the LPC for inclusion in the SIP; and
- Next steps regarding the SIP, project awards, and implementation

## SECTION 2.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

### Local Outreach Activities

While public workshops offer an opportunity to share information and receive information from the community at key milestones, local outreach activities can be more specifically tailored to engage the community. These activities differ from public workshops in that they are geared toward meeting community members where they already are, and they may be more tailored to specific components of the planning process.

While all public engagement should take local context into consideration, local outreach activities should be unique to the individual community and may include activities like setting up a pop-up event at a local festival or school event, or holding stakeholder round tables (see the next page for more examples). These activities should be customized to share and solicit relevant information that will inform and advance the DRI/NY Forward planning process. For example, an activity held at the beginning of the planning process may focus on identifying needs, opportunities, and challenges, visioning activities, or soliciting project ideas. Activities held later in the process may focus on gathering community feedback on the proposed projects.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The LPC** is expected to:

- Serve as a liaison to the broader community and encourage attendance by helping to advertise events and sharing meeting notices with their network
- Identify existing local events and meetings where information can be shared
- Recommend strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community
- Participate in public engagement events

**Municipal Representatives** are expected to:

- Identify existing local events and meetings where information can be shared
- Recommend strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community in the past
- Help coordinate the logistics of engagement events
- Help advertise public events by sharing meeting notices with the public

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all events
- Develop all materials to support the engagement events and solicit feedback
- Facilitate and staff each event
- Ensure broad and inclusive participation (e.g., providing translation services, outreach to hard-to-reach populations)
- Develop a meeting summary for each event

**SECTION 2.3**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

**Examples of Local Outreach Activities**

- Public walking tours of the DRI/NY Forward area and potential projects
- Pop-ups at community events (e.g., farmer's market, festival)
- Social events like a movie night or restaurant crawl to share and gather information
- Presentations at standing community meetings to share information about the DRI/NY Forward program and solicit input
- Partnering with local businesses to establish a downtown project information center in a high traffic location
- Collaborating with the local school to host a workshop with students and faculty
- Meetings with community stakeholders



**Public Engagement Event in Greater Morris Park, NYC (DRI Round 8)**



**Peekskill Pop-Up Event (DRI Round 4)**



**Keeseville Coffee with Consultants (NY Forward Round 5)**

## SECTION 2.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



### Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders in the DRI/NY Forward planning process will help expand awareness about the program, proactively solicit community needs, opportunities, and project ideas, and seek feedback from individuals and groups associated with and/or impacted by the proposed projects. Stakeholder meetings should include targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations.

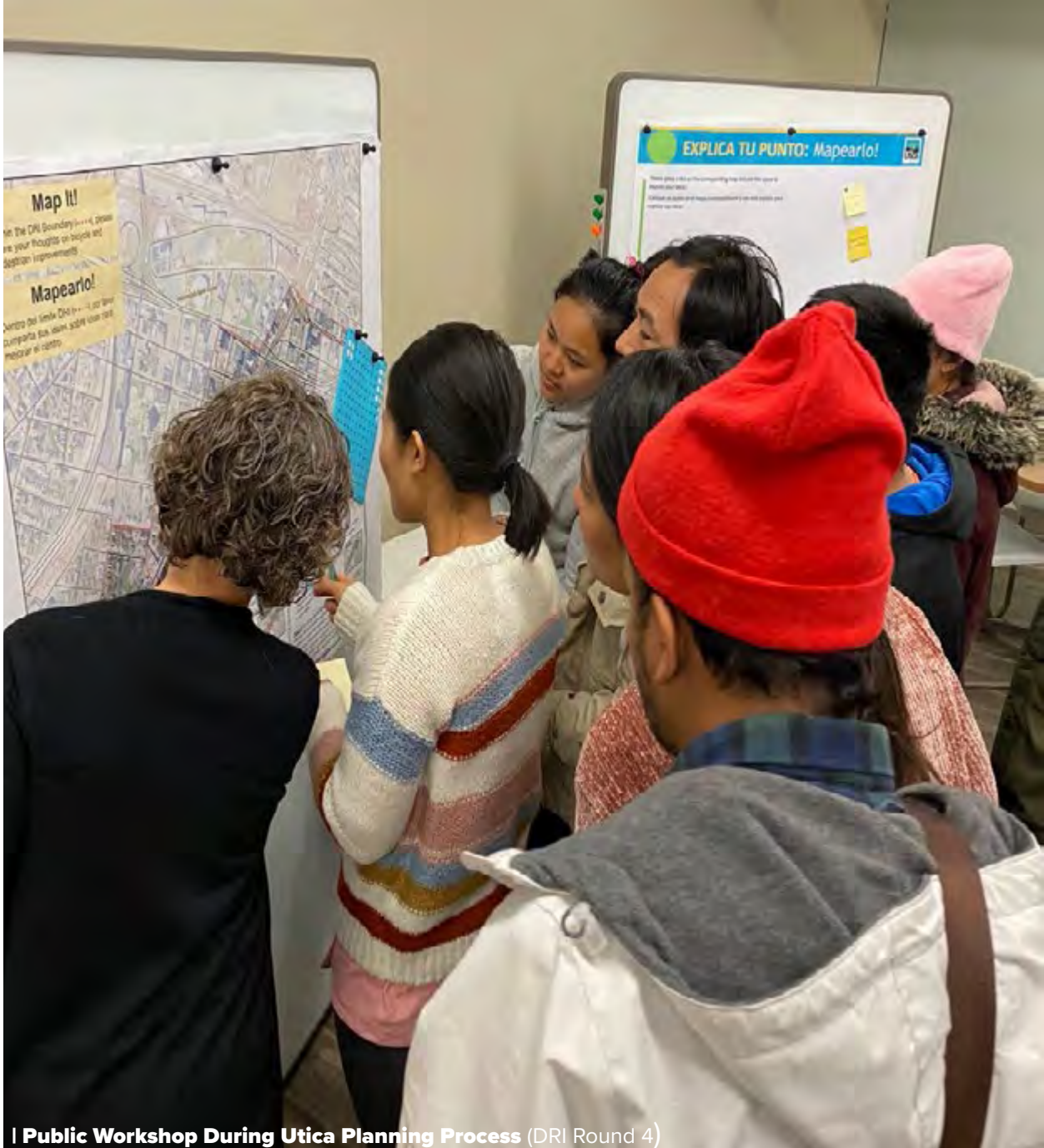
Stakeholders should be engaged from the beginning of the DRI/NY Forward planning process, with ongoing engagement throughout the entire planning process, to ensure they are aware of the ongoing planning and project development. Stakeholders to engage with may include the following:

- Community leaders
- Block clubs and other civic groups
- Business owners, Chambers of Commerce, professional organizations
- Organizations working with hard-to-reach populations
- Business improvement districts
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Cultural and educational institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, museums)
- Special interest groups
- Youth groups
- Municipal staff
- Senior citizen groups



| Cocksackie Engagement Event (NY Forward Round 1)

SECTION 2.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



**Public Workshop During Utica Planning Process (DRI Round 4)**

## SECTION 2.4

# Online Engagement

## Overview

Online engagement — through various web-based and social media platforms — has increasingly become an important and common method for disseminating public information and obtaining feedback. Online engagement should be used in conjunction with varied forms of in-person outreach. An online presence should be established for each DRI/NY Forward community.

## Project Website

A community-specific DRI/NY Forward website is expected to be established at the beginning of the planning process and maintained throughout. The website can be a standalone website created and maintained by the consultant team, or it can be a dedicated page on a municipality's website, with content prepared by the consultant team. The website is intended to serve as a project portal to share information, advertise public events, post meeting summaries and presentations, allow the public to submit comments, and provide contact information for questions.

The State also maintains websites with information about the DRI/NY Forward programs and participating communities:

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

NY Forward: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward>

## Social Media

Social media may be used to bolster a DRI/NY Forward community's online presence and reach a broader audience. Social media can help share information about the DRI/NY Forward planning process and upcoming public events, while serving as an additional platform to encourage public comment. Social media is not required, and its use will depend on local context and needs.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**The LPC** is expected to:

- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with their networks

**Municipal Representatives** are expected to:

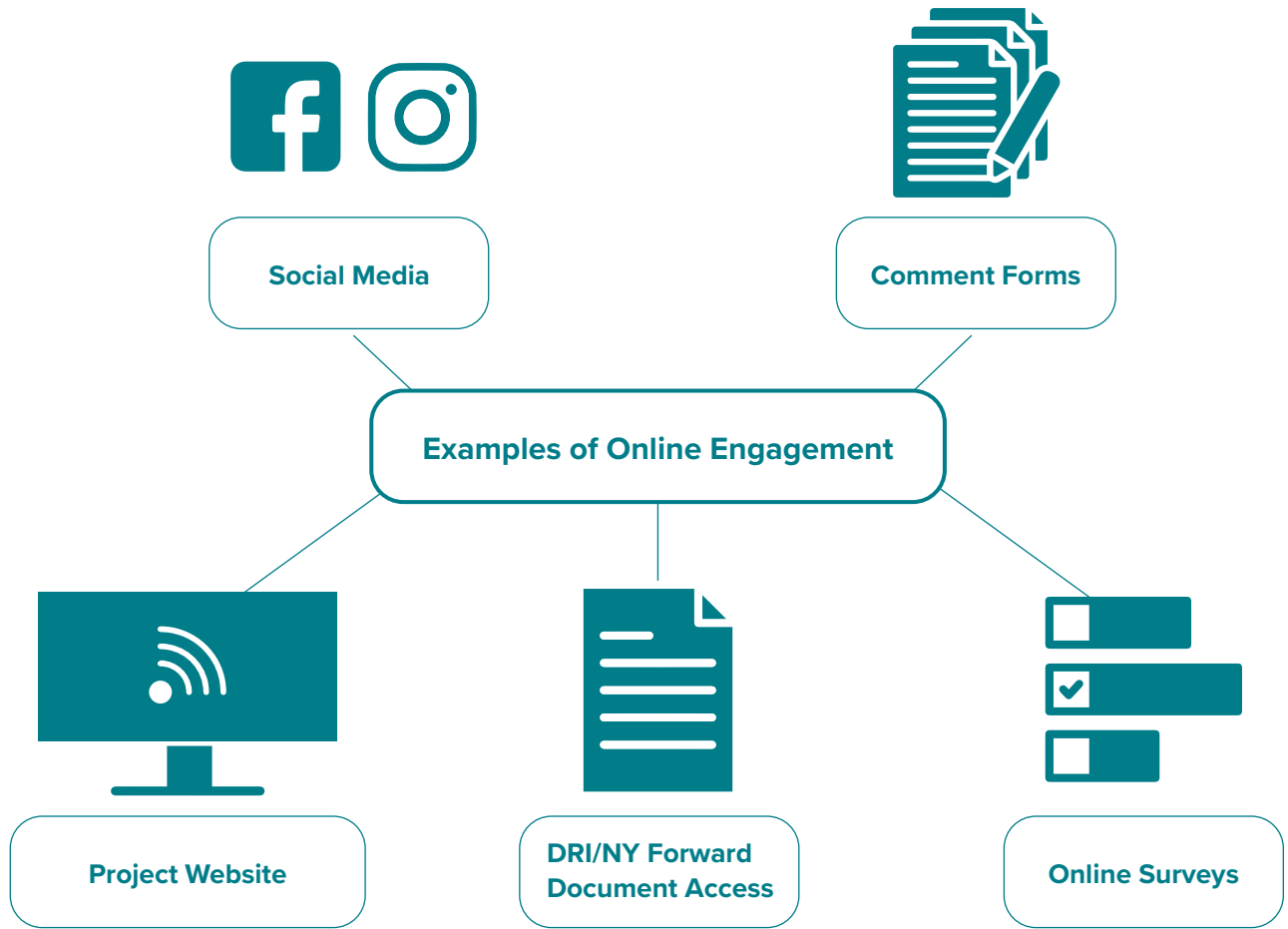
- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with the public using municipal outlets

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Create a project website or provide the necessary content to the community
- Develop and maintain online content, such as online surveys
- Post regularly to the different online platforms to solicit public input and advertise upcoming meetings

**SECTION 2.4**

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



**Project Website Example**

Are you interested in seeing what a project website looks like? Click here to see the project website for Amityville (DRI Round 5):

[www.amityvilledri.com](http://www.amityvilledri.com)



## SECTION 2.5

# Project Identification

## Overview

The public engagement process is critical for identifying the projects that will help advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization. These projects can be identified in a variety of ways, including from the community's DRI/NY Forward application, during the Open Call for Projects, through public engagement, or through the planning process as it advances. Projects may be put forth by public, not-for-profit, and private for-profit entities.

## Project Sourcing

### DRI/NY Forward Application

One way to identify projects is from the community's DRI/NY Forward application, in which the community was asked to identify transformative project opportunities. The sponsors of these opportunities must complete a DRI/NY Forward Project Form detailing the proposed project and submit the form to the consultant team.

### Open Call for Projects

Another means of identifying projects is through the Open Call for Projects, a public process that solicits projects from public, not-for-profit, and private project sponsors. The Open Call for Projects should be discussed at the early LPC and public engagement events, and should start after the community has established a draft vision for downtown. It will generally be publicized using various outlets in the early months of the planning process. Project sponsors are expected to submit a DRI/NY

Forward Project Form detailing the project proposal. Project sponsors will have at least four weeks to complete and submit the DRI/NY Forward Project Form through the Open Call.

### Public Engagement

Public engagement is also an opportunity to identify projects, particularly when engaging the public about community needs and opportunities. The information gathered during public engagement can help inform an existing project proposal or inspire a new project. While projects identified this way may require more project development, project sponsors should provide the information requested on the DRI/NY Forward Project Form to the consultant team to aid in shaping the proposals into potentially viable projects.

### Other

As the planning process advances, new projects may come to light. While these projects may form at a different stage in the planning process, they will be expected to provide the same information as requested from all other projects.

All submitted project proposals will be reviewed by the LPC and publicly discussed during an LPC meeting.

## SECTION 2.5 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

### Impacts to the DRI/NY Forward Boundary

The project identification process may yield project submissions that are adjacent to or proximate to the boundary confirmed by the LPC. The LPC has the ability to consider and approve minor boundary adjustments to incorporate a project, or projects, that they believe are compelling and support the vision for the DRI/NY Forward area. These instances should be limited to transformative downtown projects that will advance the goals of the DRI/NY Forward area and must be reviewed by the State prior to proceeding.

### Support for Project Sponsors

In support of project identification and development, the consultant team will be available to assist project sponsors as they complete the DRI/NY Forward Project Form and with other project development activities, as needed. Potential options for assistance include the consultant team hosting a public information session, holding open office hours for project sponsors, or conducting one-on-one assistance with a project sponsor.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The LPC** is expected to:

- Assist in publicizing public engagement events and the Open Call for Projects in the community through networks and colleagues
- Serve as a liaison to the broader community and share information about DRI/NY Forward with potential project sponsors

**Municipal Representatives** are expected to:

- Identify and develop public improvement projects to submit for LPC consideration
- Help advertise the public engagement events and the Open Call for Projects to the community by using municipal outlets

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Support project sponsors with the completion of the DRI/NY Forward Project Form
- Hold technical assistance opportunities for project sponsors such as office hours or public information sessions
- Conduct outreach to share information about the Open Call for Projects and solicit project proposals
- Work with the municipality to develop public improvement projects

## SECTION 3.0

# Downtown Assessment

## In this Section:

**SECTION 3.1** Purpose and Schedule

**SECTION 3.2** Best Practices

**SECTION 3.3** Required Components



## SECTION 3.1

# Purpose and Schedule

*The downtown assessment tells a clear and concise story of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward community — where it is today, how it got there, and where it is going — and provides the logical basis for project recommendations.*

## Purpose

Working closely with municipal representatives and the State team, the consultant team will develop a downtown assessment for each Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward community. The downtown assessment shall consist of a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates the conditions of the downtown, its relationship to the surrounding region, and its future potential.

The downtown assessment should be a highly visual document that allows the reader to quickly and easily understand the character of the downtown, including its challenges and opportunities. It also serves as the logical basis for project identification, development, and selection. The required components of the downtown assessment are defined in Section 3.3 and include the following topics:

- Study area/boundary description
- Downtown snapshot
- Historical and regional context
- Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) priorities
- Related recent plans and investments (as appropriate)
- Downtown character
- Key observations

## DRI/NY Forward Boundary

As part of the DRI/NY Forward application process, each community clearly identified the boundary of the downtown area where it proposes to focus its planning efforts. These boundaries define concentrated, walkable areas and may range from a corridor to a few blocks of a neighborhood or arts district to the municipality's traditional central business district.

In addition to defining the eligible project area, this boundary also establishes the geographic focus for the downtown assessment. Any changes made to the boundary will impact the data collected and presented in the downtown assessment.

The DRI/NY Forward boundary will be confirmed or adjusted during Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1. Slight modifications, for which there is a strong justification, may be made to the boundary during the planning process, subject to State approval. However, communities are encouraged to limit boundary adjustments to the early phases of the planning process, as changes to the boundary can have cascading effects on other project deliverables, including the downtown assessment.

## SECTION 3.1

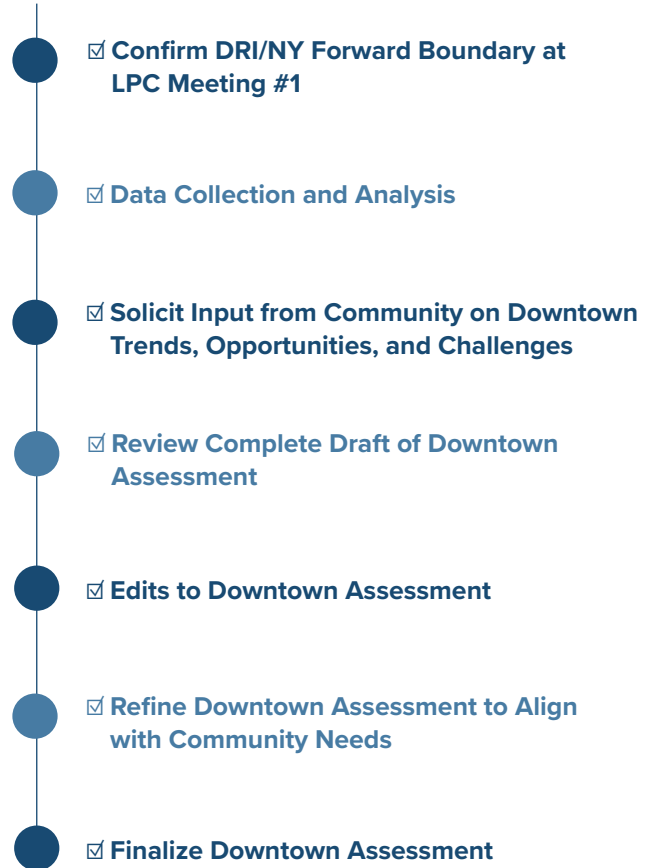
### PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

#### Schedule

The graphic to the right defines key milestones related to the development and refinement of the downtown assessment over the course of the planning process.

- A complete draft of the downtown assessment will be generated by the consultant team during the early months of the planning process.
- As projects are identified and developed, additional analyses (e.g., a housing market analysis) may be required to better understand specific local or regional challenges. The consultant team will conduct these custom analyses and incorporate the findings into the downtown assessment during the project development phase.
- Towards the end of the planning process, consultant teams will revisit and update the downtown assessment to document any additional opportunities and/or challenges uncovered during project development and the planning process as a whole.

The downtown assessment is intended to be a living document throughout the planning process. Although a full draft should be complete prior to the third LPC meeting, updates and refinements will be made throughout the planning process to ensure the downtown assessment truly reflects the unique conditions, needs, and opportunities of each DRI/NY Forward community.



## SECTION 3.2

# Best Practices

## Developing a Strong Downtown Assessment

A strong downtown assessment:

- Concisely tells the story of the community by using a combination of maps, diagrams, photographs, and other visuals to help the reader quickly understand the downtown area's context and its potential.
- Provides a strong analytical understanding of trends, opportunities, and challenges and lays the foundation for the development of revitalization strategies.
- Clearly relates all data and analysis back to the community's revitalization efforts (i.e., if there is no clear link between a piece of information and the community's revitalization potential, it's probably not necessary).
- Is an on-the-ground perspective of the community established through site visits and local insights, providing greater context and understanding than a data and desktop review.
- Provides a logical basis for the recommended projects. Proposed projects should connect to or address some of the trends, opportunities, and challenges presented in the downtown assessment.
- Avoids jargon and is written in a style accessible to the general public.

### i

## **The Downtown Assessment Does Not...**

- **Provide a full inventory of all conditions.** Rather, it only highlights the conditions most relevant to developing and achieving a community's downtown revitalization goals.
- **Present information in a vacuum.** Data and other information should be presented as part of a larger narrative that provides insight into the community and its future potential.
- **Limit data and analysis to the DRI/NY Forward area.** While the DRI/NY Forward area provides the geographic focus for the downtown assessment, regional trends, transportation connections, destinations, and anchor employers/institutions should be considered. The DRI/NY Forward area does not exist in isolation. Regional connections critical to the downtown's revitalization should be clearly identified and described.



SECTION 3.2



| Town of Seneca Falls (DRI Round 4)

## SECTION 3.3

# Required Components

## Overview

The downtown assessment should be customized to each DRI/NY Forward community and organized in a way that clearly and effectively tells the story of each downtown area, including its strengths, challenges, and future potential. The downtown assessment should be concise and targeted, and all information presented needs to clearly relate to the downtown's revitalization efforts.

The downtown assessment is also expected to be a well-integrated mix of photographs, infographics, maps, diagrams, and narrative. All visuals should support the text and help the reader quickly distill key findings.

## Minimum Requirements

Each downtown assessment should address the topics described below in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the downtown and community.

### Study Area/Boundary Description

This section describes the primary study area for the downtown assessment, including its boundary, general character, and significant features, such as roadways, landmarks, and/or environmental features.

### Historical and Regional Context

This section provides a brief overview of the historic context of the downtown — including defining events, change over time, and unique features and services. This section will also clearly identify connections on the regional and state level that are critical to sustaining a high quality of life in the downtown area (e.g., access to transportation hubs, employment centers, healthcare, etc.). The information in this section should be relevant to informing downtown revitalization efforts.

### REDC Priorities

The REDC priorities found in the regional strategic plans will be included in this section.

### Recent Plans and Investment (as appropriate)

This section provides a concise narrative of major initiatives undertaken within or adjacent to the DRI/NY Forward boundary that directly support the revitalization of the study area. This may include comprehensive plans, corridor studies, small area plans, Brownfield Opportunity Area and Local Waterfront Revitalization plans, parks and open space plans, and economic development initiatives. Key findings and recommendations related to the area's downtown revitalization efforts should be summarized for each plan and initiative.

## SECTION 3.3

### REQUIRED COMPONENTS

This section should also describe recent public and private investments made within or adjacent to the DRI/NY Forward area that directly advance the downtown's revitalization. The attributes of each investment (e.g., project name and brief description, amount, funding source) will be organized in a table, and if possible, shown on a map.

#### Downtown Snapshot

This section provides essential data points to understand the demographic, housing, and economic context of the downtown. This includes appropriate comparisons between the study area, the municipality, and, potentially, the larger region. This section is intended to introduce the downtown in a quick, easy-to-understand way and to provide relevant context for downtown revitalization and the DRI/NY Forward planning process. The following data must be included, and trends over time should be addressed where appropriate:

##### Demographics

- Population
- Median Age
- Age by Cohort
- Median Household Income
- Household Size

##### Housing

- Number of Housing Units
- Housing Tenure
- Type of Housing
- Vacancy
- Median Housing Costs (Owners and Renters)

##### Local Economy

- Commuting Patterns
- Primary Employment Sectors
- Unemployment Rate

The snapshot should also include other demographic, housing, and economic data needed to understand the context of the downtown and the community. The following are examples of additional data that may be included, as appropriate. Consultant teams should work with the LPC and State team to identify additional data to explore.

- Race and Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Educational Attainment
- Age of Housing Stock
- Size of Housing Units
- Housing Cost Burden
- Employment Sector Wages
- Sales Tax Revenue
- Retail Leakage and Surplus
- Other Pertinent Topics



#### Using the Downtown Assessment to Inform Project Development

The downtown assessment should be clearly related to a downtown's vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and recommended projects. For example, in the Watkins Glen SIP (DRI Round 2), the downtown assessment identified long-term housing availability as a critical issue. It provided a summary of existing housing types, recent housing assessments and developments, and summarized a real estate market analysis that delved into residential inventory, vacancies, and rents. This information helped shape the community's revitalization strategies and recommended projects that focused on providing high-quality, year-round housing for current and future residents.

**SECTION 3.3**

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

**I Representative Downtown Snapshot Infographic from the Hempstead DRI Downtown SIP (DRI Round 8)**

**Demographic Snapshot**



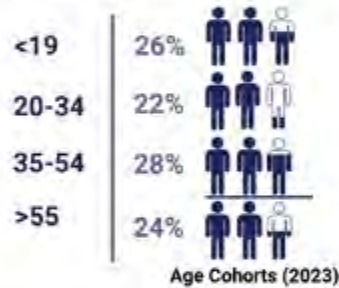
**Population Growth**

Hempstead is the most populous Village in the State. In 2023, the total population of the Village was 58,569, an increase of 4,219 residents (7.8%) since 2013, and the total population of the Town of Hempstead was 789,177, a 3.6% increase since 2013.



**Age**

The median age for the Village rose noticeably from 32.5 to 36.5 over the past decade while the median age in the Town remained stable, increasing slightly from 40.1 to 40.5.



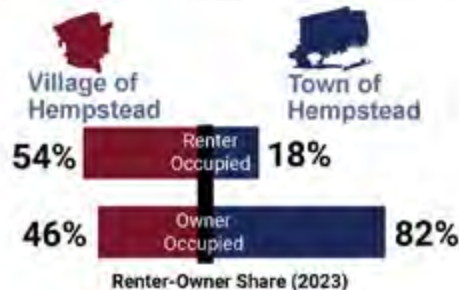
**Educational Attainment**

About 12% of residents aged 25 and older in the Village have a Bachelor's degree, which is half the share of residents in the Town (24%).



**Housing Tenure**

Of the 17,304 occupied housing units in the Village of Hempstead in 2023, 46% were owner-occupied, while 54% were renter-occupied.



## SECTION 3.3 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

### Downtown Character

This section provides an assessment of the downtown's character, focusing on physical attributes, the regulatory context, the sense of place, and other aspects to inform revitalization opportunities in the DRI/NY Forward area.

The development of this section will include a summary of existing conditions; identification of what is working well; challenges and barriers; and key findings to inform project development and revitalization strategies. The section should be visually rich and include annotated photographs, maps, diagrams, charts, and other graphics as appropriate to highlight conditions and opportunities. The following topics should be explored as relevant to the downtown.

- **Public Realm.** This section focuses on the public realm and how people use and move through the downtown. This includes, but is not limited to: streetscapes, amenities, parks, gathering spaces, wayfinding systems, and, as appropriate, environmental conditions and resiliency.
- **Building Form and Conditions.** This section analyzes the built environment in the DRI/NY Forward areas. This includes but is not limited to land uses, building form, historic character, and other qualities associated with downtown buildings.
- **Downtown Identity.** This section evaluates zoning and other regulatory policies and practices, as well as factors that affect a downtown's identity and sense of place. This includes but is not limited to branding, placemaking, and public art.

- **Downtown Economy.** This section assesses the diversity and health of the commercial corridors in the DRI/NY Forward area. This includes but is not limited to the local business mix; the relationship of the downtown to the regional economy; demand and supply; new development opportunities; and challenges and opportunities for creating and retaining downtown businesses and patrons.
- **Downtown Housing.** This section identifies gaps, demand, and opportunities for new housing in the downtown. This includes the incorporation of the housing data from the other sections, as appropriate.

### Key Observations

Concluding the downtown assessment is a key observations section that synthesizes trends, challenges, and opportunities, and explains how these findings are relevant to downtown revitalization. This section will likely reference information from other sections of the downtown assessment and may introduce new data that clearly illustrate the key observations. These key observations should also lay the foundation for the revitalization strategies and potentially, the downtown roadmap and proposed projects.

**SECTION 3.3** REQUIRED COMPONENTS

**I Representative Map Showing the Pedestrian Walkways and Conditions in Catskill's DRI Area (DRI Round 8)**



**SECTION 3.3** REQUIRED COMPONENTS

**I Representative Diagram Describing Street and Sidewalk Attributes in Hudson Square, NYC**  
 (NY Forward Round 2)

**Neighborhood Connector**

W Houston Street, between Varick Street and Hudson Street

Street ROW: 7'-15" | 35'-37" | 3'-15"

W. Houston Street runs from east to west through Hudson Square, directly linking major employers such as Google and destinations such as Hudson River Park to the Houston Street subway entrance. With a projected daytime population of 85,000 people in the neighborhood, this connector is likely to experience even higher levels of foot traffic between frequented destinations. However, the connector has narrow pedestrian pathways and limited pedestrian infrastructure.

- ① Planters
- ② Street Light
- ③ Tree-Pit
- ④ On-street Parking
- ⑤ Temporary Construction Infrastructure
- ⑥ Stairs & Ramps



Perspective pictures are not to scale, refer to annotated texts for measurements.

## SECTION 4.0

# Vision, Goals, Revitalization Strategies, and Downtown Roadmap

## In this Section:

SECTION 4.1 Purpose and Schedule

SECTION 4.2 Required Components

# VISIONING

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AUBURN TODAY?

CHANGING

DIVERSE

BOUNTIFUL

DYNAMIC

OPEN

X 4

VIBRANT X 4

COMPLEX

ENERGETIC

THRIVING

RESILIENT

FAST



## SECTION 4.1

# Purpose and Schedule

---

*The community's vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and roadmap for the downtown are intended to be ambitious as well as illustrative of the future that can be achieved through the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward program and subsequent investment. Each community's vision, goals, strategies, and downtown roadmap should be informed by robust community engagement, respond to the needs and opportunities identified in the downtown assessment, and guide decision-making related to future development and investment in the community.*

## Purpose

As part of the DRI/NY Forward application, communities were required to provide a brief vision statement for downtown revitalization. Early in the planning process, the Local Planning Committee (LPC) will review the initial vision and make modifications to best reflect the unique characteristics of the community and incorporate public feedback gathered during the early public engagement events.

In support of the community's vision, goals and revitalization strategies will also be established. Goals should be detailed, attainable, and action-oriented, and they should be paired with measurable revitalization strategies that will guide the implementation of the DRI/NY Forward program. A downtown roadmap, which identifies additional activities to support downtown revitalization beyond the DRI/NY Forward process will also be developed in support of the community's vision and goals. The community's vision statement, goals, strategies,

and downtown roadmap should incorporate, as appropriate, the fundamental goals of the DRI/NY Forward program, which can be found in [Section 1.2: Introduction to the DRI and NY Forward Programs](#) of this guidebook.

## SECTION 4.1

## PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE



### **Vision, Goals, Revitalization Strategies, and Downtown Roadmap Defined**

#### **VISION**

***What will the community look like in 5–7 years?*** The vision statement provides a guiding framework for the DRI/NY Forward community's Strategic Investment Plan and decision-making regarding future development and investment in the community.

#### **GOALS**

***How will the community attain its vision?*** Goals are clear statements of what needs to be accomplished to move towards the DRI/NY Forward vision.

#### **REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES**

***What steps must be taken to achieve a specific goal?*** Strategies are discrete, measurable actions required to achieve a goal.

#### **DOWNTOWN ROADMAP**

***How can the community continue its revitalization?*** The downtown roadmap will identify specific projects, financial resources, and potential partners to progress the identified revitalization strategies.



**Public Engagement Activities in Long Island City (DRI Round 7)**

## SECTION 4.1

### PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

#### Schedule

The graphic to the right defines key milestones related to the development and refinement of the community's vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and downtown roadmap over the course of the planning process.

- The identification of strengths, opportunities, and challenges, and the results from visioning exercises from the first LPC meeting and early engagement events, will help refine the vision originally presented in the community's DRI/NY Forward application.
- At LPC Meeting #2, the LPC should consider feedback from early public engagement events and establish a draft vision and goals for downtown.
- The refined vision and goals should be presented and finalized at LPC Meeting #3. Corresponding draft revitalization strategies and activities in the downtown roadmap supporting the vision and goals should also be discussed.
- Minor adjustments to the strategies may be made during the project development phase of the process to better reflect the proposed projects.
- The downtown roadmap may be added to and/or modified as additional projects, resources, and community partners are identified.

The vision, goals, and revitalization strategies play an important role in guiding project identification, development, and evaluation. The draft and final versions should be communicated to the community and potential project sponsors early in the planning process. Each community's

vision and goals should be near-final by LPC Meeting #2. The vision and goals should be finalized, and the revitalization strategies should be near-final by LPC Meeting #3. The downtown roadmap, introduced around LPC Meeting #3, may continue to be modified throughout the process and shall be approved by the final LPC meeting.



## SECTION 4.2

# Required Components

### Overview

As previously noted, the vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and downtown roadmap are intended to reflect each community's unique local conditions and provide a strong framework for long-term revitalization. Specifically, the vision, goals, and strategies should directly respond to the key findings and observations synthesized in the downtown assessment and provide the evaluative framework for assessing proposed projects under consideration for DRI/NY Forward funding. The downtown roadmap should be a resource for the community to use to help them realize the goals and implement the revitalization strategies.

In addition, the vision, goals, and strategies will be critical during the planning process as they guide the identification, evaluation, and selection of proposed projects.

### Minimum Requirements

The vision, goals, revitalization strategies, and downtown roadmap must be clearly presented in the SIP, with general guidance and representative examples provided on the following pages.

### Vision

The consultant team will support the LPC in reviewing and refining the vision statement included in the community's DRI/NY Forward application.

The vision statement should:

- Be future-focused and clearly define how the community would like to see itself in the next five to seven years;
- Be inspiring, aspirational, and ambitious for long-term revitalization;
- Be reflective of the unique nature of the DRI/NY Forward community and the catalytic impacts DRI/NY Forward funding will have on the community's downtown;
- Incorporate a diversity of voices through terms, ideas, and statements identified through public engagement;
- Be concise, accessible to all readers, and avoid jargon;
- Avoid metrics;
- Reflect consensus across community sectors;
- Be general enough not to be affected by short-term changes; and
- Be locally specific and not easily transferable to another community.

The next page is an example of a strong vision statement from Sleepy Hollow NY Forward Round 1.

## SECTION 4.2 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

**| Example of a Strong Vision Statement from the Sleepy Hollow NY Forward**  
(NY Forward Round 1)

***Downtown Sleepy Hollow will be a vibrant, welcoming, and easily accessible community in the Mid-Hudson region that showcases its legendary history, celebrates its cultural diversity, and offers a model for sustainable living. Made famous by Washington Irving’s short story, the Village of Sleepy Hollow will become a year-round destination for residents and visitors alike by building upon its strengths—a charming and walkable mixed-use district located near to public transit, thriving immigrant-owned small businesses, and the beautiful Hudson River waterfront. In doing so, the Village will cultivate a downtown that expands opportunities for all.***



### **Why this is a Strong Vision Statement**

- Future-focused
- Context-specific (e.g., Hudson River, legendary history, public transit access, immigrant community )
- Avoids jargon

## SECTION 4.2 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

### Goals

In support of the vision and with community feedback, the consultant team will develop a series of goals designed to achieve the community's vision for downtown revitalization. The consultant team will work closely with the LPC to develop and refine these goals; the goals must be responsive to public input received throughout the planning process.

The goals should be:

- Realistic;
- Clear and well-defined; and
- Aligned with and supportive of the community's vision.

### Revitalization Strategies

Based on the vision and goals, findings from the downtown assessment, and public feedback, the consultant team shall guide the LPC in the development of creative and ambitious strategies to direct future development and investment in the downtown area. Each goal should be paired with several action-oriented strategies that are locally specific.

The revitalization strategies should:

- Be actionable statements that are specific and have local context;
- Be derived from the opportunities and challenges identified in the downtown assessment;
- Relate to the proposed DRI/NY Forward projects;
- Clearly and concisely direct a type of action to help meet a specific goal; and



### What to Avoid

The following should be avoided during the development of the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies:

- Restating a description of the community today
- Developing unattainable actions, especially those not tied to the DRI/NY Forward area
- Using vague language that could relate to anywhere

## SECTION 4.2 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

### **I Example of Strong Goals and Revitalization Strategies from the Syracuse DRI (Round 5)**

*The goals are very specific, and the strategies clearly state how to achieve the goals.*

#### **Goal | Improve the vibrancy of commercial and residential real estate in the Southwest Gateway.**

- ✓ Redevelop properties to maximize utilization of vacant or outdated structures and create additional commercial activity throughout the Southwest Gateway.
- ✓ Invest in new development, particularly infill development, to support a diverse array of uses that would help residents (e.g., pharmacies, wellness facilities) and attract people from outside the areas (e.g., food and music venues).
- ✓ Support facade improvements to buildings along the Southwest Gateway's primary commercial corridors.

#### **Goal | Help small businesses retain and attract new customers.**

- ✓ Invest in small mom and pop businesses eager to upgrade their buildings / facades that contribute to the vibrancy of the district.
- ✓ Promote small businesses in the Southwest Gateway, helping customers to identify and visit related businesses in the area.

#### **Goal | Attract a diverse community to the Southwest Gateway.**

- ✓ Create additional housing across the income spectrum, particularly affordable units, to attract new residents and improve the housing stock.
- ✓ Develop and execute a marketing plan for the Southwest Gateway to engage new investors, businesses, potential residents, and visitors.
- ✓ Support public art murals along West Onondaga Street and other key locations in the Southwest Gateway.
- ✓ Support of spectrum of small businesses that vary in the services they offer and the people they serve.

#### **Goal | Cultivate a walkable, vibrant streetscape that is environmentally friendly and connected to Armory Square**

- ✓ Encourage pedestrian activity by adding lighting and improving streetscapes, particularly at crosswalks.
- ✓ Increase transit mobility by adding infrastructure improvements that support the use of bikes, scooters, and electric vehicles.

#### **Goal | Enhance the quality of life in the Southwest Gateway.**

- ✓ Improve public spaces and rights-of-way along business corridors to increase the area's attractiveness and provide additional quality of life amenities for residents, employees, and visitors.
- ✓ Encourage the frequent use of parks through improved infrastructure and additional activities.
- ✓ Support the development of outdoor vendor spaces.

## SECTION 4.2

### REQUIRED COMPONENTS

#### Downtown Roadmap

The consultant team will work closely with the LPC to identify and develop activities for revitalization as part of the downtown roadmap to be implemented after completion of the DRI/NY Forward planning process and project implementation. These activities should be based on the vision, goals, and revitalization strategies, and take into account previously adopted plans and public input.

The downtown roadmap should:

- Be discrete tasks that support a goal or strategy beyond the projects included in the Strategic Investment Plan;
- Identify a project champion and/or community partner(s) most able to progress the task;
- Propose potential funding opportunities to financially support the completion of the task; and
- Identify the priority for task initiation

#### Abbreviated Example of Downtown Roadmap

*The downtown roadmap provides actionable next steps to progress a goal or revitalization strategy. Activities may be related to a proposed DRI or NY Forward project or may be independent actions.*

<b>Goal: Encourage walkability, especially between neighborhood commercial corridors, employment centers, and existing transit stops by enhancing the pedestrian environment and improving safety.</b>			
<b>Downtown Roadmap Activities</b>	<b>Champion and Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding Resources</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<p>Seek funding to launch a traffic-calming feasibility and design study, identifying specific intersections and speed-control interventions.</p> <p>Implement low-cost, pilot pedestrian safety projects, such as painted curb extensions or medians, at high traffic intersections and crossings.</p>	<p>City, Business Improvement District (BID)</p>	<p>Local or County Funds</p> <p>NYS DOT</p> <p>NYS ESD Strategic Planning Studies</p> <p>BID Funds</p>	<p>Short (0-2 years) - Medium-term (3-5 years)</p>



**SECTION 5.0**

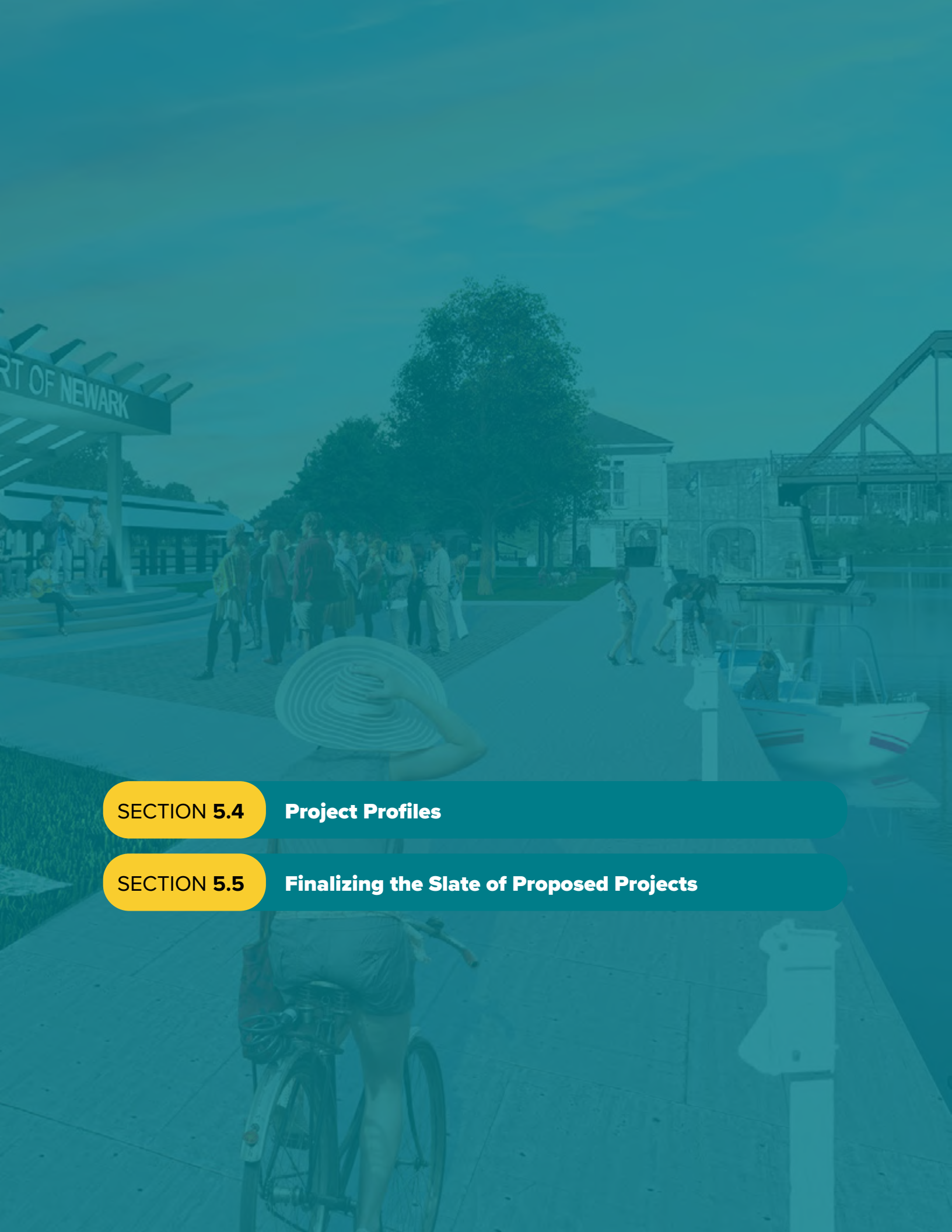
# Project Development

## In this Section:

**SECTION 5.1** Purpose and Schedule

**SECTION 5.2** Project Types and Requirements

**SECTION 5.3** Project Development



**SECTION 5.4**

**Project Profiles**

**SECTION 5.5**

**Finalizing the Slate of Proposed Projects**

## SECTION 5.1

# Purpose and Schedule

*Proposed projects seeking Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward funding should catalyze future downtown revitalization, further the community's vision and goals, and benefit a growing downtown.*

## Purpose

As part of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), communities should identify transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward funds. It is expected that DRI/NY Forward funds will be used for capital projects that will transform the physical environment of the downtown in ways that will benefit current residents and future generations, while being accessible to people of all ages and abilities. However, certain non-capital projects that may lead to capital investment will also be considered to the extent that they will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown and are consistent with the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies.

Project identification, development, and evaluation by the Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprises a substantial portion of the planning process. The project development phase is fast-paced and collaborative; it requires that project sponsors, the consultant team, and the LPC be engaged in a process that results in fully detailed project proposals. The LPC then evaluates those proposals to determine the slate of recommended projects, which will help the community progress toward its vision of a revitalized downtown.



**Example of a Proposed Project Rendering**  
(Cornwall NY Forward Round 1)

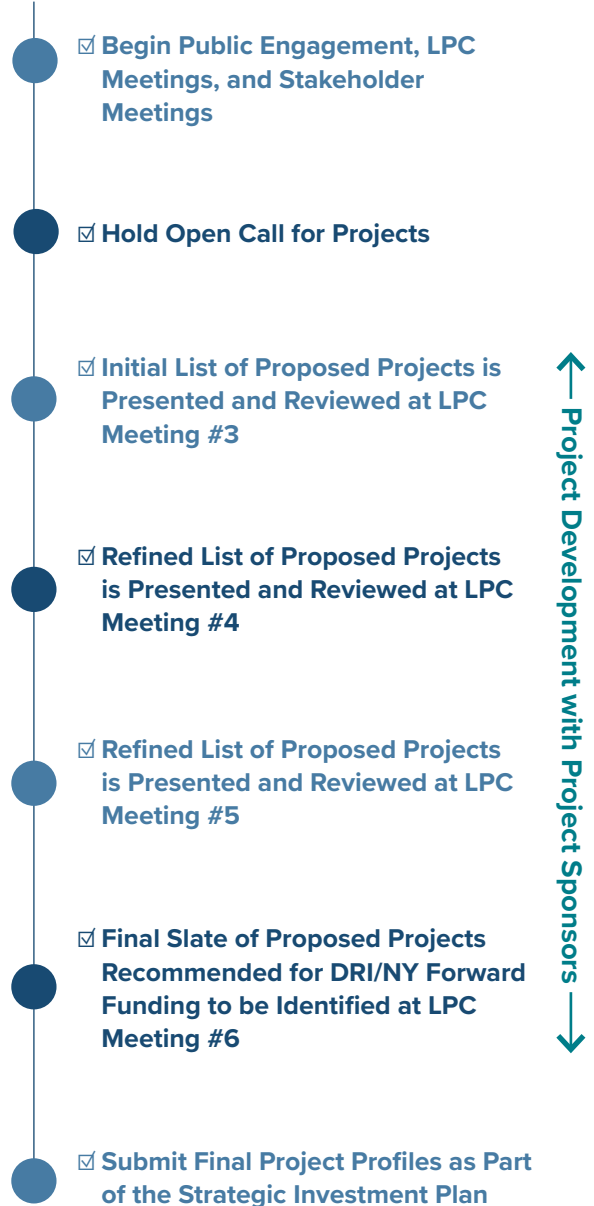
## SECTION 5.1

### PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

#### Schedule

The graphic to the right identifies key milestones related to the identification, development, and refinement of proposed projects over the course of the planning process.

- Public engagement and the Open Call for Projects should occur during the early months of the planning process to inform the community about the opportunity to submit proposed projects for the LPC's consideration.
- Projects received in the early months of the process will be presented at LPC Meeting #3. At LPC Meeting #3, the LPC will begin discussing and refining the list of proposed projects.
- Following LPC Meeting #3, the consultant team will work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to develop projects, conduct site visits, and identify information needs. During this period, the LPC will also discuss and evaluate projects as they narrow the list into the final slate of proposed projects.
- At the final LPC Meeting, a final slate of proposed projects will be identified for inclusion in the SIP. Project profiles may be further refined for inclusion in the SIP as it is compiled.



## SECTION 5.2

# Project Types and Requirements

## Overview

This planning process is designed to encourage creative and innovative approaches to downtown revitalization that result in a list of proposed projects. DRI and NY Forward fund primarily capital investments or projects that lead to capital investment. Projects generally fall into the following categories under Eligible Project Types.

- **Public Improvement Projects.** These may include projects such as streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, wayfinding signage, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure, and other public realm projects that will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown.

## Eligible Project Types

- **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings.** Projects in this category may include the development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not-for-profit, or public uses. These projects should have a visible and functional impact on the downtown, serving as catalytic or transformative projects that will provide employment opportunities, housing choices, and/or services for the community. Proposals to construct or rehabilitate parking facilities will only be considered if they directly support new development in the downtown area.



**Example of a Completed Brewery Project**  
(Batavia DRI Round 2)

## SECTION 5.2

## PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

- **Small Project Fund.** A locally managed matching Small Project Fund may be proposed to undertake a range of smaller downtown projects, such as facade enhancements, building renovation improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces, business assistance, or public art. Funds are capped at \$600,000 for DRI communities and \$300,000 for NY Forward communities. However, a NY Forward community can receive up to \$600,000 if there is substantial demand demonstrated for a Small Project Fund. Each project undertaken under the Small Project Fund must individually meet the required matching requirements.
- **Branding and Marketing.** Downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors are eligible projects. The costs eligible under this category must be one-time expenses, such as those to develop associated materials. Ongoing operational costs, such as funding a downtown manager or maintaining a website, are not eligible for DRI/NY Forward funding. This project type is intended for the overall branding and marketing of a downtown, not to provide branding and marketing services to individual downtown businesses or other entities.



### Ineligible Activities

There are few restrictions on the use of DRI/ NY Forward funds other than the requirement that proposed projects are largely capital in nature, can be implemented quickly, and as a whole, have a transformational impact on the downtown. However, a few specific activities have been identified as ineligible for DRI/NY Forward funds and should not be included in projects proposed for DRI/NY Forward funding. These ineligible activities include:

- **Standalone planning activities.** Following the preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), all DRI/ NY Forward funds must be used for projects that directly implement the plan.
- **Operations and maintenance.** DRI/ NY Forward funds cannot be used for ongoing or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property upkeep.
- **Pre-award costs.** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the completion of the SIP and the announcement of funding awards is not permitted.
- **Property acquisition.** The cost of property acquisition can be included in the overall project budget, but the acquisition must be funded by another funding source.
- **Training and other program expenses.** The DRI and NY Forward programs are a one-time infusion of funds and cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training costs and expenses related to existing programs.

## SECTION 5.2

## PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

### Project Requirements

The DRI/NY Forward programs are designed to fund transformational projects that have the potential to create an immediate, positive effect on a community’s downtown. Projects recommended for DRI/NY Forward funding in the SIP should meet the following requirements:

- **Timing.** Projects must be able to break ground within two years or sooner of receiving DRI/NY Forward funding.
- **Project Size and Scale.** Projects must be large enough to be truly transformative for the downtown area. Standalone DRI/NY Forward projects must be at least \$75,000 in total project cost.\* Projects less than \$75,000 can be submitted through this process as a demonstration of demand for a Small Project Fund.
- **Project Sponsors.** Every project must have an identified project sponsor. Sponsors may be public, not-for-profit, or private entities with the capacity and legal authority to undertake the proposed project. Proposals with project sponsors that are membership-only organizations or religious facilities must propose projects that are available to the public and not just to active members.
- **Financing.** Projects should have financing commitments largely secured or be able to demonstrate a clear path to securing sufficient financing. This financing, combined with DRI/NY Forward funding, should enable the sponsor to undertake the project expeditiously.
- **Matching and Leverage.** For projects with a private sponsor, there is a minimum match requirement of 25% of the total project cost.\*\* There is no minimum match requirement for public or not-for-profit projects. However, the LPC may impose additional match requirements as part of the planning process for all project types. For a Small Project Fund, matching requirements must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project.
- **Site Control.** The project sponsor must have site control or be in the process of acquiring site control. If the project sponsor is leasing or renting the proposed project site, the property owner must agree to the proposed project in writing.
- **Reimbursement.** Any DRI/NY Forward funding provided for projects will be made available on a reimbursement basis only after expenses are incurred or, in some cases, after a project has been successfully completed in its entirety. Project sponsors will be expected to demonstrate financial capacity to complete the project while awaiting reimbursement.



### Non-DRI/NY Forward Leverage

It is strongly encouraged that all projects, especially private projects, leverage non-DRI or NY Forward funds. DRI and NY Forward project funds are best used to fill funding gaps and facilitate other investment.

\*A project may be exempt from the \$75,000 minimum project cost under special circumstances. This exemption can only be sought after consultation with the consultant and State team.

\*\*A private project may be exempt from the 25% minimum match requirement under special circumstances. This exemption can only be sought after consultation with the consultant and State team.

## SECTION 5.2 PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

- **Building Decarbonization.** For DRI/NY Forward communities, all public, private, and not-for-profit projects that meet the criteria for new construction, substantial renovation, or a building addition shall include decarbonization techniques. Project sponsors will select a method demonstrating that the project satisfies the program's decarbonization requirements, called the compliance path. Technical assistance regarding decarbonization strategies will be provided to project sponsors by NYSERDA and its consultants.

The following projects are required to comply with the decarbonization standards:

- New construction and building addition projects > 5,000 SF
- Substantial renovation projects > 5,000 SF that include two or more of the following:
  - Removal of 50% or more of the area of the interior wall-covering material of the building thermal envelope
  - Removal of 50% or more of the area of the exterior wall-covering material of the building thermal envelope or fenestration
  - Replacement of space-conditioning equipment constituting 50% or more of the total input capacity
  - Replacement of water-heating equipment constituting 50% or more of the total input capacity
  - Replacement of 50% or more of the interior and exterior lighting powered from the building

Projects meeting these criteria are required to follow one of the compliance pathways listed below:

- Energy Code Credits: Projects complying with the ECCCNY – Commercial or Residential Provisions of the 2025 ECCCNY shall achieve not less than 110 percent of the applicable minimum energy credit requirements in accordance with Section C406, as set forth in Table C406.1.1(1) or Section R408, as set forth in Table R408.2, as applicable. Projects complying with the 2025 NYS ASHRAE 90.1 standard shall achieve not less than 110 percent of the applicable minimum energy credit requirements prescribed in Section 11.5.1 and Table 11.5.1-1.
- Energy Star: Obtain an Energy Star score of 90 or better using EPA's Target Finder Calculator
- Third-Party Certification: Obtain a certification from an approved third-party organization, such as Energy Star, LEED, etc.

Because decarbonization improves energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and building resilience, project sponsors are encouraged to implement decarbonization techniques even if they do not meet the threshold criteria and will be able to receive technical assistance during the planning process. Check out the [DRI/ NY Forward website](#) for more information on decarbonization strategies.



## Considerations for Potential Project Sponsors

As you are thinking about submitting a project for LPC consideration, here are a few questions to think about while developing your project:

- Do you have a preliminary project budget?
- Do you own the property or do you have site control/permission to implement the proposed project?
- Have you identified any environmental constraints and/or regulatory issues/needs that may affect the project?
- Have you considered how your project can be accessible to people of all ages and abilities?\*
- For private projects, do you have a business plan, market study, pro-forma, or other documents showing feasibility?
- Have you assessed how you will pay for the project while awaiting reimbursement from the State, if funded?

\*Projects that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities often consider the principle of Universal Design, meaning an environment that can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. (Centre for Universal Design).

Check out DOS's Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure's [ADA Compliance & Beyond in Community Design](#) for examples of inclusive design.



| City of Peekskill Five Elements Mural Project (DRI Round 4)

## SECTION 5.3

# Project Development

## Overview

Given the diverse ways that project proposals are identified as described in [Section 2.5: Project Identification](#), projects arrive to the process in different stages of development ranging from ideas to fully-formed proposals with clear budgets and design concepts. The project development portion of the DRI/NY Forward planning process is designed to first assist project sponsors with determining if the project is viable for DRI/NY Forward funding. Project viability can be affected by various factors, including but not limited to ineligibility, lack of project sponsor, financing, site control, or readiness.

If a project is viable, this process shifts to the consultant team working with project sponsors to refine the project so it can meet State standards and be ready for implementation if funded under the program. During this portion of the process and guided by the requirements listed in [Section 5.4: Project Profiles](#), project sponsors and the consultant team work together to develop budgets, project justifications, and concept designs, among other project components.

The consultant team may provide significant technical support to project sponsors (e.g., rendering development, planning-level cost estimates, development of project profiles, etc.). It is critical that project sponsors communicate frequently with the consultant team and provide necessary project information in a timely manner. The consultant team, in close coordination with the State team, will also be responsible for helping project sponsors understand the requirements of the DRI/NY Forward grant funds, which are structured as reimbursable grants.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Coordinate, schedule, and facilitate meetings with all project sponsors
- Conduct a site visit with each viable project sponsor at the proposed project site
- Conduct ongoing meetings, as needed, to develop and refine proposed projects
- Answer questions and facilitate ongoing meetings, as needed, to discuss the DRI/NY Forward program, eligible project activities, and a project sponsor's capacity to implement the proposed project and ensure its long-term success
- Develop project profiles, including conceptual renderings and cost estimates

**Project Sponsors** are expected to:

- Clearly define the project's purpose and scope and how it relates to the community's vision, goals, and strategies
- Work closely with the consultant team to provide the necessary information to support the development of the project profile, including a detailed scope of work, cost estimates, and renderings
- Provide information in a timely manner to enable review and evaluation by the LPC

**SECTION 5.3**

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



**What Makes a Project Idea into a Viable Project?**

- Eligible project activities
- A project sponsor that has the legal authority and capacity to implement the project
- Sufficient financing
- Site control or demonstrated ability to acquire the property or receive permission to implement a project
- Readiness and capacity to implement the project within two years of DRI/NY Forward funding



**Tour of Proposed NY Forward Projects in Greenwich (NY Forward Round 3)**



## SECTION 5.4

# Project Profiles

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### Overview

The project profile is a description of the proposed project that includes all relevant information needed to evaluate the project in the context of downtown revitalization. The profile is the documentation of the project development and refinement process. The project profiles, which are developed for each proposed project, are the primary content generated during the planning process.

Each project profile should be able to stand on its own and should contain all the information needed to evaluate it in the context of the community's downtown revitalization effort. The content of each project profile is expected to evolve throughout the planning process, with the final project profiles providing the level of detail needed to move quickly from evaluation to funding and, if awarded, to implementation. Each SIP should include project profiles for all projects that would advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The LPC** is expected to:

- Review project profiles as they are made available and come to each LPC meeting prepared to discuss the proposed projects
- Identify additional information and/or desired project elements needed to keep the project in consideration for DRI/NY Forward funding

**Project Sponsors** are expected to:

- Work closely with the consultant team to provide necessary information in a timely manner to support the consultant team's development of the project profile

**The Consultant Team** is expected to:

- Draft and finalize all content, renderings, photographs, and/or graphics required for the project profiles
- Work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to obtain and develop the necessary information and data to support the development of the project profiles

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Project Profile Contents

Each project profile is required to address the following topics. Below are instructions for how to address that topic for each project as well as examples of how that topic could be successfully covered in a project profile.

#### Project Title

The project title must begin with an action-oriented statement and should succinctly describe the “what” and “where.” Project titles must:

- Begin with an action (Transform, Expand, Establish, Renovate, Build, Create, etc.)
- Name the outcome if applicable (Public Plaza, Job Training Center, Small Project Fund, Mixed-Use, Housing)
- Name the location if applicable (Historic Edwards Building, Historic Cannon Building, Long-Vacant Historic Buildings, Corner of Main & Clinton, 78 Bridge Street)

#### DRI/NY Forward Funding Request and Total Project Cost

Each project profile must state the requested amount to be paid by DRI/NY Forward funds, the total project cost, and the percentage of total costs requested. It is expected that the DRI/NY Forward funding request for private projects will represent just a component of the overall project budget. The total project cost should reflect costs paid for by DRI/NY Forward funds, as well as private equity or financing, tax credits, or other public funding or financing. Those sources of additional funds should be listed in the project budget later in the profile.

#### Examples

- *Construct Mixed-Use Development on West Water Street*
- *Transform City Centre into an Indoor Market and Performance Space*
- *Renovate 13-15 Central Avenue to Create New Office Space*

#### Example

*Total DRI Funds Requested: \$2,500,000*

*Total Project Cost: \$6,500,000*

*% of Total Project Cost: 40%*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Project Description

A complete but concise description of the project that includes the scope of the project and what will be planned, designed, and constructed; the background of the project and project site, including any previous planning work and general context needed to understand the project, and a brief description of the merits/goals of the project. This description should include the following, if applicable:

- A description of the proposed use (e.g., commercial, industrial, residential, public improvement, or mixed-use) and the specific proposed improvements. For example, a description of a residential or mixed-use development may include information about the estimated number of units, building stories, commercial square footage, housing class (e.g., affordable, market-rate, workforce housing), or commercial tenants (if identified). A description of a park improvement may include details on specific improvements, such as new seating areas, lighting, landscaping, or path construction.
- The current use and condition of the property and the size of the area impacted by the project, such as the number of square feet per floor and the number of building stories.
- A description of any work or planning done previously on the proposed project.
- For a Small Project Fund, a description of the types of projects that will be funded must be included. Eligible activities, activity funding limits, private funding requirements, and other requirements unique to the DRI/ NY Forward should be included.

### Example

*Village Green, situated proximate to Main Street in a residential setting, is the primary community park within the Village, providing a range of programming and amenities. Although widely used by the community, the amenities within the park are outdated and need upgrades. The existing path is deteriorating, and the playground equipment is outdated and inaccessible to some of the Village's population. Additionally, the park lacks modern amenities that would support the needs and interests of residents. To ensure an inclusive and welcoming recreation facility for all users, in 2023, the Village hired a consulting firm to complete a park master plan. The park is envisioned to get a comprehensive update, with upgrades to be completed in phases as funding becomes available.*

*The first phase, which is proposed for NY Forward funding, includes installing a large playground area with ADA-accessible equipment, a nature play area, a splash pad, and 1,000 square yards of new walking paths to provide access to and around the new playground areas. The walking path will be six feet wide and constructed with concrete to ensure accessibility for all users.*

*The proposed upgrades to Village Green will provide new and upgraded recreational options for community members that encourage healthy living and improve quality of life. The ADA playground equipment will expand recreational options for those with mobility differences and ensure that all in the community can access play spaces equitably. The ADA equipment and splash pad also have the potential to make the park into a regional destination, as these facilities are not available in nearby communities.*

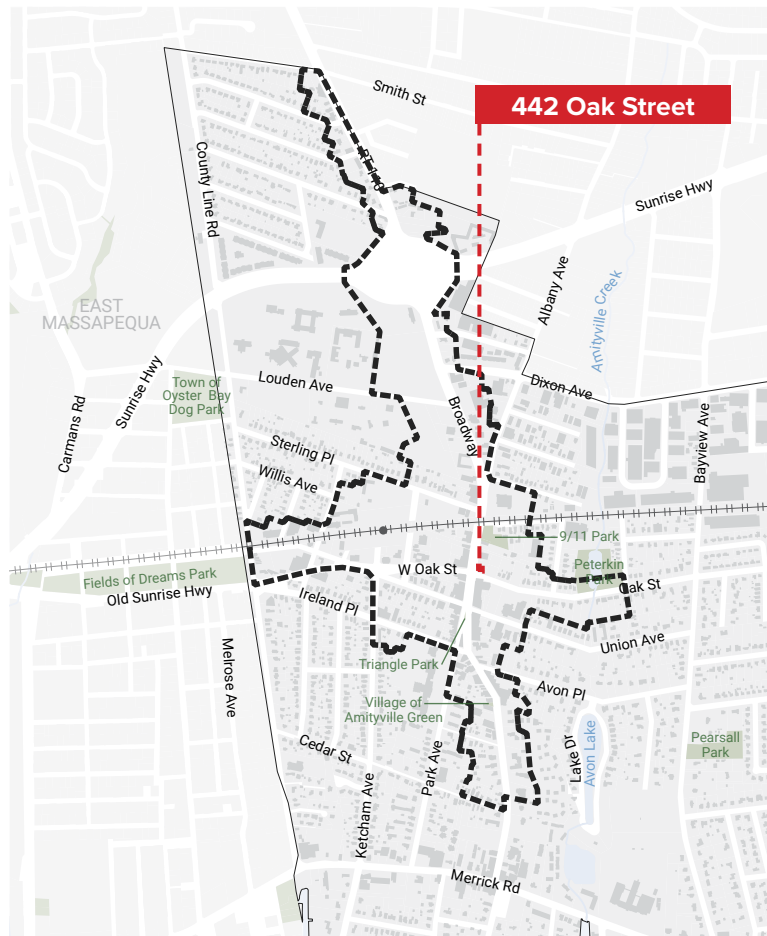
**SECTION 5.4**

PROJECT PROFILES

**Project Location/Address**

Each project profile must indicate the location of the project and its physical extent, including the address if available, with a location map. For Small Project Funds, as well as branding and marketing projects, identify the project target area and provide a geographical representation of the project limits.

**Example**



## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Project Sponsor

The project sponsor that will implement the project shall be identified. A project sponsor must be a legal entity; it cannot be an individual. The entity should have the legal authority to execute a contract with the State for any awarded funds, as well as undertake and oversee the project. For Small Project Funds, an entity must be identified that will manage the fund and contract with the State.

### Property Ownership

This section must identify the current ownership of the property on which the project will be located. If the project requires the acquisition of real property, describe the acquisition process and its status. If the project sponsor is not the property owner, this section should describe the sponsor's rights to the property or how the sponsor will obtain permission to carry out the proposed project.

Project Sponsor and Property Ownership may be combined into one section in the Project Profile.

### Examples

#### **Example of Same Owners and Sponsors**

*The City is the property owner and project sponsor for the implementation of streetscape improvements on proposed neighborhood side streets.*

#### **Examples of Different Owners and Sponsors**

- The project sponsor is Artists Group, a local arts organization that fosters community through the arts. The property owner of the waterfront park and trail is the Village. The Village is fully supportive of this project and will develop a maintenance agreement with the project sponsor for the proposed sculpture installation.*
- The current owner is King Development Corporation. ABC Realty, LLC, which will be the new property owner and project sponsor, executed a purchase agreement for the property, dated May 17, 2018. The agreement is contingent upon ABC Realty obtaining a zoning change to permit the proposed use.*

#### **Example of Owners and Sponsors of Funds**

*The City Department of Neighborhood and Business Development will administer the Fund. All individuals, entities, or companies receiving funding will be the principal owner of the property or have an agreement with the principal owner to make alterations to the subject property.*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Capacity

This section shall describe the project sponsor's capacity to implement and sustain the proposed project by describing their experience with similar projects and state or federal funding programs. For public improvement projects, it must clearly indicate how the improvement will be maintained after project completion. For Small Project Fund proposals, include information about the entity that will implement the fund, their organizational structure, management plan, and experience with similar projects.

If there are partners involved with the implementation of this project, they should be identified in this section, and their roles should be described. Partners include key public, not-for-profit, and private entities or organizations needed to implement the projects (e.g., funding partners, operational partners). This does not include the project development team (e.g., architects, engineers, etc.).

### Examples

- *The Village will be overseeing the implementation of the proposed project with the assistance of contracted professional planning, engineering, and construction firms. The planning and engineering firms will assist with the design of the project. The Village will subsequently release an RFP for contracting services to construct the approved design. With the assistance of these firms, the Village has implemented many public improvement projects, including streetscapes and park improvements, such as the recently*

*added fitness center at the outdoor recreation area. Many of these public improvement projects were subsidized with state and/or federal funds, including CDBG, NYSDOT, and DEC, and were successfully managed by the Village. The Village intends to provide for future maintenance costs of the project in subsequent budgets. No partners have been identified for the implementation of this project.*

- *The Youth & Family Center will be responsible for the implementation of the project. Founded in 1910, the Youth & Family Center is a longstanding 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that promotes youth and family development, healthy lifestyles, and social responsibility. The Center has extensive grant management experience, including the management of millions of dollars in grants from the following organizations: Food Bank, United Way, County Youth Bureau, Office of Children and Family Services, ABC Foundation, and City School District, among others.*

*The Center currently provides numerous services to the community, including a food pantry, thrift store, childcare, and technology access. This project will help the Center expand its services and better meet the needs of the local population. To further its service offerings, the Center is collaborating with local and regional not-for-profits, including the Food Bank and ABC Foundation. The Food Bank will be an operating partner as it will be leasing a space in the building to expand the existing food pantry. The ABC Foundation, an existing financial supporter, will help fund the programming at the Center.*

## SECTION 5.4

## PROJECT PROFILES

### Revitalization Strategies

The DRI/NY Forward strategies that the project addresses and their alignment with relevant DRI/NY Forward and REDC strategies should be identified in this section.



Village of Amityville (DRI Round 6)

### Example

#### DRI STRATEGIES:

- Increase access to recreational, cultural, and family-friendly activities and amenities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Build a concentration of activities and services around downtown anchors to attract visitors and extend their stay.
- Provide a network of public spaces that support year-round activities.
- Integrate green infrastructure, landscaping, art, and other amenities throughout public spaces to increase resilience to climate change and establish a sense of place.

#### REDC STRATEGIES:

- Facilitate growth of tourism opportunities.

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Decarbonization and Environmental Resiliency

Project profiles must state whether or not the project meets the decarbonization compliance criteria ([Section 5.2](#)) and why (e.g., substantial renovation over 5,000 square feet that includes replacement of its heating, cooling, and lighting systems). A description of the decarbonization techniques proposed by the project sponsor should be included in this section. If the project sponsor has identified a compliance path at this stage, that should be indicated; otherwise, the profile should identify the compliance path under consideration. This section should also identify any incentives or energy efficiency programs for which the project sponsor intends to explore and/or apply.

For projects that do not meet the criteria but are intending to pursue key decarbonization strategies, that compliance path and/or a description of the strategies should be included in this section.

In addition to describing the decarbonization strategies, this section should also describe how the project incorporates resiliency as related to the environment. For example, projects may include natural measures such as bioswales, rain gardens, living shorelines, green roofs, creation of open space, etc. to address resiliency. If a project is located within a flood hazard area, this section must identify the measures and techniques that will be incorporated into the project to mitigate flood risk.

### Examples

- As a newly constructed building greater than 5,000 square feet, the proposed project must satisfy DRI/NY Forward decarbonization requirements. The project sponsor plans to meet the Energy Code Credits compliance path. Strategies will include LED lighting, high-efficiency HVAC and water heating equipment and distribution, enhanced insulation in walls, floors, and roof, and high-performance windows. Electrical systems will be sized for a future solar electric system. The project is exploring local utility incentives for the construction of the building.*

*In addition to constructing a more efficient building, the project will also use permeable pavement for its parking lot and install rain gardens and bioswales to manage stormwater runoff. Additionally, the project will incorporate native and drought-resistant plantings that require minimal maintenance.*
- As a streetscape project, there are no required decarbonization measures; however, the pedestrian connections established in this project will enhance walkability and may reduce automobile use and carbon emissions. Additionally, the streetscape will incorporate energy-efficient LED streetlights. The project promotes resiliency through the addition of pollinator plantings and street trees, which will provide improved stormwater management and habitat connectivity for pollinating insects and birds in a built environment that currently lacks these resources.*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Public Support

The level of public support for the project should be described, including any key project elements that were strongly supported by the community. If applicable, this section should also refer to any specific outreach completed and documented support for the project that was outside the DRI/ NY Forward public engagement process (e.g., comprehensive plan, letters of support, non-DRI/ NY Forward public meetings, etc.)

### Examples

- *Many residents and LPC members expressed support for renovating this iconic building. Based on the feedback from Community Meeting 1, 92% of the Village’s poll respondents expressed support for maintaining the historic integrity of buildings in downtown. Moreover, 67% of community respondents showed support for more diverse retail options in the downtown area. This project provides an excellent opportunity to both maintain the historic integrity of downtown through renovating existing buildings, while also adding additional options for retail stores.*
- *Previous community outreach efforts of the city and the county have demonstrated strong support for the restoration of the city’s core and for mixed-use redevelopment. During the DRI planning process, this project had strong support from participants due to the perceived economic and aesthetic benefits of redevelopment and revitalization. The LPC felt that this was an important project that needed to be addressed, especially as the building has significant critical safety needs that have the potential to impact other downtown buildings.*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Project Budget

A firm and detailed cost estimate that includes a breakdown of funding sources and uses of funding is required for each proposed project. The budget should be developed using the following guidelines:

- All projects must use the [prescribed budget table](#). The budget should be broken down into specific component activities or into grouped activities for each budget line.
- Public improvement projects should be broken down into component activities, including relevant soft costs. For example, a streetscape project could include itemized activities such as design and engineering, sidewalk installation, street furniture (benches, planters, trash receptacles, etc.), or asphalt resurfacing.
- New construction or renovation project activities can be grouped into a singular “construction” activity, but activities associated with soft costs, site improvements, or other non-building construction should also be broken down into component parts.
- A DRI/NY Forward Small Project Fund budget should have separate line items for administration expenses, soft costs, and the proposed fund activity (e.g., façade rehabilitation, permanent machinery, etc.). The budget table should include any local match and/or private owner match. Matching requirements will be established by the DRI/NY Forward LPC, as local conditions warrant. Matching requirements must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project.
- Branding and marketing projects should be broken down into component activities. For example, a branding and marketing project may include activities such as branding design, website development, or design of marketing materials. If a wayfinding signage project is combined with a branding or marketing project, those distinct costs, such as fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage, should be identified.
- All budgets should include specific soft costs if required for the project. Soft costs should be broken down into design, engineering, legal, and other soft costs to the extent practicable.
- Contingency amounts should be appropriately factored into all project budgets, as appropriate. These amounts should be factored into budget line items and not shown in a separate line.

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

- The funding source for each line item should be specifically identified to the project sponsor's best knowledge. It must be clear what components of the project will be paid for with DRI/NY Forward funds and other sources of funding. Sources of funding other than the DRI/NY Forward may include private equity or financing, tax credits, or other public funding or financing, and bond documents, memorandum of understanding, contracts, or other instruments. If the project sponsor does not have specific funding sources identified for project activities, that must be explained in the Budget Narrative section. The status of all funding sources must be stated in the budget table using the following definitions:
  - **Secured:** This funding source and amount of funding are guaranteed, and documentation has been provided demonstrating that the funding will be available at the time of project implementation.
  - **Anticipated:** This funding source is reasonably expected to be available at the time of project implementation, but the project sponsor does not have the funds currently available. This status may apply to funding sources such as loans, bonds, or fees.
  - **Requested:** The project sponsor has submitted a request to a funding entity for the amount identified, but has not received confirmation of funding. This category is appropriate for the DRI/NY Forward funding source or other grants.
  - **Undetermined:** This funding source has not been secured, and the project sponsor has not fully identified the funding sources and amounts. This status may be appropriate for projects that anticipate a capital campaign, but no activity has yet occurred to obtain those funds.
- All project budget line items should be rounded to the nearest \$1,000, meaning the total project cost and DRI/NY Forward request amounts will be rounded to the nearest \$1,000.



**SECTION 5.4**

PROJECT PROFILES

*Template Example | Create the Regional Health & Wellness Center*

Activity	Amount	Funding Source	Status of Funds
Construction	\$3,820,000	DRI	Requested
	\$6,481,000	Bank Loan	Anticipated
	\$500,000	RG&E	Requested
	\$200,000	Restore NY	Requested
	\$100,000	ESD Capital	Requested
	\$530,000	Capital Campaign	Undetermined
	\$470,000	ARPA Funding	Secured
Drainage Infrastructure/Site Work	520,000	DRI	Requested
Permitting / Inspections	\$198,000	Bank Loan	Anticipated
Design	\$352,000	Bank Loan	Anticipated
Construction Administration	\$831,000	Bank Loan	Anticipated
Total DRI/NY Forward Funding Request			\$4,340,000
Total Funding from Other Sources			\$9,662,000
Total Project Cost			\$14,002,000
% Requested of Total Project Cost			31%

*Template Example | Enhance Streetscaping Along Main Street*

Activity	Amount	Funding Source	Status of Funds
Stamped Asphalt	\$69,000	DRI	Requested
Asphalt Resurfacing	\$162,000		
Median Landscaping	\$312,000		
Sidewalk Widening	\$78,000		
Retaining Wall Repair	\$67,000		
Decorative Fencing	\$57,000		
Design and Engineering	\$112,000		
Total DRI/NY Forward Funding Request			\$857,000
Total Funding from Other Sources			N/A
Total Project Cost			\$857,000
% Requested of Total Project Cost			100%

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Budget Narrative

The budget narrative must explain how the cost estimate was developed and verified. If contingency is included in the project budget, the percentage of contingency and justification for that amount of contingency should be explained. The status of funding, particularly for all funding that is not secured, must be explained, and a timeline and/or a plan for obtaining the unsecured funding should be explained. This includes any funding identified as Anticipated, Requested, or Unsecured.

The project sponsor should be able to provide documentation of the status of all funding sources, and that documentation should be summarized in this section. If there have been previous investments in the project, they should be discussed in this section; however, those activities should not be in the proposed project budget, as the project budget should only account for planned/future activities.

### Example

*The project budget, which is based on standard construction estimating methods, was prepared by a licensed architect familiar with the proposed design improvements associated with this project. The 10% contingency included in the budget is within the typical range for this type of project to account for unanticipated project modifications. The sponsor has identified four sources of funding needed to complete the project. The first source of funding, which represents 40% of the overall project budget, is the requested DRI funding. The second source of funding, which represents 30% of the overall project budget, is the project sponsor's cash equity. This funding is secured in the form of a mortgage that is supported by a commitment letter from the bank in the amount stated in the project budget.*

*The third source of funding, which represents 20% of the overall project budget, is currently being raised through a capital campaign. The project sponsor has secured approximately half of the goal amount and anticipates reaching the campaign goal within one year. The final source of funding, which represents 10% of the overall project budget, will be secured through the NY State and Federal Historic Tax Credit Programs. A Part 1 form has already been submitted, and Part 2 will be submitted if and when DRI funds are awarded to the project. The property is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and the project architect specializes in historic preservation. Therefore, it is anticipated that the proposed work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the tax credits will be approved.*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Project Need and Impact

This section must demonstrate the need and feasibility for the project and characterize the potential impact and benefits of the project on the downtown and the surrounding region. To demonstrate need and feasibility for a private project, this section should discuss economic assessments, pro-formas, market studies, and/or other analyses, as appropriate. It could also incorporate findings from the downtown assessment to support the need for a certain type of development. For a public project or not-for-profit project, there could be a reference to a community need (potentially identified in the downtown assessment) or other evidence that demonstrates the local and/or regional demand and/or interest in the project's long-term viability. This may also include a discussion of existing conditions that demonstrated the need for the proposed project.

In characterizing the potential impact and benefits, this section should describe the economic, environmental, climate resilience, health, and social impacts, as applicable, of the proposed project. These should be context-specific and clearly explain the connection between the impact/benefit and the project.

#### Example

*The proposed project will help address the housing shortage in the community, and it has been demonstrated that the local market can absorb additional housing. The project sponsor commissioned a third-party preliminary market study, which established the appropriate number of units that can be absorbed so there is no possibility of over-building and vacancy, the appropriate mix of units according to bedroom size, and the appropriate income targeting and rents.*

*The market study also determined the number of units that the local housing demand supports, as well as the proposed rents based on working household incomes*

*locally and county-wide. The market study identified that approximately 80% of expected tenants will come from the Primary Market Area. It also indicated that the housing units are expected to be rented at a rate of eight units per month, with an especially strong demand for studios and one-bedroom apartments. The project is anticipated to house approximately 130 people.*

*This project will immediately result in removing an abandoned, blighted, and unsafe building. Constructing the proposed housing project will also increase housing options for the local workforce, which will benefit the business community and strengthen economic development ventures in the region. New housing will also provide a larger year-round residential population, creating a greater customer base for local businesses and helping to stabilize the declining school population. The availability of workforce housing may also give private investors more confidence to launch a brand-new business or project. The project will promote housing stability, economic revitalization, and quality-of-life improvement for residents.*

*Further, the community has experienced a significant rise in housing prices due to the increase in short-term rentals and pandemic-related migration. These factors have made it difficult for local workers and residents to afford housing, and housing prices for both owners and renters are expected to continue to rise. This project will address the need for housing at affordable price points, enabling the community's workforce to live in the community and for existing residents to age in place.*

*Additionally, this project is projected to generate a tax benefit of approximately \$80,000 per year through a proposed payment-in-lieu-of-taxes arrangements, a fiscal benefit compared with zero tax revenue generated by the property for the past 20 years.*

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Regulatory Requirements

This section should address the project's regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, consistency with the comprehensive plan, zoning, and other locally adopted plans; SEQRA status; required state and local approvals; permitting status; or potential regulatory hurdles. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is required for all projects receiving State funding and should be noted in this section and accounted for in the timeframe for implementation. Further, if a project requires a re-zoning or a variance, that should be noted in this section and appropriately incorporated into the project timeline.

### Example

*The proposed project is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and meets the use requirements established in the zoning code. Final plan approvals will need to be obtained from the Planning Board, and SEQRA review will be undertaken at that time. If funded, the project will be required to consult with SHPO due to receipt of State funds. The project sponsor may need to obtain area variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals for not meeting setback requirements. All local building, electrical, and plumbing permits will be obtained at the time of construction.*



**Example Rendering of a Proposed Project** (Fulton DRI Round 4)

## SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

### Images of Current and Proposed Conditions

At a minimum, each project is required to include an image of the current conditions and at least one perspective rendering or visual representation of the site and/or project when it is complete. All project renderings and visuals must be high-quality and should be developed with a consistent style. Site plans or additional imagery from the project sponsor may be included to supplement the rendering(s) or visual representation of the project.



Existing Conditions



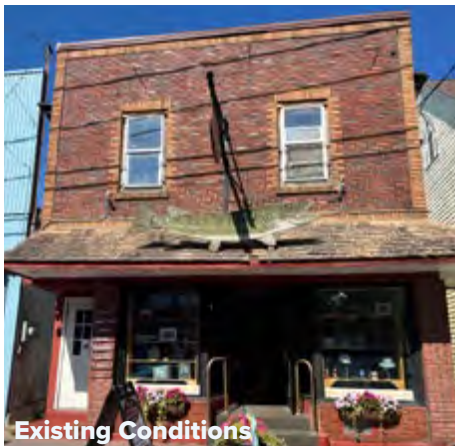
Proposed Conditions

**Example Rendering of a Proposed Project** (Waddington NY Forward Round 1)

**SECTION 5.4** PROJECT PROFILES



**| Example Rendering of a Proposed Project** (Newark DRI Round 5)



**| Example Rendering of a Proposed Project** (Alexandria Bay NY Forward Round 2)

## SECTION 5.4

### PROJECT PROFILES

#### Timeframe for Implementation

This section should include a general outline of project activities and milestones with an implementation timeframe and phasing indicated. Using the template below, the phases should be expressed in the anticipated number of months and be specific to the project.

If applicable, include any preliminary work already completed or in progress that is part of this project (e.g., engineering and design, property acquisition, permits or approvals, capital infrastructure improvements, etc.). Additional preliminary work that is planned and funded, but not yet completed, must be described and included in the table.

#### Example

PROJECT STAGE	TIMEFRAME
<b>Conceptual Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop renderings</li> <li>Develop project scope</li> <li>Draft preliminary construction cost estimate</li> </ul>	Completed
<b>Regulatory Approvals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek rezoning for property</li> </ul>	In Progress
<b>Design, Engineering, Bid Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solicit design and engineering services</li> <li>Develop construction documents</li> <li>Obtain necessary permits and approvals</li> <li>Issue bid documents</li> <li>Award bid to selected contractor</li> </ul>	10 Months
<b>Construction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolition of existing building</li> <li>Site work</li> <li>Construction of new building</li> </ul>	15 Months
<b>Total Timeframe</b>	<b>25 Months</b>

## SECTION 5.5

# Finalizing the Slate of Proposed Projects

### Overview

From LPC Meeting #3 to the conclusion of the planning process, the LPC will focus on identifying, reviewing, and evaluating projects. During this process, the LPC may have to discuss and narrow down the list of proposed projects into a final slate of projects. These discussions and deliberations are reserved for LPC members, the consultant team, and the State team. When evaluating projects, the LPC may consider public support, the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies, and local project evaluation criteria as they identify a final slate of recommended projects.

### LPC Project Evaluation

Prior to reviewing the proposed projects, which usually begins at LPC Meeting #3, the LPC will develop local project evaluation criteria, using the State criteria as a guide.

The local evaluation criteria developed by the LPC, along with the community's vision, goals, and strategies, will guide the LPC members in their discussion of projects throughout the planning process, as they narrow the proposed project list into a final slate of projects. This will occur iteratively over the course of LPC Meetings #3-6 as more project information becomes available through the consultant team's ongoing project development work with the project sponsors.



| Westbury LPC Meeting (DRI Round 1)

## SECTION 5.5

## FINALIZING SLATE OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

### State Evaluation Criteria

The DRI/NY Forward project evaluation criteria used by the State should serve as a guide for LPCs as they develop project evaluation criteria specific to their community's needs and goals. The LPC may use the State's criteria below as a guide to build on.

- **State and Local Goals.** The project should be aligned with State and local goals and demonstrate strong community support.
- **Project Readiness.** The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI/NY Forward area.
- **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 at a scale appropriate for the DRI/NY Forward community.
- **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, enhance accessibility, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable, and productive environments in which to live and work.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** Investment of DRI/NY Forward funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

### Slate of Proposed Projects

For DRI communities, the final slate of projects should total between \$13-16 million in DRI funding requests. For NY Forward communities, this final project list should total approximately between \$6-8 million in NY Forward funding requests. It is essential that the LPC select a slate of projects with a total funding request in excess of the DRI/NY Forward grant award. A larger slate of projects will allow the State to evaluate a broader range of projects recommended by the LPC, while ensuring that there are enough viable projects in case one or two projects do not ultimately come to fruition or if selected projects receive funding from another source.

The LPC should also ensure that the removal of one project from the final project list will not result in a total DRI/NY Forward funding request that is less than the community was awarded. For example, if a NY Forward community receives a \$4.5 million award and submits a final slate of projects that totals \$6 million, no one project should request more than \$1.5 million in NY Forward funding. Finally and importantly, the final proposed project list should not be prioritized — every project should be one that the LPC and community would be excited to see implemented.



| City of Lockport (DRI Round 3)



**SECTION 6.0**

# Project Implementation

## In this Section:

**SECTION 6.1** Project Awards

**SECTION 6.2** Contracting with the State

**SECTION 6.3** Downtown Management and Grant Administration



## SECTION 6.1

# Project Awards

*After final submission of the Strategic Investment Plan, projects recommended for Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward funding will be selected following a careful review by the State.*

## Overview

Upon final submission of the Strategic Investment Plan, projects recommended for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward funding will be carefully reviewed by the State based on how well each project achieves the following criteria:

- **State and Local Goals.** The project should be aligned with State and local goals and demonstrate strong community support.
- **Project Readiness.** The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI/NY Forward area.
- **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 at a scale appropriate for the DRI/NY Forward community.
- **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, enhance accessibility, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable, and productive environments in which to live and work.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** Investment of DRI/ NY Forward funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

**SECTION 6.1**

PROJECT AWARDS



**| Secretary of State Mosley Attending Ribbon-Cutting for the Clinton Market Collective in Albany (DRI Round 3)**

## SECTION 6.2

# Contracting with the State

### Overview

Projects selected for a DRI/NY Forward award will be assigned to an appropriate state agency or authority to manage the contract for implementation of the project. The state agency or authority selected and the method of contracting and funding disbursement will be dependent on the specific project. While there may be some variation between agency or authority administration and the project type, in general, awarded project funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis. It should be noted that DRI/NY Forward funds may be used as a match for other grant funding if permitted by the granting agency or authority. However, the priority is to fund projects that are ready for implementation, with the expectation that all projects will break ground within two years from the time of the award.

DRI/NY Forward awards will be subject to all requirements typically attached to state funding, including but not limited to minority- and woman-owned business enterprise (M/WBE) and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOB) goals, competitive procurement, grant reporting requirements, and prevailing wages, as appropriate. Prevailing wage provisions would need to be met for public works projects (such as those projects subject to the Wicks Law, etc.) or if it is a requirement of another funding source (as it is for U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Planning and Development programs - the Davis-Bacon Act).



| City of Schenectady Mural (DRI Round 4)

SECTION 6.2

CONTRACTING



**| Ribbon Cutting at State Street Plaza, Auburn**  
(DRI Round 3)



**What is a Reimbursable Grant?**

A reimbursable grant is one where the grantee receives the grant funds only **after** expenses are incurred or in some cases, after a project has been successfully completed in its entirety. This means that a project sponsor must pay for the project costs, and then they will be reimbursed by the State once they achieve agreed-upon milestones.

SECTION 6.3

# Downtown Management and Grant Administration

## Overview

Local oversight and coordination of downtown projects is vital to the overall success of the DRI/ NY Forward investments. To ensure efficient and coordinated implementation of DRI projects, it is expected that each community will designate a DRI/NY Forward point of contact who will provide consistent oversight and serve as a single point of contact regarding all DRI/NY Forward projects.

Each contracting state agency/authority (primarily DOS, ESD, and HCR) will be responsible for managing individual contracts with project sponsors; however, DOS will remain the lead for the state team and will be responsible for tracking the progress of all DRI/ NY Forward projects.



| Watertown Public Art (DRI Round 2)

**SECTION 6.3**

**DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION**



**| Clute Park Enhancements, Watkins Glen (DRI Round 2)**



The Clute Park ADA-compliant playground is outfitted with accessible ramps, individual and group accessible swings, an accessible carousel and special flooring for the walkways.

