



# Downtown Revitalization Initiative

## Roles & Responsibilities

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a comprehensive approach to boosting local economies by transforming communities into vibrant neighborhoods that offer a high quality of life for all residents. Each community selected to participate in the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) will accomplish its goals through a unique state-local partnership that includes a Local Planning Committee (LPC), a consultant team, and state agency staff. With support from municipal staff and input from the public, this partnership will result in a strategic investment plan that will achieve the vision and goals for revitalization of the downtown.

### LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Local Planning Committee (LPC) is made up of local and regional leaders, stakeholders, and community representatives. Each LPC is led by two co-chairs consisting of the local elected official (or his or her designee) and a member of the Regional Economic Development Council. Other members will be invited to participate by the Secretary of State after consultation with the LPC co-chairs and other state partners.

The Local Planning Committee will work with the consultant team and state agency staff to:

- Create a profile of the downtown.
- Refine the vision that was included in the community's DRI application.
- Develop strategies and identify methods to achieve the downtown vision.
- Identify and select projects key to overall downtown revitalization.
- Develop and adopt a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Strategic Investment Plan.
- Develop a community engagement plan and engage the public in the planning process.

LPC members will attend a variety of meetings at which they will be asked to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to consultants, review planning products, and prioritize actions.

The LPC may form work groups to provide an opportunity for some LPC members to dig deeper into an issue, sometimes with the help of non-committee members, such as local business

persons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood activists. Work groups provide an opportunity for brainstorming, for building a sense of community spirit and buy-in of the plan, and allow for better time management at LPC meetings. Work groups may be developed around any topic, such as developing a public engagement strategy, business development, identification of projects and actions, and implementation of the plan.

LPC members will weigh in on various components of the plan, such as the identification and recommendation of key projects. They will also be asked to agree to a Code of Conduct as a reminder that they must always act in the public interest in their role as Local Planning Committee members.

## CONSULTANT TEAM

A consultant team contracted by the state is assigned to each community. The consultant team will work with the Co-Chairs and state agency staff to prepare for and staff LPC meetings and public outreach events. Consultants will handle meeting presentations, and meeting logistics with assistance from municipal staff. At the LPC meetings, the consultant will ask LPC members for their ideas and guidance at each step of the planning process.

Research and studies will be conducted by the consultants within the scope of the work plan. Consultants will work with the LPC and state agency staff to prepare documents, such as the downtown profile and assessment; the downtown vision and goals; revitalization strategies; the DRI Strategic Investment Plan; and fulfil other tasks in their scope of work, such as research and market studies.

Consultants will work with the LPC to develop an approach to public engagement appropriate for the community, and confer with the LPC about input received from the public – at engagement events, meetings, and online – and how that input can be used.

Consultants will assist the LPC in identifying key projects for implementation using DRI funding, and prepare detailed profiles of the projects and analyses that demonstrates the feasibility and potential impact of projects.

## STATE AGENCY STAFF

State agency staff from the Department of State (DOS) and Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) will be assigned to each LPC. The DOS planner, with assistance from HCR staff and the Empire State Development (ESD) Regional Director, will manage the consultant team assigned

to the LPC, and assist the consultants and LPC in meeting preparation, as well as preparation and review of DRI documents. The HCR representative will bring to the planning process their knowledge of the community and expertise in housing development, CDBG, and HCR grants and programs. The ESD Regional Director provides a wealth of knowledge of past, present, and proposed development in an around the downtown. When needed, state agency staff will facilitate assistance from other State agencies.

The state agency team will also work with the consultants to ensure project profiles include the appropriate level of information needed for state evaluation of projects. Once projects are selected for funding by the State, state staff will prepare contract work plans or incentive proposals for projects assigned to their agencies, or work with others within their agency or authority to supply needed information for work plans or incentive proposals.

## **MUNICIPAL STAFF**

Municipal staff from the DRI community may provide local assistance to the consultants and state agency staff when local resources or expertise are needed. Municipal staff may assist with meeting logistics, provide necessary background data and information, help identify municipal programs and resources that can be leveraged to advance the DRI planning process, and act as local point of contact for public engagement.

## **PUBLIC**

Public engagement is a key component of the DRI planning process and fundamental to the success of the DRI. To that end, consultant teams and state agency staff will seek input from stakeholders in the community including municipal government, key employers and institutions, residents, business owners, stakeholder groups and organizations, and the public at large.

The objective of public engagement is to ensure that all stakeholders have ample opportunity to know and understand the DRI process and its intended outcomes; to comment on the study as it progresses; to express their concerns and contribute ideas; and to participate in building a consensus about the vision for the Downtown and other outcomes, culminating in a locally supported DRI Strategic Investment Plan.