



GOUVERNEUR

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #1 SUMMARY

Purpose:	Public Open House #1
Date and Time:	June 16, 2025, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Location:	Gouverneur Community Center 4673 NY-58, Gouverneur, NY 13642

Station #1. Project Overview

Discussion

This public open house-style session included interactive activity stations which provided an overview of the NY Forward Process, Area Boundary, Existing Conditions, Goals, Vision, Opportunities and Challenges, and where to find further information. A New York State Department of State (DOS) representative and MJ Engineering and Land Surveying team members were available to answer questions and discuss ideas with the public. Attendees were provided with a participant guide for the following activity stations.

- **Station #1 - Project Overview:** The what, why, who and how of NY Forward
- **Station #2 – Downtown Profile:** Highlights of existing conditions
- **Station #3 – Downtown Vision & Goals:** Use the sticky notes to share what you want downtown Gouverneur to look like in 5-7 years, and which downtowns you enjoy and why.
- **Station #4 – Challenges & Opportunities:** Share your concerns for Gouverneur and identify opportunities.
- **Station #5 – Thinking about Public Spaces:** Identify future improvements to public spaces in downtown!
- **Station #6 – Other Thoughts and Ideas:** Have more to share? Write it down at this station!
- **Station #7 – Call for Projects:** The open call for projects is coming soon. Get information about the steps to propose a project for funding consideration.
- **Station #8 – Kids Table:** This is a place for kids to be creative and share their ideas.

Station #2. Downtown Profile

Discussion

This station provided an overview of Gouverneur's demographics, growth trends, income, education, and employment. Village population, population growth, and age group percentages were displayed in tables and graphs. Income, education, and employment data was also displayed in tables and graphs, accompanied by a brief narrative highlighting notable data.

Six (6) maps were displayed at this station:

- The median age is 40.5 years old, this is higher than the median age of St. Lawrence County.
- 20% of Gouverneur's population is under the age of 18.
- The population is 3,585, with an even split of renters and homeowners, and the population has decreased since 2000.
- A little less than a quarter of Gouverneur's residents have a bachelor's degree or higher
- The boundary of the Gouverneur NY Forward is centered along East and West Main Streets, between North Gordon Street and the Oswegatchie River. The boundary encompasses the key downtown business corridor.

Station #3. Downtown Vision & Goals

Discussion

The Draft Downtown Vision station provided an opportunity for participants to share their vision for what they want downtown to look like in 5-7 years and what other downtowns they enjoy and why.

Common themes included:

- Establish more local businesses (restaurants, delis, etc.) on Main Street and limit vacant storefronts
- Upgrades to infrastructure to improve resident and visitor satisfaction and promote a vibrant community
- Fostering a safer environment for downtown and creating spaces that are family-friendly
- Learn from attractive downtowns like Potsdam and Clayton which have a greater variety of shops and updated urban structures

Ideas expressed through this exercise include (written as presented, in no particular order):

- More housing, more families walking – feeling safe, outside shopping – larger farmer's market
- Vibrant with people and activities
- More interactive clean areas to walk, more restaurants and recreation areas (real coffee shops)
- Less empty storefronts, updated building fronts, maybe historic signage
- More businesses to create foot traffic (restaurants, shops, and entertainment), no gas stations, no empty stores, nicer façade, and more lights
- Dog park
- Plattsburgh, NY – Has lots to do in a short walk including business, food, and recreation
- Clayton, NY, Sackets Harbor, NY, Lowville, NY
- Alex Bay, Clayton, Canton, Potsdam – Building façades are well maintained, less empty storefronts, and a variety of retail/restaurants
- Alex Bay/ Clayton (seasonal of course), Potsdam, Waddington, Lowville, and Rensselaer Falls

Station #3. Downtown Vision & Goals

Discussion

- Greenville, SC
- Clayton, NY

Station #4. Challenges & Opportunities

Discussion

This station encouraged participants to share their insights about challenges and opportunities for the downtown Gouverneur.

Themes in challenges and concerns raised included:

- Insufficient opportunities to keep the younger generations from leaving the area
- Safety concerns

Challenges identified by participants (written as presented, in no particular order):

- Addressing safety concerns and opportunities to keep younger generations here
- Opportunities to keep younger generations and not much workable space to expand downtown
- Mental health, people need vision, think out of the box, people are so used to failure and need a spark

Themes in opportunities and strengths raised included:

- Including and prioritizing youth participation in the community to help facilitate change within the village
- Focus on safety to enable the productive use of the downtown area

Opportunities and strengths identified by participants include (written as presented, in no particular order):

- Dog park
- Younger community leaders stepping into position to help initiate change and working with schools for more youth participation
- Partner more with the school – which is and can continue to be the hub of our community
- Need change, abandon poverty, image and we are growing and more activities for the community to do to limit crime
- Increase police force we need 24/7 coverage
- Coffee shops! Welcoming shops along Main Street (not broken/cloudy windows where you can't see inside) and higher security for businesses (less vandalism)

Station #5. Thinking about Public Spaces

Discussion

This station included a board and large boundary map enabling participants to identify ideas regarding public spaces within downtown. Including what improvements, the participants would like to see and where.

Themes in public space improvements:

- Providing residents more open space within parks for families
- Better lighting around existing parks to improve upon safety and general enjoyment
- Creation of a dog park

Map comments (written as presented, in no particular order):

- Smaller street trees along East Main Street
- Expansion of Village Park though changing Church Street to a one-way road
- More lighting by the park and on Park Street?
- Dog park
- Establish a more accessible City Hall as well as a façade lift
- Bigger park and open spaces for play (swings/playground)

Station #6. Other Thoughts and Ideas

Discussion

This station included an opportunity for any additional thoughts and ideas. The thoughts shared are listed below (written as presented, in no particular order):

- Make a Greenspace pathway from Kinney's to the Community Center
- Thank you Ron for all you have done for our village
- Remove as many signs as possible from the park. You cannot see the park from some locations on Route 11
- Move the Lifesaver to another location in the park (near the gazebo) so that it can become a focal point
- Repair municipal parking lot
- Coffee shop with outdoor seating
- Museum façade, lighting, and recreation activities

Station #7. Call for Projects

Discussion

- Participants were able to discuss the Open Call for Projects with MJ Team members
- The submission period for projects will be open to the public for at least 4 weeks
- Open Call for Project opens June 17, 2025
- Applicants must complete a submission form with the required information (available online or in hard copy at accessible locations) by July 31, 2025 at 4:00 PM
- Similar, parallel process for Small Project Fund

Station #8. Kids Table
Discussion
This was a place for kids to be creative and share their ideas.

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

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cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee

