



Village of Gouverneur

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Purpose:	Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1
Date and Time:	May 21, 2025 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Location:	Village Court Room at the Gouverneur Municipal Building Offices at 33 Clinton Street
Attendees:	See Below
Agenda:	1. Welcome & Introductions 2. NY Forward Program overview 3. Public Engagement 4. Gouverneur NY Forward Application 5. Next Steps 6. Public Comment

1. Welcome & Introductions

Discussion

Village of Gouverneur representative Mayor Ronald McDougall welcomed Local Planning Committee (LPC) members, State Partners, the consultant team, and members of the public.

Kylie Peck (DOS) introduced herself and the LPC members introduced themselves:

- Ronald McDougall, LPC Co-Chair, Mayor, Village of Gouverneur
- Dr. Zvi Szafran, LPC Co-Chair, North Country REDC member, President of SUNY Canton
- Jacquelyn Kelly, Superintendent, Gouverneur Central School
- Bart Kidwell, Regional Sales Manager, Cives Steel Company
- Brooke Plowman, Manager, Central Fill (Kinney Drugs)
- Clark Porter, Owner of Small-Town Supply, Jumbo's Diner
- Greta Schrader, Supervisor, Gouverneur Cargill, Inc.
- David Spillman, Supervisor, Town of Gouverneur
- Kristina Ayen, Deputy Clerk, Village of Gouverneur (Support Team)

Members of the LPC, State Team, and Consultant Team then introduced themselves in turn:

- Kylie Peck, Project Lead, Project Manager, Department of State (DOS)
- Jennifer Voss, Project Manager, Department of State (DOS)

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained that her colleagues Steve Hunt, Regional Director from Empire State Development (ESD) and Mary Barthelme, Senior Project Manager from Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) were unable to attend this meeting.

Members of the consultant team introduced themselves:



1. Welcome & Introductions

Discussion

- Jaclyn Hakes, Director of Planning/Project Manager, MJ Engineering
- Jennifer Ceponis, Senior Planner, MJ Engineering
- Melia Hema, Planner, MJ Engineering

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained the Roles and Responsibilities of the LPC, State Partners, and Consultant Team:

Local Planning Committee (LPC):

- Guide development of the Strategic Investment Plan
- Support and learn from public engagement activities
- Attend monthly LPC meetings; may form work groups and/or convene working sessions
- Review and advise on NY Forward planning products and activities
- Review, provide input and evaluate potential projects and recommend project selections for NY Forward funding

State:

- Provide guidance and expertise throughout the NY Forward planning process
- Manage and assist the consultant team and community
- Ensure documents meet state and local goals and requirements
- Facilitate assistance from other State agencies
- Support contracting projects awarded

Consultants:

- Work with LPC and state to research, prepare and submit final NY Forward documents
- Facilitate and lead all public engagement with guidance from LPC
- Assist in identification, development and assessment of potential projects
- Manage meetings, event logistics and presentations

Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

2. NY Forward Program Overview

Discussion

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained that the preamble will be read aloud by a LPC co-chair at the beginning of each NY Forward LPC meeting.

PREAMBLE

Each Local Planning Committee Member is reminded of their obligation to disclose conflicts of interest with respect to projects that may be discussed at today's meeting. If you have a potential conflict of interest regarding a project you believe will be discussed during the meeting, please disclose it now and recuse yourself from any discussion or vote on that project. For example, you may state that you, or a family member, have a financial interest in the project, or you are on the board of the organization proposing the project. At this time, are there any recusals that need to be noted?

Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises unexpectedly and then recuse yourself from discussion or voting on the project.



2. NY Forward Program Overview

Discussion

As we continue through the planning process, recusal forms will be required from anyone with an identified potential conflict to be kept on file with the Department of State.

- Guidelines, standards and procedures for LPC members to follow throughout the planning process.
- All LPC members are required to serve and act in the public interest
- LPC members will receive and must sign the Code of Conduct for Members of New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward Local Planning Committees (Code of Conduct)

Kylie Peck (DOS) instructed members to use the Code of Conduct to guide service and actions while on the LPC and to remember **DAD**:

- **D**isclose conflicts of interest
- **A**ct in the public interest
- **D**isqualify as necessary

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained that “**acting in the public interest**” means to:

- Avoid conflicts of interest
- No “unwarranted privileges” in which an LPC member should use or attempt to use their position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for themselves or others
- No “improper influence” An LPC member shall exercise their duties and responsibilities so as to not exert improper influence over other members.
- An LPC member shall exercise all duties and responsibilities for the primary benefit of the public and in a manner where any benefit to the member or a family member or relative is incidental.
- If a benefit is more than incidental, a conflict of interest arises, and an LPC member should recuse themselves.

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained the process for **documenting conflicts**:

- Members must identify if they have a potential conflict at the first meeting in which the matter giving rise to the conflict is discussed.
- When a potential conflict is identified, LPC members must complete and submit a formal Recusal Form.
- LPC members may not vote, or attempt to influence, a discussion or vote on any project(s), where a potential conflict of interest exists.
- The LPC co-chairs will remind members of their obligation to recuse at each meeting of the committee.
- A list of recusals together with the recusal form completed by each recused member will be maintained for each project for the duration of the NY Forward planning process.
- The recusal list will be updated at each meeting.

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained the process for **voting on recommended projects**:

- All LPC members will vote on a slate of projects to be recommended to the State for NY Forward funding consideration
- Voting will take place via an official LPC ballot to be submitted to the State
- LPC members must recuse themselves from voting where a conflict of interest exists

2. NY Forward Program Overview

Discussion

- LPC members must follow the determinations made by the Ethics Officer in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other applicable laws

Key Decisions & Outcomes

3. Program Goals + Planning

Discussion

Kylie Peck (DOS) provided an overview of the **NY State NY Forward Goals** and indicated that local goals will be defined at LPC meeting #2:

- Create an active downtown with a mix of uses
- Provide diverse employment opportunities for a variety of skill sets and salary levels
- Provide enhanced public spaces that serve those of all ages and abilities
- Encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhance downtown living and quality of life
- Create diverse housing options for all income levels
- Grow the local property tax base
- Local Goals to be defined at LPC #2

Kylie Peck (DOS) presented an overview of the expected timelines for key milestones of the NY Forward process and the process from start to finish:

- **APPLY** (September 2024 – March 2025): Communities submit applications to REDCs, REDCs nominated communities, State announced winners
- **PLAN** (April – December 2025): LPCs are established, community vision and goals are refined, projects are identified and refined, LPC recommends projects to the State and participate in the preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan
- **IMPLEMENT** (2026-2031): Final plans are submitted to the State and projects are selected and awarded

Kylie Peck (DOS) proceeded with a focus on 8-10 Month Timeframe between April to December 2025.

- Visioning: Refine the community's downtown vision, establish priorities and gather input
- Opportunities + Challenges: Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities
- Project Development + Evaluation: Identify, develop and evaluate potential projects
- Project Recommendations: Recommends projects that align with the community's goals
- Each community is led by a consultant team to guide the planning process, develop projects to recommend to the State, and document in a Strategic Investment Plan.
- This process helps ensure all voices are heard and projects are carefully considered.

Kylie Peck (DOS) explained the project schedule + scope:

3. Program Goals + Planning

Discussion

May – June:

- LPC Kick-off
- Vision, Goals, & Strategies
- 1st Public Engagement

June:

- Draft Downtown Profile
- Vision, Goals, & Strategies
- Open Call for Projects

July:

- Final Downtown Profile
- Project Development

August:

- Preliminary Project List
- Project Sponsor Coordination
- Project Development
- Draft Project Profiles

September:

- 2nd Public Engagement
- Draft Strategic Investment Plan
- Final Project Profiles

October – November:

- Final NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan

Kylie Peck (DOS) described the different project types and requirements:

Eligible Project Types

- Public Improvement Projects
- New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings
- Small Project Grant Fund
- Branding and Marketing

Ineligible Project Types/Activities

- Planning Activities
- Operations and Maintenance
- Pre-award Costs
- Property Acquisition
- Training and Other Program Expenses
- Expenses related to Existing Programs

Project Match Requirements & Decarbonization

- 25% minimum project match for private projects (per NY Forward program)
 - * *Proposed projects with a greater sponsor match may be more competitive during the project evaluation process*
- No match requirement for public or non-profit projects
- Total project cost must be a minimum of \$75,000 (except Small Project Fund)
- LPC can set high match requirements at their own discretion

3. Program Goals + Planning

Discussion

- New construction, building additions over 5,000 SF and some substantial renovation over 5,000 SF will be required to meet decarbonization standards

How are projects identified?

- Projects included in the community NY Forward application
- Projects solicited through the Open Call for Projects
- All potential projects must complete a NY Forward project submission through the Open Call, even if submitted in the community's NY Forward application
- The LPC will evaluate all projects based on the NY Forward Program criteria and community goals
- **Not all solicited projects will be selected**

Kylie Peck DOS provided details about the **Open Call for Projects**:

- Open Call for Projects provides an opportunity for community members, property owners, and business owners to submit projects for consideration
- Submission period will be open to the public for at least 4 weeks
- Applicants must complete a submission form with required information (available online or in hard copy at accessible locations)
- Simpler, parallel process for Small Project Fund
- We are looking for projects that are ready to be implemented in the near-term, are transformational, and are feasible!
- Release Open Call for Projects: June 17, 2025
- Project Forms Due: July 31, 2025

How are Projects Evaluated? Kylie Peck (DOS) explained that the LPC will evaluate all submitted projects based on NYS NY Forward Program criteria and goals and local goals:

- Eligible Project
- Alignment with Local and State Goals
- Catalytic Effect
- Project Readiness
- Cost Effectiveness
- Co-Benefits
- Community Criteria

Final Slate of Recommended Projects

- The Final slate of projects takes into consideration feedback from the public and is finalized by the LPC
- The total amount of requested NYF funds will have a higher dollar amount than what will be awarded (\$6-\$8 million)

What is the end goal of this planning process?

- Consensus on a recommended list of projects for implementation
- Submission of a Strategic Investment Plan to the State containing recommended list of projects
- Momentum and direction for downtown revitalization

3. Program Goals + Planning
Discussion
What happens after the planning ends? • State Agencies evaluate recommended projects • Funding announcements are made by NYS • Contracts are executed between State Agencies and Project Sponsors • Project implementation and reporting • Announcements are typically made in the months following submission of Strategic Investment Plan • Projects begin implementation as soon as possible Project Implementation • All awards are provided as a reimbursement grant. Project sponsors must complete work before monies are provided • Project sponsors will likely need to secure bridge financing to cover costs while the project is being completed All awards are subject to State requirements, including MWBE goals, competitive procurement, etc.
Key Decisions & Outcomes
N/A

3. Program Goals + Planning
Discussion
Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) provided an overview of the anticipated Community Engagement components, noting that public engagement is integrated throughout the duration of the NY Forward process and tailored specifically to each community's needs, is led by the consultant team, and should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population. Methods • Immersive Engagement • Public Workshops (x2) • Local outreach/Pop-ups/stakeholder discussion groups • LPC Meetings • Open Call for Projects • Online Engagement • Business Survey • Community Survey Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) noted that public engagement helps to craft/refine the downtown's vision, goals, and strategies, provide input on project types and community needs, and give feedback on proposed projects and transformative potential in downtown. Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) asked the Local Planning Committee about important community groups/stakeholders that should be reached out to, community events/locations for outreach activities, effective channels for notifications, and hard to reach groups that should be engaged:
Key Decisions & Outcomes

3. Program Goals + Planning

Discussion

LPC members suggested the County Fair, the upcoming Memorial Day parade and Flag Day as potential outreach events.

4. Gouverneur NY Forward Application

Discussion

Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) displayed the NY Forward Boundary that was proposed within the Gouverneur NY Forward Application and provided an overview of proposed projects:

- Downtown Park Improvements
- 33 Clinton St: Municipal Building Upgrades
- Municipal Streetscape
- Small Business Transformation Fund
- Pedestrian Walkability Upgrades
- 53 East Main Street
- 1 East Main Street
- 47 East Main Street: Small Town Appliance Sales
- 23 West Main Street: Small Town Supply
- 1, 3, 5 West Main Street
- 91 East Main Street
- 30 Church Street: the Gouverneur Museum
- 75-79 East Main Street

Key Decisions & Outcomes

5. LPC Visioning Exercise

Discussion

Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) explained that a downtown vision unifies a community focus, assists with goal setting and defining strategies, provides guidance and direction for the downtown revitalization, and will be used by the LPC as a metric for evaluating projects.

Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) displayed and read aloud the vision for the NY Forward application:

Gouverneur will capitalize on its historical charm, its vibrant and expanding downtown business community, its safe, friendly, and walkable environment, and its proximity to major regional employers to enhance quality of life, strengthen resilience, and increase economic opportunities for both current and future residents. Additionally, Gouverneur aims to attract visitors to experience its rich recreational, cultural, and retail assets, positioning the village as a regional destination.

Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) led a visioning exercise for LPC members to share input on a variety of questions. Input received from LPC members included:

- Full storefronts
- Populated
- Increased foot traffic



5. LPC Visioning Exercise

Discussion

- Something that welcomes you to the community
- ADA Compliant
- Wayfinding
- Destination marker
- Update storefront facades
- Walkable
- Variety of stores
- Welcoming parks

Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

6. Next Steps

Discussion

Jennifer Ceponis (MJ) discussed the next steps for the LPC:

- Review, sign, and return the Code of Conduct
- Public Workshop #1 – June 16 at 5:00 – 7:00 PM
- Release Call for Projects – June 16
- Office Hours – June 17 at 9:30 – 11:00 AM
- LPC Meeting #2 – June 17 at 12:00 – 2:00 PM
- Downtown Profile and Assessment
- Research, mapping, data collections

Visit the Gouverneur NY Forward website to follow along, view meeting summaries, and presentation materials and find out how to get involved!: [GouverneurNYForward.com](https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward)

NYF Program resources can be found at: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward>

Key Decisions & Outcomes

7. Public Comment

Discussion

Kylie Peck (DOS) opened the meeting for public comment.

Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

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:

Melia Hema, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.



cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee

Local Planning Committee

Name	Present
Ronald McDougall, Co-Chair	☒
Dr.Zvi Szafran, Co-Chair	☐
Jacquelyn Kelly	☒
Bart Kidwell	☒
Brooke Plowman	☒
Clark Porter	☒
Greta Schrader	☒
David Spilman	☒

State Partners

Name	Present
Kylie Peck	☒
Jennifer Voss	☒



Mary Barthelme	×
Stephen Hunt	×

Planning Support

Name	Present
Kristina Ayen	☑

Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	☑
Jennifer Ceponis	M.J. Engineering	☑
Melia Hema	M.J. Engineering	☑