

PUBLIC WORKSHOP 02

School District Office Boardroom
November 13, 2023

The presentation slides can be downloaded at: www.MedinaNYForward.com/get-involved.

Attendees

Project Team:

- Samantha Aldrich, DOS Project Manager
- Greg Parker, ESD
- Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Project Manager
- Jeanette Petti, Bergmann
- Allison Harrington, Sustainable Planning Design

Other Attendees:

- 35 community members
- Several LPC members

Welcome and Introductions

Jeanette Petti, planner with Bergmann, welcomed participants to the public workshop and thanked them for their interest in the NY Forward (NYF) program. She explained that Bergmann is the lead consultant helping the Village of Medina facilitate the NYF program, with support from other subject matter experts and representatives from multiple New York State (NYS) agencies.

What is the NYF Program?

Jeanette began the session by providing some background on the NYF program. She explained that NYF is a New York State program designed to invigorate and enliven downtowns in New York's small villages and hamlets. This round, the program is infusing a total of \$100 million in 24 communities across New York State. The Village of Medina has been awarded \$4.5 million as part of the program to plan and implement transformative projects downtown.

The program has multiple goals, including:

1. Enhancing downtown living and quality of life
2. Creating an active downtown with a mix of uses
3. Providing a diverse mix of employment opportunities
4. Creating diverse housing options for all incomes
5. Providing public spaces that serve all ages and abilities
6. Encouraging the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
7. Growing the local property tax base

Projects will be identified through a 6-month planning process. The planning process began in May and will conclude in November with the completion of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which is the report that documents the planning process and recommends to New York State which projects the community believes have the most potential to positively impact downtown Medina. The State will review the SIP and determine which projects will receive funding from the \$4.5 million allocation. NYF grant awards will be announced tentatively in Spring 2024, with project implementation to follow.

Jeanette explained that Medina's NYF planning process will be led by the Local Planning Committee (LPC), with assistance from a Project Team of industry experts and representatives from multiple New York State agencies. The LPC is a group of community members selected by NYS and local leaders to lead Medina's NYF planning process and to determine which projects have the most potential to bring transformative change to downtown Medina. LPC members represent a diverse segment of the Medina community, from business owners, to residents, to local officials. They are required to act in the public interest and to adhere to a Code of Conduct. LPC members who have a conflict of interest with a proposed project must recuse themselves from discussing or voting on that project. LPC members volunteer their time.

The LPC will evaluate all proposed projects based on a set of established criteria and determine which projects to include in the SIP. Projects can be proposed by the Village of Medina as well as by community members. Jeanette emphasized that not all proposed projects will be included in Medina's Strategic Investment Plan. Similarly, not all projects included in the SIP will receive NYF funding. Ultimately, New York State will make the final decision on which projects are funded.

The Planning Process

Jeanette outlined the steps involved in the NYF planning process, which begins with visioning and a baseline analysis of the community, then moves into project development and evaluation, and concludes with the development of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

Visioning

The first step in the planning process is to establish a community vision for Medina’s NYF and create a set of supportive goals and strategies to achieve this vision. LPC and community members will participate in visioning exercises to help craft Medina’s vision. A summary of the results from this visioning session can be found later in this document.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral and on-going part of the NYF process. A Community Engagement Strategy has been developed to plan for engagement throughout the NYF process.

Downtown Profile

The Project Team will perform a baseline analysis of Medina’s demographics, economic activity, physical setting, recent plans and ongoing efforts, and other topic areas. This analysis will identify Medina’s opportunities and challenges and help the LPC understand existing conditions as they stand today in Medina.

Project Identification

Project identification is a critical step in identifying projects that might be potential candidates for NYF funding. Potential projects are identified through two streams: (1) through the projects proposed by the Village of Medina in its application for NYF funding; and (2) through the Open Call for Project Proposals which gives community members the opportunity to submit project proposals for the LPC to consider.

Four types of projects are eligible for NYF funding:

- **Public Improvement Projects:**
Streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, wayfinding signage, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure, and other public realm projects.
- **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings:**
Development and redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not-for-profit, or public uses. Development and/or redevelopment should result in employment opportunities, housing choices, and/or other services for the community.
- **Branding and Marketing**
Downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and visitors.

- **Small Project Grant Fund**

A locally-managed matching small project fund (up to \$300,000) for small downtown projects such as facade enhancements, building renovations, business assistance, or public art.

There are several activities that are *not eligible* for NYF funding. These include:

- Planning activities
- Operations and maintenance
- Pre-award costs
- Property acquisition
- Training and other program expenses
- Expenses related to existing programs

All proposed projects must meet the following requirements:

- Projects must be located in the Medina NYF boundary
- Projects must be able to break ground within 2 years or sooner of receiving NYF funding
- Projects should have financing commitments largely secured or be able to demonstrate a clear path to sufficient financing
- Projects must be large enough to be truly transformative for downtown Medina
- Projects must have a sponsor who has the capacity and legal authority to carry out the project
- Certain projects will be required to meet decarbonization requirements based on the type and size of the project

A total of 40 projects were proposed through the month-long Open Call for Applications process. At the time of the workshop:

- 22 projects were still under consideration for potential funding,
- 8 projects were identified as better candidates for the potential Small Project Grant Fund,
- 6 projects were deemed not eligible for NYF funding; and
- 4 projects had been removed from consideration through previous LPC deliberations.

Project Evaluation

The LPC evaluates all proposed projects based on a set of established criteria to determine which projects should be included in the Strategic Investment Plan. The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- Projects must have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of downtown Medina
- Projects should be well-developed and ready to proceed upon the award of funding
- Projects must be one of the eligible project types described above
- Projects must represent an effective and efficient use of public resources
- Projects must result in benefits to the community, beyond just the project sponsor, such as: additional economic activity and improved quality of life
- Projects must advance the goals established by the LPC and the State for Medina's NYF

The State’s goals for the NYF program are to:

- Create an active downtown.
- Attract a diverse mix of uses.
- Enhance public spaces.
- Provide amenities that support a high quality of life.
- Grow the local tax base.
- Attract and support a diverse population.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Locally-established goals for Medina’s NYF program are to:

- Support Main Street.
- Enhance the waterfront.
- Promote tourism.
- Improve livability.

Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)

The Strategic Investment Plan is the final deliverable of the NYF process. It documents the planning process and recommends projects to NYS for potential funding. Not all proposed projects will be included in the SIP. Similarly, not all projects included in the SIP will receive NYF funding. The State will review the SIP and make the final determination on which projects to fund. Award announcements are expected in Spring 2024.

Projects Under Consideration

Jeanette described each of the 22 projects still under consideration for potential funding through the NYF program, including the proposed scope of work, total cost estimate, and requested amount of NYF funding. Project descriptions can be found in the workshop presentation slides.

Project Evaluation Activity



Following the presentation of the projects under consideration, attendees were able to participate in an interactive project evaluation activity. Each attendee received \$4.5 million in play money to “spend” on their favorite projects. Jeanette reminded attendees to consider the evaluation criteria when deciding which projects to fund. Attendees also had the option to leave comments about each project.

For those who could not attend the in-person workshop, a companion version of the project evaluation activity was made available online and promoted through the project website and Village social media channels.

In total, over 200 people participated in the activity. The results of the evaluation activity are shown below. These results and the public comments will be shared with the LPC to help inform their decision-making process.

Projects with High Support from the Community:

- Lee-Whedon Memorial Library Expansion
- Canal Village Farmer’s Market
- Knights of Columbus Building Improvements
- Small Project Grant Fund
- E. Center Street Alleyway Improvements
- Public Lot Improvements
- Canal Basin Gateway Signage
- Community Arts Workshop and Gift Store (509 Main Street)
- Medina Theatre Renovations

Projects with Medium Support from the Community:

- Downtown Wayfinding Signage
- Author’s Note Bookstore Renovations (519 Main Street)
- Arenite Brewing Company
- Canal View Bar/Tasting Room
- Hart House Hotel
- Canal Basin Park – Option A
- Canal Basin Park – Option B
- 521 Main Street Renovations
- 409-413 Main Street Renovations

Projects with Low Support from the Community:

- Walsh Hotel Renovations
- 424 Main Street Renovations
- Canal Basin Park – Option C
- Canal Basin Park – Option D
- Bunkhaus Apartments
- 433 Main Street Renovations
- Avanti Pizza Renovations

Next Steps

The next step in the planning process is as follows:

- **September 26th at 6 PM:** LPC Meeting #5