

## OPEN CALL INFORMATIONAL SESSION

School District Office Boardroom  
June 13, 2023

### Attendees

#### LPC:

- Mayor Mike Sidari, Village of Medina, *LPC Co-chair*
- Steve Mowers, Finger Lakes REDC, Claims Recovery Financial Services, *LPC Co-chair*
- Gabrielle Barone, Orleans County Economic Development Agency
- Kathleen Blackburn, Medina Planning Board
- Gloria Brent, Orleans Community Health Foundation, MDS Consultants
- Christopher Busch, Orleans Renaissance Group
- Timothy Elliott, Brushstrokes Studios, Into the Enigma

#### Project Team:

- Samantha Aldrich, DOS Project Manager
- Greg Parker, ESD
- Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Project Manager
- Jeanette Petti, Bergmann

#### Other Attendees:

- 11 community members

### Welcome and Introductions

Kimberly Baptiste, project manager with Bergmann, welcomed attendees to the informational session and thanked them for their interest in the NY Forward (NYF) program.

### Background Information

Kimberly began the session by providing some background on the NYF program. She explained that NYF is a New York State (NYS) 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.

Kimberly 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. Community members can submit project proposals through the Open Call for Project Proposals. Any private or not-for-profit entity can submit. Applicants must complete the Application Form, which is explained later in this document. **All Open Call for Project Proposals applications are due by Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Kimberly 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.

## Eligible Project Types

Kimberly outlined the four types of projects 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 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 also 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

Kimberly noted that activities ineligible for NYF funding may be included in the total project budget, but other sources of funding must be used to cover these activities.

## General Project Requirements

There are a series of requirements that all proposed projects must meet to be considered for NYF funding. Kimberly explained these requirements as follows:

- **Project Location:**  
Projects must be located in the Medina NYF boundary (as shown on the next page). In certain instances, the LPC may consider modifications to the NYF boundary. If applicants propose a project outside the NYF boundary, they must explain in their application how the project relates to downtown and supports the goals of the NYF program.



- **Project Timeline:**  
Projects must be able to break ground within 2 years or sooner of receiving NYF funding. For example, if NYF grants are announced in Spring 2024, projects must be ready to break ground before Spring 2026.
- **Project Funding:**  
Projects should have financing commitments largely secured or be able to demonstrate a clear path to sufficient financing. Privately sponsored projects will be required to provide some match using non-NYF funds. Match requirements will vary based on the LPC's discretion. The Project Team will contact project sponsors once match requirements are determined. Projects that leverage other funding sources will be more competitive to receive NYF funding.

Kimberly emphasized that NYF funding is provided on a reimbursement basis, meaning that project sponsors will not receive any NYF funding until the project scope of work is completely implemented. In most cases, this will require project sponsors to secure bridge financing. It is not permitted to request reimbursement for project costs that were incurred prior to the announcement of NYF awards.

Kimberly also noted that NYF funding is subject to all applicable New York State requirements, including MWBE (minority- and women-owned business enterprise) utilization, competitive procurement for goods and services, and project status reporting.

- **Project Scale:**

Projects must be large enough to be truly transformative for downtown Medina.

- **Project Sponsor:**

Projects must have an identified sponsor who has the capacity and legal authority to carry out the project. Sponsors may be public, not-for-profit, or private entities. In the Application Form, sponsors will be asked to demonstrate their capacity by explaining their experience implementing similar projects and/or administering grants. If the project sponsor does not own the property where the project is located, the sponsor must explain how they will obtain the legal authority to implement the project at that site.

- **Decarbonization Requirements:**

Kimberly explained that certain projects will be required to meet decarbonization requirements based on the type and size of the project. Decarbonization requirements align with New York State goals to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.

Projects required to meet decarbonization requirements are as follows:

- New construction of 5,000 square feet or greater
- Building additions of 5,000 square feet or greater
- Renovations of 5,000 square feet or greater if the renovation includes two or more of the following aspects:
  - Removal and/or replacement of 50% or more of the area of interior wall-covering material of the building thermal envelope
  - Removal and/or replacement of 50% or more of the area of the exterior wall-covering material of the building thermal envelope, including doors and windows
  - Replacement of equipment that makes up 50% or more of the total input capacity of the space heating or cooling equipment serving the building
  - Replacement of equipment making up 50% or more of the total input capacity of all the water heating equipment serving the building
  - Replacement of 50% or more of the interior and exterior lighting that is powered from the building

Kimberly noted that, if a project must meet decarbonization requirements, the Project Team will connect the project sponsor with industry experts, including representatives from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), who will assist the project sponsor in identifying strategies to decarbonize their building, improve energy efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She emphasized that decarbonization improvements will reduce operating costs in the long run.

## Project Evaluation

Kimberly explained the criteria that the LPC will use to evaluate proposed projects. The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- **Alignment with State and Local Goals for the NYF Program:**  
Projects must advance the goals established by the LPC and the State for Medina’s NYF, as listed on *page 2* of this document.
- **Catalytic Impact:**  
Projects must have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of downtown Medina and must have the potential to catalyze additional public and private investment.
- **Project Readiness:**  
Projects should be well-developed and ready to proceed as soon as possible upon the award of funding. Projects must be ready to begin implementation within two years after the announcement of funding. Projects should be more than an “idea” at this stage. They should be fairly well-developed, with plans, cost estimates, budgets, etc., in progress.
- **Eligibility:**  
Projects must be one of the eligible project types described on *page 3* and must meet all of the general project requirements described on *pages 3-6*.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:**  
Projects must represent an effective and efficient use of public resources. Projects should produce some return-on-investment for the community, whether that be by improving downtown quality of life, catalyzing additional investment, or through some other co-benefit(s).

Kimberly explained that cost-effectiveness also means that project budgets and cost estimates must be realistic, and that project financing or the path to financing must be feasible. Project sponsors must be able to demonstrate that they can meet the private match requirement set by the LPC for their project.

- **Co-Benefits:**  
Projects must result in benefits to the community, beyond just the project sponsor, such as: additional economic activity, improved quality of life, an expanded local property tax base, and/or the creation of healthy and productive places to live and work.

## Application Form

To propose a project for potential NYF funding consideration, applicants must complete and submit an Application Form. Applications can be downloaded online from [www.MedinaNYForward.com/projects](http://www.MedinaNYForward.com/projects). (Scroll down to the “Open Call for Project Proposals” section and click the link to “Download the Project Application.”) Hard copy applications are also available at the Village Office (119 Park Avenue, Medina, NY 14103), which is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Kimberly walked attendees through the Application Form page-by-page. The first 4 pages of the application explain the eligibility criteria, general project requirements, and evaluation criteria as described above in this document.

The rest of the pages of the Application Form require applicants to fill in the following information:

- **Page 5:** Contact information for the project sponsor. After applications are submitted, the Project Team will contact all project sponsors individually to discuss and refine their projects.
- **Page 6:** Basic project information including location, a description of existing site conditions, the project type, and a brief description of the work being proposed.
- **Page 7:** Identify the owner of the property where the project is located. If the property owner is not the project sponsor, identify how the project sponsor will obtain the legal authority to implement the project at that site. On this page, applicants are also asked to prepare a preliminary budget for the project, including the total estimated cost, amount of NYF funding requested, and other funding sources. Kimberly noted that this budget is *preliminary* and that applicants should try their best to fill budgets out as completely as possible. If gaps remain, the Project Team can assist sponsors in refining budgets after applications are submitted.
- **Page 8:** Describe how the project will be implemented by explaining the capacity of the project sponsor, identifying any partners that will be involved, and outlining the timeline for implementation.
- **Page 9:** Indicate how the project incorporates resilience, if applicable. Also identify any economic, environmental, or social benefits of implementing the project. This page also asks applicants to identify if they are submitting any supplemental information with their application. Supplemental information could include: images of the project site, renderings of the proposed project, documentation of project readiness, previously prepared market studies or pro formas, and other information. *Submitting supplemental information is optional.*
- **Pages 10-11:** These pages are only applicable to new construction, building addition, and substantial rehabilitation projects. (All other project type applicants are not required to fill out these pages.) The questions on these pages will help you determine if your project will need to

meet decarbonization requirements. If your project is required to meet decarbonization requirements, the Project Team will provide you with additional direction once your application is submitted.

- **Page 12:** The final page of the application includes a series of certifications. Applicants must sign and attest that: (1) all the information provided in the Application Form is true to the best of their knowledge; (2) they understand that submission of an Application Form does not guarantee funding from New York State; and (3) they have read and understand all the requirements of the NYF program including the project requirements and the eligibility and evaluation criteria.

## How to Submit

To be considered for potential NYF funding, applications must be submitted by **Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**.

Kimberly explained that there are three ways to submit completed applications:

- **Online:** Go to [www.MedinaNYForward.com/projects](http://www.MedinaNYForward.com/projects). Scroll down to the “Completed Applications” section and click the “Upload” button.
- **Via email:** Email completed applications to [jpetti@bergmannpc.com](mailto:jpetti@bergmannpc.com) or [kbaptiste@bergmannpc.com](mailto:kbaptiste@bergmannpc.com).
- **By mail or in-person:** Mail or drop off completed applications to the Village Office (119 Park Avenue, Medina, NY 14103).

Remember to attach any supplemental information to your application, like site images, renderings, or existing studies. Include the project title and project sponsor contact information on each page of supplemental information.

Kimberly noted that if applicants have questions about project eligibility, evaluation, or other requirements or need help completing or submitting their application forms, they can contact Jeanette Petti, planner with Bergmann, at [jpetti@bergmannpc.com](mailto:jpetti@bergmannpc.com). Questions can also be submitted online using the contact form at [www.MedinaNYForward.com](http://www.MedinaNYForward.com).

## Next Steps

Kimberly explained what applicants can expect next in the process:

- **Monday, July 10:** Applications are due.
- **Within a few weeks after that:** The Project Team will contact you to refine your proposal.
- **August through September:** The LPC will review project proposals and begin considering which projects to pursue further in coordination with the Project Team and NYS representatives.



- **November:** Select projects will be included in the Strategic Investment Plan and recommended to NYS for funding.
- **Tentatively Spring 2024:** NYS will announce which projects included in the Strategic Investment Plan will receive NYF funding.

## Public Questions

- Do all projects go to New York State for review?
  - *Answer:* Only the projects included in the Strategic Investment Plan will be reviewed by New York State. Projects included in the SIP are those identified by the LPC as having the most potential to transform downtown Medina. It is important to recognize that not all projects included in the SIP will receive funding. Ultimately, NYS will decide which of the projects included in the SIP will receive a share of funding from the \$4.5 million allocation.
- Is there a waiver for the MWBE requirements?
  - *Answer:* Waivers are extremely difficult to get and require a lot of paperwork from the applicant. To assist applicants in meeting MWBE requirements, the State has an online database where applicants can find certified MWBE contractors. The database can be accessed here: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com/FrontEnd/searchcertifieddirectory.asp>.
- A good share of the Medina NYF boundary is in a historic district. How does that affect project requirements?
  - *Answer:* Any local regulations that would impact project implementation must still be complied with, including historic district regulations and site plan review.