

## LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING 01

School District Office Boardroom  
May 24, 2023

### Attendees

#### LPC:

- Mayor Mike Sidari, Village of Medina, *LPC Co-chair*
- Steve Mowers, Finger Lakes REDC, Claims Recovery Financial Services, *LPC Co-chair*
- Lauren Backlas, Community Member
- 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
- Jesse Cudzilo, Orleans County YMCA
- Timothy Elliott, Brushstrokes Studios, Into the Enigma
- David Flynn, Community Member
- Mark Kruzynski, Medina Central School District
- Andrew Meier, Hart House Hotel
- Patrick Weissend, Tompkins Community Bank
- Mark Zambito, Orleans County Chamber of Commerce, Zambito Realtors

#### Project Team:

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

### Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Sidari welcomed attendees and expressed the Village of Medina's excitement to begin the NY Forward (NY) process. Local Planning Committee (LPC) members, representatives from New York State (NYS) agencies, and the Project Team introduced themselves and their affiliations.

## Code of Conduct

Kimberly Baptiste, project manager with Bergmann, explained the “Code of Conduct” which sets the standards and procedures for the NYF planning process. The Code requires LPC members to: (1) disclose any conflicts of interest; (2) act in the public interest; and (3) disqualify themselves as necessary if they have a conflict of interest.

To disclose a conflict of interest, LPC members submit a formal Recusal Form to the Project Team. Potential conflicts must be disclosed at the earliest possible time, which should be prior to the meeting in which the matter will be discussed or as soon as they become aware of the conflict. LPC members may not attempt to influence a discussion or vote on any project(s) with which they have a conflict of interest. They may, however, provide objective, factual information about these projects.

All LPC members are required to sign and attest that they understand and will adhere to the Code of Conduct.

All LPC meetings will open with a reading of the “Preamble” by one of the LPC Co-chairs. The Preamble reminds LPC members of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest and gives members an opportunity to do so at the beginning of the meeting.

## Overview of the NYF Program

Kimberly explained that the NYF program 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, led by the LPC with guidance from NYS and the Project Team. 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 LPC and the community believe 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.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Kimberly outlined the roles and responsibilities of the different groups involved in the NYF planning process.

### **Local Planning Committee (LPC)**

The LPC is a group of community members selected by NYS to lead Medina’s NYF planning process and 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. LPC members volunteer their time.

LPC members will:

1. Attend monthly LPC meetings
2. Provide guidance and direction to the Project Team
3. Refine and confirm the Village’s vision for the NYF
4. Identify and evaluate proposed downtown revitalization projects
5. Review interim NYF deliverables
6. Participate in and help implement public engagement activities
7. Develop and adopt the Strategic Investment Plan to recommend projects to the State for funding consideration

### **New York State Agencies**

Several State agencies will oversee the planning process and provide guidance in specific areas. Involved agencies will include the Department of State Office and Planning and Development (DOS), Empire State Development (ESD), Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and the Office of the Governor.

State agency representatives will:

1. Manage the Project Team and oversee the planning process
2. Support the LPC throughout the planning process
3. Ensure NYF deliverables meet State requirements and local goals
4. Facilitate and coordinate assistance from other State agencies
5. Prepare and manage contracts after the State selects projects for funding

## Project Team

The Project Team is composed of subject matter experts in planning, economic development, architecture and other areas who will drive the planning process, facilitate meetings, and produce deliverables. The team lead is Bergmann – a multidisciplinary planning, architecture, and engineering firm that has been involved in all five of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) rounds that preceded this inaugural year of the NYF program.

The Project Team will:

1. Prepare for and staff LPC and public meetings
2. Develop and implement the public engagement strategy
3. Assist with project development
4. Develop detailed project profiles for each proposed project
5. Assist the LPC in identifying key projects for funding consideration
6. Conduct technical analyses of projects to understand feasibility and cost
7. Compile the Strategic Investment Plan will guidance from the LPC

## The Planning Process

Kimberly 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.

### 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 Development

Project development 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 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

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

## 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 advance the goals established by the LPC and the State for Medina’s NYF
- Projects must have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of downtown Medina
- Projects should be well-developed and ready to proceed as soon as possible 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

## 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.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral and on-going part of the NYF process. A Community Engagement Strategy will be developed to create a plan for engagement throughout the NYF process.

Engagement activities will include, at a minimum:

- Two public workshops
- Monthly LPC meetings
- A series of stakeholder meetings
- The Open Call for Project Proposals
- On-site meetings with project sponsors
- Youth engagement
- The project website  
([www.MedinaNYForward.com](http://www.MedinaNYForward.com))

The LPC also suggested other opportunities for engagement, including:

- Farmer’s market
- Car show (every Friday in June)
- National Night Out (August 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Medina Area Partnership

## Open Call for Project Proposals

Jeanette Petti, planner with Bergmann, explained the Open Call for Project Proposals. The Open Call gives community members the opportunity to submit project proposals for review and consideration by the LPC. Submission is open to the public. Any private or not-for-profit entity can submit a proposal. LPC members can also submit proposals but must recuse themselves from evaluating that project throughout the NYF planning process. Applicants must complete an application form and provide basic information about the proposed project including a description, cost estimate, and potential benefits.

LPC members decided to keep the Open Call as unrestrictive as possible to encourage a large pool of applicants to submit. As such, there is no minimum NYF request amount. Projects located outside the NYF boundary can also be proposed, though the applicant must explain their relation and benefit to downtown.

The Open Call application will be available June 5<sup>th</sup> and submissions are due by July 10<sup>th</sup>. Applications can be downloaded from [www.MedinaNYForward.com](http://www.MedinaNYForward.com) or can be picked up at the Village Office (119 Park Avenue, Medina, NY 14103). Completed applications can be submitted on the project website, emailed to [jpetti@bergmannpc.com](mailto:jpetti@bergmannpc.com) or [kbaptiste@bergmannpc.com](mailto:kbaptiste@bergmannpc.com), or mailed or dropped off at the Village Office.

*An informational session about the Open Call will be held on Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM in the School District Office Boardroom (1 Mustang Drive, Medina, NY 14103).*

## Medina's NY Forward Application

The NYF program involves a competitive application process. Medina was one of several municipalities across the state selected to receive NYF funding as part of the inaugural round of the NYF program. Mayor Sidari provided an overview of the application the Village submitted to request NYF funding.

### Boundary

In its application for the NYF program, the Village identified a boundary within which NYF investment would be concentrated. The boundary is shown on the following page.



## Proposed Projects

Mayor Sidari explained the seven projects preliminarily proposed in the Village’s application for NYF funding. These projects may or may not be included in the final SIP based on the LPC’s discretion.

The projects include:

- 1. Medina Railroad Museum:**  
Expand footprint to create a campus-like complex.
- 2. Mustang City:**  
Adaptive reuse of historic school building into apartments/lofts.



- 3. State Street Park:**  
Enhancements including an ice rink, playground equipment, seating, and bicycle amenities.
- 4. Municipal Parking Lot Improvements:**  
Paving, signage, green infrastructure, pedestrian connections, security cameras, and Lighting.
- 5. Small Project Grant Fund:**  
Support for façade improvements to commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- 6. Renovation of Upper Stories:**  
Support for rehabilitation of upper stories of downtown commercial and residential spaces.
- 7. Wayfinding Signage:**  
Installation of gateway, directional, interpretive, and other signage downtown and at key destinations.

## Visioning Session

Kimberly led LPC members in a visioning session. LPC members were asked a series of questions to begin crafting a vision for Medina’s NYF program. The questions and LPC responses are shown below:

- What is Downtown Medina’s greatest asset?
  - Canal (x3)
  - Waterfront
  - Downtown
  - History (x2)
  - Historic Buildings
  - Architecture
  - Shops
  - Businesses
  - People
  - Support
- What is the greatest challenge facing Downtown Medina today?
  - Money (x4)
  - Parking (x2)
  - Walkability/sidewalks
  - Transportation
  - Gateways
  - Space (lack of)
  - Market demand
  - Modernization
  - Negativity
- How would you like to be able to describe Downtown Medina in 5 years?
  - Destination (x3)
  - Gateway
  - Historic
  - Balanced
  - Perfect
  - Wonderful
  - Amazing
  - Thriving
  - Vibrant (x2)
  - Livable
  - Complex (diverse)

## Next Steps

The next steps in the planning process are as follows:

- **June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM:** Open Call Informational Session
- **June 5<sup>th</sup> through July 10<sup>th</sup>:** Open Call submission period
- **June 27<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM:** LPC Meeting #2
- **June 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM:** Public Workshop #1
- **End of June:** Draft of Downtown Profile completed

## LPC Questions and Comments

- How does this process comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)?
  - Answer: The planning process is not required to comply with SEQR. Once projects are funded and begin implementation, they will go through their own SEQR process if applicable.
- Is capital equipment fundable through the NYF program?
  - Answer: If the equipment is fixed in place (like playground equipment, for example), it can be funded through the NYF program.
- Does the State only consider projects within the NYF boundary?
  - Answer: The LPC can modify the NYF boundary to include projects if it believes these projects have a relation to and can impact downtown. All projects ultimately included in the SIP must be located within the final NYF boundary.
- It will be important that private entities are made aware of match requirements as early as possible in the project development process so they can budget and secure gap financing accordingly.

## Public Comments

LPC meetings are open to the public. Time is reserved at the end of each meeting for a public comment period. All comments are recorded. The Project Team and the LPC do not respond directly to comments unless clarification is needed. Public comments are summarized below:

- **Carolyn Flynn:**
  - Important to emphasize ADA accessibility downtown
  - A “career day” might be a good opportunity for youth engagement

- **John Sherman, Gwinn Street:**
  - Is money available to property owners to upgrade their street frontage?  
*Clarification: NYF funding is available for multi-family or commercial properties, but not for single-family properties.*
- **Tom Rivers, Orleans Hub:**
  - The Village has the highest tax rate in the region, while county sales taxes are low
  - Maybe the NYF process can highlight this and the lack of funding the Village gets from the State through AIM
- **Margaret Sherman:**
  - Might be a good idea to engage apartment owners on South Main Street and let them know that funding for improvements is available through the NYF program