

Date: June 27, 2023

Project Name: Lindenhurst NY Forward
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Location: Rainbow Center (Senior Citizens Center), 293 Buffalo Ave.
Meeting Date: June 27, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

RJ Renna (Co-Chair)
Jim Morgo (Co-Chair)
Sammy Chu
Marian Conway
Robert Sweeney
Franklin Cruz
Jason Kontakis
Liz Mirarchi
Alice Cromarty
Joann Boettcher

Not present: Sharon Badri-Persaud, Matt Gaudio, Lisa Kropp, Pat Corcoran, Sara Pesserillo, Anthony Ferlito

New York State

Kevin Garrett, Department of State (DOS)
Denise Zani, Empire State Development (ESD)

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning
Suzanne Goldberg, Planner, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was for the Local Planning Committee (LPC) to discuss an update on the Downtown Profile and Assessment, as well as revised versions of the Vision, Goals, and Strategies. Approximately 5 members of the public joined the meeting as attendees. The presentation is posted on the [Lindenhurst NYF Website](#).

Introductions and NYF Code of Conduct

- Members of the public were reminded that LPC meetings are working sessions, and there is an opportunity for the public to share comments at the end of the meeting or submit comments online at www.LindenhurstNYF.com.
- Co-Chairs RJ Renna and Jim Morgo introduced themselves and the NY Forward process.
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning introduced the consultant team.
- RJ Renna read aloud the LPC preamble for disclosure and recusal.

Planning Process and Engagement Updates

- Ms. Favate provided an overview of the NYF timeline, mentioning the launch of the Open Call for Projects, the recent Pop-Up Event, and the upcoming Public Workshop.
- The Public Workshop on July 18, 2023 will be held from 7-9 PM at the Village of Lindenhurst Firehouse (225 S. Wellwood Ave). This will be the first of two public workshops and will include an interactive component to solicit community feedback on the Vision, Goals, Strategies, and project opportunities. It is requested that the LPC help spread the word about the upcoming Public Workshop via social media promotion and the distribution of flyers.
- Ms. Favate described the launch of Online Engagement in coordination with the Public Workshop on July 18, 2023. This will consist of an interactive “Ideas Wall” exercise hosted through Social Pinpoint. Users will have the option to translate the site into various languages if they choose to.

Downtown Profile and Assessment Highlights

- Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning provided an overview of progress on the consultant team’s development of the Downtown Profile and Assessment.
- This section began with a map of the revised NYF Boundary, which has been expanded to include the commercial uses on S 1st St and W John St.
- Ms. Goldberg provided an overview of past planning efforts, including the most recent Downtown Walkability Improvement Study (2019), Downtown Master Plan (2020), and Downtown Business District Questionnaire Summary of Responses (2022). The NYF process will build upon the Village’s previous planning efforts, as well as recent/pending investment in the NYF area. These investments include Village Square Park improvements, the construction of the Wel, the opening of new businesses, and pending pedestrian safety improvements along Wellwood Ave.
- To contextualize the Economic and Demographic Analysis updates, Ms. Goldberg described the “Downtown” area used for this purpose as the Census Block Groups located within or bordering the NYF area. The Economic and Demographic Analysis was summarized through the following key takeaways:
 - Downtown Lindenhurst has and will continue to grow faster than the Village and Suffolk County overall.
 - Downtown has relatively fewer children and more younger adults vs. the Village and County, reflecting the diverse housing stock, proximity of transit and downtown amenities.
 - Downtown has a significantly higher job density and draws employment from a variety of sectors, suggesting resilience from contractions in any one business sector.
 - Housing stock in downtown and the Village overall is much older than the County, reflecting the age of the Village itself. This could restrict ability to attract younger residents to the downtown, who tend to prefer new construction or updated properties that don’t require significant renovations.
 - Homes in the downtown are relatively affordable vs. the Village overall and the County, though downtown home values are expected to surpass the Village’s by 2027.
- The following portion of the presentation consisted of maps created by the consultant team to capture physical characteristics and existing conditions within the NYF area:

- The first map, Land Use, demonstrated the primary uses in the NYF area, including commercial, multifamily residential, parks and open space, and institutional categories.
- The Transit Network map showed current connectivity within the downtown area via LIRR, Suffolk County Transit bus routes, bikeshares, as well as municipal parking lots.
- The Pedestrian Safety map utilized data from the Downtown Walkability Improvement Study to show vehicle-pedestrian crash inventory in recent years, and the sidewalk condition within the downtown area.
- A map of Arts, Cultural, and Historic Sites displayed locations with historical significance in the downtown area, as well as arts and cultural amenities that enhance the downtown.
- The Identified Opportunity Sites Map builds upon the Village's application and proposed projects and priority sites identified by the LPC at the previous meeting.
- The Parks and Open Space map shows the greater area surrounding the NYF boundary, demonstrating the several parks and water sources in the area.
- The last map of FEMA Flood Hazard Areas shows the relative resilience of the NYF area in comparison to the coastal areas of the Village. The entirety of the NYF area has a 0.2% annual chance of flood hazard according to FEMA.
- Ms. Goldberg concluded this section of the presentation with an overview of opportunities and challenges.
- A member of the LPC asked what methodology and data sources were used to determine future home values in the downtown area. The consultant team explained that the source is ESRI and will follow up with a more detailed description of the methodology used to determine this finding.
- Another comment made by members of the LPC highlighted the lack of parking in the downtown area. LPC members explained that visitors are not always aware of available parking due to a lack of wayfinding. Parking lots are often not visible from the main commercial corridors and there are limited points of access from lots behind storefronts. An LPC member suggested creating more walkways or alleyways to shorten the distance and increase accessibility from the lots behind storefronts.
- An LPC member suggested encouraging restaurants to use valet services, which would better utilize less convenient lots. An example of a restaurant in Patchogue that provides a chauffeur from the train station parking lot to the restaurant was discussed.
- RJ Renna explained that the Village has attempted to implement an employee parking program, in which parking spaces are reserved for businesses that purchase employee parking passes. However, this program did not gain traction, and many employees still park on Wellwood Ave in front of storefronts.
- An LPC member asked if Firemen's Memorial Park could be included in the NYF area to support the creation of a bike a pedestrian path from north to south.
- Another LPC member suggested improving Heling Blvd. by adding public art.
- The creation of an amphitheater in Firemen's Memorial Park was suggested, and RJ Renna mentioned that the Village is looking into improving the bleachers by Village Park, which could also be used to host concerts and shows.

Vision, Goals, and Strategies

- Ms. Favate presented the revised preliminary Downtown Vision and invited the LPC to share any comments or feedback.
- Ms. Favate then introduced the visioning exercise, in which the LPC was asked to discuss each preliminary downtown goal and strategy, as well as project ideas that could support these goals. The following bullet points include priorities and project ideas discussed by the LPC:
- **Goal #1: Enhance Downtown Lindenhurst's connection to the rest of the Village and to the region.**
 - Improve signage.
 - Encourage usage of the LIRR parking lot.
 - Improve gateway from LIRR to downtown (new elevator will enhance accessibility).
 - Create a visitor's station/kiosk to share maps and business information.
 - Introduce greenery and murals around LIRR station.
 - Implement unique elements that make Lindenhurst stand out, such as vertical greenery.

- Create an app that can support marketing efforts.
- Goal #2: Cultivate a walking and biking environment through targeted improvements to enhance the safety and comfort of non-auto users.
 - Improve safety on Delaware Avenue. There are currently no sidewalks, which is especially unsafe for children walking there.
 - Add more sidewalks and traffic-calming measures.
 - Create murals in the roadway which could slow traffic.
 - Create brick crosswalks.
 - Use reflective paint on crosswalks.
- Goal #3: Beautify the Downtown area to make it a more attractive place to visit and linger.
 - Add greenery and trees for beautification and shade.
 - Repurpose the County courthouse and expand Village Square Park.
 - Create historical markers to promote education and Village pride/identity.
 - Create a veterans' walk, which could build upon the existing flags.
 - Add streetlights and more light poles.
 - Improve lighting at the Youth Center, under the LIRR, and on Wellwood Ave near Fremont St.
 - Create decorations that can be used year-round, not just for winter holidays.
- Goal #4: Strengthen Lindenhurst's arts and historic assets to establish the Village as a regional cultural destination.
 - Host more events downtown, including outdoor art fairs.
 - Create more events for families to attend.
 - Raise the visibility of theaters.
 - Conduct outreach and/or mailings for historical education, i.e. street names.
 - Create a "Faces of Lindenhurst" campaign.
 - Improve public spaces for art and performances.
 - Preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings.
 - Create art visible from the LIRR for those riding the train.

Open Call for Projects

- Ms. Favate explained that the Open Call has been launched and will remain open until July 26, 2023.
- The Project Team will host Application Assistance Drop-in Office Hours on July 6, 2023 from 3-7 PM at the Lindenhurst Memorial Library for members of the public that would like to submit a project.
- Ms. Favate gave an overview of eligible/ineligible projects and the possibility for the LPC to decide whether to require or target a "match" from project sponsors and/or a project cost minimum.
- An LPC member asked if the consultant team could provide a list of approved projects from past DRIs.
- A member of the LPC stated that the Village's Business Improvement District (BID) is interested in facilitating the Small Project Fund to support façade improvements for downtown businesses. The Project Team responded that this has been implemented successfully in other communities.
- A representative of the BID asked if they could use NYF funding to build structures for their annual Christmas market, and the DOS representative explained that this is not eligible for NYF funding.

Next Steps

- Promote Open Call for Projects and conduct outreach
- Finalize Vision, Goals, and Strategies
- Continue working on Downtown Profile and Assessment for State review
- Begin development of projects (public and private)
- Upcoming public events:

- Application Assistance Drop-In Office Hours: July 6 (3-7PM, Lindenhurst Memorial Library)
- Public Workshop #1: July 18 (7-9PM, Firehouse)
- LPC Meeting #3: August 8 (7-9PM, Rainbow Center)
- LPC Meeting #4: September 12 (7-9PM, Rainbow Center)
- LPC Meeting #5: October 24 (7-9PM, Rainbow Center)

Public Input

- A member of the public suggested that the Vision should mention that Lindenhurst is a “coastal community.”
- A member of the public asked if parcels by the waterfront could be included in the NYF area. RJ Renna responded that the coastal area is receiving different grant funding and the NYF projects are aimed specifically at the core downtown area.