

Meeting Summary
Village of Lindenhurst NY Forward
Public Workshop #1
Village of Lindenhurst Firehouse, 225 S. Wellwood Ave.
July 18, 2023
7:00-9:00 PM

I. Welcome and Introductions

RJ Renna, Deputy Mayor and Co-Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC), welcomed the approximately 40 attendees to the Public Workshop and introduced himself and the Village of Lindenhurst staff. Mr. Renna then turned it over to Susan Favate of BFJ Planning who began the presentation. Ms. Favate started off by introducing members of the LPC, the consultant team, New York State Department of State (DOS), and Empire State Development (ESD).



II. What is NY Forward?

Ms. Favate explained that NY Forward (NYF) is an outgrowth of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program, launched by New York State in 2016 to improve the vitality of urban centers across the State. The 10 Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) select communities for significant investment to transform the downtown economy. The Village of Lindenhurst was one of two communities selected for NYF, receiving a \$4.5 million award. Through the NYF process, each community prepares a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to identify specific projects to promote downtown revitalization.

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The goals of NYF are to:

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

The four main phases of the NYF planning process:

- Vision and Goals: Refine the community's future vision, establish priorities, and gather input.
- Opportunities and Challenges: Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities.
- Project Identification and Evaluation: Identify, review, and evaluate potential projects.
- Project Recommendations: Recommend projects that align with the public's goals.

The final Lindenhurst NYF SIP will include the following sections:

- Section 1: Downtown Profile and Assessment
- Section 2: Community Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies
- Section 3: Public Engagement
- Section 4: Project Profiles

Ms. Favate presented the NYF timeline, emphasizing upcoming LPC meetings and opportunities for public engagement. She then described project eligibility requirements for NYF funding. Eligible projects include new development and/or rehabilitation of existing downtown buildings, public improvement projects, the small project fund, and branding and marketing. Ineligible projects include planning activities, operations and maintenance, pre-award costs, property acquisition, training and other program expenses, and expenses related to existing programs. Ms. Favate presented a map of the Lindenhurst NYF Boundary, which includes the area connecting the Village Core to the LIRR station, retail, recreation, residences, and more. The boundary captures the downtown thoroughfares of West/East Hoffman Avenue and North/South Wellwood Avenue.

The Open Call for Projects will be the main tool to solicit projects from public, non-profit and private project sponsors. All potential project sponsors should submit through the Open Call, as it provides an open, fair, and transparent process for the LPC to vet projects. The deadline to submit applications for the Open Call for Projects is July 26, 2023, and Ms. Favate encouraged the public to submit projects and reach out for assistance with the application. Submissions can be sent virtually to LindenhurstNYF@gmail.com or hard copies can be delivered to Katherine McCaffrey at the Village Hall. The LPC may consider other potential projects that are not submitted through the Open Call. Project proposals will be evaluated based on alignment with State and local goals, catalytic effect, project readiness, eligibility of project type, cost effectiveness, and potential co-benefits.

III. Lindenhurst Challenges and Opportunities

Mark Freker of BFJ planning presented the next section, beginning with a recap of preliminary findings uncovered through initial analysis, stakeholder engagement, and LPC meetings. Mr. Freker explained that recent planning efforts and investments will be the foundation for the NYF process. Recent plans/studies

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include: Downtown Business District Analysis (2000 & 2015), Lindenhurst Downtown Opportunity Analysis (2016), Downtown Walkability Improvement Study (2019), Downtown Master Plan (2020), and Downtown Business District Questionnaire Summary of Responses (2022). Additionally, recent/pending investment in the NYF area include: Village Square Park improvements, the construction of The Wel, a 260-unit multifamily complex directly across from the Village's LIRR Station, new businesses opening, and pending pedestrian safety improvements along Wellwood Avenue.

Preliminary challenges identified in Downtown Lindenhurst include:

- Physical division North/South & East/West
- Lack of wayfinding and ability to easily navigate downtown
- Pedestrian and bike safety
- Limited retail diversity
- Need for a cohesive identity/branding
- Fragmentation of Hoffman Avenue
- Old housing stock and aged buildings overall may require replacement/significant renovation to attract new residents and businesses

Preliminary opportunities identified in Downtown Lindenhurst include:

- Recent planning efforts and investments in downtown
- Compact downtown
- Community pride and engagement
- Regional transit access
- Open space and community amenities
- Enhanced mix of commercial uses –i.e. wider variety of retail, restaurants, entertainment, etc.
- Additional destinations for arts and cultural experiences
- Connectivity to community anchors within downtown
- Increasing programming and events to attract a diverse range of families and visitors
- Recent and projected population growth among younger adults, who provide a customer base for local businesses and with fairly minimal impacts on municipal services
- Relatively affordable housing to attract both younger adults and downsizing seniors –although downtown home values are expected to surpass the Village overall, they will still be well below Suffolk County

IV. Preliminary Vision Goals, & Strategies

Mr. Freker stated that the purpose of developing Downtown Vision, Goals, and Strategies is to move from a vision that guides the process, to action-oriented goals and revitalization strategies that justify recommended NYF projects.

Preliminary Downtown Vision:

Lindenhurst, a close-knit, coastal South Shore community that has drawn generations of residents to raise their families, start businesses, and enjoy small-town amenities, has experienced an influx of investment and activity that is breathing new life into its downtown. Through strategic public and private investments, the Village will build on its rich history and recent momentum to create a vibrant, attractive, and walkable community known throughout the region as a premier dining, entertainment, and shopping destination for locals and visitors alike.

Preliminary Downtown Goals and Strategies:

1. ***Enhance Downtown Lindenhurst's connection to the rest of the Village and to the region.***
 - Improve the physical appearance at and around the Long Island Rail Road station to create a stronger sense of arrival into Downtown Lindenhurst.
 - Create a greenway network linking parks and open spaces within and near the Downtown, including through the use of the Heling and Neguntatogue Creeks.
 - Establish a cohesive wayfinding system to enable visitors to find public parking and other Downtown amenities.
 - Design and implement a marketing and branding strategy to identify Lindenhurst as a downtown of choice for the South Shore and greater Long Island.
2. ***Cultivate a walking and biking environment through targeted improvements to enhance the safety and comfort of non-auto users.***
 - Implement intersection, streetscape, sidewalk, and parking lot improvements, with a focus on Hoffman and Wellwood Avenues and other pedestrian safety hot spots.
 - Create a biking network through infrastructure improvements including bike lanes, improved bike share systems, and other amenities.
3. **Beautify the Downtown area to make it a more attractive place to visit and linger.**
 - Facilitate improvements to building facades and businesses, especially along Hoffman Avenue.
 - Enlarge and enhance Village Square as a focal point for Downtown activities throughout the year.
 - Identify and mark gateways and civic spaces through improved signage, landscaping, and public art.
4. ***Strengthen Lindenhurst's arts and historic assets to establish the Village as a regional cultural destination.***
 - Support existing theaters to increase their visibility within Downtown Lindenhurst and expand their reach.
 - Assist historical organizations and museums in improving their facilities to broaden programming, activities and public events.

V. Opportunities for Public Input

Mr. Freker presented upcoming opportunities for public engagement, including LPC meetings on Tuesday August 8, September 12, and October 24 (7-9PM) at Rainbow Center (Senior Citizens Center), 293 Buffalo Ave. Additionally, the online "Ideas Wall" interactive visioning exercise is now open for public input at the following link: <https://bfjplanning.mysocialpinpoint.com/lindenhurstnyf#/>

VI. Small Group Discussions and Report Back

Ms. Favate introduced the small group discussion exercise following the presentation. Tables were organized by the four Goals and Vision. Each table was led by a facilitator from the planning team, and members of the public chose which table to join, but also had the flexibility to visit multiple stations. Following the small group discussions, attendees reconvened for a report back to share key takeaways.

The following section includes a summary of public feedback on each board, including transcribed comments.

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Vision:

Lindenhurst, a close-knit, coastal South Shore community that has drawn generations of residents to raise their families, start businesses, and enjoy small-town amenities, has experienced an influx of investment and activity that is breathing new life into its downtown. Through strategic public and private investments, the Village will build on its rich history and recent momentum to create a vibrant, attractive, and walkable community known throughout the region as a premier dining, entertainment, and shopping destination for locals and visitors alike.

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PRELIMINARY DOWNTOWN VISION STATEMENT

Lindenhurst, a close-knit, coastal South Shore community that has drawn generations of residents to raise their families, start businesses, and enjoy small-town amenities, has experienced an influx of investment and activity that is breathing new life into its downtown. Through strategic public and private investments, the Village will build on its rich history and recent momentum to create a vibrant, attractive, and walkable community known throughout the region as a premier dining, entertainment, and shopping destination for locals and visitors alike.

Let us know what you think about the preliminary vision statement by placing green (= I like it) or red (= hmmm, I don't like it much) dots here.

WHAT WORDS RESONATE THE MOST?

- influx - new life - rich history
 - premier
 - unique look/activities
 - unique - eat

WHAT ARE WE MISSING?

enhance the differences than the other towns along LIRR

DO YOU HAVE PROJECT IDEAS? DO YOU OWN PROPERTY OR HAVE A BUSINESS IN THE NYF AREA?

The Lindenhurst NY Forward Open Call for Projects is open through July 26, 2023.
 Download the form & find submission instructions at www.LindenhurstNYF.com or scan the QR code:

What words resonate the most?

- Influx
- New life
- Rich history
- Premier
- Unique look/activities

What are we missing?

- Enhance the differences from other towns along the LIRR

Goal #1: Enhance Downtown Lindenhurst’s connection to the rest of the Village and to the region.

PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR LINDENHURST NYF

Goal #1

Enhance Downtown Lindenhurst’s connection to the rest of the Village and to the region.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS GOAL?

Share your comments and/or place dots below

Emphasize the uniqueness of Lindy.
 *make the sight from the train leap out at the riders.

GOAL #1 STRATEGIES

- Improve the physical appearance at and around the Long Island Rail Road station to create a stronger sense of arrival into Downtown Lindenhurst.
- Create a greenway network linking parks and open spaces within and near the Downtown, including through the use of the Heling and Neguntatogue Creeks.
- Establish a cohesive wayfinding system to enable visitors to find public parking and other Downtown amenities.
- Design and implement a marketing and branding strategy to identify Lindenhurst as a downtown of choice for the South Shore and greater Long Island.

WHAT PROJECT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?

Use post-its to share your ideas below

GREEN DOT = I LIKE IT!
 RED DOT = HMM, IT NEEDS WORK

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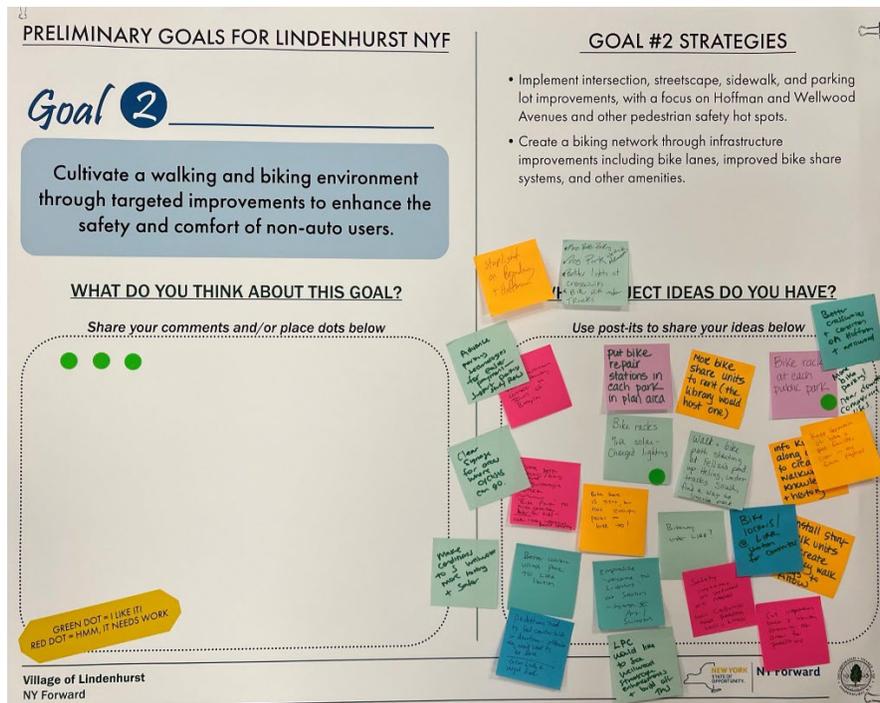
What do you think about this goal?

- Emphasize the uniqueness of Lindy
- Make the sight from the train leap out at the riders

What project ideas do you have?

- Places to congregate
- Greenery and improved maintenance under LIRR
- Add trees around LIRR to make it more inviting
- Painted walking path under the railroad
- Unique signage or sculpture by commuter lots that you can see from the train
- Vertical plantings and green spaces to give Lindy a unique look
- “Rewild Lindenhurst” with native plantings
- Line Heling Blvd or the median with trees
- Reduce vacancies in storefronts near E Gates and Wellwood Ave by the 7/11
- Community garden/playground/public space in the currently vacant Chase Bank drive-through
- Shop Local Property Tax Incentive Program to reward people for shopping locally with property tax rebates
- Lincoln Woods electric forest
- More stores and shops, i.e. a zero-waste store
- More healthy food opportunities would bring people to downtown, i.e. a small-scale grocery store
- Wayfinding signage right by LIRR exit points with a list of downtown stores, restaurants, bikeshare locations, etc.
- Passageways from South 1st St parking lots to Wellwood Ave should be well-lit and decorative
- Digital marketing strategy

Goal #2: Cultivate a walking and biking environment through targeted improvements to enhance the safety and comfort of non-auto users.

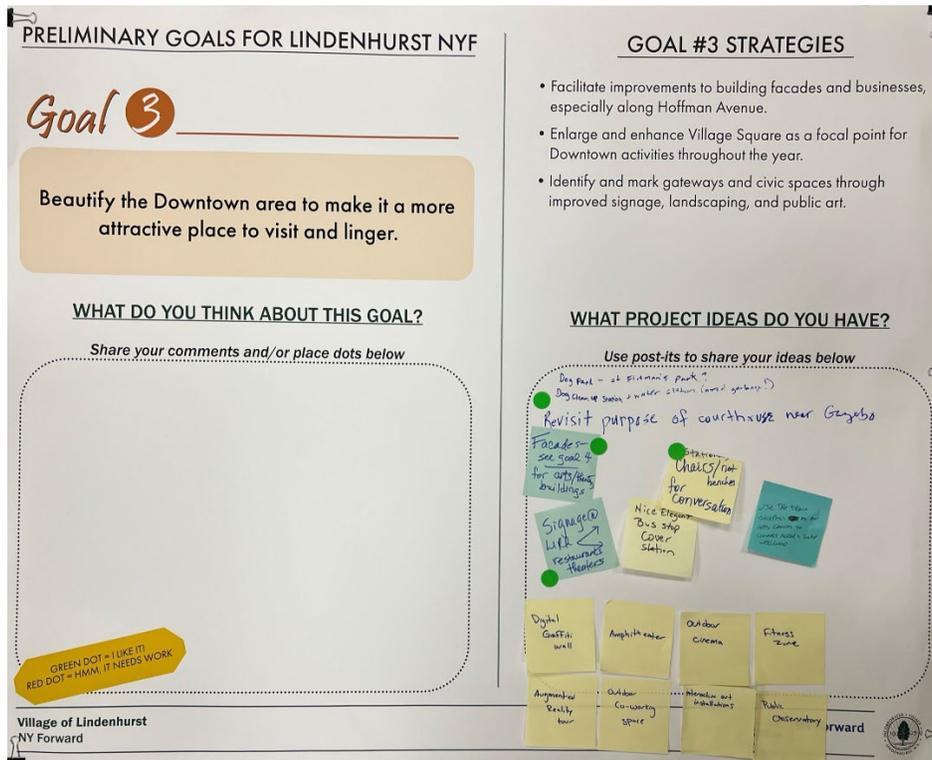


What project ideas do you have?

- Stoplight on Broadway and Hoffman
- More bike parking
- Dog park
- Better lights at crosswalks
- Bike path under trucks
- Advance parking technologies for easier payment- support Parking Study recommendations
- Clear signage for areas where cyclists can go
- Make conditions to South Wellwood more inviting and safer
- Create bike infrastructure that ultimately connects to Town of Babylon
- Create better walking/biking around Neguntatogue Creek
- “Bike Park” to make conditions safer for kids (case study: American Ramp Company)
- Put bike repair stations in each park in the plan area
- Bike racks with solar-charged lights
- Bike share is great, but not enough places to bike to
- Emphasize “Welcome to Lindenhurst” at station with signage or art/sculpture
- LPC would like to see Wellwood streetscape improvements and build off this
- More bike share units to rent (the library would host one)
- Walk and bike path starting at Feller’s Pond, up Heling, under tracks South, to Lincoln Park
- Bikeway under LIRR
- Safety improvements on Wellwood Ave needed
- More crosswalks need pedestrian crossing buttons
- Bike rack at each public park
- More bike parking near downtown commercial uses
- Better crosswalks on Hoffman and Wellwood

- Keep separation of bike and pedestrian facilities clear in any future projects
- Bike lockers at LIRR station for commuters
- Cut vegetation back and maintain commuter lot areas for pedestrians
- Info kiosks to create walkway of knowledge and history
- Install story-walk units to create literacy walkways
- Pedestrians need to feel comfortable in downtown- otherwise they won't want to be here

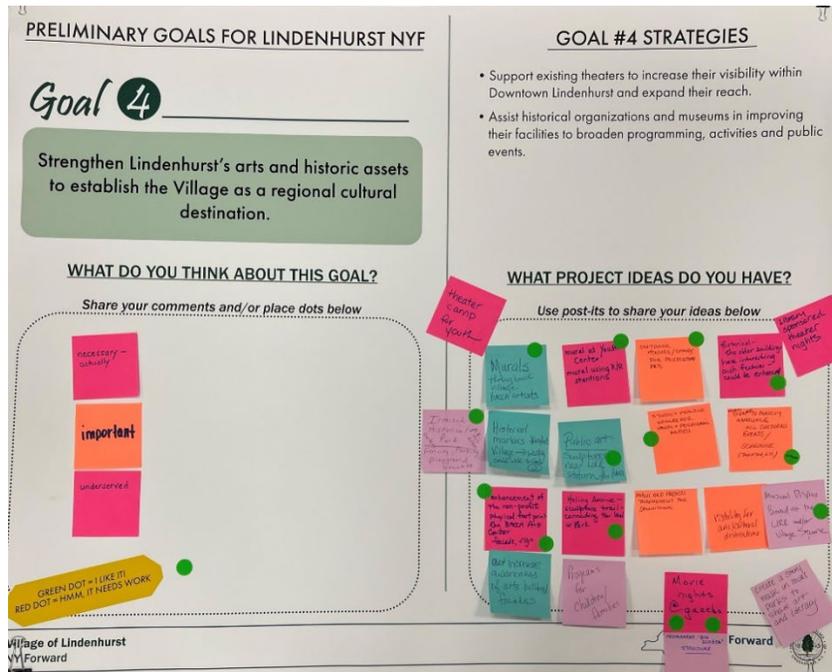
Goal #3: Beautify the Downtown area to make it a more attractive place to visit and linger.



What project ideas do you have?

- Dog park at Firemen's Park
- Dog clean-up, water stations, and garbage
- Revisit purpose of courthouse use near Gazebo
- Facades for arts/theater buildings
- Signage at LIRR showing restaurants and theaters
- Nice elegant bus stop, cover station
- Station chairs/not benches for conversation
- Use the train overpass as an arts canvas to connect North and South Wellwood
- Digital graffiti wall
- Augmented reality tour
- Amphitheater
- Outdoor cinema
- Outdoor co-working space
- Interactive art installations
- Fitness zones
- Public observatory

Goal #4: Strengthen Lindenhurst’s arts and historic assets to establish the Village as a regional cultural destination.



What do you think about this goal?

- Necessary
- Important
- Underserved

What project ideas do you have?

- Theater camp for youth
- Murals throughout Village- BACCA artists
- Irmisch Historical Park picnic area, curbing, fencing, parking, playground, benches
- Historical markers throughout the Village- walking could link to Goal #2
- Enhancement of the non-profit physical footprint, i.e. the BACCA Arts Center façade, sign
- Increase awareness of arts buildings/facades
- Mural at Youth Center
- Mural using LIRR stanchions
- Public art- sculptures near LIRR station through BACCA
- Heling Ave sculpture trail connecting the Wel with the park
- Programs for children/families
- Outdoor venues/spaces for performing arts
- Studio and practice spaces for visual and performing artists
- Public arts projects throughout the downtown
- Movie nights at the Gazebo
- Permanent “big screen” structure
- The older buildings have interesting architectural features that could be enhanced
- Signage to publicly announce all cultural events/schedule (theater, etc.)
- Visibility for arts/cultural destinations
- Library sponsored theater nights
- Musical display board at the LIRR and/or Village Square
- Create a story walk in local parks to share art and literacy