

Date: October 24, 2023

Project Name: Lindenhurst NY Forward
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #5

Meeting Location: Rainbow Center (Senior Citizens Center), 293 Buffalo Ave.
Meeting Date: October 24, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

Jim Morgo (Co-Chair)
RJ Renna (Co-Chair)
Marian Conway
Robert Sweeney
Jason Kontakis
Alice Cromarty
Joann Boettcher
Matt Gaudio
Liz Mirarchi
Lisa Kropp
Sammy Chu

Not present: Pat Corcoran, Franklin Cruz, Sara Pesserillo

New York State

Kevin Garrett, Department of State (DOS)
Rachel Bruce, DOS
Jenna DiMarco, ESD
Denise Zani, ESD

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning
Mark Freker, Associate, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was to update the Local Planning Committee (LPC) on refined potential NYF projects and feedback from the recent Public Workshop and ongoing online survey, as well as to establish matching requirements for non-profit NYF proposals and the Small Project Fund. Approximately 30 members of the public were in attendance. The presentation is posted on the [Lindenhurst NYF Website](#).

Welcome, Project Status, and Timeline

- Co-Chair RJ Renna introduced himself and the NY Forward process.
- 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 and take the public survey at tinyurl.com/LindenhurstNYFSurvey
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning introduced the LPC, consultant team, and New York State team.
- Mr. Renna read aloud the LPC preamble for disclosure and reminded LPC members to recuse themselves from weighing-in on their own projects.
- Ms. Favate presented an overview of the NYF timeline. This is the fifth and final LPC meeting. The next steps include a final vote on NYF projects and drafting the final Strategic Investment Plan, which will be submitted to the State by the end of 2023.

Community Engagement Update

- Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning presented an update on community engagement.
- Public Workshop #2 was held on October 10, 2023, from 7-9PM at the Lindenhurst Middle School Gymnasium. Approximately 50 people from the public attended. The first portion of the workshop consisted of a presentation with an overview of the NYF program, preliminary identified goals, and proposed projects. The second portion of the workshop included interactive stations for attendees to give feedback on proposed public and private projects.
- Ms. Goldberg explained that a key takeaway from the preliminary public projects was a general enthusiasm on the idea of increased pedestrian safety. Comments were generally supportive of the expansion of Village Square, with concerns expressed regarding the noise from LIRR and a proposed café's competition with existing local businesses.
- For the proposed private projects, attendees were mostly supportive of the private and non-profit projects, especially those that included public art and beautification.
- A web-based public survey is currently open until November 3, 2023, allowing community members to review proposed NYF projects and provide input: tinyurl.com/LindenhurstNYFSurvey.
- As of October 23, 2023, the survey had received 1,171 responses. Approximately 85% of respondents are homeowners, ~9% are renters, ~5% are business owners, and ~4% live outside of Lindenhurst.
- Initial takeaways from public survey include general support for most projects, especially those related to community amenities, infrastructure, and public space, and a desire for aesthetic improvements through public art and small business enhancements
- Ms. Goldberg summarized public survey feedback for each project. An overview of public survey feedback can be viewed in the presentation posted on the [Lindenhurst NYF website](#).

Updates on Potential NYF Projects

- Ahead of reviewing NYF project updates, Ms. Goldberg reminded LPC members of key questions that should be considered when evaluating the proposed NYF projects:
 - Does this project meet the State and Local NYF Goals?
 - Does the project have the potential to create a catalytic effect?
 - Is the project ready to be implemented?
 - Is the project cost effective?
 - Does the project have co-benefits?
- The projects should be evaluated on the following five criteria:

- Alignment with State and Local Goals: NYF State Goals
- Catalytic Effect
- Eligible Project Type
- Cost Effectiveness
- Co-Benefits
- Mr. Freker gave a recap of the matching targets the LPC voted on for the Small Project Fund as well as for Private Standalone Projects.
 - The LPC affirmed the previously discussed matching requirement of 50% for the Small Project Fund, citing the desire have the total \$300,000 fund stretch further, across projects.
 - The LPC also affirmed the previously discussed minimum matching requirement of 33% for private standalone projects.
 - A member of the LPC asked if there have been precedents from past DRI processes for not setting a matching requirement for non-profit projects.
 - Ms. Favate responded that it is common for no match to be required for both public and non-profit projects.
 - The LPC agreed that it would be best not to set a matching requirement for non-profit projects to support their contributions to the Village, rather than drain their resources. It was also noted that the public art projects proposed by a non-profit organization have the potential to create a catalytic effect in the downtown area.
 - Mr. Freker introduced a map of the Lindenhurst NYF proposed projects, describing the creation of the boundary through the NYF process and the Village's initial application to the State.

Discussion of Potential NYF Projects

- Ms. Favate and Mr. Freker alternated presenting an updated summary of each project submission, with refinements since LPC #4. The notes below reflect the presentation and LPC discussion. More details regarding each project submission are included within the [presentation slides](#).

An overview of potential Village-sponsored Public Projects was presented

- Irmisch Historical Park Revitalization
- Lindenhurst Greenway
- Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements
- Village Square Park

An overview of potential Standalone Private Projects was presented:

- 197-201 S Wellwood Ave Façade Upgrade
- 175 S Wellwood Ave 2nd Floor Expansion
- 101-109 N Wellwood Ave Façade Upgrade
- 101-105 N Wellwood Ave Belfast Gastro Pub Upgrades
- BACCA Renovations
- BACCA Public Art Project Fund
- 50 E Hoffman Ave – Former Waldbaums Site

LPC Discussion of Standalone Private Projects:

- 50 E Hoffman Ave – Former Waldbaums Site

- Mr. Renna clarified that the Village has not received a formal application from this project sponsor to review the development. The project sponsor is seeking NYF funding for this potential project, but the development application would still need to be formally submitted to the Village and go through the approvals process even if it's included in the Strategic Investment Plan.
- A member of the LPC asked if the sponsor's funding request is intended for general funding assistance or a specific aspect of the project.
- An LPC member stated that it is unclear whether the project sponsor needs this funding to fill a gap. Without a full understanding of the intentions for this funding request, it is difficult to determine the potential impact of this funding.
 - Ms. Favate responded that there is potential for the project sponsor to create improvements to the public realm. She stated that the consultant team will continue follow up with the project sponsor to determine how the funding will be used and if there will be public benefits specifically connected to NYF funding. The applicant has indicated that they are interested in making connections to Village Square and West Hoffman Ave streetscapes, which could benefit the Village.
- The project team asked the LPC if there are specific streetscape/public realm improvements they would like to see included in this project.
 - A member of the LPC responded that leveraging Village Square improvements is the most important element of this project.
 - Other LPC members raised potential public benefits such as public art and publicly accessible parking.
- BACCA Public Art Project Fund
 - An LPC member confirmed that potential art projects will only be eligible within the NYF area.
 - The project team presented the idea of raising the NYF funding request for this project in response to positive public feedback regarding the implementation of public art and beautification throughout the Village.
 - An LPC member suggested connecting this project to 50 E Hoffman to implement a public art project on that property.
 - The LPC agreed to increase the NYF funding request/total project cost to \$200,000 to bolster the amount and quality of art able to be implemented through this public art project fund.

An overview of the **Small Project Fund** was presented

- The project team explained that the Village would be the main administrator of the fund and the BID would play a supporting role (i.e., application review).
- The project team stated that the LPC previously set a minimum matching requirement of 50% of the total cost per project for all private applicants.
- The State sets a minimum requirement of 25% for all Small Project Fund applicants.
- The project team explained that establishing local design guidelines will be important to help steer the Small Project Fund – specifically in relation to future façade work projects.

LPC Discussion of the Small Project Fund:

- The LPC discussed the minimum matching requirement for non-profit applicants.

- A member of the LPC stated that they are in favor of setting a lower minimum requirement than 50% for non-profit projects, since non-profits applying to a Small Project Fund are more likely to need financial assistance.
- The LPC agreed upon a target matching requirement of 25% for all non-profit sponsors applying to the Small Project Fund, with future discretion by the Village/BID while administering funds.

Project Cost Summary

- Mr. Freker presented the project cost summary for the proposed projects. The total NYF funding request is currently \$6,197,892. The NYF funding request for proposed public projects is \$3,450,000 and \$2,747,891 for proposed private projects.
- Ms. Favate explained that the total NYF funding request is currently at the lower end of the State's suggested \$6-8 million range. Therefore, there may be increases to public projects to raise the total NYF funding request.
- Mr. Morgo stated that there are other State grants that applicants can apply for if they are not selected for NYF.

A summary of Projects Recommended for Future Funding was presented

- Ms. Favate explained that NYF is a condensed process, and there are certain projects that are valuable but beyond the scope of this capital project grant. For this reason, the project team has compiled a list of projects recommended for alternative future funding sources.
- The projects recommended for future funding are:
 - Comprehensive study of the East/West Hoffman corridor in Lindenhurst to maximize pedestrian and bike safety.
 - Traffic study to determine potential for a new midblock High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) from the LIRR Station to areas south of Hoffman and a new traffic signal or flashing pedestrian beacon at W. Hoffman/S. Broadway, if County requires further analysis.
 - Future phases of the Lindenhurst Greenway/Walking Trail that connect to Firemen's Memorial Park and Neguntatogue Park.
 - Improvements to parking lot circulation connected to the municipal lot on N Wellwood Ave.
 - The creation of general guidance for facades, lighting, materiality in relation to the Small Project Fund business improvements.

Next Steps

- Ms. Favate presented the next steps for the project team and LPC, including:
 - Refinement of cost estimates (especially for public projects)
 - Vote to determine NYF projects to be included in the Strategic Investment Plan.
 - Consultants to continue following up with project sponsors to finalize project details and cost estimates.
 - Consultants to submit draft and final NYF Plan to State (end of November – mid December).

LPC Comments

- Q: Are all projects reimbursable?
 - A: It varies on the agency administering the funds. DOS often reimburses project sponsors throughout the process whereas ESD reimburses sponsors upon project completion.

- Q: If there are obstacles to project implementation, such as variances and approval processes, will these be taken into consideration for the project?
 - A: A comprehensive list of necessary steps for implementation will be included in each project profile within the Strategic Investment Plan.
- Q: How will LPC members submit their vote on the slate of projects?
 - The project team will reach out to coordinate a time for a virtual vote.

Public Comments

- Q: Does the State vote on the slate or specific projects?
 - A: The State votes on each project individually.
- Q: Can the State approve funding for a project with a lesser amount than requested?
 - A: Yes, at least one project sponsor will receive less than the requested amount to fit within the \$4.5 million funding awarded.
- Q: Will previous Open Call submissions be incorporated into other project proposals, for example, in the case of burying the utility poles near Village Square?
 - A: It depends on the availability of funding, but each project element will be included in the Strategic Investment Plan if suitable.
- Q: Why would the LPC commit to contribute to the 50 E Hoffman development given the crowding in the area?
- Q: What is the purpose of the proposal for a new traffic light on S Broadway and Hoffman Ave?
 - A: This is one of the most dangerous intersections in the Village. The idea is to provide a safe route to exit S Broadway and allow pedestrians to cross. Future traffic studies will investigate this further.
- Q: Will a traffic study be included as part of the 50 E Hoffman project?
 - A: Yes, a traffic study will be required as part of the Village's approval process.
- Public Comment: Request for the 50 E Hoffman project to be taken off the slate due to the condensed timeline of this process and the uncertainty of the effects of the project.
- Public Comment: There is currently inadequate parking for the businesses in the downtown area, which will be exacerbated by the 50 E Hoffman proposal.
 - The project team will continue to discuss an agreement with the project sponsor to provide public parking for visitors to the downtown area.
 - Mr. Renna stated that past parking studies have demonstrated adequate parking within the downtown area. There needs to be additional public education on the location of parking to better utilize the existing lots. Wayfinding elements proposed by NYF projects are intended to address this issue.
- Public Comment: As a resident of Bayshore, walking is a common occurrence in any vibrant downtown.
- Public Comment: There is a series of vacant storefront near 7/11 that should be redeveloped.
 - Despite continuous efforts by the Village, the property owner refuses to improve the site.
- Q: What is the status of the Waldbaums site?
 - The applicant has not submitted anything to the Village.
- Q: A 5,000 sf grocery store is not large enough. When will the public be able to vote on the 50 E Hoffman project?
 - It is unclear when the developer will submit an application to the Village. This will be a fully transparent process, and everything will be posted online and available to the public once the process has begun.
- Q: Is Bisou being sold?
 - A: That property is currently for sale, and it is not confirmed who the future tenant will be.