

Project Name: Mineola New York Forward (NYF)
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #5

Meeting Location: Village Hall Community Center (155 Washington Ave)
Meeting Date: October 15th, 2024
Meeting Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Participants:

Local Planning Committee

Mayor Paul Pereira, Co-Chair

Carol Giordano

Maria “Cina” Ahostinho Palumbo

James Sherry

Gina Buongiovanni

Manuel Norona

Not present: Resi Cooper (Co-Chair), John Doyle, Michael Spae

New York State

Rachel Bruce, Department of State (DOS)

Brandon Gimpelman, Empire State Development (ESD)

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning

Mark Freker, Associate, BFJ Planning

Eshti Sookram, Planner, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was to update the Local Planning Committee (LPC) on refined potential NYF projects and to share feedback from the recent Public Workshop, as well as to establish matching requirements for the Small Project Fund. Approximately 15 members of the public attended the meeting as attendees. The presentation is posted on the [Mineola NYF website](#) and can be referred to for additional details.

Welcome and Introductions

- Susan Favate, Principal at BFJ Planning gave opening remarks and provided the evening's agenda.
- Ms. Favate introduced Department of State representatives, LPC members, and the Consultant Team, BFJ Planning. BFJ Planning is the lead consulting firm, supported by a team of subconsultants with specialties that include economic development, urban design, sustainability, and engineering. The consulting team is working together to develop content for the Strategic Investment Plan.
- Ms. Favate gave an overview of the NYF Code of Conduct, and the preamble was read aloud by Mayor and LPC Co-Chair Paul Pereira. This reminds LPC members that any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed at the earliest possible time. LPC members must complete and submit a formal Recusal form when a potential conflict is identified. No conflicts of interest were reported.

Planning Process & Engagement Updates

- Ms. Favate reviewed the timeline and deliverables, highlighting the team's schedule through the end of this year.
- Ms. Favate then touched upon engagement updates, including a summary of Public Workshop #2. Approximately 30 members of the public attended; There was broad support for the projects, and participants shared ideas to help refine public initiatives. The comments provided by the public will guide follow-ups with private project sponsors.
- Public Survey #2 will launch in the weeks following LPC #5, which will further solicit public feedback on proposed projects.
- The final LPC meeting, in which LPC members will vote for the slate of projects will be on November 18th via Zoom.

Potential Projects – Updates

The project team reviewed the updates pertaining to the submissions received from the Open Call for Projects, providing an in-depth discussion of the projects and related points of interest or issues. More details can be found in the meeting [presentation slides, including project descriptions. The recap below focuses on updates provided to the LPC and questions/comments raised in discussion.](#)

Second Street & Main Street Redesign

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - Cost estimates are still being developed, with the project expected to cost around \$1.5 million.
 - The project team is collaborating with the Village to refine elements such as parking, lighting, seating, greenery, and bollards.

- The plan aims to balance greenery with sidewalk space while maintaining road access from the sidewalk.
- The project team is incorporating feedback received to finalize the illustrative rendering and site plan.

Train Station Connectivity Improvements

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - Cost estimates are being refined.
 - The approach to procuring public art is being developed, with the inclusion of local artists as a key goal.
 - Project details are being finalized, including specifics related to lighting, planters, and the space designated for public art.
- LPC Discussion:
 - Questions were raised about the full scope of the project, emphasizing that it should include more than just what was shown in the rendering. The project team explained that the project profile and cost estimates will cover the full scope, including items not represented in the rendering.
 - It was highlighted that the proposal aims to create a more inviting space with consistent paving, which connects to the Morgan Parc site as part of their development agreement.
 - Additionally, it was noted that the Mineola Blvd. bridge will soon undergo rehabilitation from the MTA, complementing the proposed project.
 - Concerns were expressed about the lack of pedestrian lighting on the bridge, prompting questions about whether lighting will be included.

Public Mural on The Pavilion Parking Garage Wall

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - The cost estimate has increased by \$100,000.
 - Added scope includes maximizing mural area, adding a pergola/shade structure, incorporating greenery, creating a food truck landing and hookup, providing seating, and designing flexible space.
 - The area is envisioned as a multipurpose space for events, commuters, and nearby residents.
- LPC Discussion:
 - The Mayor envisions utilizing the large wall facing the train tracks as the main mural surface. One idea is for a community competition that would determine the mural design, with muralists submitting concepts for voting. The space near Davenport Press could be activated for events during warmer months, featuring food trucks, dining areas, and potentially attractions for children or families to draw people in, especially on weekends. The parking lot, currently underutilized, would become a flexible gathering spot for both residents and visitors.

Wayfinding/Signage & Streetscape Enhancements

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - Cost estimates are being refined.
 - The areas of focus for this project would roughly range from Second Street to Cleveland Avenue in between Mineola Boulevard and Willis Avenue.

- The scope of this project was refined to include lighting, parking meters, and greenery.
- Precise wayfinding details and locations will be decided on later.
- LPC Discussion:
 - It was highlighted that the lighting and improvements aim to extend up to Cleveland Avenue to ensure a cohesive look, avoiding a piecemeal approach. The enhancements are intended to help create a unified identity for the Downtown area.
 - It was also noted that any future developments to the north would be expected to align with established design standards, at the developer's expense.

Village of Mineola Marketing & Branding Study

- Updates/Next Steps: Cost estimates increased by \$25,000.
- Mixed public feedback on current Village logo – Study could dive deeper.
- Longer term strategy: Is a Business Improvement District (BID) appropriate for Mineola?

94 Main Street Renovation – Creations de Belle

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - A rendering has been provided.
 - Professional cost estimates are pending, with a slight increase in cost anticipated.
 - The scope of work needs clarification based on the rendering.

The Bridge – Century Lounge

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - A decarbonization call was held with the State.
 - The overall project cost has slightly decreased, but the project team is still discussing financials with the sponsor.
- LPC Discussion:
 - Questions were raised about the specifications for the number of bathrooms, which was clarified would be included in the site plans.
 - It was highlighted that the current project has already been approved by the Village, while the upcoming project at 199 Jericho (same developer as The Bridge) has not yet been presented for approval.

199 Jericho: Mixed-Use Development

- Updates/Next Steps:
 - An updated rendering has been provided since LPC #4.
 - Burying power lines is no longer required, as the updated site plan demonstrates that there are no conflicts that would deem this necessary.
 - A decarbonization call was held with the State.
 - A detailed pro forma is needed.
 - The project team is seeking more information on the plan for façade preservation.
- LPC Discussion:

- It was highlighted that while the new project has not yet been formally submitted to the Village, it is expected to be soon.
- The building will not span the entire block. Parking is planned on the ground-level.
- The proposal is anticipated to reach the Village before the State, featuring 30 units, half of which would be designated as affordable by the Long Island Housing Partnership.
- It was highlighted that no curb cut is planned on Jericho, and retail space would be integrated into the existing façade.
- It was noted that the submission to the Village is expected within 1-2 months, with updates provided beforehand.
- Questions were raised regarding the definition of affordability, clarified as units priced at 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), designated by the Long Island Housing Partnership. This is distinct from federal Section 8 housing.
- The project seeks funding to preserve the former bank building façade, an added expense that aims to maintain the building's historical character. Efforts to retain historic elements are seen as beneficial, particularly in a Downtown with few historic structures, like the old opera building and 102-104 Main Street.

102-104 Main Street Renovations

- Updates/Questions
 - This project is now seeking to replace all windows.
 - Professional cost estimates provided reduced the total project cost by around \$5,000.
 - A rendering is still needed.
- LPC Discussion:
 - It was highlighted that improving the aesthetics of the area would make it more welcoming and transform it into a destination that people are more inclined to visit.

The St. James Façade Renovation

- Updates/Questions
 - There has been an updated rendering and cost estimates since LPC #4, increasing the project cost by \$5,000.
 - Will require coordination between General Manager, building owner, and business owner. Official sign-off from the building owner and business owner is still needed.

Second-Main Street Mixed Use Development

- Updates/Questions
 - An updated rendering was provided at Workshop #2. The project team has expressed concerns about the location of the pocket park with the project sponsor. It is a Village goal for the pocket park to be location on Second Street. However, the rendering presented at Public Workshop #2 showed the park off Main Street.
 - There are concerns about the NYF timeline, as there are no cost estimates yet and the project scope remains uncertain
- LPC Discussion:

- It was noted that, like 199 Jericho, there has been no formal submission or hearing date for this development.
- Concerns were expressed that the project is not as advanced as others. In particular, cost estimates and details on the NYF funding request have not been specified. This is a barrier for the LPC as this inhibits project evaluation.
- It was also highlighted that while this site is important, it may not remain a NYF project due to its current status. Even if this project does not remain on the NYF slate, the group discussed how the process has helped to facilitate conversations that should ultimately push development forward on this site.

Small Project Fund

- Updates / Questions
 - LPC should confirm whether the Small Project Fund should be raised to \$600,000.
 - LPC should consider whether the minimum match requirement, currently set at 25%, should be increased.
- LPC Discussion
 - The LPC affirmed that they want to raise the Small Project Fund to \$600,000.
 - The LPC also decided to keep the minimum match requirement at 25%.
- Spaghettoni Updates
 - A year-round patio structure has been proposed, estimated at \$106,000.
 - Depending on the approach, it could qualify as a standalone project, but there are concerns about whether it aligns with the NYF timeline.
 - LPC Discussion:
 - Considering the new cost estimate for a patio structure, the LPC discussed different approaches with this project sponsor: Scope of work for various Spaghettoni items could be combined as a standalone project, or the sponsor could selectively pursue certain scope items for the Small Project Fund. The LPC expressed interest in giving the project sponsor the option to decide on the pathway forward as long as they meet NYF requirements.
 - Total project cost could total around \$192,000 or more.
 - Questions were raised about the steps needed to make it a standalone project and how that might impact the process. Refined cost estimates are needed.

Small Project Fund Parameters

When determining the parameters for the Small Project Fund, the following considerations were discussed:

- Eligible Activities: Whether it should include façade improvements, utility upgrades, interior fit-out projects, public art, and/or outdoor dining enhancements.
- Location Preferences: Decide if there are specific areas within the NYF zone that should be prioritized.
- Funding Interplay: Evaluate how NYF and CDBG funding interact, keeping in mind that both sources cannot be combined for a single project.
- Minimum Match Requirement: Currently set at 25% for future Small Project Fund projects; consider whether this should be adjusted.

- LPC Discussion:
 - It was discussed that the NYF area covers certain Village locations that are not eligible for CDBG funding. Such sites could potentially be prioritized for Small Project funding.
 - The LPC agreed that the Small Project Fund should consider the full array of eligible activities.
 - It was emphasized that public benefit/infrastructure upgrades should be prioritized, but projects should be considered holistically to maintain the broader vision.
 - There was support for integrating wayfinding elements, as even local residents may not fully understand changes in the Downtown area.
 - The LPC generally agreed to maintain the minimum match requirement at 25%.
 - The LPC agreed that Small Project Funds should focus on commercial uses rather than residential interiors.
 - It was also suggested that priority should be given to long-standing businesses, as newer ones might pose a risk if they close shortly after receiving funds.
 - The possibility of new businesses applying for the Small Project Fund one year after opening was confirmed.

Early-Stage Project Cost Summary

- At this stage, project costs are still to be subject to change/refinement.
- Public projects are estimated to cost approximately \$3,500,000.
- The total cost for private projects exceeds \$17,000,000, with a NYF funding request of around \$2,242,500. It is important to note that private sponsors are required to contribute at least 25% per project, with many exceeding this threshold.
- The Small Project Fund is NYF request has now been set at \$600,000.
- The overall cost for all projects is estimated at just over \$21.5 million, with a total NYF funding request over \$6 million.

Slate of Projects

The project team recapped the full slate of projects, including key questions about timing, catalytic impact, and the potential for the Small Project Fund. The LPC then discussed the slate of projects.

- LPC Discussion:
 - Concerns were raised about the proposed cost for the public mural on the Pavilion Garage, with several members agreeing that it seemed low, considering wall preparation, scaffolding, and labor. It was emphasized that costs could rise, with priority given to the north-facing wall. The project team agreed to revisit this cost estimate.
 - Traffic issues were highlighted regarding the 199 Jericho project, specifically during peak hours. It was emphasized that a residential use would generate fewer trips than commercial uses like restaurants or banks. It was clarified that the mixed-use component would include only 2,500 square feet of retail.
 - It was also agreed that widening sidewalks could create more indoor/outdoor space for local businesses.

- Regarding the 2nd and Main Street Mixed-Use Development project, it was acknowledged as important but unlikely to be funded through NYF. It was suggested that the project be taken off the current slate.
 - The LPC agreed to remove the 2nd and Main Street Mixed-Use Development project from the current slate, with the suggestion to include it in the plan as a future pipeline project, noting that it is not yet ready within the NYF timeline.

Next Steps

- Local Planning Committee Meetings: 6-8pm at Village Hall Community Center
 - Monday, November 18 via Zoom
 - Vote on final slate of projects to be included in the Strategic Investment Plan
- Final Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)
 - Consultants to continue following up with project sponsors to finalize project details and cost estimates
 - Draft due to State end of November
 - Final Plan is due mid-December
- Online Engagement
 - Public Survey #2 launching soon
- Websites
 - www.MineolaNYF.com
 - www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward
- Final Slate Ballot
 - The project team detailed what the LPC's ballot to vote would look like and how they would vote.
- What happens when the NYF Plan is complete?
 - Community Roadmap Component
 - Project award winners should be announced in the first half of 2025; State makes final selections from the slate voted on by the LPC
 - Public projects will be undertaken by Village of Mineola
 - The Small Project Fund will be administered locally by the Village. Recipients will be selected through a competitive process
 - NYF funding is reimbursable – rather than an up-front grant, project sponsors are reimbursed for expenses incurred

Public Comment & Questions

- Q: Can you let us know about meeting schedules sooner?
- Q: How tall is the Century Lounge building near the Bridge?
 - A: It is 9 stories tall.
- Q: Is it possible to have high-rise apartments in Mineola? What about fire requirements? Should the focus be on keeping buildings low to maintain a managed development process?
 - A: Mineola is a suburb, so high-rise apartments are not allowed. Fire requirements are closely involved in the approval process. The Village has not approved any 20+ story buildings, like those for the hospital.

- Q: Benches should have armrests in the middle to prevent homeless individuals from sleeping on them.
- Q: I've been in Mineola for 50 years, but I struggle to access information online. Can you provide paper copies of information at the library?
 - A: Yes, the Village will continue to work to ensure senior citizens can access information through non-digital means.
- Q: I've lived in a condo on Main Street for 25 years, and the improvements are great. Can requirements include post-project maintenance, like partnering with the post office or having a maintenance team for Downtown?
 - A: A new section of the plan called "Community Roadmap" will address these maintenance needs.
- Q: What is the Village doing to ensure proper garbage collection for new developments?
 - A: Every new development and business must have private carting services. Additionally, sanitation workers collect garbage from commercial areas after completing residential pickups.
 - A Business Improvement District (BID) is considered a potential long-term project, but some businesses have expressed hesitation due to the costs involved. While benches are still being considered, multiple solutions will be explored to address concerns as the project develops.
 - It was noted that the new planters along Jericho create a welcoming, village-like atmosphere, emphasizing that even small improvements can have a significant positive impact.
- Q: Are there plans to upgrade residential streetlights?
 - A: The Village is transitioning to full LED lighting. Issues can be reported through the MyMineola app.
- Q: What is happening with the building across from Spaghetini on Mineola Boulevard?
 - A: A developer proposed an 8-story hotel with no parking, which was rejected. The Village generally won't support anything over 30-40 feet. Overlay districts allow us to manage proposals more effectively.
- Q: Can plantings/trees Downtown be adjusted so they don't block storefronts?
 - A: The Village will use a mix of trees and planters between stores, avoiding direct obstructions. Wider sidewalks will also help.
- Q: How is parking being managed, given the focus on housing?
 - A: Each development must provide 1.5 parking spaces per unit. Current Downtown developments are under-parked and underutilized.
- Q: Can the Village acquire the Pro-Health building for parking?
 - A: The building was sold for \$7-8 million, a price the Village cannot match.
 - A: This highlights the need for better wayfinding, so people know where they can park.
- Q: If a project comes under budget, can funds be reallocated?
 - A: A decision at the State level would be required to determine how unused funds are handled.