

Project Name: Mineola New York Forward (NYF)
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #3

Meeting Location: Village Hall Community Center (155 Washington Ave)
Meeting Date: August 5th, 2024
Meeting Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Participants:

Local Planning Committee

Mayor Paul Pereira, Co-Chair
Carol Giordano
James Sherry
Michael Spae

*Not present: Resi Cooper, Gina Buongiovanni, Manuel Norona, John Doyle,
Maria “Cina” Ahostinho Palumbo, Fatima Carlos*

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 review the planning process and provide community engagement updates, share findings from the Downtown Profile, present State evaluation criteria, and discuss public and private project submissions from the Open Call for projects. Approximately 5 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 will work 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.

Planning Process & Engagement Updates

- Ms. Favate reviewed the timeline and deliverables, highlighting the team’s schedule through the end of this year.
- Eshti Sookram then explained some of the recent engagement completed by the project team, including canvassing local businesses and residents in the NY Forward area and the online visioning survey which is open until the end of summer. The online visioning survey can be found [here](#).
- Ms. Sookram further detailed the results from the preliminary vision survey thus far. The “Ideas Wall” component received 106 comments from 66 individuals and 623 votes. Top categories discussed were shopping and dining (35%), public realm and streetscapes (29%), and transit and mobility (16%). The interactive map received 13 posts from 7 contributors, with top categories in public realm and streets, and transit/mobility.
- Overall, the key themes identified through the preliminary vision survey include overall downtown appeal, green spaces and nature integration, circulation and mobility, local businesses and gathering spots, public safety and cleanliness, and cultural and recreational opportunities.

Revitalization Strategies for Mineola

- Mark Freker then explained some of the draft strategies derived from the planning goals, which were created with input from public outreach. They are as follows:
 - 1. Transform vacant and underutilized properties and storefronts to spur downtown activity and enhance aesthetic conditions.**
 - a. Facilitate upgrades to existing buildings to improve aesthetics, support business operations and expansion, and incorporate a broad mix of uses.
 - b. Leverage significant development opportunities to introduce new, active downtown uses that can serve current residents and visitors alike.

- 2. Foster a walking environment through streetscape improvements that enhance the safety and comfort of all modes of transportation.**
 - a. Implement a comprehensive set of streetscape improvements, including sidewalk upgrades, new lighting, and other amenities, to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - b. Enhance the area around the train station and its connection to the downtown core, to encourage visitors to spend more time in Downtown Mineola.
 - c. Improve the aesthetic appearance of the Village’s public realm, including new signage and gateway treatments, to foster a stronger image of Mineola and support community pride.
- 3. Create and enhance public spaces as opportunities for community events and gathering places.**
 - a. Establish Second Street as the focal point for Downtown events and activities, through street upgrades and new civic spaces.
 - b. Enhance connections to existing public spaces, including through the use of public art.
- 4. Improve awareness of Mineola’s downtown offerings for Village residents, workers, and visitors.**
 - a. Implement a unified wayfinding system to help visitors locate public parking, points of interest, and other Downtown amenities.
 - b. Craft a branding and marketing strategy to broaden Mineola’s appeal as a vibrant, family-friendly destination.

Downtown Profile Highlights

The Consultant Team then highlighted some key findings from the Downtown Profile. *Refer to the posted presentation for further detail.*

Population Growth, Median Age & Age Distribution (2010-2023)

- Since 2010, the Downtown population has surged by 51%, adding 1,684 residents and significantly outpacing the growth seen in the Town, County, and State. By 2023, the NY Forward area had 4,979 residents.
- This rapid population increase has brought about noticeable changes in the community’s demographic profile. The median age of the area stands at 39.6, making it younger compared to the County (43), Town (44.1), and Village (42.1). Unlike other areas, the NY Forward region has experienced growth across all age cohorts.

Household Income Data

- The median household income is \$107,162, slightly below the broader region’s average, yet the area boasts a uniquely balanced distribution of households across various income ranges.
- This financial diversity is likely because of the varied age demographics within the population.

Employment

- Local Jobs
 - In 2022, the area supported 12,428 workers, establishing itself as a medium-sized suburban employment center.

- The vast majority (85%) of these jobs are concentrated in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector. This sector grew by 1,801 jobs (+21%) since 2012, far more than any other major industry sector, given NYU’s presence.
- Resident Workers
 - Unemployment Rate: 3.5% - slightly less than the Village and Town (3.8%).
 - Resident workers (people who live in Mineola and are employed) are not overly represented in the healthcare sector (23%), despite its prevalence. This implies that a sizeable portion of Mineola’s population leave the community for work.

Housing Stock

- With a total of 2,876 housing units, the area has seen substantial growth since 2010.
- Mineola, recognized as a Pro-Housing Community, has added around 1,100 housing units since 2010, nearly doubling its residential stock. An additional 900 units are currently in the pipeline.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of the housing are occupied by renters, reflecting the area's appeal to a broad range of residents.
- The median age of housing structures is relatively new (1961) compared to surrounding areas. This is largely due to recent developments that have refreshed the housing stock.
- A significant proportion of the housing units (nearly 60% as of 2022) are in dense multifamily buildings.

Land Use

- The Downtown Core, Jericho Turnpike, and key corridors like Mineola Boulevard and Willis Avenue are predominantly commercial or mixed-use areas. Central parts of the region are mainly residential and multifamily, with multifamily units dispersed throughout the NY Forward area.

Zoning

- The area is divided into residential, business, and special districts, enhanced by three overlay districts:
 - **Downtown Overlay District:** Enhances the Village core, promotes mixed-use, and supports transit-oriented development.
 - **Historic Overlay District:** Preserves historic character while encouraging development.
 - **Jericho Turnpike Overlay District:** Supports commercial growth along the thoroughfare, allowing for multifamily residential, mixed-use, and commercial uses.

Public Ownership

- Key municipal buildings, including Village Hall, the Fire House, and several municipal parking lots, are owned by the Village. Additionally, other public properties are owned by the MTA, Nassau County, DOT, and the School District.

Transportation Network

- The area is well-served by the NICE bus, with multiple lines passing through downtown, and the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) station located along Front Street, providing regional access. Public parking is significant, especially around the LIRR station.

Roadway Jurisdiction

- Many downtown core streets are under County ownership, while Jericho Turnpike is maintained by New York State. Key corridors, Mineola Boulevard and Willis Avenue, are also County-owned.

Crash Analysis

- From 2019 to 2023, vehicular crashes predominantly occurred at major intersections. There were also notable numbers of pedestrian and bicycle crashes within the NY Forward area, with fatalities mapped out.

Parks

- There is a noticeable lack of park space within the NY Forward area. The only park within the area is the Little League fields. Mineola Memorial Park, located just outside the NY Forward area, serves as a community hub and gathering place for residents and visitors.

Historic and Cultural Sites

- The US Post Office is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several other sites are eligible for the Register, including Mineola Diner, 203 Willis Avenue, the Commercial Buildings at Station Plaza North, and the Denton Building.
- Additionally, there are numerous heritage sites that, while not formally recognized, are significant to Mineola's character and history.

Opportunity Sites

- There are six identified potential opportunity/redevelopment sites and several key areas prioritized for façade and building improvements, offering prime opportunities for development and enhancement within the community.

Downtown Challenges

- There is a limited number of public spaces in the NY Forward area; while streetscapes are critical for the public realm, they need significant improvements.
- The lack of cohesive branding, wayfinding, and a strong downtown image inhibits attracting new visitors.
- Insufficient lighting on key streets hinders walkability at night.
- Visual and physical barriers, such as the separation of the downtown core by Jericho Turnpike and the areas south and east of the tracks, disrupt the flow of the area.
 - Although the NY Forward area has distinct sections that do not directly compete, revitalization efforts should promote cohesion and strategize cross-pollination.
- The small business environment faces challenges with vacant or underutilized storefronts and weak facades, which detract from downtown vibrancy and appeal.
 - There is competition from neighboring areas and a lack of retail diversity.
 - Despite recent developments, there is still a lack of evening foot traffic to support businesses, and there is a desire for more local evening and nighttime options.

Downtown Assets and Opportunities

- Recent and impending population and job growth are key assets for downtown Mineola.
 - The significant residential population is creating 24/7 downtown activity, offering opportunities for new uses and spaces for gathering.
- Mineola has one of the most visible and busiest downtowns during the daytime on Long Island, with NYU and the County Complex providing a stable employment hub.
- The area is well connected to the region, benefiting from excellent LIRR service.

- Mineola boasts a strong small business community, with many long-standing businesses.
- Recent and ongoing planning initiatives, such as zoning and façade upgrades, are setting the stage for new development and increased activity.
- Momentum in community programming is providing various activities, which could be diversified and further supported by small business offerings.
- Various opportunity sites can be integral parts of the long-term revitalization strategy for Mineola.

Project Evaluation Criteria

- Ms. Favate discussed eligibility requirements for NYF funding.
- Additionally, Mr. Favate gave an overview of the **eligible** project types (public improvement projects, new development and/or rehabilitation of existing downtown buildings, small project grant funds, branding and marketing) and **ineligible** project types/activities (planning activities, operations and maintenance, pre-award costs, property acquisition, training and other program expenses, expenses related to existing projects). Refer to the posted presentation for additional details.
- Standalone NYF projects must be a minimum of \$75,000 total cost. The Small Project Fund Interest Form is a separate solicitation process that will occur concurrently with the Open Call for projects less than \$75,000.
- The NYF process will conclude with a consensus on recommended projects for submission to the State in the Strategic Investment Plan, and a broader vision for the Village’s downtown revitalization.
- The final slate of recommended projects, finalized by the LPC, incorporates public feedback and includes requested NYF funds exceeding the awarded amount, leaving the State flexibility to make final selections.

Potential Projects: Open Call Results

The project team reviewed 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 [presentation slides](#).

Second Street & Main Street Redesign

- Description
 - Redesign the streetscape of these two blocks to facilitate temporary road closures for various events; create a new flexible public space for downtown Mineola.
 - Expand sidewalks to be more pedestrian friendly and accessible, supported by added amenities.
- Issues/Questions
 - Potentially focus on Second Street as a Phase 1 for NYF funding; Main Street could follow later?
 - Should coordinate with wayfinding/streetscape enhancement project
 - Address parking and loading needs with redesign
 - Design should maximize other public spaces: Morgan Parc plaza and potential pocket park on Second St.
 - County coordination is key
 - Cost estimates needed

Public Mural on The Pavilion Parking Garage Wall

- Description
 - Large scale mural installation on the north facing wall of the Pavilion Parking Garage, facing the LIRR tracks.
 - Potential for destination gateway signage/imagery that promotes the Village of Mineola
- Issues/Questions
 - Determine exact scale/size of mural
 - Potential to enhance ground area underneath the mural (landscaping, lighting, seating, etc.)
 - Logistics of installation: artist commission, materials, etc.
 - Coordination with building owner needed – Village owns land, building is under private ownership
 - Cost estimates needed!

Wayfinding/Signage & Streetscape Enhancements

- Description
 - Add wayfinding and gateway signage at key locations: Promote Village identity, sense of arrival, and directional guidance to destinations and parking.
 - Identify package of different sign types to be created and installed based on location-specific strategy/needs.
 - Include funding for general streetscape enhancements. Elements could include adding trees, planters, seating; removing cluttered parking sign poles; potential sidewalk resurfacing in certain areas.
- Issues/Questions
 - Need to coordinate signage with efforts underway.
 - Detailed signage/wayfinding strategy needs to be developed with locations determined.
 - Where should other general streetscape enhancements be applied for the purposes of NYF funding – i.e. downtown core or area-wide? Are certain focused treatments preferred?
 - Should coordinate with all other public projects.

Train Station Area Improvements

- Description
 - Create safer, more enjoyable pedestrian connectivity from the station to Second Street/downtown core (focus on north side of tracks).
 - Encourage alternative routes that avoid Mineola Blvd.-Second street intersection. Target improvements at the Mineola Blvd. Bridge underpasses, and Front Street.
 - Incorporate elements that promote a stronger sense of arrival and comfort for station users.
- Issues/Questions
 - Exact areas for intervention need to be defined.
 - Coordinate with wayfinding efforts.
 - Analyze potential parking changes related to design changes.
 - Ensure changes promote small businesses and positive uses

94 Main Street Renovation – Creations de Belle

- Description
 - Improvements to existing mixed-use building with active small business and two apartments above.
 - Façade enhancements: new windows, brick and vinyl
 - Interior improvements: Flooring upgrades, drop ceiling in retail space. New AC.
 - New Roof
- Issues/Questions
 - Are apartments currently occupied? Are any interior improvements for these spaces proposed?
 - More façade treatment details desired – i.e., extent of brickwork vs. vinyl.
 - Refined cost estimates will be needed

The Bridge – Century Lounge

- Description
 - 13,000 SF multi-function event venue and entertainment space. Ground-floor space of The Bridge development.
 - Project seen as a destination anchor for the downtown, providing a venue for gathering and arts and cultural events.
 - When events are not taking place, the space would operate as a publicly accessible “lounge,” with flexible space for community uses.
 - Potential economic catalyst for Mineola.
- Issues/Questions
 - What are the details on how this space would be managed; How will public access look when events are not taking place?
 - How would the buildout of this space look in coordination with The Bridge?
 - Timing for NYF funding?

199 Jericho: Mixed-Use Development

- Description
 - Proposed 3,949 SF mixed-use building on a nearly 0.5-acre parcel with frontage on Jericho Blvd, Mineola Blvd, and Washington Ave.
 - Design prioritizes preservation of historic bank building facades.
 - 32 residential units (4 affordable units); 2,685 SF retail space.
 - Applicant anticipates submitting plans to Village in next ~2 months.
- Issues/Questions
 - Potential for public realm improvements?
 - Goal to break ground in 10 months - NYF timing alignment
 - Detailed cost estimates needed

Leal Properties: Multi-Site Renovations

- Description
 - Improvements to a series of buildings with the same owner: 102 Main Street, Mineola; 210 Willis Avenue, Mineola; 212 Willis Avenue, Mineola; 225 Willis Avenue, Mineola; 262 Jericho Turnpike, Mineola
 - Mix of façade work, new windows, upgraded entrances, exterior walkways, signage, lighting
- Issues/Questions
 - No cost estimates provided

- Uncertainty whether multi-sites can be bundled as one project, more details are needed.
- Potential for a mix of standalone projects and Small Project Fund sites, based on scope? For example – could 210 Willis and 212 Willis be combined as one project?

Bike Share Program

- Description
 - Phase 1 of a bike share program that would focus on adding bike racks/docks and publicly accessible bikes at key locations: Mineola Station, Library, County Complex, Jericho Turnpike.
- Issues/Questions
 - NYF would not cover ongoing operations/maintenance; operational details of program are unclear at this stage.
 - Project would need a corporate or public sponsor for implementation.
 - Costs would likely be higher – no matching funds designated at this time.
 - Opportunity to keep long-term goal of improved biking conditions in mind – timing of this project might not be right

Small Project Fund

- The small project fund is intended for projects less than \$75,000.
- LPC can vote to increase size of the Small Project Fund from \$300,000 up to \$600,000 but demand must be demonstrated
- 6+ letters of Interest for the Small Project fund were received by a handful of small businesses, including Oak and Orange, PS Burger, Tsontos Furs, Kucks Deli, Spaghetini, and for a community mural on a residential building.
- Scopes of work include façade enhancements, murals, utilities (HVAC, water heater, etc.)
- Local demand has been demonstrated and will continue to be monitored given the application deadline extension; the LPC will need to consider the total NYF funding allotted, taking into account other projects on the table.

Next Steps

- LPC Homework
 - Review project forms on Google Drive
 - Share comments via Handout
- Local Planning Committee Meetings: 6-8pm @ Village Hall Community Center
 - Monday, September 9
 - Monday, October 14 – Date to be changed?
 - Monday, November 4
- Public Workshops
 - Public Workshop #2 (Late September/Early October – Date TBD)
- Open Call for Projects
 - Final Deadline – August 19th
- Online Engagement
 - Ideas Wall and Interactive Map – online through August
- Websites
 - www.MineolaNYF.com
 - www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward
- Key Stakeholder Interviews

- Throughout the process

LPC Questions + Comments

- Q: Can you look into the vacancies in the Downtown Areas?
 - A: Yes, the project team will look into this.
- Q: Regarding the Leal properties, can we independently move these into the Small Project Fund?
 - A: Based on follow-up with the sponsor and a better understanding of the scope of work at each site, most or all these sites would likely be candidates for the Small Project Fund.
- Q: Does the match percentage need to be applied to all projects?
 - A: The 25% minimum match percentage applies to private sector projects and is required. The LPC has the discretion to raise this percentage if deemed necessary.
- Q: As we review these projects, should we focus on maximizing impact by concentrating efforts in the Downtown Core, or should we distribute resources to include Jericho and Willis as well?
 - A: This is left to the discretion of the LPC.
- I want to reinforce the goals of the NYF program and clarify what the Village is permitted to do with the funds. The State is essentially "driving the bus," and the Village is following the State's guidelines and directives.

Public Questions + Comments

- Q: Is it possible to get copies of the maps to review?
 - A: Yes! They can be found on the [presentation slides on the website](#).