

**Village of Mineola NY Forward**  
Public Workshop #1 Meeting Summary

**Meeting Summary**  
**Village of Mineola NY Forward**  
**Public Workshop #1**  
**Village Hall Community Center (155 Washington Ave)**  
**May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**  
**6:00-8:00 PM**

**I. Welcome**

Mineola Mayor Paul Pereira, who is also the Co-Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC), welcomed approximately 30 attendees to the public workshop and provided opening remarks. Mayor Pereira then handed the presentation over to Susan Favate, Principal of BFJ Planning, who introduced the members of the LPC, consultant team, and representatives from the New York State Department of State (DOS) and Empire State Development (ESD).



*Mayor Pereira delivering welcome remarks*

## **Village of Mineola NY Forward**

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#### **NY Forward (NYF) Program Overview**

Ms. Favate explained that NY Forward is an extension of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program, which was launched by New York State in 2016 to enhance the vitality of urban centers statewide. NY Forward focuses on smaller downtown communities. The 10 Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) select communities for significant investments to transform their downtown economies. The Village of Mineola was one of two Long Island communities chosen for this round of NY Forward, receiving a \$4.5 million award. Through the NY Forward process, each community develops a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to identify specific projects aimed at promoting downtown revitalization.

The State's goals for NY Forward 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

Ms. Favate then outlined the NY Forward process from start to finish, beginning with the Village's application period, which ran from September 2023 to March 2024. The current phase, spanning from April 2024 to December 2024, involves establishing the LPC, refining the community vision and goals, identifying and refining projects, and having the LPC recommend projects to the State. The implementation phase, from 2025 to 2030, will see the selection of projects by the State, awarding of contracts, and implementation.

Ms. Favate explained that the NY Forward boundary defines the area for potential projects. It is generally outlined by Old Country Road, Jericho Turnpike between Saville Road and Roslyn Road, and Mineola Boulevard east to the LIRR tracks. This boundary includes key north-south commercial corridors such as Willis Avenue and Mineola Boulevard, and is centered around the core, transit-oriented village downtown (TOD). All NYF projects must be within this boundary to ensure that development is concentrated to key economic corridors, to maximize catalytic impacts.

Ms. Favate then introduced Mark Freker, BFJ Planning Associate, to discuss the planning process. He detailed the timeframe of 8-9 months, from April to December 2024, during which the goals are to:

- Refine the community's future vision.
- Establish priorities and gather input.
- Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities.
- Identify, develop, and evaluate potential projects.
- Recommend projects that align with the community's goals.

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*Mark Freker, Associate at BFJ Planning, explaining the NY Forward planning process*

Each community is led by a consultant team (in this case, BFJ Planning) to guide the planning process, develop projects to recommend to the State, and document them in an SIP. This plan includes a vision for the downtown and a catalog of transformative projects based on community outreach and input, forming the foundation for immediate and ongoing project implementation. The consultant team develops a plan with four sections:

- Downtown Profile and Assessment
- Community Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies
- Public Engagement
- Project Profiles

Mr. Freker also reviewed the timeline, highlighting future LPC meetings, the Open Call for Projects, the timeline for stakeholder engagement, and various visioning and community surveys that will help inform and shape the plan. Next, Mr. Freker covered the types of eligible projects:

1. Public Improvement Projects
2. New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings
3. Small Project Grant Fund
4. Branding and Marketing

Projects that are ineligible for NY Forward funding are:

- Planning Activities

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- Operations and Maintenance
- Pre-award Costs
- Property Acquisition
- Training and Other Program Expenses
- Expenses related to Existing Programs

The Open Call for Projects will be the main tool to solicit projects from public, nonprofit and private project sponsors. All potential project sponsors should submit through the Open Call, which will begin in mid- to late-June, and wrap up toward the end of July. Mr. Freker encouraged the public to submit projects and reach out for assistance with the application. The LPC may consider other potential projects that are submitted slightly later in the process. 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.

Mr. Freker also covered details on NY Forward project requirements, including a minimum 25% project match from private project sponsors, minimum total project cost of \$75,000, and the Small Project Fund, which is a separate solicitation process that will occur concurrently with the Open Call. NYF communities can increase the Small Project Fund from \$300,000 up to \$600,000 with demonstrated demand.

The end goal of the planning process is to:

- Reach consensus on a recommended list of projects for implementation.
- Submit an SIP to the State with the recommended slate of projects.
- Generate momentum and direction for downtown revitalization.

With public input in mind, the LPC will vote on the final slate of projects for inclusion in the SIP. The total dollar amount of requested NYF funds will exceed \$4.5 million, and the State will have the final say on which projects are implemented. After the planning process concludes, State agencies will evaluate the recommended projects, funding announcements will be made by NYS, and project implementation and reporting will follow. Announcements are anticipated to be made in early 2025.

## **II. Preliminary Mineola Vision and Goals, Challenges & Opportunities**

Eshti Sookram, Planner at BFJ Planning, discussed the preliminary vision and goals, along with challenges and opportunities identified through the Village's NY Forward application and the planning team's initial research. During the open house portion of the evening's meeting, attendees had the opportunity to share their thoughts on the draft vision and goals. Ms. Sookram explained that the purpose of developing the Downtown Vision, Goals, and Strategies is to transition from a guiding vision to action-oriented goals and revitalization strategies that justify the recommended NYF projects.

### **Preliminary Downtown Vision:**

*Mineola will be a thriving downtown destination for residents, workers, and guests, with vibrant shops, restaurants, and unique spaces to gather for entertainment and community events. As the official seat of Nassau County, and a central Long Island hub for employment and transit, downtown Mineola is poised to become the "go-to" place that serves all local needs, while attracting visitors into its safe, pleasant, walkable, and welcoming community.*

### **Preliminary Downtown Goals, Issues and Opportunities:**

- 1. Transform vacant and underutilized properties and storefronts to spur downtown activity and enhance aesthetic conditions.**
  - Challenges & Opportunities
    - Visible and active downtown during daytime hours (opportunity), but limited evening foot traffic (challenge).
    - Need to provide amenities for workers, visitors, and residents alike (opportunity).
    - Vacant storefronts and sites (both challenge and opportunity).
    - Residents leaving downtown Mineola for shopping and entertainment (challenge).
    - Ongoing need for facade upgrades
- 2. Foster a walking environment through streetscape improvements that enhance the safety and comfort of all modes of transportation.**
  - Challenges & Opportunities
    - Strong access to regional transit and road networks (opportunity).
    - Recent investments at the LIRR station and Village parking garages (opportunity).
    - Narrow, cluttered sidewalks that limit pedestrian movement, outdoor dining opportunities (challenge).
    - Heavily trafficked intersections that can be difficult for pedestrians and drivers alike (challenge).
    - County/State jurisdiction of roadways requires coordination for upgrades (challenge and opportunity).

**3. Create and enhance public spaces as opportunities for community events and gathering places.**

- Challenges & Opportunities
  - Success of new downtown events shows demand for more activity (opportunity).
  - Few public spaces for residents and visitors to gather, limiting potential for more events (challenge).
  - Scarcity of public seating and other refuge areas, reducing pedestrian comfort (challenge).

**4. Improve awareness of Mineola's downtown offerings for Village residents, workers, and visitors.**

- Challenges & Opportunities
  - Village lacks cohesive branding, wayfinding, and downtown signage (challenge).
  - Inadequate lighting, large utility poles, and sign clutter create visual and physical barriers (challenge).
  - Opportunities for public art to enhance public spaces and reflect community spirit (opportunity).

**III. Opportunities for Public Input**

Ms. Sookram then highlighted upcoming public engagement opportunities:

**Local Planning Committee Meetings**

6-8pm at Village Hall Community Center

- Monday, June 17, 2024
- Monday, August 5, 2024
- Monday, September 9, 2024
- Monday, October 14, 2024

**Public Workshops**

- Second Public Workshop (Fall – Date TBD)

**Open Call for Projects**

- Will launch late June, after LPC Meeting #2 (Date TBD)

**Online Engagement**

- [Ideas Wall and Interactive Map](#) now on the [project website](#)

**Websites**

- [www.MineolaNYF.com](http://www.MineolaNYF.com)
- [www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward](http://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward)

**Key Stakeholder Interviews**

- Throughout the process

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**IV. Open House**

Ms. Sookram introduced the open house, where boards displayed the draft vision and goals, the project study area, and general information about the NY Forward process. Members of the public made comments on sticky notes to further refine the vision and goals and placed green (support) and red (concern/disagreement) stickers in response to draft content presented on the boards. Members of the public were also encouraged to record ideas for potential projects and downtown areas that need improvement. These boards were facilitated by members of the planning team, who were available to answer questions and gather input from the public. In addition to project ideas and opportunities for downtown improvements, a key takeaway from the open house is that members of the public generally supported the proposed vision and goals.



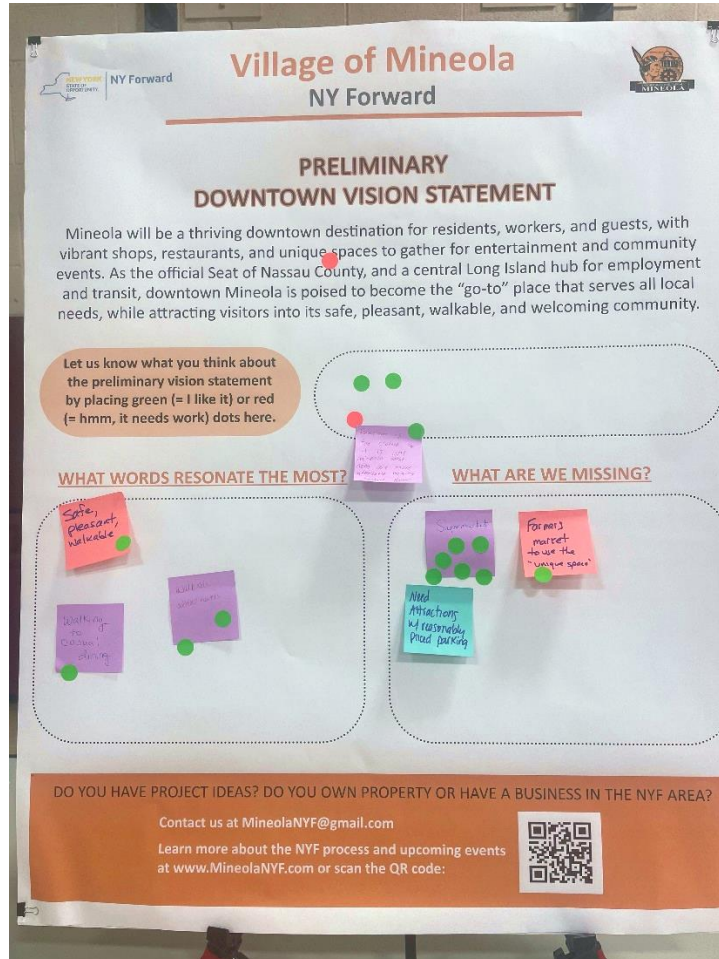
*Planning team and residents during Open House*

# Village of Mineola NY Forward

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

### Preliminary Downtown Vision:



#### What words resonate the most?

- Safe, pleasant, walkable
- Walking to casual dining
- Walkable
- Attract visitors

#### What are we missing?

- Supermarket
- Farmers market to use the “unique space”
- Need attractions w/ reasonably priced parking
- Downtown is too cluttered, and Mineola doesn’t need any more affordable housing



**Goal #1: Transform vacant and underutilized properties and storefronts to spur downtown activity and enhance aesthetic conditions.**

**PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR MINEOLA NYF**

**Goal 1**

Transform vacant and underutilized properties and storefronts to spur downtown activity and enhance aesthetic conditions.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS GOAL?**  
Share your comments and/or place dots below

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

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- Visible and active downtown during daytime hours (opportunity), but limited evening foot traffic (challenge).
- Need to provide amenities for workers, visitors, and residents alike (opportunity).
- Vacant storefronts and sites (both challenge and opportunity).
- Residents leaving downtown Mineola for shopping/entertainment (challenge).
- Ongoing need for facade upgrades (challenge and opportunity).

**WHAT PROJECT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?**  
Use post-its to share your ideas below

Sticky notes include:  
 - "Excellent goal - providing employment for all abilities"  
 - "Great idea - would like to be able to go to dinner in Mineola vs Garden City"  
 - "What are landowner intentions? How do they become transparent?"  
 - "Need a public inventory/map of owners"  
 - "Good idea, ultimately sidewalks and greenery need work too. Because most people can just go to Garden City for shopping"  
 - "Do need to keep safety in mind"  
 - "Property owners need to get on board; too many empty storefronts since COVID"  
 - "Mineola-specific restaurant week; encourage locals to explore places in our own backyard"  
 - "Pocket park in downtown to encourage community feel"

Village of Mineola NY Forward  
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY NY Forward MINEOLA

Preliminary Goal 1 for Mineola NY Forward

What project ideas do you have?

- Excellent goal – providing employment for all abilities
- Great idea—would like to be able to go to dinner in Mineola vs Garden City
- What are landowner intentions? How do they become transparent?
- Need a public inventory/map of owners
- Good idea, ultimately sidewalks and greenery need work too. Because most people can just go to Garden City for shopping
- Do need to keep safety in mind
- Property owners need to get on board; too many empty storefronts since COVID
- Mineola-specific restaurant week; encourage locals to explore places in our own backyard
- Pocket park in downtown to encourage community feel

**Goal #2: Foster a walking environment through streetscape improvements that enhance the safety and comfort of all modes of transportation.**

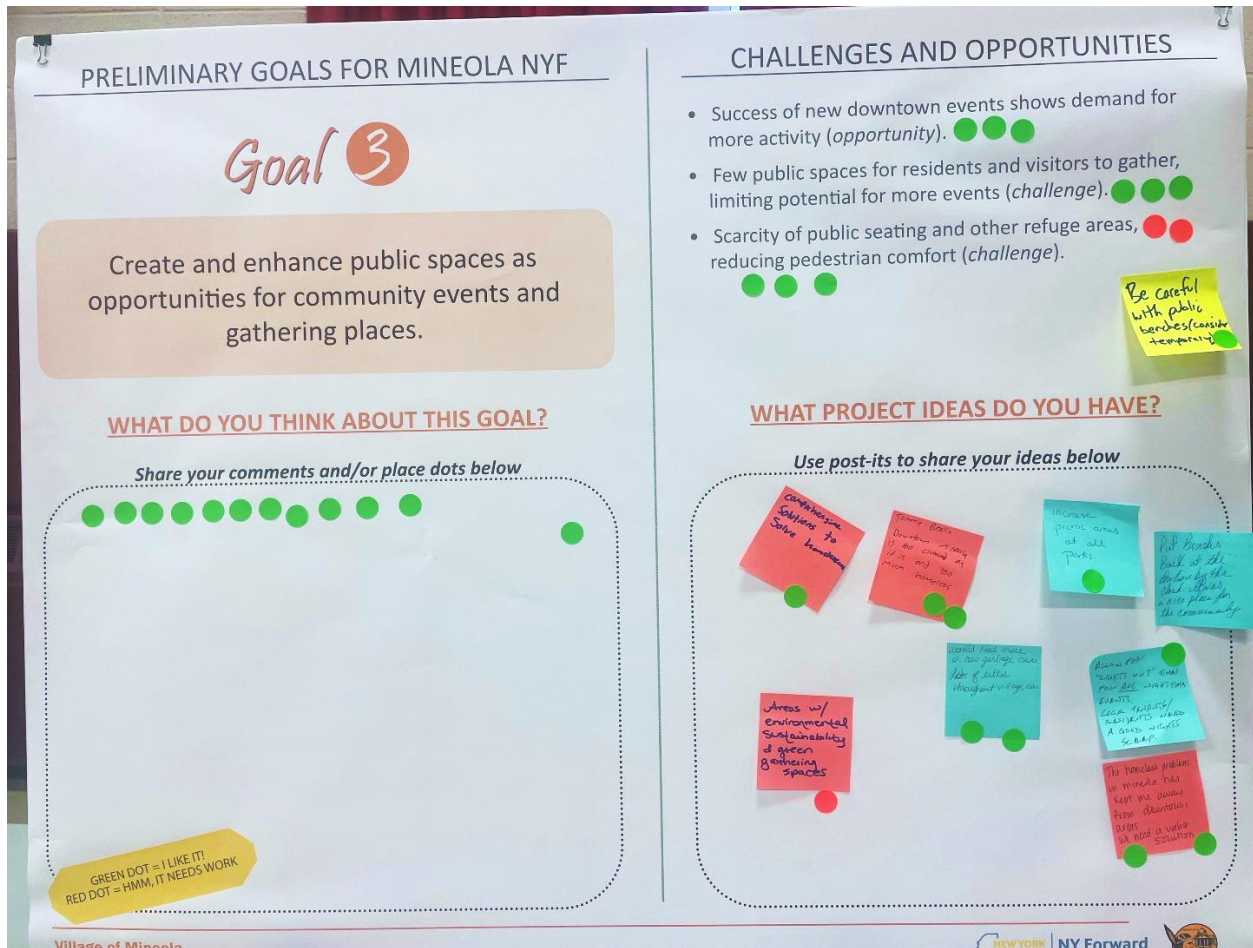
The presentation board is titled "PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR MINEOLA NYF". It features "Goal 2" in a large blue circle, which reads: "Foster a walking environment through streetscape improvements that enhance the safety and comfort of all modes of transportation." Below this, a section titled "WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS GOAL?" asks participants to "Share your comments and/or place dots below". A yellow callout box explains: "GREEN DOT = I LIKE IT! RED DOT = HMM, IT NEEDS WORK". To the right, the "CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES" section lists several points, including "Strong access to regional transit and road networks (opportunity)", "Recent investments at the LIRR station and Village parking garages (opportunity)", "Narrow, cluttered sidewalks that limit pedestrian movement, outdoor dining opportunities (challenge)", "Heavily trafficked intersections that can be difficult for pedestrians and drivers alike (challenge)", and "County/State jurisdiction of roadways requires coordination for upgrades (challenge and opportunity)". Below this, the "WHAT PROJECT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?" section asks participants to "Use post-its to share your ideas below". This section is filled with several colorful sticky notes containing handwritten suggestions such as "Train Station", "Speed bumps", "Better one-way signs", "Better stop signs", "Better lighting", "Parking bollards", "Better pedestrian crossings", "Head-in parking only", "Widen sidewalks", "Traffic study", and "Light sequence". Logos for "Village of Mineola NY Forward" and "NY Forward" are visible at the bottom of the board.

Preliminary Goal 2 for Mineola NY Forward

What project ideas do you have?

- Train Station
  1. Speed bumps
  2. Better one-way signs
  3. Better stop signs
  4. Better lighting
  5. Parking bollards
  6. Better pedestrian crossings
  7. Head-in parking only
- How do we widen sidewalks without causing worse traffic than we already have?
- Great idea – 2<sup>nd</sup> St + Mineola crossing is pretty scary to walk across or even drive through.
- Many drivers double park to drop off and pick up at railroad station, not sure how to improve this. Agree that safety improvements are needed.
- Roads need fixing and Mineola is too crowded as it is
- Traffic study is essential for parking permit for elderly
- Light sequence at Mineola Blvd + 1<sup>st</sup> Street causes a lot of congestion
- Widen sidewalks ADA accessibility

**Goal #3: Create and enhance public spaces as opportunities for community events and gathering places.**



Preliminary Goal 3 for Mineola NY Forward

What do you think about this goal?

- Be careful with public benches/consider temporary

What project ideas do you have?

- Comprehensive solutions to solve homelessness
- Downtown Mineola is too cluttered as it is and too much homelessness
- Increase picnic areas at all parks
- Put benches back at the station by the clock. It was a nice place for the community.
- Areas with environmental sustainability & green gathering spaces
- Would need more or new garbage cans. Lots of litter throughout Village now.
- Allow for “lights out” times for all night-time events. Local residents need a good night’s sleep.
- The homeless problem in Mineola has kept me away from Downtown areas. We need a viable solution.

**Goal #4: Improve awareness of Mineola’s downtown offerings for Village residents, workers, and visitors.**

**PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR MINEOLA NYF**

**Goal 4**

Improve awareness of Mineola’s downtown offerings for Village residents, workers, and visitors.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- Village lacks cohesive branding, wayfinding, and downtown signage (*challenge*).
- Inadequate lighting, large utility poles, and sign clutter create visual and physical barriers (*challenge*).
- Opportunities for public art to enhance public spaces and reflect community spirit (*opportunity*).

**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

Village of Mineola NY Forward

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY NY Forward

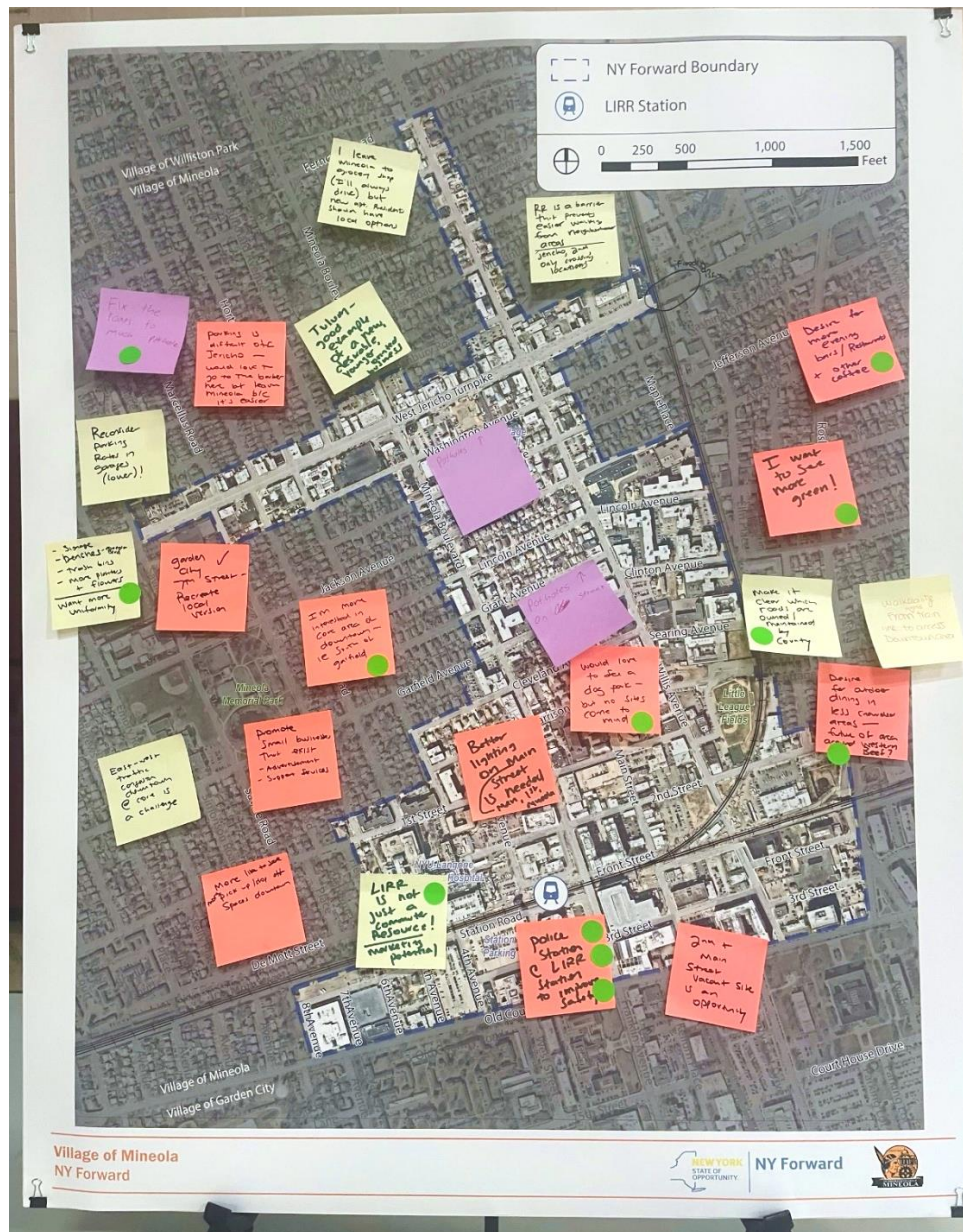
Preliminary Goal 4 for Mineola NY Forward

What project ideas do you have?

- Cohesive signage
- Village logo needs to be changed
  - As a note, there was also opposition to this idea as shown by the red dots.
- Maintain existing light poles – many are out
- Mineola needs a symbol like Garden City has the pineapple
- For sure need more banners and signs
- New logo & more frequent mailings & notifications of events
- More lighting!
- Consistent, coordinated multi-channel (social media, text, web, e-mail) communications
- “Welcome to Mineola” sign
  - Please! (Referring to previous bullet)

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**NYF Boundary Map**



- I leave Mineola to grocery shop (I'll always drive), but new apt. residents should have local options
- Railroad is a barrier that prevents easy walking from neighborhood areas / Jericho, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. are the only crossing locations
- Fix the roads, too much potholes
- Parking is difficult off of Jericho—would love to go to the barber here but I leave Mineola because it's easier
- Tulum—good example of a new, desirable, younger-oriented business
- Desire for more evening bars/restaurants + other coffee

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- I want to see more green!
- Reconsider parking rates in garages (lower)!
- Garden City 7<sup>th</sup> street – recreate local version
- Signage
- Benches on Mineola Blvd.
- Trash bins
- More planters + flowers
- Want more uniformity
- I'm more interested in core area of Downtown—i.e., south of Garfield
- Potholes on Washington Ave.
- Potholes on Grant Ave.
- Make it clear which roads are owned/maintained by County
- Walkability from across train line to access Downtown area
- Desire for outdoor dining in less crowded areas—future of area around Western Beef?
- Would love to see a dog park – but no sites come to mind
- East-west traffic congestion downtown @ core is a challenge
- Promote small businesses that exist through advertisement, support services
- Better lighting on Main Street, 1<sup>st</sup>, and Mineola Blvd. is needed
- More, like to see more pick up/drop off spaces downtown
- LIRR is not just a commuter resource! Marketing potential
- Police station at LIRR station to improve safety
- 2<sup>nd</sup> + Main Street vacant site is an opportunity

