

Date	May 6, 2025
Project	Canandaigua Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Location	Hurley Building Conference Room, 205 Saltonstall Street, Canandaigua, NY
Attendees	Local Planning Committee Department of State (DOS, HCR, ESD) Urban Strategies Inc. Three City Council Members, one City staff member, five members of the public
Purpose	Local Planning Committee Meeting #1

Overview

As the steering body of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) process, the role of the LPC is to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to the consultant team, review planning products, discuss, evaluate, and recommend projects, and act as ambassadors to the program. The LPC will meet regularly over the planning process, with the following future dates scheduled:

- Tuesday, June 10 (6-8pm)
- Tuesday, July 29 (6-8pm)
- Tuesday, September 9 (6-8pm)
- Tuesday, October 21 (6-8pm)
- Wednesday, November 12, if needed (6-8pm)

LPC Meeting #1 provided an opportunity for the group to further familiarize themselves with the DRI program and their role as LPC members, refresh their understanding of Canandaigua's DRI Application, and discuss options for the minimum match requirement. The meeting ended with a visioning exercise to understand downtown's opportunities and challenges, the types of projects the LPC finds most needed, and the desired outcome from the DRI. This early input will help shape the refined vision and goals for the DRI>

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome
- Code of Conduct
- DRI Program

- DRI Planning Process
- Public Engagement
- Project Match
- Canandaigua's DRI Application
- What's Next?
- LPC Visioning Exercise
- Public Comment Period

Meeting Summary

The following is a high-level summary of LPC Meeting #1. The presentation slides that were used at this meeting are available on the project website: CanandaiguaDRI.com. Key questions and points of discussion (from the LPC and public) are also summarized. A summary of decisions is included at the end.

Welcome

- Opening remarks were provided by Sam Aldrich (DOS Representative), followed by a round of introductions of other State representatives, the LPC, and the consultant team.

Code of Conduct

- DOS also provided a reminder of the Code of Conduct and the process of documenting conflicts of interest once discussions of projects begin.

DRI Program

- DOS provided an overview of the DRI, including the State goals for the program (illustrated with successful DRI projects within the region), the roles and responsibilities of the State team, the consultant team, the LPC, and municipal representatives.

DRI Planning Process

- DOS provided an overview of the overall eight-month planning process (visioning, opportunities and challenges, project development and evaluation, and project recommendation).
- This included an overview of the types of projects that are eligible and ineligible for the DRI funding, how they are identified (e.g., through DRI application and the Open Call for Projects), and the process and tools that the LPC would use to evaluate and recommend projects for funding.

- DOS also described key details of the post-DRI planning process, including:
 - The State's process for evaluating the recommended projects, announcing the awards, and executing contracts with project sponsors, and project implementation.
 - A reminder that the DRI award is a reimbursable grant, which may require project sponsors to secure bridge financing.
 - A reminder that awards are subject to State requirements such as competitive procurement and Minor and Women-Owned Business Enterprise goals.

Public Engagement

- Urban Strategies provided an overview of the role in stakeholder and public engagement in the DRI process. This included a description of types of activities that would be held (public comment periods at LPC meetings, public workshops, local outreach events, online surveys, etc.) and how input would inform the process.
- Urban Strategies outlined upcoming engagement activities, which include Public Workshop #1 (May 21) and the Open Call for Projects Information Session (May 22). The LPC isn't required to attend these events, but is welcome to join and act as ambassadors to the program, and to help encourage the public to attend.

Project Match

- Urban Strategies described the rationale for setting a match requirement for privately sponsored projects, including that it ensures that project sponsors have a vested interest and it extends the impact of the DRI by leveraging more investment.
- Urban Strategies outlined two base options for the match requirement: maintain the minimum 25% match requirement for privately sponsored projects; or increase the minimum requirement. Additionally, the option of setting a match *goal* in addition to a match *requirement* was introduced. The pros and cons of each were discussed.
- The LPC decided on a minimum match requirement for privately sponsored projects of 30% and a goal of 40% was determined, where projects that meet the match goal would receive a higher evaluation.

Canandaigua's DRI Application

- City Manager and LPC member John Goodwin provided an overview of Canandaigua's DRI application, including a description of the DRI boundary and the intent to strength connections between downtown and the waterfront.
- Mayor and LPC Co-Chair Bob Palumbo provided an overview of the various projects that were included in the DRI application, which include a mix of building

rehabilitation projects, public improvement projects, a small project grant fund, and a wayfinding strategy.

- Finger Lakes REDC member and LPC Co-Chair Tracey Dello Stritto noted that the City's application was likely successful in part because it hit on many of the various objectives of the DRI program.

What's Next?

- Prior to initiating the visioning exercise, Urban Strategies outlined next steps for the Canandaigua DRI, primarily that LPC Meeting #2 would be held on June 10, where highlights from the Downtown Profile & Assessment would be shared.

LPC Visioning Exercise

- Urban Strategies facilitated a visioning exercise with the committee. LPC members were presented with the vision set out in the City's DRI application and Comprehensive Plan, and were asked to respond to three questions:
 - What is the biggest challenge facing downtown Canandaigua today?
 - What type of project do you think is most needed in downtown Canandaigua?
 - What outcome of the Canandaigua DRI would you be most proud to see?
- Urban Strategies will review and synthesize the input from the LPC to refine the preliminary DRI vision that was included in the City's application and to develop goals. These will be presented back to the group to confirm and shared with the public for input.
 - *Biggest challenges:* Getting locals to shop; cohesiveness; family activities; ability to cross Main Street; safety and friendliness; lack of housing; parking; underutilized space (e.g., upper storeys); vibrancy; the cost of developing; connections to the lakefront; lack of destinations/draws; walkability.
 - *Most needed projects:* Free-flowing traffic; upper story housing (mentioned many times) and office space; mixed-use collaboration space (e.g., community kitchen); public restrooms; transportation; evening activities; façade improvements; enhancements to downtown parks and public spaces; more downtown attractions; connectivity and safety improvements; projects that encourage everyday visits to downtown.
 - *Outcomes that would make the LPC proud:* Updated buildings; a vibrant downtown with housing, attractions; connectivity to the lake; activity throughout the day and year; a beautiful, charming, and historic downtown; a safer intersection at Highway 5 & 20; community involvement & acceptance.

LPC Questions and Discussion

- An LPC member asked for clarification on the difference between a renovation and property upkeep (the latter being ineligible for DRI funding). DOS noted that it's often easy to tell when a project is property upkeep / deferred maintenance, as the scope of work is not transformational (e.g., a new roof). The DRI focuses on projects that are transformational and have a visual impact and a public benefit.
- An LPC member asked if projects other than those included in the City's DRI application can be submitted. New projects can be submitted through the Open Call for Projects, which will be launched May 21. Applications will need to be submitted for all projects, even if they were part of the City's application.
- What is the timeline for engagement? Stakeholder engagement will happen over the next month or so, so that it can inform the consultant team's analysis of the downtown. Public engagement will take place over the course of the process.
- A member of the LPC mentioned that the Wood Library would be a good place to host engagement events.
- A member of the LPC suggested that brief updates on the DRI process be provided at Council meetings.
- An LPC member asked a clarifying question about the example of how maintaining a match requirement would leverage additional investment, specifically whether this example assumed all private projects. The example assumed all private projects (see Slide 45 of the presentation for details).
- A member of the LPC asked if project sponsors would be required to demonstrate proof of funds? Yes, project sponsors will be asked to provide a proof of funds or a commitment letter from a bank, if they include a bank loan as a funding source.
- A member of the LPC mentioned that they would prefer to raise the match requirement as more projects could be included.
- A member of the LPC mentioned that raising the match requirement would send a good message to the community, as there are some sensitivities are public funds being given away.
- A member of the LPC asked whether, in past DRI rounds, projects with a higher sponsor contribution received greater public support. In previous rounds, though private projects that exceeded the match requirement were uncommon, the public did note this as a positive component through their feedback.
- A member of the LPC asked how you would evaluate projects if a match goal were established in addition to a match requirement (i.e., would a project receive a higher evaluation if it met the match goal?). The LPC will determine criteria to evaluate projects, which could include "cost effectiveness", factoring in the project sponsor's match.

- A member of the LPC asked whether a member of the public who work for the municipality will be conflicted in regard to the public improvement projects. DOS noted that this would not constitute a conflict of interest as there would be not be a financial interest or benefit to a public employee or elected official.
- A member of the LPC asked whether a higher match requirement would make it more difficult to get a bank loan. This would depend on the project.
- Various LPC members suggested increasing the minimum match requirement and establishing a match goal as well in order to extend the reach of the DRI and ensure that sponsors have a vested interest. A member of the LPC suggested that there should be a notable difference the match requirement and the match goal.
- A member of the LPC asked how “shovel ready” would apply to public improvement projects. DOS noted that public improvement projects have typically be conceptually developed through previous planning work, like the Waterfront Active Transportation Plan, and that the consultant team helps to develop these further.
- A member of the LPC asked about the relationship between the DOT and the DRI where projects might be within their jurisdiction. DOS noted that they are able to assist in setting up meetings with the DOT and other agencies to discuss specific projects.
- There was some discussion around improvements to the Highway 5 and 20 intersection, given that this is a substantial barrier to access to the lake. It was noted that it would be an expensive project, potentially requiring a substantial portion of the DRI award.
- A member of the LPC asked whether the DRI boundary could be revised. The LPC can decide to make minor refinements to the boundary if, for example, there is a compelling project that is submitting nearby. However, significant changes cannot be made.

Questions/ comments from the Public

- A member of the public suggested that the consultant team avoid using jargon and provide a glossary of terms. The consultant team will be mindful of this.
- A City of Canandaigua Council member highlighted the importance of environmental sustainability. The project team noted that certain projects would be required to meet the State’s decarbonization standards.
- A City of Canandaigua Council member highlighted that housing affordability was not raised through the LPC visioning exercise and noted that a significant portion of City residents are considered low income.

Summary of Key Decisions

Match Goal

The LPC decided to institute a minimum match requirement of 30% and a match goal of 40%. The LPC intends to evaluate projects that meet the match goal higher, though the evaluation criteria will be determined at a future LPC meeting.





