

Date	June 10, 2025
Project	Canandaigua Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Location	Hurley Building Conference Room, 205 Saltonstall Street, Canandaigua, NY
Attendees	Local Planning Committee Department of State (DOS, ESD) Urban Strategies Inc. 6-8 Members of the public
Purpose	Local Planning Committee Meeting #2

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### 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 focus of LPC Meeting #2 sharing highlights from the consultant team's work on the Downtown Profile and Assessment, which is intended to identify opportunities that DRI projects can take advantage of, and challenges that they can address. A refined vision and draft goals for the DRI were also shared for further input and feedback.

### Meeting Agenda

- Welcome
- Engagement Updates
- Highlights from the Downtown Profile & Assessment
- Draft Vision and Goals
- Evaluation Criteria
- Next Steps
- Public Comment Period

### Meeting Summary

The following is a high-level summary of LPC Meeting #2. The presentation slides that were used at this meeting are available on the project website: [CanandaiguaDRI.com](http://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.

## Engagement Updates

- Urban Strategies provided an overview of activities undertaken by the consultant team since LPC Meeting #1, which included launching the website, working the City to discuss public improvement projects, hosting a public workshop and launching the online survey, hosting the Open Call Info Session, meeting with project sponsors, refining the vision and goals, and working on the Downtown Profile.

## Highlights from the Downtown Profile & Assessment

The broader consultant team (Urban Strategies, Bero Architecture, and 4ward Planning) shared highlights from the Downtown Profile and Assessment.

Bero Architecture provided an overview of Canandaigua's historical evolution, focusing on the historical factors that shaped Canandaigua's physical development.

- Transportation played an important role in the city's development. It was a hub for early roads and railroads, though it was by-passed by the Erie Canal.
- The multi-modal transportation hub (roads, rail, and steamboats) served both farmers producing within the region as well as vacationers.
- The City was thoughtfully planned by Oliver Phelps. Main Street was located up the hill from the lake (away from a swamp), with important civic uses at the top of Main Street where there was a natural plateau.
- In the 1900s, the city began to be shaped and adapted by the automobile: the development of more modern parkways with auto-oriented uses and tourism establishments, upgrades to Main Street to accommodate vehicles, and the reconstruction of Route 332 in the early 2000s.
- Much of the DRI area is on the National Register of Historic Places, which create eligibility for historic tax credits.

4ward Planning shared an overview of Canandaigua's demographics and economy, as well as some economic opportunities that the City is well-positioned to pursue. Highlights included:

- New housing downtown can contribute to local businesses and services.
- The historic district is an incredible asset that can be leveraged through more events and activities, particularly during the off-season. The City can leverage its waterfront

location to attract more tourists, which can be done by cross-marking with events occurring in other nearby cities.

- Population growth is relatively flat.
- Smaller non-family households represent 55% of the population of the DRI area, and this cohort is on the rise. These types of households (young professionals, empty nesters) tend to have more discretionary income that can benefit downtown businesses.
- There are many workers that are commuting into Canandaigua each day. These should be considered potential residents, as some of them would consider trading in their commute to live closer to work.

Urban Strategies provided observations on Canandaigua regional context, as well as the quality and character of downtown's physical setting. Highlights included:

- Canandaigua is centrally located within the region and can leverage its proximity and access to larger urban centres (for jobs, visitors, entertainment, new residents, etc.).
- Canandaigua is also located within the NY SMART-I Corridor, which could create opportunities for economic development or to attract new residents who may be drawn to the broader area (Buffalo to Syracuse) for new job opportunities.
- The city is also located in a well-established tourism region. Where many cities in the Finger Lakes are competing for tourism dollars, Canandaigua is well-positioned as a long-standing destination with established tourism infrastructure and name recognition.
- Urban Strategies then took the LPC on a "virtual walking tour" of downtown, highlighting downtown's strengths, assets, and opportunities for improvement.
- Key assets include: grand old homes along Main Street that create a strong sense of arrival; a cluster of important civic uses and historic open spaces that generate employment and foot traffic while contributing to local identity; a well-defined historic Main Street (from the rail corridor to Saltonstall), with buildings that appear to be in good shape; generous sidewalks and a landscaped median that makes Main Street feel more intimate; new public spaces that fill in the gaps along Main Street; low levels of retail vacancy; residential neighbourhoods in close proximity to downtown; interesting things to see and do beyond Main Street (restaurants, historic buildings, breweries, the farmers' market, etc.).
- Key challenges / opportunities for improvement include: unoccupied upper stories; some buildings that could use reinvestment; gaps in the building fabric on the shoulders of Main Street (vacant and underutilized lots), which disconnect Main Street from its surrounding context; some newer buildings (south of Saltonstall) that do not frame Main Street at the same comfortable scale; more suburban style buildings that have been inserted along the south end of South Main Street; the lack

of buildings / uses along the south end of Main Street to contribute to an interesting walk to the lakefront; the increasing width of Main Street as one approaches the lake, which gets increasingly uncomfortable for pedestrians; the intersection of Main Street and Routes 5 & 20, which doesn't support safe and comfortable crossings.

- Last, Urban Strategies provided a high-level overview of the key City documents (plans and other initiatives), highlighting areas of alignment between City plans and policy and the DRI. This included the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and the 2021 Waterfront Active Transportation Plan.

## Draft Visions, Goals & Evaluation Criteria

- Urban Strategies presented some suggested changes to the draft vision and draft goals for the DRI, based on input that was received from the LPC and from the public at the public workshop and through the online survey. This feedback is summarized on Slides 90-91 of the presentation slides.
- Urban Strategies then provided an overview of how the LPC would evaluate projects through a survey after the next LPC meeting, and provided examples of other criteria that could potentially be factored into the evaluation (though the consultant team would consider the full range of criteria in their vetting process).

## Next Steps

- Next steps include: ongoing discussions with project sponsors, circulation of the written Downtown Profile, and LPC Meeting #3 (July 29), where the project applications will be presented to the LPC for discussion.

## LPC Questions and Discussion

- The group discussed how successful engagement had been to date (e.g., attendance at the workshop, uptake for the survey). It was decided to hold off on finalizing the DRI vision and goals until the public survey had been promoted more. The consultant team would also follow up with a poster to help promote the survey.
- On the topic of the south end of Main Street, a member of the LPC asked whether it would be viable to extend Main Street all the way down to the lake. Canandaigua likely won't grow in population to support that much new retail in a traditional Main Street format. One approach would be to identify "nodes" along the street with clusters of activity.
- A member of the LPC asked about the feasibility of closing Main Street to trucks, given the challenges they create in terms of traffic and noise. The City has explored this but it was determined to not be feasible, and could also divert other vehicle traffic from the downtown.

- The group briefly discussed evaluation criteria, but ultimately determined that it would be better to determine these at LPC Meeting #3. Examples of evaluation criteria that the Committee could incorporate in their evaluation will be circulated for consideration ahead of the July meeting.
- A member of the LPC asked whether there would be any consideration for the market viability of projects. Larger projects or projects that have a more unique or niche program would be reviewed in more detail by the consultant team to determine the feasibility.
- A member of the LPC asked whether there would be any consideration for how a project would disrupt Main Street (e.g., construction hoarding while a project is being built). The DOS program manager mentioned that it has been an issue in other DRI communities where several DRI projects are under construction at once. The project team will aim to understand these details through the project development process, but a concept development stage, sometimes the details of construction management are not fully understood.
- A member of the LPC asked a question about whether there would be any consideration for how well a project fits within the community. Building projects would still be subject to review by the City Planning Commission, which would review site plans, architectural design and signage, and alterations to historic structures, which all consider matters of compatibility.
- The group discussed the challenge of the Main Street and Routes 5 & 20 intersection, noting that it's a barrier to getting visitors up to Main Street. There have been plans for a trolley in the past, and the Lake House offers bicycles. Part of the challenge is there is very little along the way that creates interest for pedestrians.
- On evaluation criteria, a member of the LPC noted a few in particular that stood out as important to consider: sponsor capacity and project sustainability.
- A member of the LPC mentioned the "Lake Canandaigua" should be "Canandaigua Lake" in the vision, as it is not one of the Great Lakes.

## Questions/ comments from the Public

- A member of the public asked what was meant by diverse housing options (one of the draft goals for the Canandaigua DRI). This could include diversity in housing types (upper stories, apartments, townhouses, etc.), tenure (rental versus ownership housing), size (bachelors, family housing, etc.), and various price points.
- A member of the public asked whether projects that are funded through the DRI would still need municipal approval. Yes, they would. As part of the project development process, the consultant team will work with project sponsors to

identify the necessary approvals and any challenges in terms of securing those approvals.

- A member of the public offered his past experience working in urban renewal for the City, noting that Phoenix Street has long been identified as an opportunity site in the downtown. He also noted how the City's efforts to building parking lots on the shoulders of Main Street was very challenges (through eminent domain). It was noted that off-street / off-site parking would be a challenge when adding new residential units to the downtown.

#### Summary of Key Decisions

- The public survey will be left open longer to allow more input to inform the vision and goals. These will be finalized before the end of June to ensure project sponsors have enough time to finalize their applications. The draft vision and goals will be circulated to project sponsors for reference, as they are not anticipated to change dramatically.
- Evaluation criteria will be discussed at LPC Meeting #3.