

## Village of Canastota - NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1

### Meeting Notes

Date/Time	May 8, 2024 / 6-8pm
Place:	Storefront space at S Peterboro and Center Streets – 104 Center St
LPC Attendees:	<b>Rosanne Warner</b> , Village of Canastota Mayor, Co-Chair <b>Amanda Douglass</b> , NBT Bank Manager, Canastota Chamber President <b>Anthony Palmara</b> , retired engineer <b>Bill McDade</b> , Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) chairperson <b>Colleen Keane</b> , Village Beautification Committee, National Grid <b>Emily Sorbello</b> , Village Beautification Committee, Owl Wire <b>Marilyn Higgins</b> , Planning Board chairperson <b>Sena Clarke</b> , Canastota Housing Authority Board Member <b>Tracy Cesario</b> , Onedia Indian Nation employee
LPC Not in Attendance:	<b>Kipp Hicks</b> , Madison County IDA Director, Co-Chair <b>Melinda Parmeter</b> , Canastota Housing Authority Director
State/Consultant Team:	<b>Holly Granat</b> , New York State (NYS) Department of State (DOS) <b>Zach Becker</b> , Empire State Development (ESD) <b>Melissa Davis</b> , Empire State Development (ESD) <b>Phil Schaeffing</b> , Stantec

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The Village of Canastota's first NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) meeting took place on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at the former Red Onion storefront at the corner of S Peterboro and Center Streets. The meeting's primary purpose was to introduce the NY Forward process and LPC responsibilities to committee members, review the Village's successful application, discuss opportunities and challenges, and review community engagement plans with the committee. Holly Granat from DOS and Phil Schaeffing from Stantec, the State's consultant team lead, presented the attached slideshow. Eight members of the public signed in to observe the committee's working meeting.

### NY Forward Overview and Planning Process

- Holly reviewed the LPC Code of Conduct and the role LPC members have in the planning process.
- Holly outlined the goals of the NY Forward program for the \$4.5 million awarded to the Village of Canastota for project implementation in and near the downtown area.
- Phil described the approximately eight-month planning process which will include an Open Call for Projects, two public meetings, and six LPC meetings. In addition, consultant team members will attend a local event to share NY Forward program information and gather additional public feedback. A project webpage will be setup for the public to access the Village's application, meeting presentations, and learn about upcoming events.
- The final product of the planning process will be a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for the Village. It will identify a slate of projects recommended by the LPC for State funding

consideration. The slate will include \$6-8 million in NY Forward funding requests, from which the State will select projects to be awarded the \$4.5 million in implementation funding.

### **LPC Discussion**

- LPC members discussed future LPC meeting days and times. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 6pm generally work best.
- Will there be an application for smaller projects interested in NY Forward funding?
  - Yes, the Open Call for Projects will have two forms: a detailed one for most projects and a simpler one for small projects.
- As a local bank manager, do I need to recuse myself if my bank is funding potential projects?
  - DOS will check and follow-up.
- Can projects leverage other NY State funds in their budgets?
  - Yes, leveraging other funding sources (including other State programs) is encouraged to maximize the use of NY Forward funding.
- Is there a boundary that projects have to be within to be considered?
  - Yes, the draft boundary will be shared later in this meeting for discussion. The LPC will have another chance to suggest changes at the second LPC meeting.
- Is the NY Forward program meant more for businesses or for community-serving projects, like the fire department?
  - One of NY Forward's primary goals is downtown revitalization so businesses and building projects are a main focus. However, community-supporting projects can also be part of downtown revitalization and the LPC will be able to discuss that.
- Can students be involved? For example, in a public art project like painting murals?
  - Yes, the project would need a sponsor with the legal authority to contract with the State and complete the project.

### **Public Engagement Discussion:**

- Local resources to share project information and meeting notices include the library, Chamber of Commerce, schools, high school alumni association, American Legion, VFW, Rotary, and Canal Town.
- Posters or flyers to distribute downtown would be helpful
- Social media posts should be shared with local groups
- The Save Our Towns organization offers resources to organize a vacant buildings tour. We've talked about it before, something like that could be a great opportunity to showcase available spaces and drum up interest.
- Upcoming events that could be good places to share NY Forward project information and ask for additional public feedback: fishing derby on the canal (early June), Cana-I-stota (7/20), Old Homes Day (8/3, but outside Village), a heritage event along the canal (early August), school barbeque, carnival (September).

## Canastota NY Forward Application Highlights

- The Village’s draft vision statement and goals were shared. These will be re-visited at the upcoming public meeting and second LPC meeting to include in the Open Call for Projects form.
- The application identified 18 projects demonstrating Canastota’s potential and its need for NY Forward funding. Those projects cited a preliminary request for almost \$7 million in funding assistance and the Village received a \$4.5 million award. Other projects are likely to be submitted during the Open Call for Projects as well.

## LPC Discussion

### 1. Review of the NYF Boundary

*\* The boundary discussed is included at the end of these meeting notes.*

- A draft boundary was presented for LPC discussion that is smaller than the boundary in the Village’s application. The NY Forward program encourages a compact, walkable boundary focused on the downtown area to concentrate investment.
- LPC members mentioned how the I-90 access area is important to direct people toward downtown with better signage, wayfinding, and streetscape. There are also several projects that may happen in that area.
- It was pointed out that the industrial park area is outside the draft boundary. The Village’s application included several projects in that area, both industry-related and recreational.
- The industrial park and the I-90 area are important nodes of activity in Canastota, not just downtown.
- Route 5 is also a gateway location for people coming from south of the village.
- DOS and the consultant team will adjust the boundary and share a revised version at the upcoming public meeting. LPC members will have another chance to review it at the second LPC meeting prior to the Open Call for Projects being released.

### 2. Discussion of Canastota’s Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges

Strengths: why people live in Canastota, own a business, or visit today

- The people here and sense of community
- Local history: the Erie Canal and the buildings along it especially
- The Village Board is willing to work with property and business owners
- The Village is centrally located and has the county’s only access to I-90. People from wealthy eastern Syracuse suburbs come through Canastota.
- Safety
- Access to nearby amenities (Turning Stone, parks, etc.)
- The area has a reputation for food

Opportunities: things missing in Canastota today that could make it even better

- Buildings along the Canal are an asset and can be improved
- Getting a coffee shop would be great
- Village needs a community center and more recreation options

- More industrial jobs needed for residents
- The Village has undeveloped land, room to grow
- Empty storefronts can become something new

Challenges: issues or obstacles to success

- Infrastructure, especially sewer
- Lack of spaces for small businesses. Have heard from businesses interested in coming to Canastota who can't find the right size space here.
- Cost of leasing space – some owners ask for higher rents than seem feasible here
- Village staff capacity limitations – they can only do so much.

### 3. Public Comments

There was a public comment period at the end of the LPC meeting and a comment card was available for written comments. No written comments were submitted.

- Camden was mentioned as a nice example
- I-90 is a double-edged sword in some ways – visitors can get to us but residents can easily get to Syracuse or Utica for restaurants, businesses, and services. May make small businesses more challenging.
- As a small business owner, can I phase a project to get reimbursed in stages? Is in-kind labor acceptable?
  - Project-specific questions can be addressed by the team during and after the Open Call for Projects phase. Generally, projects have to be complete prior to reimbursement by the State and in-kind labor is not considered for matching requirements, but the three State agencies (DOS, ESD, HCR) have slightly different approaches.
- Will projects be required to keep a historic vernacular?
  - Design review is part of the local permitting process not the NY Forward program.
- Does the mayor have a conflict of interest with public projects the Village submits for consideration?
  - No because the Mayor is a public representative and will not materially benefit from any public projects.
- Downtown needs more businesses and reasons to walk there
- Can different projects have different match funding amounts or percentages?
  - Yes. The LPC can decide if they want to set a minimum match percentage.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Please send questions, comments or corrections regarding the meeting notes to Phil Schaeffing, project manager for the State's consultant team (philip.schaeffing(at)stantec.com).

**Stantec Consulting Services Inc.**

\* Potential NY Forward boundary discussed during the LPC meeting:

