



Meeting Summary

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Meeting Name | Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1 |
| Date & Time | May 14, 2024 – 5:00 to 7:00 pm |
| Location | Highland Falls Senior Center – 15 Drew Avenue, Highland Falls, NY 10928 |

Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, and Presentation (105 Minutes)

1. Welcome | DOS and LPC Co-Chairs
2. Introductions | DOS, LPC, and VHB
3. LPC Code of Conduct Refresher | DOS
4. NY Forward Program Overview | DOS
5. Roles and Responsibilities | DOS
6. Project Development and Evaluation | DOS
7. Conclusion of the NY Forward Planning Process | VHB
8. Highland Falls NY Forward Application | VHB
9. Public Engagement Approach | VHB

Public Comment (15 minutes) – VHB to moderate

10. Next Steps | VHB

Attendees

Department of State

Susan Landfried

LPC Members

Mayor Joe D'Onofrio, Co-chair

Maureen Halahan, Co-chair

Stella Bailey

Dandai (Dee Dee) Moreno

Bobbie Fallon

Jeff Gathers

George Biskup

Michael (Mick) Hauser

Gabe O'Connell

Paula Holt

Consultant Team

Jill Gallant (VHB)

Lindsey Cassone (VHB)

Summary

Susan Landfield (DOS), Mayor Joe D'Onofrio (LPC Co-Chair), and Maureen Halahan (LPC Co-Chair) welcomed the LPC members to the first meeting. Following welcoming remarks, LPC members and the consultant team introduced themselves. Together, the group included residents, local business leaders, and members of local civic groups and non-profit organizations. Susan then reviewed the LPC Code of Conduct and there were no recusals.

Susan provided an overview of NY Forward and the program's goals. Susan then reviewed a timeline for the planning process including the months in which five to six Local Planning Committee (LPC) and

two Public Workshops would take place. It was explained that process would take around seven months and would end with the development of the Final Strategic Investment Plan in December.

Jill Gallant (VHB) talked through the roles and responsibilities of the LPC, followed by an introduction of the State team and their roles and responsibilities. Jill then introduced the consultant team which consists of VHB, Kevin Dwarka LLC, WXY, Karp Strategies and Trophy Point as well as their roles and responsibilities. Jill then paused and asked the LPC if they had any questions about the information presented thus far, and the LPC had no questions.

Next, Susan presented the project requirements which included eligible and ineligible project types and activities and explained how projects will be identified, developed, and refined. Susan then introduced the Open Call for Projects, which opens June 17th and closes July 22nd, and explained the State's project evaluation criteria as well as the LPC's role in establishing a local project evaluation criterion, which will be drafted at LPC Meeting #2.

Susan then reviewed the conclusion of the NY Forward planning process, explaining that the LPC will decide on a final slate of projects to be recommended to the State for funding in the final Strategic Investment Plan. Susan highlighted that the total amount of the NY Forward requests in the final slate of projects will have a higher dollar value than what will be rewarded in order to provide flexibility in project implementation. Susan then went over the general timeline of State evaluation of projects, funding announcements, contract execution, and project implementation and reporting. Susan then paused and asked the LPC if they had any questions about the information presented thus far, and the LPC had no questions.

Next, Jill discussed the contents of the Highland Falls NY Forward application and introduced the Highland Falls NY Forward Boundary. Mayor D'Onofrio then talked through the rationale for the NYF boundary that was included in the application. An LPC member questioned if it would be feasible to extend the boundary to Roe Park. After discussion, the LPC was in consensus to maintain the NY Forward Boundary as presented.

Jill then presented an activity prompting LPC members to share what their vision of downtown Highland Falls is. Jill noted that this is an opportunity for the LPC to refine the vision statement that was in their application. To capture feedback on the vision, Jill asked the LPC, "What words come to mind when you envision the future of downtown Highland Falls?". Jill indicated that VHB would revise the vision statement to reflect the resultant Word Cloud (see below).

30 responses submitted

What words come to mind when you envision the future of downtown Highland Falls?

A word cloud of responses for downtown Highland Falls. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'Walkable' and 'Active' being the largest and most prominent. Other words include 'Attractive', 'Outdoors', 'Sustainable', 'Clean', 'Inviting', 'Restored', 'Revitalize', 'Food-trucks', 'Work-Play', 'friendly-parks', 'Visiting-center', 'Murals', 'Hometown-USA', 'User', 'Facades', 'Destination', 'Lifestyle', and 'No powerlines'.

Next, Jill began an activity regarding the opportunities and challenges associated with revitalizing Highland Falls' downtown. Through the discussion activity, LPC members identified the following opportunities: the Village's proximity to West Point, Bear Mountain, and other attractions; a charming small town feel; larger empty buildings that can be used for redevelopment; access to the Garrison Metro-North train station, and opportunities to increase access to the Hudson River. Additionally, LPC members identified the following challenges to downtown revitalization: the Village needs to be more inviting to visitors and the West Point community; the West Point Visitor Center needs to provide regional information; micromobility or shuttle bus is needed to get the West Point community to the downtown; security at West Point is a barrier to people leaving the West Point campus; property owners face high rents; traffic; flood damage has used up business capital; downtown needs outdoor seating, amenities, and wider sidewalks; older buildings need modernization; parking has to be paid for; and, the Village's small population results in a lack of investment.

Afterwards, Lindsey Cassone (VHB) read the vision statement that was included in the Highland Falls NY Forward application and reiterated that the two activities would be used to refine this vision statement.

Next, Jill presented the proposed outreach strategies and the importance of public engagement for the process. Jill then inquired about any other outreach and public engagement approaches that the LPC has noticed works well in the community or that is missing from the proposed outreach strategies. LPC members suggested to increase NY Forward's digital presence, utilize the Mayor's blast texting platform, engage with summer programs affiliated with West Point, the Town of Highland Recreation

Department, as well as to engage more with public schools through school groups, “club days” and a school assembly. It was also suggested that public outreach be extended to West Point’s community engagement team as well as local civic organizations such as the Highland Falls library, the Center for Highland Falls, and the school board. Additionally, several events were suggested for future immersive engagement opportunities such as the Ambulance Corps Fall Foliage event, the National Night Out, and the Sunday farmer’s market.

The dates and agenda of the upcoming Public Workshops and LPC meetings were presented, and any potential scheduling conflicts were discussed. Jill then paused and asked the LPC if they had any questions about the information presented thus far, and the LPC had no questions.

The meeting was then opened to the public for comments. Public comments are summarized below:

- There is not enough emphasis on the Hudson River as an opportunity.
- Public outreach and workshops should provide bilingual materials for the Spanish speaking population in Highland Falls.

Jill then went over next steps for the LPC members and the consultant team. Next steps for the LPC members include to promote public workshop #1 and review the NY Forward Guidebook, while next steps for the consultant team include preparation for public workshop #1 and Community Family Fun Day, to update the Highland Falls NY Forward vision, and to start work on the Downtown Profile and Assessment. Jill then reiterated upcoming important dates, including the June 1st business meeting, public workshop #1, and Community Family Fun Day event, LPC Meeting 2 on June 13th, and the June 17th opening of the Open Call for Projects.

Jill then paused and asked the LPC if they had any questions about the information presented thus far, and the LPC had no questions. The meeting then concluded.