



# CANTON

## LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 SUMMARY

<b>Purpose:</b>	Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #2
<b>Date and Time:</b>	June 25, 2024, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Canton Justice Court Room, 60 Main Street, Canton, NY 13617
<b>Attendees:</b>	See Below
<b>Agenda:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome &amp; Code of Conduct Reminder</li> <li>2. Project Schedule Update</li> <li>3. Community Engagement Update</li> <li>4. Downtown Profile Highlights</li> <li>5. Vision &amp; Goals Discussion</li> <li>6. Call for Projects Overview</li> <li>7. Next Steps</li> <li>8. Public Comment</li> </ol>

### 1. Welcome & Code of Conduct Reminder

#### Discussion

Canton NY Forward Co-Chair Mayor Michael Dalton welcomed attendees to the meeting and read the Preamble aloud as follows:

**PREAMBLE**

*Each Local Planning Committee Member is reminded of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest with respect to the projects that may be discussed at today’s meeting. If you have a potential conflict of interest regarding a project you believe will be discussed during the meeting, please disclose it now and recuse yourself from any discussion or vote on that project. For example, you may state that you, or a family member, have a financial interest in the project, or you are on the board of the organization proposing the project. At this time, are there any recusals that need to be noted?*

*Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises unexpectedly, and then recuse yourself from discussion or voting on the project.*

*As we continue through the planning process, recusal forms will be required from anyone with an identified potential conflict to be kept on file with the Department of State.*

# 1. Welcome & Code of Conduct Reminder

## Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ), provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda:

- Welcome & Code of Conduct Reminder
- Project Schedule Update
- Community Engagement Update
- Downtown Profile Highlights
- Vision & Goals Discussion
- Call for Projects Overview
- Next Steps
- Public Comment

## Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

# 2. Project Schedule Update

## Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) presented the expected timeline for key milestones of the NY Forward process, spanning the months of June to October/November.

### *June*

- Downtown Profile (Draft)
- Vision, Goals, & Strategies
- Open Call for Projects

### *July*

- Open Call for Projects
- Downtown Profile (Final)
- Project Development

### *August*

- Preliminary Project List
- Project Sponsor Coordination
- Project Development
- Draft Project Profiles

### *September*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Engagement
- Strategic Investment Plan (Draft)
- Final Project Profiles

### *October/November*

- NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan (Final)

## 3. Community Engagement Update

### Discussion

Grace Sherburne (MJ) provided an overview of the ongoing Community Engagement components.

#### Community Engagement – May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>

- Public Open House
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Coffee with Consultants
- Door-to-Door Business Survey
- Farmer’s Market
  - Advertising Community Survey
- Dairy Festival
- Community Survey
  - Opened May 30, 2024, and closes June 30, 2024
  - 218 respondents as of 6/21/24
- NY Forward Website
  - [www.CantonNYForward.com](http://www.CantonNYForward.com)

Grace Sherburne (MJ) noted that all meeting summaries will be made available on the Project Website as well as the contact form to receive continuous feedback throughout the process.

Grace Sherburne (MJ) then led an overview of the key takeaways from the community engagement events.

#### Public Open House

- 25 community members attended
  - Overall desire to see more people downtown
  - More local businesses and retail options
  - More family-friendly places
  - Eliminate vacant storefronts
  - More green spaces
  - Better signage and wayfinding
  - Better accessibility (pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular)

#### Stakeholder Meetings

- Municipal Staff, Parks & Recreation, Community Organizations, Business & Housing
  - Need for diverse housing options
  - Better wayfinding/signage
  - Enhanced pedestrian connectivity/safety improvements
  - Activities to draw residents/students downtown
  - Need for summer attractions

#### Door-to-Door Business Survey

- Places for students and their families
- Involvement of Educational Institutions to advertise downtown as a welcoming space for students
- Better wayfinding/signage

### 3. Community Engagement Update

#### Discussion

- More restaurants/community gathering spaces

#### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

### 4. Downtown Profile Highlights

#### Discussion

Daniel Madigan (MJ) reviewed what the Downtown Profile is and its purpose: according to DOS guidance, “The Downtown Profile and Assessment tells a clear and concise story of the NY Forward community – where it is today, how it got there, and where it is going – and provides the logical basis for project recommendations.” It is an important component of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) that will be submitted to the state.

#### Required Components

- Description of the study area
- Demographic snapshot
- Regional and historic context
- Related recent plans and investments
- Physical setting
- Economic context
- Housing assessment
- Key observations

The consultant team then shared preliminary demographics with the LPC members. Population, age cohorts, employment, and housing were covered.

#### Population

- 12% Population increase from 1990 to 2020
- Village population consistent with Town population
- St. Lawrence County is experiencing a steady population decline.

#### Age Cohorts

- Nearly 60% of the population within the NY Forward Study area is under 35 years, particularly due to the student population.
- Similarly, most of the population in the Village is also under 35 years ( $\pm 65\%$ ).
- Most of the county (about 55%) is 35 and older.

The LPC discussed that a better breakdown of the age groups 35 and under would be helpful in identifying the different needs for each group.

The LPC also discussed the unique seasonality of Canton, noting that its busiest time of the year is during the academic year when local colleges are in session, unlike other communities that

## 4. Downtown Profile Highlights

### Discussion

experience peak activity during the summer. The LPC identified the universities as a valuable resource to expand on this trend.

#### Housing

- Most households in the Village of Canton are renters.
- It is assumed that the percentage of rental vs. owner-occupied households are reflective of the student population and young professional population.

The LPC discussed the accuracy of this data and noted that some Universities and Colleges require students to live on campus.

#### Employment

- Among Village residents, the largest employment sector is education, health care and social assistance (about 43%).
- Health care and social assistance are a continuum but are differentiated by medical care and those who provide only social assistance
- Social assistance includes family and individual services, community food and housing relief services, childcare, etc.
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services (13.4%), and retail trade (13%) are the next largest employment sectors.

Daniel Madigan (MJ) presented the draft existing conditions mapping:

#### Project Area

##### Regional Context

##### Existing Land Use

- Commercial makes up most of the land area (42.3%)
- Parks & Conservation Lands make up 24% of land area

##### Existing Zoning

- Downton Mixed-Use zoning makes up most land area in the Project boundary (43.4%)
- Main Street zoning makes up 22.9% of the land

##### Environmental Constraints

- Steep slopes are sparse and centralized around the Grasse River.
- 500-year flood zone are flood levels that have a 0.2% chance of occurring any given year.

##### Transportation Network

- Most of downtown Canton can be walked within 5 minutes
- Three major recreational spaces
- Existing sidewalk infrastructure

##### Historical, Cultural, and Public Spaces

- Village Green and Main Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Seven places of interest all within downtown

The LPC suggested that Heritage Park be further highlighted in this map

#### Built Environment



## 4. Downtown Profile Highlights

### Discussion

- About 47% of the NY Forward area has a permeable surface
- About 53% of the NY Forward area has an impermeable surface

#### Vacant and Underutilized Sites

- Few vacant sites
- Ample parking space

The LPC suggested that this map distinguish municipal and private parking lots

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

**MJ to make edits to maps based on LPC feedback**

## 5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

### Discussion

Daniel Madigan (MJ) displayed and read aloud the refined Vision for the Village:

*Nestled along the Grasse River, Canton's historic downtown is the crossroads connecting the St. Lawrence River Valley. As the heart of Canton, downtown is a year-round economic hub and regional destination centered around its walkable streets, diverse housing options, art and cultural attractions, variety of local businesses, accessible recreational offerings and community events. Abundant educational opportunities and an active entrepreneurial spirit further support downtown Canton as a thriving, welcoming environment for residents, students, and visitors to live, learn, work and play.*

The LPC discussed replacing the last sentence with 'all' to encapsulate all people who come to downtown and Canton. The LPC also agreed to remove the word 'further'.

Daniel Madigan (MJ) then introduced the Goals and Strategies. DOS guidance requires Goals to be realistic, clear and well-defined, and aligned with and supportive of the community's vision. DOS guidance requires Strategies to be actionable statements that are specific with local context, derived from opportunities and challenges, relate to the proposed NY Forward projects, clearly and concisely direct a type of action to help meet a specific goal, and guide the community on how to continue revitalization beyond NY Forward projects.

#### Challenges

- Limited retail, entertainment, recreational options
- Limited regional attractions
- Need for community coordination for events and visibility for downtown activities
- Limited public art installations and underutilized arts community
- Downtown aesthetics lacking unity and gateways
- Need improved signage and wayfinding
- Need sidewalk improvements and installations in key areas
- Partial pedestrian connectivity and bike infrastructure/accommodations
- Limited diversity in housing options
- Academic and College visitors during school year



## 5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

### Discussion

The LPC held a discussion regarding signage within the downtown. The LPC noted there is a historic district code that must be adhered to regarding lighting and signage. Signage may be included as an eligible activity within the Small Projects Fund.

#### Opportunities

- Affordable commercial spaces for various retailers
- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Utilize ample parking space
- Bike and Scooter parking and rentals
- Art community
- Enhanced connectivity
- Sidewalk improvements and bike lanes
- Village Green enhancements
- Space for mixed-use development
- Outdoor activities on Willow Island and Canton Island Park

#### **GOAL 1: Economic Vitality**

Foster and preserve a strong, year-round economic environment with an interconnected, walkable downtown offering a mix of uses and amenities.

#### Strategies

1. Foster a supportive business environment through inclusive and cooperative event and development planning.
2. Attract diverse retail offerings (i.e., shopping and dining) along Main Street to create a strong, year-round market.
3. Enhance the aesthetics of downtown by supporting upgrades to existing buildings.

The LPC discussed an additional strategy addressing other businesses besides retail, or to re-word strategy #2 as to not be specific to just retail options.

The LPC suggested this goal may be the place to establish a marketing and branding incentive.

#### **GOAL 2: Social Inclusion & Connections**

Enhance social inclusion and community connections through improved accessibility, expanded community collaboration, and varied housing options throughout downtown Canton.

#### Strategies

1. Diversify the housing stock to attract and accommodate a range of incomes through the activation of mixed-use buildings.
2. Improve connections to and within downtown by enhancing the pedestrian environment through the prioritization of streetscape, traffic control, parking, lighting, ADA accessibility enhancements, signage and wayfinding.
3. Expand the social and economic collaboration, coordination, and among educational institutions, businesses, community-based organizations, and other community stakeholders.

The LPC suggested including more detail on housing diversity regarding strategy #1 to include all ability levels.

## 5. Visioning & Goals Discussion

### Discussion

The LPC discussed strategy #3 and what coordination meant in this context. The LPC discussed including more detail to expand on what coordination means but that it may also mean all the above. The LPC agreed to remove the words ‘social and economic’.

#### **GOAL 3: Recreation**

Enhance community coordination and visibility for downtown events to create locally and regionally attractive entertainment and recreational opportunities.

##### Strategies

1. Organize regular, all-season outdoor recreational offerings to attract a wide range of audiences.
2. Design new or enhance existing recreational spaces to include various amenities, green spaces and functional areas (i.e., café seating or activity platforms) that are accessible to people of all abilities.
3. Utilize inviting streetscaping or design elements to connect recreational opportunities within downtown Canton

The LPC agreed to change the word ‘organize’ to facilitate in strategy #1 and to not specify outdoor recreation only.

The LPC also suggested the word ‘entertainment’ be added to strategy #2 and other strategies where applicable.

#### **GOAL 4: History & Culture**

Celebrate and expand Canton’s historic and cultural presence.

##### Strategies

1. Develop and promote year-round arts and cultural events to increase local and regional tourism.
2. Encourage businesses to sponsor and participate in events to create a vibrant atmosphere.
3. Improve key gateways into downtown Canton to create a welcoming environment reflective of local history and culture.

The LPC suggested an additional strategy that states “Establish consistent aesthetic and identity for downtown reflective of local history and culture” to address streetscaping and signage.

The LPC will evaluate projects based on additional strategies and goals including the State strategies and goals. Projects may align with the State strategies and goals but not the local ones, edits can be made to the goals and strategies to become broader to help projects fit in.



## 6. Call for Projects Overview

### Discussion

The MJ Team provided an overview of the Call for Projects process. The Open Call for Projects provides an opportunity for community members, property owners, and business owners to submit projects for consideration.

- All potential projects must complete a NYF submission form with required information through the Open Call, even if submitted in the NYF application
- The Open Call for Projects will run from June 26<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>
- 25% locally match for private projects required by the program
- The total project cost must be a minimum of \$75,000 to submit a Project Form.
- Projects <\$75,000 should submit a Small Project Fund Interest Form to demonstrate support for the fund
- Not all solicited projects will be selected

The MJ team noted virtual office hours (conducted via zoom) are available for project sponsors to discuss application details with members of the consultant team. Dates and times are as follows:

- Tuesday, July 9, 2024, 9:00 – 10:00 AM
- Thursday, July 11, 2024, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
- Wednesday, July 24, 2024, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

#### Project Evaluation Criteria

Alignment with Canton's vision and goals will be used to evaluate submitted projects. All projects submitted through the Open Call will be presented at LPC #3, then LPC evaluation will begin.

- Other Local Evaluation Criteria
  - Potential to leverage additional private and/or public funds, above 25%
  - Public support
  - Transformative potential – elements that improve downtown and how it is perceived
  - Availability of alternative funding sources that are more appropriate than the NYF award

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) noted that LPC work group sessions may be held to work through the evaluation criteria, but no decisions are to be made during these sessions. The LPC agreed to creating work groups.

For more information and links to the zoom meetings please go to the Call for Projects tab located on the project website: [www.CantonNYForward.com](http://www.CantonNYForward.com)

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

**MJ to make edits to vision, goals, and strategies based on LPC comments**



## 7. Next Steps

### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) then discussed the next steps for the LPC.

#### Next Steps:

- Open Call for Projects Release – June 26, 2024, at 12 PM
- Close Community Survey – June 30
- Draft Downtown Profile – July
- Open Call for Projects Closes – July 31
- LPC Meeting #3 – August 13, 12:30-2:30 PM

An LPC member inquired about the announcements of projects that will be funded. The State team noted there is no set date, but announcements may be made in Spring 2025.

Visit the Canton NY Forward website to stay up-to-date, view meeting summaries, presentations and materials, fill out a project form and get involved! [www.CantonNYForward.com](http://www.CantonNYForward.com)

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

## 8. Public Comment

### Discussion

LPC Co-Chair, Mayor Michael Dalton opened the meeting for public comment.

- A member of the public inquired about projects being completed in stages, can the non-reimbursable aspects be completed before, and the definable parts be funded through NYF?
  - A member of the State team answered that the definable parts can be funded and that projects should be completely definable as possible. The 25% match is forward-looking, and any aspects of the project already completed should be disclosed in the description of the project to show investment/readiness.
- A member of the public noted that many of their questions had been answered during the LPC meeting, but inquired about to what extent are projects limited to the project area and the possibility for projects to reach out beyond the boundary possibly through partnerships
  - The State team noted projects requesting NY Forward funding must be within the boundary, but the hope is that projects within the boundary that are funded will spur investment outside the boundary and future investment
- A member of the public suggested the vision speaks more on the business-friendly environment of the area, though these may be addressed in the goals. Similarly, the goals and vision should promote housing for various age groups.
- A member of the public inquired why the submission period was so short
  - The MJ team noted that the schedule is aligned with the NYS schedule that all NYF programs must follow. The MJ team noted that the program is looking for projects that are shovel-ready but may need a final financial investment in order to implement.
- A member of the public asked if there will be feedback for project sponsors after the close of the call for projects and how detailed applications should be in regard to building codes, etc.

## 8. Public Comment

### Discussion

- The consultant team will reach out to project sponsors for additional materials needed. Additional materials may be submitted by project sponsors after the closing of the Call for Projects to ensure project development accuracy. Project sponsors should provide enough detail and information for an accurate cost estimate.

Following the public comment period, LPC Co-Chair Michael Dalton thanked all those in attendance.

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Grace Sherburne, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee

## Local Planning Committee

Name	Present
Michael Dalton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kathryn Morris	<input type="checkbox"/>
Josh Vink	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Brian Coakley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ariane Palmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connie Jenkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Katie Berry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dave Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kirk Davis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## State Partners

Name	Present
Kylie Peck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stephen Hunt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Planning Support

Name	Present
Leigh Rodriguez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anna Sorensen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Daniel Madigan	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grace Sherburne	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>