



MEETING SUMMARY

Village of Lancaster NY Forward LPC Meeting #3

Tuesday, July 18, 2023
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Lancaster Municipal Building
5423 Broadway
Lancaster, NY

Attendees:

- Local Planning Committee (LPC):
 - Hon. Lynne Ruda, Mayor of the Village of Lancaster (Co-Chair)
 - Mr. Paul Brown, WNY Regional Economic Development Council (Co-Chair)
 - Mr. Luke Borkowski, resident of Lancaster.
 - Mr. Joseph Crumlish, President of the WNY Mountain Biking Association.
 - Ms. Jennifer Eichenseer, resident of Lancaster.
 - Ms. Deborah Glowny, Vice President & Community Office Manager of Bank on Buffalo (Lancaster Branch).
 - Mr. Alan Kurtzman, owner of The New York Store
 - Mr. Michael Meyer, Chair of the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission.
 - Ms. Kirsten Shelly, member of the Village of Lancaster Climate Smart Task Force.
 - Mr. Daniel Sundell, owner of Dark Forest Chocolate.
 - Mr. Thomas Van Nortwick, resident of Lancaster
- State Agencies:
 - Ben Bidell, NYS Department of State (DOS)
 - Erin Corrado, Empire State Development (ESD)
 - Leonard Skrill, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
- Consultant Team:
 - Norabelle Greenberger, LaBella Associates
 - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, LaBella Associates
 - Edward Flynn, LaBella Associates
- Members of the public



i. Co-Chair Introduction

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. The Co-Chairs welcomed the public. Mr. Brown reviewed and read the Code of Conduct. There were two recusals filed, one by Mr. Alan Kurtzman for 16 Central Avenue and the other by Mayor Lynne Ruda for 43 Central Avenue.

ii. LPC Meeting Review

LaBella provided a recap of the previous meeting, discussed the goals for the current meeting, and previewed the next meeting.

iii. Community Engagement Updates

LaBella noted that the Public Engagement Plan was circulated to the LPC in advance of the meeting, reflects previous feedback, and is a working document reflecting work undertaken and planned. The LPC did not have any comments on the Public Engagement Plan.

LaBella provided an update on recent local engagement activities. Recent targeted outreach activities took place at Lancaster Towers, Lancaster Public Library, and Lancaster Senior Center, where display boards, hard copy surveys, and flyers were distributed. Additionally, posters and survey flyers were distributed during the 4th of July community event.

LaBella provided an update on stakeholder outreach. They have reached out to all the stakeholder organizations identified by the LPC, have interviewed five of the stakeholders and have a goal of interviewing all stakeholders by the end of July.

LaBella reviewed the results of the survey, which received 1,839 survey respondents. LaBella provided an overview of the people that responded, which represented a good cross-section of the population and some of the key findings. Mayor Ruda noted that a similar survey was conducted in 2018 by LaBella and that it will be interesting to compare the results. Mayor Ruda asked whether a fuller summary of survey results will be provided, and LaBella confirmed.

iv. Review of Community Vision, Goals, and Strategies

LaBella noted the importance of the community vision, goals, and strategies in evaluating projects. The Vision Statement was reviewed at the first LPC meeting and second public workshop. No modifications were suggested.

The LPC walked through the draft goals and strategies, which were circulated to the LPC in advance of the meeting. The LPC made the following suggestions:

- There was a comment from the LPC to add "local" to the strategy that reads: "prioritize development projects that offer diverse commercial and employment opportunities."



- Regarding the diverse and inclusive housing solutions goal, the LPC requested that a fourth bullet point be added about inclusivity as it relates to access.
- Regarding the encourage health and wellness for residents and visitors goal, the LPC noted that people want to age-in-place but no medical services are available locally, which should be addressed in the strategies under this goal. An LPC member also requested that “of all abilities” be added to the strategy pertaining to parks.
- Regarding the implement sustainable and environmentally friendly practices goal, the Mayor noted that this is a significant priority of the Village Board. An LPC member asked about adding in specific goals on LEED certifications or other similar building standards to assist in providing business owners with guidance.
- The LPC highlighted the significance of incorporating aspects of arts and cultural diversity across all components of the draft goals and strategies. Recognizing these elements’ crucial role in enriching community life and fostering inclusivity, they agreed that they should be more prominently featured.

In response to this feedback, LaBella will revise the draft goals and strategies accordingly. Once these edits have been made, an updated version of the goals and strategies will be circulated for review prior to LPC Meeting #4, so they can be approved at that next meeting.

V. Review and Discussion of Proposed Projects

The Open Call for Projects, which was initiated on May 31st, officially closed on July 14th. LaBella provided an overview of the outreach and assistance provided to maximize responses.

LaBella provided a summary of the 32 eligible projects that were submitted for consideration. The total requested funds from these submissions amount to over \$14.1 million. These funds are expected to support projects valued at over \$26.1 million. During the presentation, the following comments were provided by the LPC:

- The LPC discussed ownership of building and tenants submitting projects and raised concerns about the long-term impact of a project if a tenant were to relocate. The State representatives provided additional details on the five year (or more) requirements for tenants to remain in place to maintain funding.
- Mayor Ruda asked about the conversations with project sponsors and whether they were aware of the grant guidelines and requirements. State representatives indicated that sample grant agreements can be provided to any interested project sponsor.

Two proposed projects are currently situated outside of the NY Forward area boundary, and as a result, they require consideration for boundary amendments. The LPC deliberated on the proposed boundary amendment during the meeting and decided in favor of extending the boundary to include the road frontages along Central Avenue up to Erie Street.

LaBella noted that several projects were submitted specifically for the Small Project Fund and/or would be typical of the Small Project Fund, given their scale and scope. While a Small Project Fund is not mandatory, it could effectively support specific initiatives. The LPC discussed the merits of creating such a fund and agreed to recommend establishing the



\$300,000 Small Project Fund as part of the NYF process. After some deliberation, the LPC agreed on a list of projects to recommend for the Small Project Fund. Projects sponsors will need to apply to the fund once it has been created.

vi. Review of Project Evaluation Criteria

LaBella discussed the project selection process and reviewed both the State evaluation criteria and example local evaluation criteria. Mayor Ruda led a discussion around the local evaluation criteria to determine which are most relevant for Lancaster. The LPC generally felt that if a criterion was already one of the State evaluation criteria, it did not need to be included in the local evaluation criteria. The local evaluation criteria selected by the LPC are as follows:

- Alignment with the community's vision & goals;
- Ability to provide a sustainable impact in the downtown;
- Capacity of responsible parties to implement the project;
- Potential to leverage additional private and/or public funds; and
- Sustainable and resilient component to the project.

LaBella will prepare a project evaluation worksheet reflecting these criteria, for the LPC to review at the next meeting. Mayor Ruda requested that the worksheet be digital.

vii. Next Steps

Public Workshop #2 is scheduled for August 9th. This workshop aims to engage the public in discussing and reviewing the submitted projects. The LPC agreed with the public workshop time of 6 PM to 7:30 PM. LaBella is coordinating the location.

The consultant team will continue to advance the development of proposed projects, refining details and preparing for further discussion.

LPC Meeting #4 is scheduled for Tuesday, August 15th, at 6 PM at the Lancaster Municipal Building.

viii. Public Comment

There was a desire from a resident to encourage residents to walk and better manage traffic.

ix. Co-Chair Closing Remarks

Mayor Ruda acknowledged the State representatives and expressed appreciation for their time and support. The meeting ended at 8:21 pm.