Victor NY Forward
Local Planning Committee Meeting 1

Victor Early Childhood School
July 16, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Attendees

LPC:

- Sean McAdoo (Co-Chair), Village of Victor Mayor
- Tracey Dello Stritto (Co-Chair), Finger Lakes REDC
- Paris Albert, ESL Federal Credit Union
- Romy Barbato, Victor-Farmington Library
- Aimee Cain, AE Gifts & Clothing
- Emily Knickerbocker, Victor Insulators
- Chris Mergler, Village Planning Board
- Charlie Parkhurst, Victor-Farmington Rotary
- Dawn Pierson, Victor Urban Renewal Agency
- Kathy Rayburn, Victor Local Development Corporation
- Scott Reinhart, Victor Hiking Trails

Project Team:

- Melissa Keller, Department of State (DOS) Project Manager
- Greg Parker, Empire State Development (ESD)
- Tirzah Peters, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
- Kimberly Baptiste, Colliers Engineering & Design Project Manager
- Jeanette Petti, Colliers Engineering & Design

Municipal Representatives:

- Brittnee Schmith, Village Clerk

Other Attendees:

- Approximately 30 community members

Welcome and Introductions

Sean McAdoo, Mayor of the Village of Victor, welcomed attendees and expressed the Village's excitement to begin the NY Forward process. Local Planning Committee (LPC) members and the Project Team introduced themselves and their affiliations.

Code of Conduct

Melissa Keller, Project Manager with the New York State Department of State (DOS), explained the "Code of Conduct" which sets the standards and procedures for the NY Forward planning process. The Code requires LPC members to: (1) disclose any conflicts of interest; (2) act in the public interest; and (3) disqualify themselves as necessary if they have a conflict of interest. She also reviewed the process for documenting a conflict and recusing from decision-making.

All LPC members are required to sign and attest that they understand and will adhere to the Code of Conduct. Melissa requested LPC members sign the code and return to her prior to the next meeting.

All LPC meetings will open with a reading of the "Preamble" by one of the LPC Co-chairs. The Preamble reminds LPC members of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest and gives members an opportunity to do so at the beginning of the meeting.

Overview of the NY Forward Program

Roles and Responsibilities

Melissa outlined the roles and responsibilities of the different groups involved in the NY Forward planning process.

Several State agencies will oversee the planning process and provide guidance in specific areas. Involved agencies will include the Department of State (DOS), Empire State Development (ESD), and NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). These entities will engage with other State agencies when needed to facilitate the process.

The Consultant Team will work under the oversight of the State Team to lead the planning process, facilitate meetings, and produce deliverables. The Consultant Team is made up of subject matter experts in planning, economic development, architecture, engineering, and other areas. The Consultant Team lead is Colliers Engineering & Design – a multidisciplinary planning, architecture, and engineering firm that has been involved in several previous rounds of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) as well as the first three rounds of the NY Forward program (2023-2025).

Other project partners include:

- Sustainable Planning Design, to develop the Downtown Assessment
- Camoin Associates, to prepare the market and feasibility analysis for the Downtown Assessment
- STC Design, to develop project profiles
- 4Ward Planning, to develop project profiles

The Local Planning Committee (LPC) is a group of community members nominated by the Village and confirmed by DOS to lead Victor's NY Forward planning process and determine which projects have the most potential to bring transformative change to Victor. LPC members represent a diverse segment of the Victor community, including business owners, residents, local officials, and community non-profit organizations. LPC members volunteer their time. The LPC is led by co-chairs Sean McAdoo, Village Mayor, and Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) designee, Tracey Dello Stritto. The LPC is responsible for ensuring the community's vision is met and the public interest is served.

Program Goals and Timeline

Melissa explained that the NY Forward program is a New York State program designed to invigorate and enliven downtowns in New York's small towns and hamlets. This round, the program is infusing a total of $200 million in communities across New York State between the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward programs. The Village of Victor has been awarded $4.5 million as part of the NY Forward program to plan and implement transformative projects downtown.

Melissa noted that the program has multiple goals, including:

1. Enhancing downtown living and quality of life
2. Creating an active downtown with a mix of uses
3. Providing diverse employment opportunities for a variety of skillsets and salary levels
4. Creating diverse housing options for all incomes
5. Providing public spaces that serve all ages and abilities
6. Encouraging the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
7. Growing the local property tax base

Melissa noted that projects will be identified through a multi-month planning process, led by the LPC with guidance from NYS and the Project Team. The planning process began in June with the establishment of the LPC and will conclude in early 2027 with the completion of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which is the report that documents the planning process and recommends to New York State which projects the LPC and the community believe have the most potential to positively impact Victor. The State will review the SIP and determine which projects will receive funding from the $4.5 million allocation. NY Forward grant awards will be announced in the months after the completion of the SIP, with project implementation to follow thereafter.

NY Forward Planning Process

Melissa reviewed the steps involved in the NY Forward planning process, which begins with visioning and a baseline analysis of the community's characteristics, opportunities, and challenges, then moves into project development and evaluation, and concludes with the development of the SIP.

Visioning

The first step in the planning process is to establish a community vision for Victor's NY Forward program and to create a set of goals and strategies to achieve this vision. LPC and community members will participate in visioning exercises to help refine the vision established in Victor's NY Forward application.

Downtown Assessment

Melissa noted that the Project Team will perform a baseline analysis of Victor's demographics, economic activity, physical setting, recent plans and ongoing efforts, and other topic areas. This analysis will identify Victor's opportunities and challenges and help the LPC understand existing conditions as they stand today in Victor.

Project Development

Project development is a critical step in identifying projects that might be potential candidates for NY Forward funding. Potential projects are identified via two streams: (1) through the projects proposed by the Village of Victor in its application for NY Forward funding; and (2) through the Open Call for Project Proposals, which gives community members the opportunity to submit project proposals for the LPC to consider. All projects, including those submitted in the original application, will need to resubmit a project application as part of the Open Call for Project Proposals. This creates a "clean slate" for all projects to be evaluated equally by the LPC.

Melissa explained the difference between eligible and ineligible project types. Four types of projects are eligible for NY Forward funding:

- Public improvement projects
- New development and/or rehabilitation of existing downtown buildings
- Branding and marketing for the Village
- Small Project Grant Fund

There are also several activities that are *not eligible* for NY Forward funding. These include:

- Planning activities (with the exception of zoning amendments)
- Operations and maintenance
- Pre-award costs
- Property acquisition
- Training and other program expenses
- Expenses related to existing programs

All projects, except for those potentially included in the Small Project Grant Fund, must meet a minimum of $75,000 in total project costs. While public and non-profit projects have no minimum match requirement, privately-sponsored projects are required to match at least 25% of total project costs.

Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)

Melissa noted the Strategic Investment Plan is the final deliverable of the NY Forward process. It documents the planning process and recommends projects to NYS for potential funding. Not all proposed projects will be included in the SIP. Similarly, not all projects included in the SIP will receive NY Forward funding. The State will review the SIP, which will include about $6-8 million worth of projects, and make the final determination on which projects to fund from the $4.5 million award.

Once project funding announcements are made, projects are expected to break ground within two years. Awards are provided as reimbursements, meaning that project sponsors must secure financing and complete the project before they receive grant funds. All awards are subject to State requirements such as MWBE goals and competitive procurement.

NY Forward Meeting Schedule

Kimberly Baptiste, Project Manager from Colliers Engineering & Design, reviewed the schedule of LPC meetings and public workshops:

- **July 16, LPC Meeting 1:** Introduction to NY Forward and review of the project application form.
- **August 6, Public Workshop 1 and Project Application Info Session:** Visioning exercise and an explanation of the project application process.
- **August 25, LPC Meeting 2:** Review of the Downtown Assessment findings.
- **September 24, LPC Meeting 3:** Review submitted projects and identify questions for project sponsors.
- **October 15, Public Workshop 2:** Project spending activity.
- **October 29, LPC Meeting 4:** Continue evaluating projects, review findings from the public workshop, and hear presentations from project sponsors.
- **December 3, LPC Meeting 5:** Finalize the slate of recommended projects.
- **December 17, LPC Meeting 6:** Held if needed.

Public Engagement

Kimberly emphasized that community feedback is integral to the planning process. A number of opportunities for public engagement are provided, including:

- **Public Workshops (2):** Interactive sessions designed to gather feedback from community members.
- **Open Call for Projects:** Opportunity for community members to propose projects to be considered for NY Forward funding.
- **LPC Meetings (5):** Always open to the public, with time reserved at the end for public comment.
- **Pop-up Events:** Informational tabling at existing community events.
- **Project Website (VictorNYForward.com):** Online resource with information about the program, the project application form, upcoming events, meeting summaries, FAQs, and a comment form.

LPC Suggested Engagement Opportunities

- Victor Food & Music, August 8
- Explore Victor, September 12
- Farmers Market, every Wednesday

Victor's NY Forward Application

Mayor McAdoo provided an overview of Victor's successful application for NY Forward funding.

Community Input

The application was informed by 215 survey responses, 27 pages of submitted comments, and dozens of project ideas. The main themes were park enhancements, walkability, and trail connectivity to support businesses and bring people downtown.

NY Forward Study Area

The Study Area boundary was drawn based on the projects received during the initial application process. It coincides with the central business district and the urban renewal area, and the Village has spent many years planning and investing in this area. The State is looking for a concentrated, compact, and walkable study area so that the impact of investment can be maximized.

The Study Area has several defining features including:

- **Popular Area:** About 80% of residents come to this area of the Village for something every week.
- **Traffic:** Route 96 carries about 24,000 cars per day through the Village.
- **Auburn Trail:** About 46,000 people use the section of the Auburn Trail near the Village each year.
- **Corridor, Rather Than Destination:** Victor is a gateway to nearby destinations with many people passing through the Route 96 corridor daily. The challenge is giving people a reason to stop.
- **Lack of Wayfinding:** Parking is located behind Main Street buildings, so people must be directed to it. The trail is hidden from the Village, so people who do not know the Village is there will not go.
- **Identified Needs:** Wayfinding signage, improved traffic flow, mixed-use housing, and commercial redevelopment of vacant lots. Because the Village is substantially built out, redevelopment is needed to maximize land use.

Why Victor?

REDC member Tracey Dello Stritto explained several of the reasons why Victor was awarded NY Forward funding:

- **Community-identified priority projects:** Housing, small business, and parks and trails.
- **A boundary within the core business district.**
- **Regional connections:** Victor is the gateway to the Finger Lakes, 20 minutes from the City of Rochester, and located along NYS Route 96 and the NYS Thruway.

Vision for Downtown Victor

In its application for funding, the Village of Victor provided a vision for the future of downtown. Kimberly reviewed the vision as stated below:

> *"The Village of Victor is a welcoming, walkable area celebrating its small-town historical charm as it grows into a more vibrant connected community. Our vision incorporates our downtown's unique role as the heart of daily life for both Town and Village residents, continually aspiring to build connections that reinvigorate gathering spaces, recreational activities, and promotes small business. We actively support the enhancement of our centralized downtown park, local Main Street services, and library campus, motivated to leverage even greater future connection-driven networks. The Village's unique collaborations across public and private partnerships augment long-term economic aspirations towards strategic housing development, commercial offerings, as well as community recreation, and gathering. There is robust momentum for our future downtown area that reflects a stronger sense of place, enhanced quality of life and greater connection-based access opportunities for coming together to live, work, play and belong."*

Key Themes for Goal Development

To support the community vision statement, a series of goals and strategies will be developed by the LPC to guide decision-making throughout the NY Forward planning process. Kimberly provided eight key themes from the Village's application to begin the process of goal development, as listed below:

- **Downtown connectivity:** Improving downtown circulation and strengthening connections into the downtown core
- **New housing options:** Expanding mixed-use housing options to bring residents into the downtown core
- **Local business growth:** Supporting and attracting small businesses and growing local downtown job opportunities
- **Vibrant community spaces:** Enhancing important community spaces such as the Library and Farmers Market
- **Historic preservation:** Celebrating and preserving Victor's small-town charm and historic character
- **Parks and recreation:** Enhancing parks, trails, and recreation options
- **Tourism growth:** Leveraging Victor's recreation assets to attract tourists downtown
- **Quality of life:** Strengthening Victor as a community of choice to live, work, and play

LPC Feedback on Challenges to Investment in the Study Area

- Property costs and rent costs for tenants
- Traffic
- Wayfinding and signage
- Not enough demand
- Cost to revitalize versus build new, including accessibility issues in old buildings
- Renovation costs, and aging buildings that need updates
- Construction costs and timelines
- Property owners find it difficult to navigate funding sources
- Property owners need income from their properties to sustain themselves and cannot "go dark" for a year for renovations

Open Call for Projects Application

Kimberly explained the Open Call for Project Proposals. The Open Call gives community members the opportunity to submit project proposals for review and consideration by the LPC. Submission is open to the public. Any private, not-for-profit, or public entity can submit a proposal. LPC members can also submit proposals but must recuse themselves from evaluating that project throughout the NY Forward planning process. Applicants must complete an application form and provide basic information about the proposed project including a description, cost estimate, and potential benefits.

Open Call Timeline

Kimberly outlined the tentative schedule for the Open Call. Project applications will open on July 20, with submissions open for six weeks, closing on August 31. An informational session will be held on August 6 to walk through the application process and answer any questions.

Application Types

There are two types of Open Call applications:

- **Large Project Application:** For projects with a total cost of $75,000 or more. Potential projects can include:
    - New development or new construction
    - Medium to large-scale construction, rehabilitation, or renovation projects
    - Public improvement projects
    - Downtown marketing and branding initiatives

- **Small Project Letter of Interest:** For projects less than $75,000 in total cost. Potential projects can include:
    - Minor renovation projects
    - Business assistance (such as the acquisition of permanent commercial machinery or equipment)
    - Public art projects

Kimberly clarified that submitted Small Project Letters of Interest will be used to *demonstrate the need* for the establishment of a Small Project Grant Fund. There is no guarantee that a Small Project Grant Fund will be established. If a Small Project Grant Fund is established, applicants who submitted Small Project Letters of Interest will need to complete another application to be considered for funding from the Small Project Grant Fund. Submitting a Small Project Letter of Interest does not guarantee funding from the Small Project Grant Fund, if one is established.

Application Requirements

Kimberly walked through the application form. Requirements for all projects include:

- **Location:** Projects must be located in the NY Forward Area. Projects adjacent to or just outside the Area may be submitted if the applicant includes a justification explaining how the project will benefit downtown. The LPC may consider modifying the boundary on a case-by-case basis.
- **Timing:** Projects must be able to break ground within two years.
- **Funding:** Projects must have financing commitments largely secured or demonstrate a path to financing. Projects will be subject to a match requirement based on the LPC's discretion.
- **Impact:** Projects must have a transformative impact on downtown.
- **Sponsor:** Project sponsors must be legal entities (such as LLCs), not individuals, and may be public, not-for-profit, or private entities.

- **Decarbonization:** New construction and building addition projects greater than 5,000 square feet, and renovation projects meeting the substantial renovation criteria, must meet building decarbonization requirements for energy efficiency.

Project Evaluation Criteria

Projects submitted through the Open Call will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Alignment with local and state goals
- Catalytic effect
- Project readiness
- Eligibility
- Cost effectiveness
- Co-Benefits, or benefits that go beyond the project sponsor or developer

Match Requirements

New York State has established minimum match requirements as shown below:

- **Private Sponsor Projects:** 25% minimum match
- **Public Sponsor Projects:** no minimum match
- **Non-profit Sponsor Projects:** no minimum match
- **Small Projects (under $75,000):** 25% minimum match

Kimberly explained that the LPC can modify match requirements, so long as they are at or above the minimum match requirements established by the State. The LPC can also choose to set match requirements on a project-by-project basis. Project sponsors can provide their required match through cash-on-hand, bank loans, or funding secured from other sources.

LPC Discussion on Match Requirements

- **Public and non-profit sponsors:** The LPC supported keeping these at 0% match.
- **Effect of a higher match:** LPC members asked whether raising the match would discourage people from applying. Others noted that a higher match could attract stronger candidates who have the capital, while weaker projects may fall away.
- **Variable match:** LPC members discussed a variable match, with a 50% target that could be reduced if a project meets certain criteria. Concerns were that a variable match opens a gray area about why one applicant received a lower match than another.
- **Target march for private projects:** LPC members set the target match for private projects at 35%, noting that 35% is ideal, but applicants should not be discouraged from applying if they cannot meet the 35% target.

Next Steps

- **July 20:** Open Call applications available
- **August 6, 6:00 PM:** Public Workshop 1 + Project Application Information Session
- **August 25, 6:00 PM:** LPC Meeting 2

LPC Questions

- If design drawings were completed before the award announcement, can they be reimbursed?
    - **Answer:** No, work completed before funding awards are announced is not eligible for reimbursement through this program.

Public Comments

All LPC meetings are open to the public. Time is reserved at the end of each meeting for a public comment period. All comments are recorded. The Project Team and the LPC do not respond directly to comments unless clarification is needed. The following comments were received at this meeting:

- **Randy Shea:** Wants people to stop in Victor rather than drive through. He does not object to including the Auburn Trail in the boundary, but is concerned that about 40 Main Street businesses are excluded. He believes the boundary was created through a process that businesses did not know about and feels that all of Main Street should be included.

- **Sami Mina (businessman):** Has a plan with a prospective landlord to submit a project. Asked whether tenants are eligible to submit projects.
    - **Answer:** Tenants are eligible to submit as long as they can provide proof of approval from the landlord, such as a MOU.

- **Nick Cretekos (Papa Jack's):** A Victor business owner for 40 years. Said he applied when the program was first announced a year ago and has not received any emails or letters since. His project is outside the area. He has ideas for traffic and noted the need for striping and sidewalk updates that property owners cannot keep up with on their own. He felt the map does not look like the Village, since Papa Jack's and many Main Street businesses are excluded. He noted that 80% of the business in Victor happens outside the Study Area as drawn.