

Date: October 18, 2023

Project Name: Long Beach NY Forward
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #5

Meeting Location: 6th Floor, Long Beach City Hall, 1 W Chester St, Long Beach, NY 11561
Meeting Date: October 18, 2023
Meeting Time: 12:00-2:30 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

Ronald J. Walsh (Co-Chair)
Resi Cooper (Co-Chair)
Johanna Mathieson-Ellmer
Jacquetta Odom
Luke Heneghan
Brian Berkery
Nicole Bergman
Anthony Rector
Tara Lannon-Stanton
Pastor Mark Moses
Darren Gallo

Not present: Rabbi Jack Zanerhaft, Myra Dejesus

New York State

Kevin Garrett, Department of State (DOS)
Pape Cisse (DOS)
Cara Longworth, Empire State Development (ESD)

City of Long Beach

Patricia Bourne, Director of Economic Development & Planning
Cindy Rogers, Deputy City Manager
John McNally, Director of Public Relations & Special Projects
Tyler Huffman, Director of Community Development

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning
Silvia Del Fava, Associate, BFJ Planning
Suzanne Goldberg, Planner, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was to update the Local Planning Committee (LPC) on refined potential NYF projects and feedback from the recent Public Workshop and online survey, as well as to establish matching requirements for private NYF proposals and the Small Project Fund. Two

members of the public joined the meeting as an attendee. The presentation is posted on the [Long Beach NYF Website](#).

Introductions, Project Status, and Timeline

- Co-Chairs Ron Walsh and Resi Cooper started the meeting by thanking the Local Planning Committee (LPC) for their involvement in the NYF process.
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning introduced the LPC, consultant team, NY State team, and City staff. She explained that the intent of this meeting is to inform and prepare the LPC for the final vote at an upcoming virtual meeting.
- Mr. Walsh read the LPC preamble for disclosure and recusal.
- LPC member Tara Lannon-Stanton recused herself from both the Long Beach Public Library Auditorium and Exterior projects.
- LPC member Darren Gallo recused himself from the Two-Family Housing Conversions project.
- LPC member Luke Heneghan recused himself from the Bright Eye Beer Co. project.
- Ms. Favate presented the NYF timeline, giving updates on the next steps to draft the project profiles and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The process will be concluded with the submission of the SIP to the State by the end of 2023.

Community Engagement Update:

- Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning gave an update on community engagement. Public Workshop #2 was held on October 4 at the Long Beach Public Library Auditorium. Approximately 30 people from the public attended. The first portion of the workshop consisted of an overview of the NYF program, preliminary identified goals, and proposed projects. The second portion of the workshop involved an interactive board exercise for attendees to give feedback on proposed public and private projects.
- Key takeaways from the public projects included general enthusiasm on safety and streetscape improvements on Park Ave. Comments were generally supportive of adding more positive signage in the NYF area with some opposition to digital signage. Many attendees provided further ideas on potential Park Ave. improvements, specifically related to the addition of bike infrastructure that was of high importance to most workshop participants.
- Many comments on proposed private projects were in favor of increasing the cohesiveness and marketing of small businesses in the area, as well as adding public art.
- Additionally, the Public Survey was open between September 21 and October 12 and aimed at gaining public input on each of the projects. Key takeaways from the survey included support for most projects and an emphasis on the need to address pedestrian and bike safety concerns. Feedback also supported enhancing public spaces and the visual appeal of the city through facade improvements and public art.
- Patricia Bourne of the City of Long Beach asked if it would be possible to increase the funding for the Small Project Fund since it received such positive support from the survey.
 - Ms. Favate stated that the City could combine the Small Project Fund with other funding sources to create additional opportunities for small businesses, but the Small Project Fund is capped at \$300,000 through NYF funding.

- Ms. Goldberg summarized public survey feedback for each project. An overview of public survey feedback can be viewed in the presentation posted on the [Long Beach NYF Website](#).

Project Evaluation Criteria Recap:

- Ms. Goldberg gave an overview of project evaluation criteria:
 - Alignment with State and Local Goals: NYF State Goals
 - Catalytic Effect
 - Project Readiness
 - Eligible Project Type
 - Cost Effectiveness
 - Co-Benefits

Current Status of NYF Projects

- Silvia Del Fava of BFJ Planning presented a summary of the status of NYF Projects, explaining that some projects might experience further refinement in the coming days.
- Ms. Del Fava stated that the consultant team has heard significant public support for bike safety improvements in the Park Ave area. Through ongoing discussions with City staff and agencies, the consultant team has recommended a project for future funding that would examine Complete Streets in Long Beach through a comprehensive study that incorporates parking, emergency management, sanitation, and other relevant factors to develop viable, actionable improvements.
- Mr. Walsh echoed support for a comprehensive study of traffic flows in Long Beach that would minimize unintended consequences of congestion and safety issues across the entire city. Due to the complexity of this issue, a complete redesign of Park Ave is not ready to be implemented in the timespan of the NYF process.

Updates on Potential NYF Projects

- Ms. Del Fava described a map with all the Long Beach NYF proposed projects. The following section of the presentation included updates on each of the projects.
- Ms. Del Fava explained that there have been updates to potential public projects, such as additional Long Beach Blvd improvements and the inclusion of design guidelines in the Wayfinding & Signage project.
- Park Ave Improvements (public project)
 - Ms. Del Fava described additional components along Long Beach Blvd, including new crosswalks across Long Beach Blvd and on side streets, improved bus stops with benches and shade structures, improved ADA accessibility/curb ramps, and the addition of plantings in empty tree pits.
 - Ms. Favate shared that the consultant team is working to coordinate with the County to get agreement on these improvements on Long Beach Blvd. The Project Team will identify the jurisdiction of bus stops and potential for shade structures. Ms. Bourne shared that the City is leading a bus shelter improvement program currently.
- Kennedy Plaza Redesign (public project)
 - Updates include:

- New stamped concrete crosswalks instead of a raised intersection at W. Chester and National Blvd
 - Extended landscaping median along National Blvd
 - All existing parking remains
 - Investigating replacement of existing trees given their condition; may increase cost slightly
- Mr. Walsh requested the inclusion of a tree assessment to determine if any trees in Kennedy Plaza need to be replaced.
- Wayfinding, Signage and Aesthetic Improvements (public project)
 - Ms. Del Fava explained that the cost estimate increased to include the creation of guidelines for cohesive design/identity for the Central Park Ave. downtown corridor.
 - Ms. Favate shared that these design guidelines will be useful especially in the case of the Small Project Fund façade improvements.
- Ms. Del Fava explained that the Professional Youth Theater (private project) is no longer a recommended project due to lack of project readiness, but a representative from Temple Israel expressed interest in applying to the potential Small Project Fund to implement accessibility improvements.
- Dance Loft (private project)
 - The consultant team met with the project sponsor and their environmental consultant to discuss next steps for NYSDEC approval and a potential remediation timeline. The sponsor provided details on the next steps required for DEC approval of the remediation work plan, and what the remediation work itself may look like. Their estimated time to start remediation is about one year from now.
 - Members of the LPC expressed skepticism regarding the project readiness.
 - Kevin Garrett of DOS stated that the remediation process seems relatively straightforward, and funding should still be eligible if substantial remediation is underway within the two-year timeframe.
 - Mr. Walsh stated that this project would take place at a key location at the entrance of the city, which is currently a vacant, contaminated site.
 - LPC members asked if the space could be rentable for the public. Members of the LPC requested commitment from the project sponsor that spaces within the building would be open to the public.
 - The consultant team will follow up with the project sponsor for further details on the location of onsite parking, number of retail spaces, and potential space open to community use.
- Two-Family Housing Conversions (private project)
 - Project was updated to include one unit at 80% Area Median Income (AMI).
 - Duration of workforce housing designation was increased from 5-10 to 10-15 years.
- Barrier Brewing Co. (Phase 2, private project)
 - The consultant team spoke with the project sponsor to determine the scope of each phase of this project.

- An LPC member asked about the status of the lease. The consultant team shared that the project sponsor is still negotiating the lease, but it is planned to be finalized soon. The sponsor shared a letter of intent to lease.
- An LPC member stated that this could help make Long Beach a regional destination for breweries.
- Ms. Bourne asked if there can be a long-term lease on this space to ensure a return on investment.
- Ms. Cooper requested that the project profile includes the cost for phase one to understand how much has already been invested in the space.
- The City stated that the project sponsor would need a variance for a bar, but can operate as a lounge.
- Long Beach Public Library Auditorium
 - The Library is working on getting more detailed cost estimates, so the NYF funding request might increase.
- Bridgeworks Campus Upgrades
 - The sponsor is finalizing details and there is a potential for the cost to increase.
 - Members of the LPC stated that the percentage of NYF funding requested is high for this project.
 - An LPC member shared that this is important as a gateway project.
- Bright Eye Beer Co. Façade Improvements
 - No updates.
- Long Beach Public Library Exterior
 - This project received significant support in the public survey.
 - Ms. Lannen-Stanton clarified that the café-style seating would take place behind the building and can be accessed through the interior and through the side of the building. The latter will include a fence which will be closed after operating hours.
- Small Project Fund
 - Other potential project sponsors expressed interest in installing solar panels and accessibility improvements.
- Ms. Del Fava shared the total project cost summary. Ms. Favate explained that the total NYF funding request is currently below the \$6-8 million range. LPC members asked if further improvements could be included in the public projects, such as:
 - New trees
 - Public charging stations
 - Wi-fi in Kennedy Plaza
 - Sidewalk improvements from Edwards Blvd to Nation Blvd (including street furniture)
 - Wayfinding color from LIRR station to beach to guide visitors

Matching Requirement & Small Project Fund

- The LPC agreed that the Library projects will be considered public projects, and will not require a match.
- The LPC reached consensus that all private project sponsors should provide a 25% match (maximum of 75% NYF funding request).

- Ms. Favate described the eligible activities allowed through the Small Project Fund:
 - Façade enhancements
 - Signage and building lighting
 - Building renovation improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces (including interior fit-out)
 - Business assistance (equipment or machinery)
 - Accessibility Improvements
 - Sustainability Improvements
- The program would be administered by the City of Long Beach. 10% of the Small Project Fund would be set aside for program administration by a City-retained consultant (per State's guidance).
- There is a State-mandated matching requirement that must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project. The LPC agreed to require a 50% match from Small Project Fund sponsors.
- The LPC agreed upon a minimum project amount of \$10,000 and maximum project amount of \$50,000.
- The LPC decided not to set aside a portion of the fund for murals, but rather encourage it as an eligible use.
- The LPC agreed to require a 25% match from Small Project Fund sponsors who are applying for art/mural projects.

Next Steps

- Mr. Garrett gave an overview of next steps in the NYF process. The LPC will meet in the coming weeks to vote on the projects.
- The SIP will be submitted in December.
- Mr. Garret showed an image of the ballot and explained that the LPC will vote yes or no to the entire slate of projects.
- Ms. Favate explained that project award winners should be announced in early 2024.
- Public improvement projects will be undertaken by the City of Long Beach, and the Small Project Fund will be administered locally by the City. Recipients will be selected through a competitive process.
- It is important to note that NYF funding is reimbursable, rather than an up-front grant, so project sponsors are reimbursed for expenses incurred.

Public Comment

- A member of the public asked why bike lanes were not included into the NYF public projects
 - Mr. Walsh responded that adding designated bike lanes is a complex issue that has been discussed with various City agencies. The consultant team and City decided that adding bike lanes is not ready to be implemented during the NYF process timeframe. Therefore, the NYF SIP will recommend a comprehensive study of Complete Streets in Long Beach for future funding.
- A member of the public responded that the recommendation for future funding seems like a way to delay the process, rather than implement bike lanes. He stated that there has

possibly been a feasibility study that examines the potential for bike lanes from Lido to Long Beach.

- Mr. Walsh stated that a comprehensive, in-depth study of traffic on the citywide level has never been completed before and would need to be taken into account when changing traffic flows in the Park Ave corridor. This study would include traffic counts, parking, public engagement, engineering work, and more.
- A member of the public asked for accountability in future complex decision-making processes regarding pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety.