

Date: September 20, 2023

Project Name: Long Beach NY Forward
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Location: 6th Floor, Long Beach City Hall, 1 W Chester St, Long Beach, NY 11561
Meeting Date: September 20, 2023
Meeting Time: 12:00-2:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

Resi Cooper (Co-Chair)
Myra Dejesus
Johanna Mathieson-Ellmer
Jacquetta Odom
Rabbi Jack Zanerhaft
Luke Heneghan
Brian Berkery
Nicole Bergman
Anthony Rector
Tara Lannon-Stanton
Pastor Mark Moses
Darren Gallo

Not present: Ronald J. Walsh (Co-Chair), Rob Richards, Leah Rosensweig-Tozer

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
Jordan Schieber, Assistant Planner

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning
Peter Van den Kooy, Associate 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 updates and new proposed projects submitted for NYF, and solicit feedback on each of the projects. One member of the public joined the meeting as an attendee. The presentation is posted on the [Long Beach NYF Website](#).

Introductions, Project Status, and Timeline

- Kevin Garrett of DOS opened the meeting by clarifying the objectives of this meeting, which are to learn the latest updates on the proposed projects, continue the vetting process and start making decisions about what projects the LPC would like to remove from the potential projects list.
- Peter Van den Kooy of BFJ Planning started the meeting by introducing the LPC, consultant team, NY State team, and City staff. Susan Favate, principal at BFJ Planning, is taking over the role of Principal in Charge of the Long Beach NYF starting this week.
- Resi Cooper read the LPC preamble for disclosure and recusal.
- LPC member Luke Heneghan recused himself from the Bright Eye Beer Co. project.
- LPC members Tara Lannon-Stanton and Darren Gallo arrived late. Ms. Lannon-Stanton recused herself from both the Long Beach Public Library Auditorium and Exterior projects. Mr. Gallo recused himself from the Two-Family Housing Conversions project.

Community Engagement Update:

- Mr. Van den Kooy presented the NYF timeline, giving updates on the next LPC meeting, status of project development, and upcoming community engagement opportunities.
- Kevin Garrett of DOS explained that the LPC will likely conduct a Zoom meeting for a final vote following the next LPC meeting.
- Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning gave an update on community engagement. The Public Survey will be launched on September 21 and is intended to gain public input on each of the projects. The survey will include a brief project description, an image, project location and sponsor(s), requested NYF funding and a place to submit feedback.
- Additionally, Public Workshop #2 will be held on October 4 at the Long Beach Public Library, Auditorium, Second Floor. The topics to be covered during this meeting include an overview of the NYF program, a summary of project submissions, and an interactive component to solicit community feedback on project profiles and refine public project details.

New Project Proposals:

Two-Family Housing Conversions

- Patricia Bourne of the City of Long Beach asked that the project sponsor clarifies the term for affordability controls.
- A member of the LPC stated that this project has previously been rejected by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). They shared that this project has a long history and some community members might be opposed to it. These houses are currently being rented at market rates, which is a rent that is not affordable for most people living in that neighborhood. Additionally, no two-family housing is allowed in Long Beach right now, and this would require a zoning variance by the ZBA.

- Other members discussed the benefits of having a housing project, especially given the need for more housing supply.
- If affordability measures are established as part of NYF, the State will monitor compliance.

Barrier Brewing Co.

- A member of the LPC stated that this project might take away business from the existing brewery nearby and two other liquor stores.
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning stated that the economic consultants would need to research whether Long Beach can support multiple breweries.
- A member of the LPC stated that there are issues with alcohol addiction in the community.
- An LPC member stated that since there is already a lease, this project might happen soon regardless of whether the project sponsor receives NYF funding. Other opportunities to enhance the project for public benefit could include façade improvements, for which the LPC could have a say (it's a prominent corner of Park Ave).
- An LPC member stated that they will need to get zoning variances, such as an off-street parking waiver from the ZBA, which means there could be some public input anyways on this project.

NYF Boundary

- Mr. Van den Kooy presented the current NYF boundary. He described the two-family housing conversions as five parcels a few blocks to the north of the current boundary.
- Mr. Van den Kooy then presented an alternative NYF boundary option, which extends north up along Long Beach Blvd. The alternative boundary would allow for the two-family housing conversions to be included in the NYF area, as well as wayfinding or gateway signage at the entrance to Long Beach.
- A member of the LPC asked if the Open Call submission period would be extended due to a boundary expansion. Mr. Van den Kooy stated that there is not enough time to reopen the Open Call, but it would expand the potential for Small Project Fund applications in the future.
- Cindy Rogers of the City of Long Beach asked if signage outside of the NYF boundary that directs people to the downtown area would qualify for NYF funding. Mr. Garrett stated that NYF funding cannot be applied to anywhere outside of the boundary, but similar signage could be installed elsewhere in Long Beach using other funding sources.
- An LPC member suggested expanding the boundary along Long Beach Blvd. to include the gateway signage, but not the residential area to the north of Park Ave.
- Resi Cooper, Co-Chair of the LPC, reiterated the importance of housing to achieve regional economic development priorities.
- Mr. Garrett stated that if a housing project receives NYF funding but at the end of the permitting process is not approved by the ZBA, the NYF funds will be reallocated to another project in the Long Beach NYF slate of projects.
- An LPC member stated that although the City has restricted residential uses in the downtown commercial area, the ZBA has allowed variances to construct residential buildings along the Park Ave corridor. Thus, even though the zoning does not currently allow two-family housing, there is potential for these uses to be allowed through variances.

- A member of the LPC asked if they can require affordability levels for the two-family housing conversions for at least 25-30 years.
- Ms. Bourne stated that creating additional housing would be consistent with priorities outlined in the recently approved Comprehensive Plan.

Project Evaluation Recap:

- Mr. Van den Kooy reviewed project eligibility requirements and the following criteria for project evaluation:
 - Alignment with State and Local Goals: NYF State Goals
 - Catalytic Effect
 - Eligible Project Type
 - Cost Effectiveness
 - Co-Benefits

Discussion of Potential NYF Projects:

- Potential Standalone Private/Non-Profit Projects:
 - Dance Loft
 - Long Beach Public Library Auditorium
 - Long Beach Public Library Exterior
 - Bright Eye Beer Co. Façade Improvements
- Potential Standalone Private Projects with Questions:
 - Professional Youth Theatre
 - Art by the Sea Murals
 - Performing Arts Studio
- New Standalone Private Projects:
 - Two-Family Housing Conversions
 - Barrier Brewing Co.
- Potential Public Projects:
 - Park Ave Improvements
 - Kennedy Plaza Redesign/Unified Civic Spaces
 - Wayfinding & Signage
- Dance Loft
 - Ms. Cooper asked if there are alternative funding sources for environmental remediation.
 - Ms. Rogers stated that this site is designated as a State superfund on the NYS DEC website. There are higher levels of remediation required for superfund sites.
 - An LPC member was concerned about the capacity of the project sponsor to move forward with this project after all the delays due to the remediation, COVID. And added expenses. Project readiness may be a concern.
- Long Beach Public Library Auditorium
 - Two LPC members stated that they appreciated that this project would be beneficial to the community.
 - An LPC member asked for clarity on other funding sources, if they are available. Tara Lannen-Stanton responded that NYS Library Construction Aid has grants every year

but they vary. Long Beach could apply for a portion of this funding, but funds are typically capped at \$100,000. LBPL could apply in Summer 2024 for the following year.

- A member of the LPC asked for clarity on the Green Room improvements. Ms. Lannen-Stanton stated that the Green Room would not expand but would have soundproofing and music/podcasting equipment for a greater variety of activities when it's not being used for performances.
- An LPC member suggested setting a lower matching requirement for non-profit projects like this one.
- A member of the LPC asked where the other non-NYF funding would come from. Ms. Lannen-Stanton responded that the other \$60,000 would come from library operating funds.
- Performing Arts Studio
 - The project is missing key elements for NYF viability, such as property control (either via lease or agreement with property owner) and a clear project scope and budget.
 - An LPC member requested if the applicant has provided information on whether there is a demand for this sort of space.
 - An LPC member asked if there is a more accurate cost estimate since this seems low and a wide range. The sponsor was not able to provide such information at this stage.
- Professional Youth Theatre
 - A member of the LPC stated that they spoke with a representative from Temple Israel, and this project would require broader agreement from their Board. The Temple is concerned with having members of the public entering the space.
 - There will be a follow up meeting with the Board of Temple Israel.
 - Dance Loft representatives (the project sponsor) would like to stay and manage the space even in the future, as it's a unique performing space.
 - Although there are three performing art projects in this NYF, an LPC member explained that the spaces serve different purposes and are not redundant.
- Art by the Sea Murals
 - An LPC member stated that these are beautiful murals, but there are opportunities for less expensive murals that support local artists.
 - Silvia Del Fava of BFJ Planning explained that the State would like to see an open call for artists even for murals on private property.
 - Ms. Bourne stated that National Endowment for the Arts funded a mural at the recreation center. This project cost around \$6,000.
 - A member of the LPC stated that there might be value in having murals that people will travel to Long Beach to see.
 - An LPC member reiterated the desire of having local artists involved in these art projects.
- Bright Eye Beer Co. Façade Improvements

- An LPC member stated that the NYF funding percentage although looks high, this does not include the millions of dollars of investment that went into the entire second floor renovations.
- An LPC member commented that this proposal seems project-ready.
- Long Beach Public Library Exterior
 - An LPC member asked clarification on the outdoor seating space, which would not be benches but café style seating, open 9 to 9 (library hours) for library patrons. There would also be small programs held here with music playing outside. There was some concern by LPC members about previous episodes of misuse of public seating areas. An LPC member asked whether the library would consider the project without the outdoor seating component, if that element was to create dissent among the LPC; Ms. Lannen-Stanton responded that they would.
 - Ms. Favate asked about the potential to combine these projects into one library project.
 - A member of the LPC applauded the library's ability to provide a positive environment for kids and teens.
- Park Ave Improvements
 - Ms. Bourne and Ms. Cooper suggested scheduling an LPC working group session to discuss the public projects in further depth.
 - Ms. Del Fava described the potential expansion of the intersection to the west of the train station and an expanded sidewalk area for pedestrians that exist the train station and wait to cross Park Ave. Other improvements also include improving the crossing and adding pedestrian safety measures at Rev JJ Evans Blvd and National Blvd.
 - Lastly, this project proposes maintaining an upgrading all other crossings and improving conditions at the median, such as adding more planting.
- Kennedy Plaza Redesign
 - Ms. Del Fava explained key project elements including:
 - Paving pattern to unify public spaces
 - Raised road between City Hall and the Plaza
 - Operable bollards that define car access
 - Redesign of the Plaza
 - Revised fountain
 - Raised intersection to National Blvd & W Chester
 - Pedestrian refuge to cross National Blvd
- Wayfinding & Signage
 - Ms. Del Fava explained key project elements including:
 - Light and color to help people find their way out of the station
 - Suite of signage
 - Digital signage
 - Gateway "bold" signage/sculpture/mural
 - If the boundary is expanded, opportunities to install an enhanced gateway and wayfinding signage along Long Beach Blvd

- Ineligible/Withdrawn Projects
 - Kennedy Plaza Mixed-Use Building
 - DiscoverLB
 - 814 West Beech LLC. – Corner of California and Beech Street
 - Dream Factory
 - Art Gallery above Surf Shop
- The LPC reached a consensus to eliminate the following projects:
 - Art by the Sea Murals- The LPC suggested they apply for the Small Project Fund if that is voted to be approved by the LPC.
 - Performing Arts Studios

Next Steps:

- At the next meeting, the LPC will decide on expanding the map boundary and the matching requirements.
- The consultant team will continue to revise the list of projects and follow up with sponsors.
- The LPC should continue to review ongoing updates to project proposals on the Google Drive.
- Upcoming Public Outreach Events
 - Second Public Workshop: October 4th, 7-9 PM at the Library, Second Floor Auditorium
 - LPC Meeting #5: Weds, October 18th (12-2, City Hall, 6th Floor)