

Meeting Summary
City of Long Beach NY Forward
Public Workshop #1
Long Beach City Hall
July 12, 2023
7:00-9:00 PM

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ronald Walsh, acting City Manager and Co-Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC), started the meeting with an overview of the NY Forward (NYF) process. Peter Van den Kooy of BFJ Planning then kicked off the presentation by introducing the consultant team, NY State team, City staff, and the 15-member LPC, who will oversee the Long Beach NYF.



II. What is NY Forward?

Mr. Van den Kooy explained that NYF is an outgrowth of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program, launched by New York State in 2016 to improve the vitality of urban centers across the State. The City of Long Beach is one of two communities in Long Island selected for NYF, each receiving awards of \$4.5 million. Each community is led by a consultant team who works with City staff and the LPC to guide the planning process, develop projects to recommend to the State, and document a Strategic Investment Plan.

The fundamental goals of NYF are to:

- Enhance downtown living and quality of life
- Create an active downtown with a mix of uses
- Provide diverse employment opportunities for a variety of skill sets and salary levels
- Create diverse housing options for all income levels
- Provide enhanced public spaces that serve those of all ages and abilities
- Encourage the reduction of greenhouse emissions
- Grow the local property tax base

The planning process includes the following phases:

- Vision and Goals: Refine the community's future vision, establish priorities, and gather input.
- Opportunities and Challenges: Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities.
- Project Identification and Evaluation: Identify, review, and evaluate potential projects.
- Project Recommendations: Recommend projects that align with the public's goals.

The Long Beach SIP will include the following sections:

- Section 1: Downtown Profile and Assessment
- Section 2: Community Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies
- Section 3: Public Engagement
- Section 4: Project Profiles

Mr. Van den Kooy presented an overview of the NYF timeline, noting the upcoming LPC meetings and opportunities for public input. He then shared a map of the proposed Long Beach NYF boundary, developed with input from the LPC. The Long Beach NYF area connects the LIRR station and commercial corridor along Park Avenue. Specifically, the Long Beach NYF boundary extends along West/East Park Avenue to Magnolia Boulevard to the west and Long Beach Boulevard to the east. Mr. Van den Kooy gave an overview of the eligible and ineligible projects for NYF funding, as well as project evaluation criteria.

Eligible projects include:

- New Development &/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings
- Public Improvement Projects
- Small Project Fund
- Branding & Marketing

Ineligible projects include:

- Planning Activities
- Operations & Maintenance
- Pre-Award Costs
- Property Acquisition
- Training & Other Program Expenses
- Expenses Related to Existing Programs

Project Evaluation Criteria:

- Alignment with State and Local Goals: NYF State Goals
- Catalytic Effect
- Project Readiness
- Eligible Project Type
- Cost Effectiveness
- Co-Benefits

Mr. Van den Kooy described the process of project identification. The City developed a NYF Application where some public project ideas were identified. The Open Call for Projects will be the main tool to solicit projects from public, non-profit and private project sponsors. All potential project sponsors should submit through the Open Call. It provides an open, fair, and transparent process for the LPC to vet projects. Submission of a proposal through the Open Call does not guarantee inclusion in the final plan. The deadline to submit projects is August 9, 2023 at 11:59 PM. The consultant team will host an information session and office hours to discuss project ideas with the public virtually on July 2023, at 11:00 AM. Participants can register in advance at the link below: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ItBHXVLUSbu6tOowz-FxZQ#/registration

III. Long Beach Challenges and Opportunities

Van den Kooy listed some of the initial public realm challenges and opportunities identified by the LPC, including:

- Opportunities to improve safety and conditions of crosswalks
- Potential to add greenery & seating
- Improve visibility and consistency of wayfinding signage
- Create a more unified streetscape

Other LPC-identified opportunities include:

- Signage, wayfinding, and beautification of downtown
- Improved City branding
- Continuity and uniformity of downtown identity
- Historical signage and landscaping
- Public art and murals
- Beautification of Kennedy Plaza
- Improved pedestrian and bike safety
- Longer crossing times and improved crosswalks
- Creation of a community hub

IV. Preliminary Vision & Goals

Silvia Del Fava of BFJ Planning explained that the purpose of developing Downtown Vision, Goals, and Strategies is to move from a vision that guides the process, to goals that are action-oriented to move towards the vision, to revitalization strategies that are discrete, measurable actions required to achieve a goal.

Preliminary Downtown Vision:

Long Beach will capitalize on its unique combination of being a barrier-island, beach-centric and transit-oriented community by making improvements to its streetscapes, public spaces, multi-modal transportation network and wayfinding to leverage private investment in its downtown, creating jobs, affordable housing and economic development opportunities.

Preliminary Downtown Goals:

1. Improve street safety and connectivity along Park Avenue to make it pedestrian-friendly, accessible, and easy to navigate for all.
2. Establish Downtown Long Beach as a year-round regional destination that leverages its multi-modal transit-oriented location to provide job and housing opportunities, as well as a diverse range of activities including arts, entertainment and recreation for residents and visitors alike.
3. Improve public spaces through the integration of landscaping, street furniture, wayfinding and public art to strengthen and enhance connections between civic spaces.
4. Foster an attractive downtown environment through cohesive streetscape treatments, including façade upgrades and gateway improvements, as well as signage and wayfinding enhancements, to reinforce the identity of Downtown Long Beach and create a unique sense of place.

V. Opportunities for Public Input

Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning concluded the presentation by outlining the upcoming public engagement opportunities. The next LPC meeting will be held on August 16, 2023 at 12 PM in City Hall, 6th Floor. The second public workshop will take place on October 4, 2023 at 7 PM. An information session for the Open Call will be held virtually on July 19 at 11 AM. The “Ideas Wall” interactive visioning exercise is now open for public input at the following link:
<https://bfjplanning.mysocialpinpoint.com/longbeachnyf/longbeachnyf-ideaswall#/>

Questions from the Public:

Q: Were the Comprehensive Plan ideas be included in these projects?

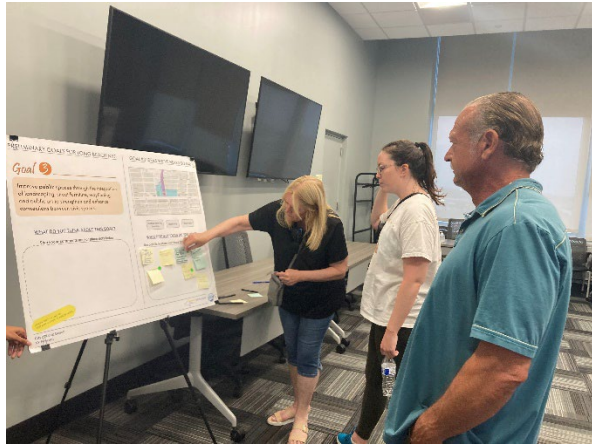
A: Yes, past planning efforts are being discussed by the LPC.

Q: Can we make pedestrian crossing safer, especially for those with disabilities and seniors?

A: Yes, we want to hear all your feedback in the Open House. This could be a project idea and ties into the preliminary goals/vision.

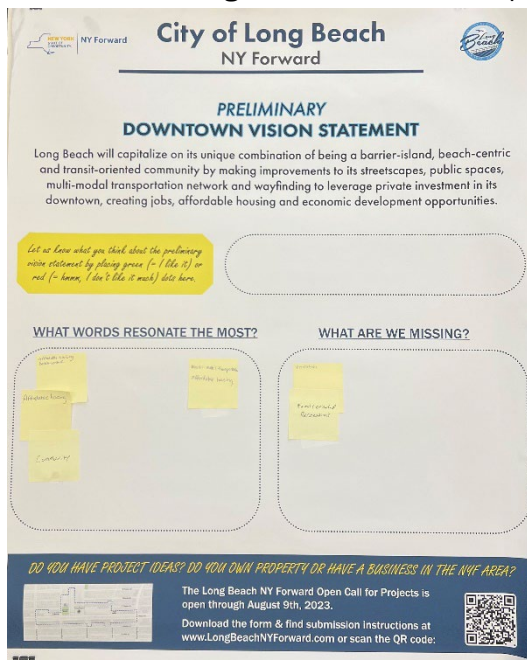
VI. Open House

Ms. Goldberg introduced the Open House exercise and invited attendees to start making their way to the next room to participate. The objective of the Open House was to review the Long Beach NYF Preliminary Vision and Goals. The exercise included one station for the vision, and four stations organized by goal. Project team members were located at each station. Each station included a board with the preliminary vision or goal, and asked participants to share comments and/or place green (agree) or red (disagree) dots. Each board with a goal also included a map of the NYF Boundary showing project ideas discussed by the LPC and a space for participants to share additional project ideas. The following section includes a summary of public feedback on each board.



Preliminary Vision:

Long Beach will capitalize on its unique combination of being a barrier-island, beach-centric and transit-oriented community by making improvements to its streetscapes, public spaces, multi-modal transportation network and wayfinding to leverage private investment in its downtown, creating jobs, affordable housing and economic development opportunities.



What words resonate the most?

- Affordable house (3)
- Beach-centric
- Community
- Multi-modal transit

What are we missing?

- Recreation
- Family-oriented recreation

Preliminary Goal #1:

Improve street safety and connectivity along Park Avenue to make it pedestrian-friendly, accessible, and easy to navigate for all.



What do you think about this goal?

- Buildings and sidewalks look dirty
- Reduce vacancies and improve façade
- Bigger trees in the median
- Parking in the median is a waste of space
- Trees in the median make it difficult to walk
- You have to cross Park Ave halfway due to short crossing time
- This is not a big issue. The boulevard is beautiful
- Walking allows more support of local businesses

What project ideas do you have?

- Curb is too high for wheelchair accessibility
- Traffic issues where Magnolia Blvd, Edwards Blvd, and Riverside Blvd intersect with Park Ave
- Unsafe crossing at Long Beach Blvd and Park Ave. Cars don't stop when pedestrians have the right of way
- Small bike racks that allow for pedestrian flow
- Large bike racks at entrances to downtown with signs stating: "No bikes on sidewalk"
- Retail on bottom, parking garage on upper floors. Could then convert parking on Park Ave to a promenade
- Make median parking sidewalks walkable without mulch or trees
- Park Ave and Long Beach Boulevard pedestrians should be able to cross without turning traffic
- Nowhere to ride bikes. Add a guarded bike lane
- Implement a program to slow down Park Ave traffic
- Lower the curb height on south side of Park Ave

Preliminary Goal #2:

Establish Downtown Long Beach as a year-round regional destination that leverages its multi-modal transit-oriented location to provide job and housing opportunities, as well as a diverse range of activities including arts, entertainment and recreation for residents and visitors alike.

PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR LONG BEACH NYF

Goal #2

Establish Downtown Long Beach as a year-round regional destination that leverages its multi-modal transit-oriented location to provide job and housing opportunities, as well as a diverse range of activities including arts, entertainment and recreation for residents and visitors alike.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS GOAL?
Share your comments and/or place dots below

GOAL #2 IDEAS WE'VE HEARD SO FAR

Event/Destination space for all ages
Create spaces for the arts
Redesign Kennedy Plaza

WHAT PROJECT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?
Use post-its to share your ideas below or onto the map

GREEN DOT = I LIKE IT
RED DOT = I WANT IT TO NEED WORK

City of Long Beach
NY Forward

What project ideas do you have?

- Leverage library space for more activities
- Arcade
- Non-food or alcohol-based establishments
- New locations for food trucks
- Restaurants and cafes
- Dave and Buster's/mini-golf at old movie theater
- Family entertainment or places for teens
- More arts space
- Common/uniform signage
- "Highline" from train to Kennedy Plaza with shops below and "boardwalk" above
- Revitalizing the train station with repairs and art
- Entertainment
- Affordable house, rentals, etc.
- Multipurpose community center with movie nights, dances/fundraisers, food fests art workshops, public use
- Bowling/food/live show venue and movie theater, i.e. Brooklyn Bowl or the Gutter

Preliminary Goal #3:

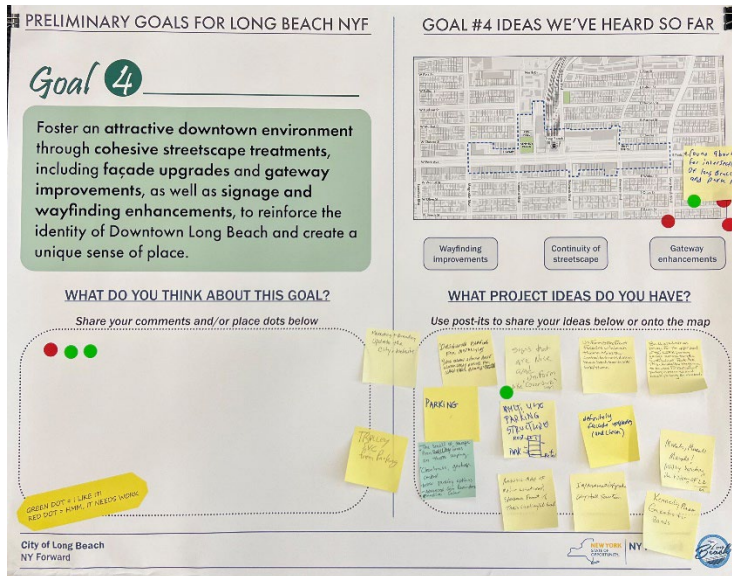
Improve public spaces through the integration of landscaping, street furniture, wayfinding and public art to strengthen and enhance connections between civic spaces.

What project ideas do you have?

- Traffic safety for seniors on Magnolia Blvd
- Green infrastructure
- Bike racks
- Beautify Stop and Shop plaza
- Artistic map of Long Beach showing major locations
- More native plants that are healthier and require less water/maintenance
- More trees and landscaping
- Outdoor seating
- Bigger library
- Solar paneling and LEED construction
- Year-round public spaces i.e. community multipurpose center, atrium, etc.
- Clean up the increasing graffiti problem
- Tourist information center where businesses could offer coupons
- Boardwalk arches over Long Beach and Magnolia Blvd, signage over Park Ave
- Getting a water system for the grass in front of City Hall where the grass is dead

Preliminary Goal #4

Foster an attractive downtown environment through cohesive streetscape treatments, including façade upgrades and gateway improvements, as well as signage and wayfinding enhancements, to reinforce the identity of Downtown Long Beach and create a unique sense of place.



What project ideas do you have?

- Marketing and branding
- Update the City's website
- Designated parking for motorcycles
- Trolley service from parking
- Uniform signs
- Multi-use parking structure
- Cleanliness, garbage control
- Better parking options
- Advanced sign reminders
- Artistic map of major locations
- Dog water spray devices
- Improve/upgrade City Hall fountain
- Façade upgrades
- Murals, possibly depicting history of Long beach
- Kennedy Plaza gazebo for bands
- Build a pedestrian bridge from the upper level of the LIRR parking garage across to the south side of Park Ave. This would allow the garage to be used for restaurant parking in the evening and beach parking on weekends
- Uniform storefront facades with a beach theme
- Make the central business district have a beach/boardwalk theme