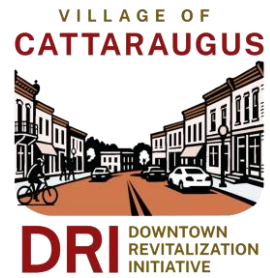


Village of Cattaraugus

Downtown Revitalization Initiative



Local Planning Committee Meeting #2 Summary

June 25, 2025 @ 5:30 – 7:30 pm | Cattaraugus-Little Valley High School Cafeteria
25 N Franklin St, Cattaraugus, NY 14719

Attendees

State Partners

- ☒ Ben Bidell, NYS Department of State
- ☒ Frank Puglisi, Governor's Executive Office
- ☒ Mo Sumbundu, Governor's Executive Office
- ☒ Erin Corrado, Empire State Development
- ☐ Tirzah Peters, Homes and Community Renewal

Consultant Team

- ☒ WSP
- ☒ Highland Planning
- ☐ Prospect Hill

Local Planning Committee

- ☒ Co-chair Hon. Anthony Nagel, Mayor
- ☒ Co-chair Paul Brown, WNY Regional Economic Development Council
- ☒ Crystal Abers
- ☒ Lauren Bronneberg
- ☒ Tom Cullen
- ☒ Kiana Deiter
- ☒ Michael Jones
- ☒ Cedric Manganiello
- ☐ Rob Miller
- ☒ Elizabeth O'Neill
- ☒ Tara Perkins
- ☒ Mary Pritchard
- ☒ Nancy Radwanski
- ☒ Tyler Soderlund
- ☒ TJ Stein
- ☒ Justin York

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

- Stephanie Camay (WSP) called the meeting to order, thanking the LPC for their continued participation in the DRI process. Stephanie also acknowledged members of the public in attendance, many of whom attended Public Workshop #1.
- The consultant team introduced themselves, followed by each member of the LPC.

Planning Process

- Stephanie presented an overview of the 9-month long DRI planning process. The LPC will refine the community's future vision, then will identify opportunities and challenges in the community, then will develop and evaluate potential projects, and then will finally recommend projects to NYS for funding consideration.
- Stephanie recapped LPC Meeting #1, which included:
 - o A review of the LPC Code of Conduct and roles and responsibilities of the LPC
 - o An overview of the DRI program
 - o An outline of the DRI planning process and schedule
 - o Submission and evaluation procedures for the Open Call for Projects
 - o DRI project examples from around WNY
 - o Public engagement strategies
 - o Proposed Cattaraugus DRI boundary and vision statement
 - o An overview of proposed projects in the Cattaraugus DRI application
- Stephanie presented the agenda for tonight's meeting, which includes:
 - o Engagement updates
 - o A review of foundational plans and studies
 - o Characteristics of strong DRI projects
 - o Building a strong slate of DRI projects
 - o State and local evaluation criteria for projects
 - o Revised vision and goals based on feedback from LPC and the public
 - o Revised DRI boundary based on feedback from the LPC and the public
 - o Overview of the Open Call for Projects process
- Stephanie presented a preview of topics to be covered during LPC Meeting #3, which includes:
 - o Engagement updates
 - o Vision, goals, and revitalization strategies
 - o Downtown profile key findings/takeaways
 - o Project evaluation criteria
 - o Proposed projects
 - o Projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
 - o Proposed boundary adjustments that may be needed to incorporate potentially transformative projects

Engagement Updates

- Stephanie presented an overview of the pop-up event held and Cattaraugus-Little Valley School Community Day on June 14.
 - o 100 members of the community were engaged
 - o Members of the public gave their thoughts on priorities and project ideas
 - o Online and paper copies of the public survey were distributed to community members
- Stephanie recapped Public Workshop #1, which was held in the CLV Central School Cafeteria on June 18
 - o 21 members of the public attended
 - o Attendees listened to a DRI overview presentation, participated in an individual visioning and goal-setting exercise, and provided input on project ideas through a group mapping exercise
- Stephanie updated the LPC on the public survey, which is open through August 1st. The public survey helps identify community issues, opportunities, and needs to be addressed in the Strategic Investment Plan. Paper copies of the survey with DRI informational boards and drop boxes are available at Village Hall, Bank of Cattaraugus, Pritchard Hardware, and Dollar General.

Past Plans and Recent Investment

- Brendan Kelly (WSP) presented an overview of past planning efforts in the Village of Cattaraugus that have set the stage for the DRI. These plans included:
 - o Village Zoning Law and Zoning Map (2002)
 - o Cattaraugus County Comprehensive Plan (2016)

- Town of New Albion-Village of Cattaraugus Comprehensive Plan Update (2017)
- Complete Streets Action Plan (2024)
- Brendan also presented an overview of recently completed projects and future investments in the Village that highlight momentum moving into the DRI process. These projects include:
 - The Revolution Rail Initiative (2025)
 - RocketCup Coffee Café and Headquarters
 - Crawford Hotel Restoration and Revitalization (ongoing)

Strong DRI Projects and Project Slates

- Brendan explained characteristics of strong DRI projects. Strong DRI projects:
 - Have a well-defined project scope
 - Have a project sponsor that has demonstrated capacity to implement the project
 - Provide evidence of strong public support
 - Have clear community and economic benefits
 - Provide evidence of market demand
 - Are financially feasible
- Brendan also explained hallmarks of moderate or weak DRI projects, which will either require more work to elevate the project to meet DRI requirements or may simply not be eligible or ready for DRI consideration.
- Brendan then detailed what makes a strong DRI slate of projects. A strong slate of DRI projects chosen by the LPC will:
 - Have a total DRI funding request between \$12-\$15 million, so that the removal of one project will not result in a total DRI funding request of less than \$10 million
 - Not prioritize projects
 - Include a healthy mix of public, private, and non-profit projects and varying project types

State Evaluation Criteria

- Brendan then presented New York State's evaluation criteria for DRI projects, which is one set of criteria the LPC will use to evaluate projects. The State evaluation criteria are:
 - **State and Local Goals.** The project should be aligned with State and local goals and demonstrate strong community support, including DRI vision and goals and REDC strategies.
 - **Project Readiness.** The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI area
 - **Catalytic Effect.** The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment at a scale appropriate for the DRI community.
 - **Co-Benefits.** The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable, and productive environments in which to live and work.
 - **Cost Effectiveness.** Investment of DRI/NYF funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.
- Brendan then presented the top-rated local evaluation criteria chosen by the LPC using online polling software. The LPC tailors the local evaluation criteria to be cognizant of the needs and opportunities specific to the Village. The LPC publicly confirmed the local evaluation criteria as final. The LPC chose the following local evaluation criteria:
 - Community and economic benefits
 - Catalytic effect - the ability to make other things happen
 - Estimated job growth and retention
 - Capacity of responsible parties to implement the project
 - Need for DRI funds to make the project feasible

Vision and Goals

- Brendan presented the updated Cattaraugus DRI Vision Statement, which was revised to reflect feedback from the LPC and members of the public. The LPC will ensure that projects recommended for funding are complementary with the vision statement. The LPC approved the revised vision statement, which reads:
 - o *The Village of Cattaraugus envisions a vibrant, walkable downtown that celebrates our historic red-brick charm, natural beauty, and deep-rooted cultural heritage. By honoring our industrial rail legacy and connecting it to outdoor recreation and regional trail networks, we will create a dynamic destination for dining, lodging, and community events. This transformation will spark economic growth, expand housing options, create jobs, support our youth, and inspire a new generation of residents to call Cattaraugus home.*
- Brendan then presented recommended DRI goals which will also be used by the LPC to evaluate projects received during the Open Call for Projects. Recommendations for goals were derived from the ranking of sample goals from members of the public and feedback from the LPC. The LPC finalized the following goals:
 - o Attract new businesses while supporting existing businesses
 - o Provide more recreational and community gathering places
 - o Improve access to essential services and affordable housing
 - o Increase walkability, bikeability, and accessibility of the downtown area
 - o Preserve and cultivate the village's small-town character, heritage, and charm

Revised DRI Boundary Area

- Stephanie presented the revised DRI boundary. The initial DRI boundary was included in the Village's DRI application to the State. Based on feedback received during LPC meeting #1, the boundary was extended to the north to include the school property, extended to the south to include Memorial Drive, and extended West to include the railroad tracks.
- The LPC approved the revised DRI boundary as final. The boundary may be slightly amended during the DRI process to include priority projects that are just outside of the DRI boundary.

Open Call for Projects

- Stephanie presented an overview of the Open Call for Projects, the formal process through which applications for DRI projects are received. The Open Call runs from July 2 to August 1.
- Steps in the Open Call process include:
 - o Applicants submit a complete DRI Project Form (with assistance from the consultant as needed) by July 12
 - o Applicants submit a Small Project Fund Interest Form for smaller or less transformative projects
 - o Technical assistance and open office hours are available through the open call for projects
- Stephanie then distinguished the two forms that are submitted through the Open Call:
 - o The DRI Project form, which is for transformational projects >\$75K in total project cost to be considered for grant funding directly from the state
 - o The Small Project Fund Interest Form, which is for smaller, less transformational projects <\$75K in total project cost to be considered for grant funding through the Village of Cattaraugus (if the fund is created)
- Stephanie reminded the LPC of eligible DRI project types, which include:
 - o Public improvement projects
 - o New development and/or rehabilitation of existing downtown buildings
 - o Small project fund
 - o Branding and marketing
- Stephanie also reminded the LPC of the DRI project requirements, which are:
 - o **Timing** - must be able to break ground within 2 years and be completed in 5 years
 - o **Sponsor** - must have an entity (not an individual) that agrees to undertake the project
 - o **Site Control** - must have authority to undertake the project at that location
 - o **Scope** - must have potential to transform the downtown area
 - o **Budget** - should have a detailed budget and leverage other funding
 - o **Decarbonization** - may be required to meet energy efficiency requirements

- **Financing** - DRI is a reimbursement-based grant program, and sponsors must be able to finance all project costs prior to DRI reimbursement at project completion
- **Match** – private projects must include a minimum 25% match (non-DRI funds)
- Stephanie then outlined the Small Project Fund. The Small Project Fund is up to \$600,000 that the LPC may recommend in the final slate of projects. Demand for the fund must be documented through Small Project Fund Interest Forms. The Small Project Fund, if recommended, is administered by the Village after the DRI planning process. All small projects will need to formally apply once the fund is administered.
- Eligible activities for the Small Project Fund can be limited by the LPC, but typically include:
 - Interior and exterior building renovations for commercial and mixed-use spaces
 - Upper-story residential improvements
 - Business assistance: permanent commercial machinery and equipment
 - Soft costs – architectural, and engineering, services, etc.
- The Small Project Fund also includes a private match component, which can be increased at the LPC’s discretion:
 - Minimum match of 25% of the total project cost on a per project basis
 - Match requirements must be realized on a building-by-building basis and are calculated using the total project cost
 - In-kind or volunteer services not eligible as a match
- Members of the LPC had the following questions/ comments following the Open Call for Projects section of the meeting:
 - What is the timeline for the Small Project Fund?
 - Ben Bidell (DOS) clarified that the Small Project Fund planning process typically takes about a year
 - How long does it take to get reimbursed for a DRI project?
 - Erin Corrado (ESD) answered that it will depend on the State agency the project contracts with. ESD typically takes 6-8 months to disburse DRI funds after project completion
 - The LPC and DRI team should solicit projects from out-of-town developers to capture more resources that are otherwise unavailable in the Village
 - Can work completed prior to DRI award announcement get reimbursed?
 - Ben clarified that only project work completed after the announcement of a DRI award is eligible for reimbursement.
 - The Mayor owns properties in the DRI area that could be part of transformative projects. Is he still eligible to submit them for DRI funding?
 - Ben clarified that this would be possible, but the Mayor would need to recuse himself from discussion on those projects.

Next Steps and Public Comment

- Stephanie summarized next steps in the DRI planning process, which include:
 - Initiate and promote the Open Call for Projects from July 2 – August 1
 - Hold Open Call informational session
 - July 2, 5:30-6:30 at RocketCup Coffee
 - Promote public survey
 - Plan pop-up engagement events throughout the summer
 - LPC Meeting #3 on August 6
- Stephanie presented upcoming engagement opportunities, which include:
 - The public survey, which is open until August 1
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Public Workshop #1 online engagement activities
 - Cattaraugus DRI Website: www.CattaraugusDRI.com
 - Social media - “Cattaraugus Downtown Revitalization Initiative” on Facebook
- The floor was then opened for comments from members of the public. The following comments were made:
 - Is the public survey only open to residents?

- Stephanie answered no, visitors to Cattaraugus are also welcome to complete the survey
- Can you clarify the deadline for when you are able to start work on your DRI project in order to get reimbursed?
 - Erin Corrado clarified that for ESD, the deadline is award announcements. Other State agencies may require the first of the month that follows award announcement.
- Erin also noted that the State's Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) is open and encouraged DRI applicants to also apply for DRI funding.