

SECTION 2.0

Public Engagement

In this Section:

SECTION 2.1 Introduction

SECTION 2.2 Public Engagement Plan

SECTION 2.3 Local Planning Committee

SECTION 2.4 Project Identification

SECTION 2.5 Public Workshops

The background image shows a hallway with several murals on the wall. One mural depicts a man in a long coat holding a banner with a logo. Another mural shows a man in a hat and coat, with the word "Muskegon" written below it. In the foreground, the backs of several people are visible as they look at informational displays. The overall scene suggests a community meeting or public engagement event.

SECTION 2.6 Stakeholder Meetings

SECTION 2.7 Online Engagement

SECTION 2.8 Local Outreach Activities

SECTION 2.1

Introduction

Broad, inclusive, and frequent public outreach is an essential component of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward planning processes, as public input plays an important role in the creation of the community's vision and goals and in the identification of projects and development of the Strategic Investment Plan.

Public engagement should begin at the onset of the planning process and continue throughout the development of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Engagement must be tailored to the local community and may take a variety of forms, with a focus on informing and educating the community about the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward (NYF) programs, soliciting and receiving input on the community's vision, goals, and proposed projects, and building support for SIP implementation.

Engagement activities should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population, and the consultant team must design events that encourage openness and innovation. Events will be held at milestones during the planning process, as described in the following sections.

Local Planning Committee (LPC) members will play a pivotal role in public engagement by helping to identify key individuals and organizations that should be involved in the

planning and implementation process and by determining the best way to involve them. Inclusion and equity are critical to the public engagement process; therefore, outreach strategies must be employed to engage all impacted stakeholders and community members, particularly from often hard-to-reach communities.

The following subsections describe the required engagement components of the DRI and NYF planning processes. Instances where NYF engagement requirements differ from DRI engagement requirements are highlighted in a teal box.

SECTION 2.1

INTRODUCTION

Public Engagement Minimum Requirements:

DRI



LPC Meetings



Public Workshops



Project Website



Local Outreach Activities

NYF



LPC Meetings



Public Workshops



Project Website



Local Outreach Activities

SECTION 2.1

INTRODUCTION

Engagement Schedule

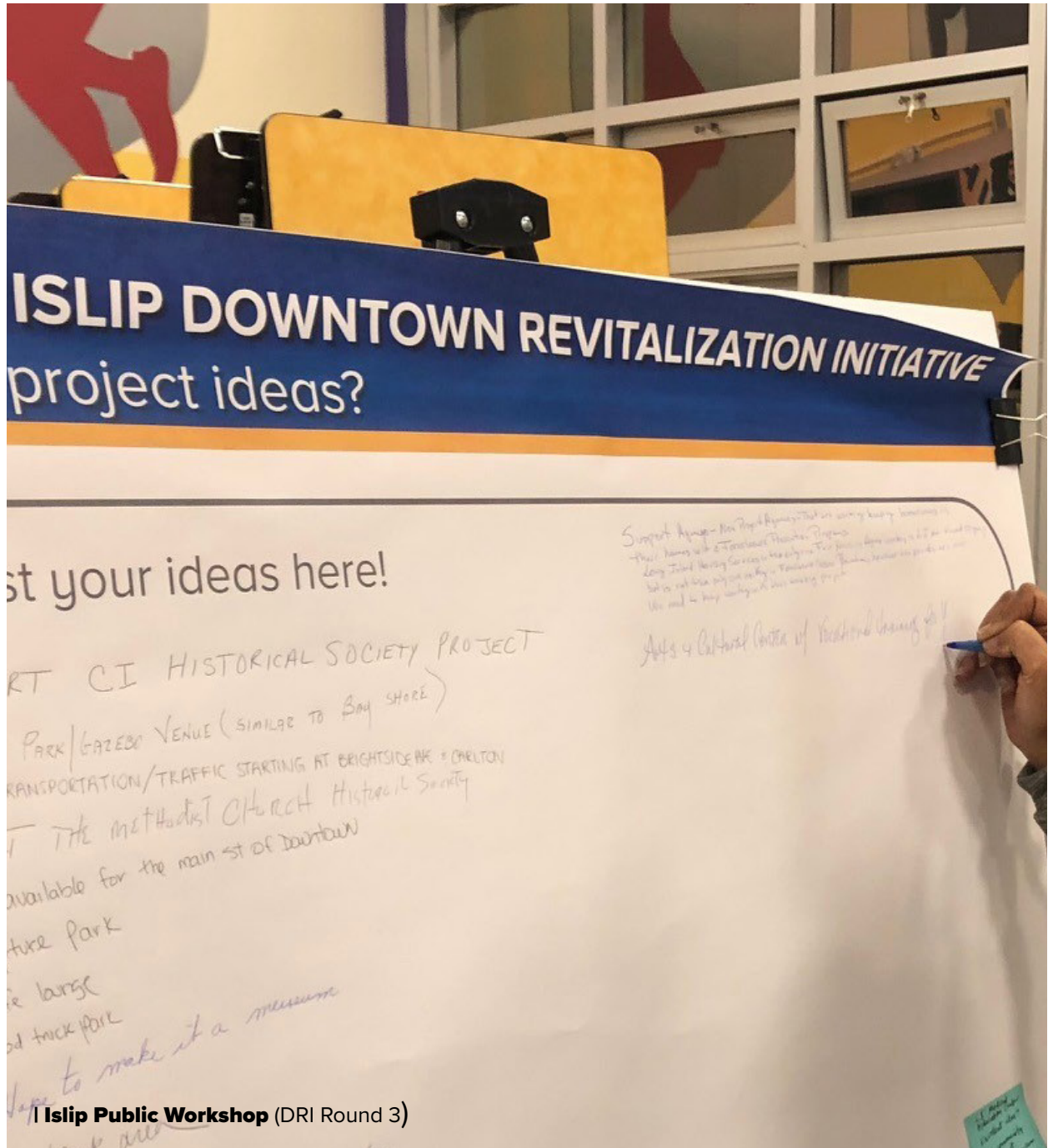
Public engagement should occur early and consistently throughout the entire planning process. The graphic to the right summarizes the anticipated public meetings and engagement activities and the order in which they typically occur in the planning process. The timing of when these activities will occur in the planning process will depend on the needs of the community.

At the onset of the planning process, the consultant team and LPC will develop a Public Engagement Plan tailored to each DRI/NYF community. This plan will outline how the general public will be involved in the planning process. More information about the Public Engagement Plan and each type of required engagement activity are provided in the following sections.

Best Practices for Public Meeting Notification

- Advertise all public meetings with a variety of media, including flyers, postcards, newspapers, municipal mailings such as water bills, social media, the project website, press releases, and email blasts.
- Post all public meetings at public locations, including libraries, community centers, farmer's markets, etc.
- Provide at least two weeks notice in advance of every public meeting.
- Encourage LPC members to share public meeting notices with their professional networks





Islip Public Workshop (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.2

Public Engagement Plan

Overview and Purpose

At the onset of the planning process, the consultant team, with input from the LPC and the State team, will develop a Public Engagement Plan that will enable the DRI/NYF community to work towards a shared vision for a more vibrant downtown.

The Public Engagement Plan will be tailored to each DRI/NYF community and outline how to involve the public in the planning process. It should detail the different types of engagement opportunities that will be provided over the course of the planning process, including the purpose, format, schedule, and public notification of each type of engagement. The Plan should carefully consider how to engage an array of hard-to-reach populations (e.g., racial minorities, immigrant populations, low-income populations, the disability community). Importantly, the Public Engagement Plan does not serve as a checklist of required actions, but rather, it is a flexible framework that may be adapted as the planning process unfolds.



Importance of Engaging Hard-to-Reach Populations

Meaningful engagement of hard-to-reach populations throughout this planning process and all public processes is vital to the vibrancy, cultural richness, economic opportunity, and equitable revitalization of communities across New York State. Inclusion of hard-to-reach populations should be considered throughout the development of the Public Engagement Plan and for all public events.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Suggest methods to identify stakeholders, various constituent groups, hard-to-reach populations, and the general public
- Provide input (e.g., engagement techniques, meetings times/locations) for the Public Engagement Plan

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

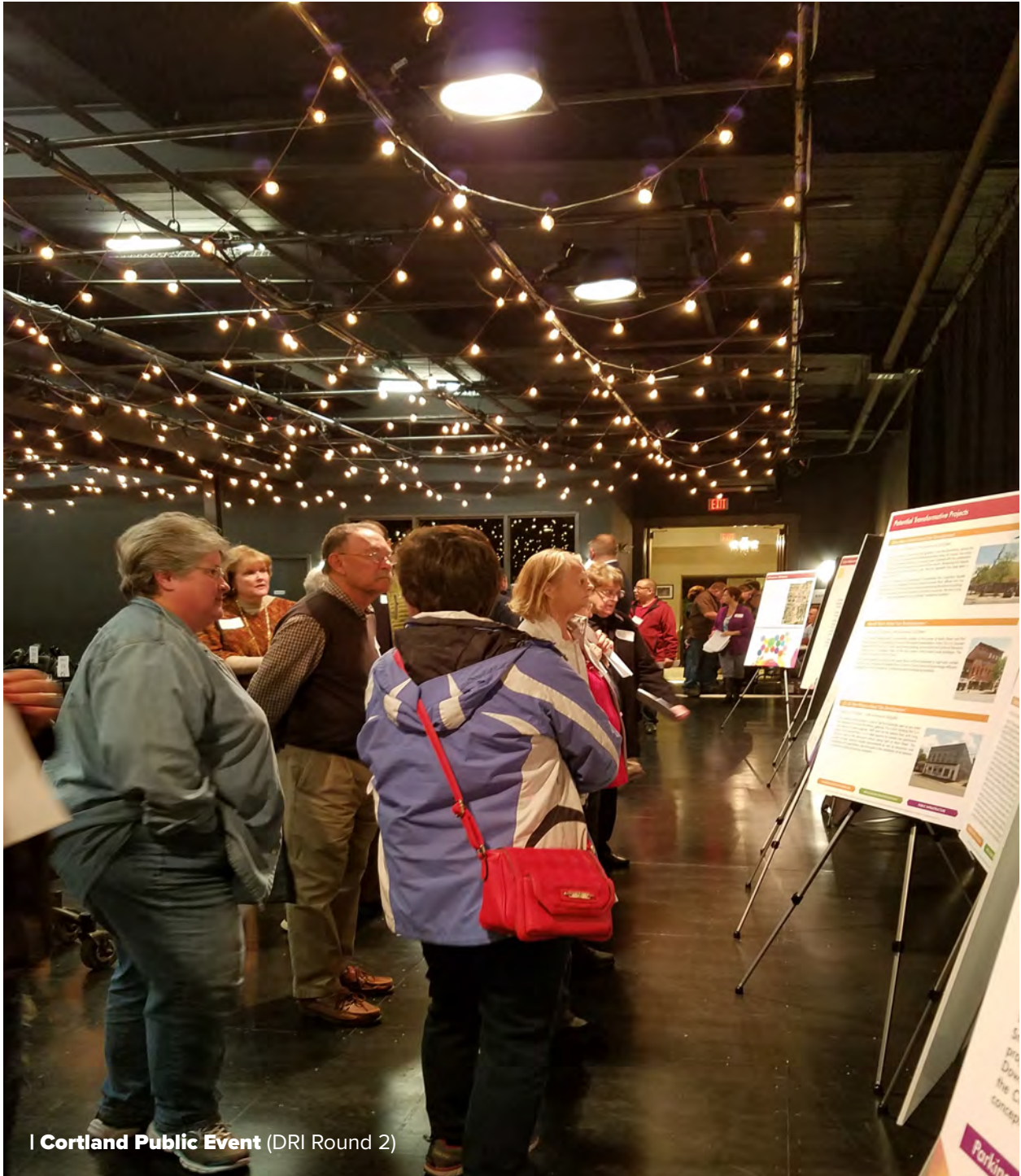
- Suggest methods to identify stakeholders, various constituent groups, hard-to-reach populations and the general public
- Provide input (e.g., previously successful engagement techniques, meeting times/location) for the Public Engagement Plan

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Develop a Public Engagement Plan tailored to the DRI or NYF community, taking into account various constituent groups, including hard-to-reach populations
- Incorporate all feedback from the LPC and municipality
- Update and maintain the Public Engagement Plan, as needed, throughout the planning process

SECTION 2.2

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN



| Cortland Public Event (DRI Round 2)

SECTION 2.3

Local Planning Committee

Overview

As the steering body of the process, the LPC will meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to the consultant team, review planning products, discuss potential projects, and prioritize actions. The LPC members, working with the consultant team and State planners, will determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time SIP.

LPC Meetings

All LPC meetings are encouraged to be in person; however, hybrid or virtual-only meetings may be an option based on local considerations and consultation with the State team. The meetings must be open to the public. The extent to which the public will be able to actively participate in a meeting will depend on the purpose and structure of each LPC meeting. At a minimum, time should be reserved at each LPC meeting for public comment.

In general, LPC meetings will cover the topics outlined in the following list. Please note each community's planning process will differ, and therefore the proposed meeting topics may be adjusted to better meet the specific needs of a community.

LPC Meeting #1. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Team introductions
- Overview of the DRI/NYF program
- Familiarize the LPC with the community's application
- Overview of planning process scope and timeline
- Confirmation of the DRI/NYF boundary as compact, walkable, and well-defined
- Input on the Public Engagement Plan and Open Call for Projects
- Input on stakeholders, various constituent groups, and hard-to-reach populations to engage
- Identify opportunities and challenges
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #2. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Downtown profile and assessment highlights
- Visioning exercises
- Public comment

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Meeting #3. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Finalize community vision, goals, and revitalization strategies
- Review project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Review any proposed boundary amendments that may be needed to incorporate potentially transformative projects
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #4. At this point in the planning process, LPC meetings will shift to focus on developing and evaluating the proposed projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process & engagement updates
- Review project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify additional project information needed to support decision-making
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #5. Developing and evaluating the proposed projects will continue at this meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Review project evaluation criteria
- Planning process and engagement updates
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify additional project information needed to discuss decision-making
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #6. By the end of this meeting, the LPC should be prepared to finalize the slate of proposed projects recommended for funding. Ideally, only a few projects will need to be removed from consideration at this meeting to arrive at the final slate of projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Review of project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- LPC vote on the final slate of proposed projects
- Public comment

Given the smaller scale of NYF communities, there is an option to reduce the number of LPC meetings to no fewer than five by combining the proposed topics in LPC Meetings #4-6 after consultation with the LPC, the State team, and the consultant team.

At the conclusion of all LPC meetings, LPCs will have selected a final slate of proposed projects.

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Working Sessions

The LPC may hold working sessions, as needed, to dig deeper into an issue, sometimes with the help of non-committee members, such as local businesspersons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood advocates. Working sessions, which need not be open to the public, provide an opportunity for brainstorming and in-depth discussions focused on specific topics or projects. They also allow for better time management at LPC meetings. No decision-making may occur during these sessions, and information discussed in these sessions will be reported out at LPC meetings. Though not a requirement of the DRI/NYF planning process, working groups may be developed around any topic, such as developing a public engagement plan, identifying projects, and reviewing and discussing proposed projects.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Attend each LPC meeting
- Review all available project materials in advance of each meeting and come prepared for a productive discussion
- Actively participate in dialogue regarding all aspects of the DRI/NYF planning process and project selection
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notifications with colleagues and networks
- Assist in identifying and engaging hard-to-reach populations or representatives
- Disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest including recusing oneself as they pertain to project development

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Assist with securing a meeting venue
- Attend each LPC meeting and be prepared to provide information regarding proposed projects sponsored by the municipality
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notifications with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all LPC meetings, including meeting logistics and meeting notifications
- Develop all necessary materials to support LPC meetings and solicit feedback in an engaging, well-informed manner
- Facilitate all meetings
- Set-up and break-down for all meetings
- Develop meeting summaries for all meetings

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE



I Penn Yan LPC Meeting (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.4

Project Identification

Overview

The public engagement process is critical for identifying the projects that will help advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization. These projects can be identified in a variety of ways, including from the community's DRI/NYF application, during an Open Call for Projects, through public engagement, or through the planning process as it advances. Projects may be put forth by public, not-for-profit, and private for-profit entities.

Project Sourcing

There are various ways to identify projects to be considered for DRI/NYF funding. The initial way to identify projects is from the community's DRI/NYF application, in which the community was asked to identify transformative project opportunities. The sponsors of these opportunities must complete a DRI/NYF Project Form and submit the form to the consultant team.

Another means of identifying projects is through the Open Call for Projects, a public process that solicits projects from public, not-for-profit, and private project sponsors. The Open Call for Projects should be initiated following the first LPC meeting or the first public workshop. It will generally be publicized through various outlets in the early months of the planning process. Project sponsors are expected to submit a DRI/NYF Project Form detailing the project proposal. Project sponsors will have at least four weeks to complete and submit the DRI/NYF Project Form through the Open Call.

Public engagement is also an opportunity to identify projects, particularly when engaging the public about community needs and opportunities. The information gathered during public engagement can help inform an existing project proposal or inspire a new project. While projects identified this way may require greater early project development, project sponsors should provide the information requested on the DRI/ NYF Project Form to the consultant team to aid in shaping the proposals into potentially viable projects.

As the planning process advances, new projects may come to light. While these projects may form at a different stage in the planning process than other projects, they will be expected to develop and provide the same information as requested from all other projects.

All submitted project proposals will be reviewed by the LPC and publicly discussed during an LPC meeting.

Impacts to the DRI/NYF Boundary

The project identification process may result in the identification of projects that are adjacent or proximate to the boundary selected by the LPC. The LPC has the ability to recommend and approve minor boundary adjustments to incorporate a project, or projects, that they believe are compelling and support the vision of the DRI/NYF area. These instances should be limited to transformative downtown projects that will advance the goals of the DRI/ NYF area.

SECTION 2.4 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Support for Project Sponsors

In support of project identification, the consultant team will be available to assist project sponsors as they complete the DRI/NYF Project Form and with other project development activities, as needed. Potential options for assistance include hosting a public information session, holding open office hours for project sponsors, or conducting one-on-one assistance with a project sponsor.

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Considerations for Potential Project Sponsors

Considering submitting a proposed project for LPC consideration? Here are a few things to think about prior to submitting your project:

- Do you have a preliminary project budget?
- Do you own the property or do you have site control/permission to implement the proposed project?
- Have you identified any environmental constraints and/or regulatory issues/needs that may affect the project?
- Do you have a business plan?

See [Section 5.0: Project Development](#) for detailed information regarding project eligibility and development.



North Tonawanda Public Workshop
(DRI Round 5)

SECTION 2.5

Public Workshops

Overview

The purpose of public workshops is to solicit ideas and feedback from the public regarding various planning topics applicable to the preparation of the SIP. Public workshops may take various forms including presentations, open houses, and charrettes. Public workshops should have a complementary online component to allow for the public to provide input outside of workshops. These public workshops are intended to be interactive, and should be held at key milestones during the DRI/NYF planning process.

The following section describes the topics that will likely be covered at each public workshop. However, please note that the format and content of each public workshop will vary and should be tailored to meet the unique needs of each community.

Public Workshops

Public Workshop #1. This should occur between the first and second LPC meetings in order to gather information to help the LPC formulate a final vision statement and goals. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Overview of the DRI/NYF program
- Identification of needs, challenges, and opportunities that impact the DRI/NYF community's revitalization
- Solicitation of project ideas
- An interactive component to solicit feedback on community needs, challenges, and opportunities; and community vision and goals

Public Workshop #2. This should occur after the LPC has reviewed all proposed projects in order to inform project development. This event will likely occur around the third or fourth LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Status update of the DRI/NYF process
- Key findings from the downtown profile and assessment
- Description of the community vision statement and goals
- An overview of proposed projects, including an interactive component to solicit public feedback

SECTION 2.5

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Public Workshop #3. This workshop may occur after the LPC has voted on the final slate of proposed projects, likely following the final LPC meeting. Alternatively, if the LPC would like public input prior to finalizing the slate of proposed projects, this may occur in advance of the final LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- An overview of the community's DRI/NYF journey
- A review of the final list of proposed projects recommended by the LPC for inclusion in the SIP
- Next steps regarding project awards and implementation

Given the smaller scale of NYF communities, there is an option for the community to reduce the number of public workshops from three to two after consultation with the LPC, State team, and consultant team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Serve as a liaison to the broader community and encourage attendance by helping to advertise meetings and sharing meeting notifications with their colleagues and network
- Actively participate in public workshops

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Help coordinate the logistics of public workshops, including venue recommendations
- Help advertise public meetings by sharing meeting notifications with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all public workshops, including development of meeting flyers and other notifications
- Develop all necessary materials to support the public workshop activities and solicit feedback in a fun, interactive manner
- Facilitate the meeting
- Ensure broad and inclusive participation (e.g., providing translation services, conducting outreach to hard-to-reach populations)
- Set-up and break-down the meeting
- Develop a meeting summary for each event

SECTION 2.6

Stakeholder Meetings

Overview

The purpose of stakeholder meetings is to expand awareness about the DRI/NYF planning process, proactively solicit community needs, opportunities, and project ideas, and seek feedback from individuals and groups associated with and/or impacted by the proposed projects. Stakeholder meetings should include targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations.

Stakeholder meetings should begin at the onset of the planning process and may require follow-up discussions with other individuals or groups identified by the LPC, municipality, and the State team over the course of the process. Meetings may be conducted through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Recommend stakeholders and community leaders to interview
- Participate as a stakeholder in interviews, as appropriate

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Recommend stakeholders and community leaders to interview
- Participate as a stakeholder in interviews, as appropriate

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Develop and maintain a list of stakeholders
- Coordinate meeting logistics with stakeholders including scheduling and meeting format (virtual vs. in-person)
- Document all conversations with stakeholders
- Summarize and communicate key findings from stakeholder meetings to the LPC



Stakeholders

Stakeholder meetings should be conducted throughout the entire DRI/NYF planning process. Stakeholders to engage with may include the following:

- Business improvement districts
- Non-profit organizations
- Cultural and educational institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, museums)
- Business owners, Chambers of Commerce, professional organizations
- Special interest groups
- Block clubs and other civic groups
- Community leaders
- Organizations working with hard-to-reach populations
- Youth groups
- Municipal staff
- Senior citizen groups

SECTION 2.6

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS



| Brooklyn LPC Meeting (DRI Round 3)



| Owego Engagement Event (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.7

Online Engagement

Overview

Online engagement — through various web-based and social media platforms — has increasingly become an important and common method for disseminating public information and obtaining feedback. Online engagement should be used in conjunction with varied forms of in-person outreach. An online presence should be established for each DRI/NYF community, as described below.

Project Website

DRI/NYF municipalities are required to have a project-specific website that is maintained for the duration of the planning process. The project website can be a standalone website created and maintained by the consultant team; or it can be a dedicated page on a municipality's website, with content prepared by the consultant team. The website is intended to serve as a project portal to disseminate project information, advertise public events, post meeting summaries and presentations, provide a way for the public to provide comments, and provide contact information for project-related questions.

The State also maintains websites with information about the DRI/NYF programs and participating communities:

DRI: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative>

NYF: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward>

Social Media

Social media may be used to bolster a DRI/NYF community's online presence and reach a broader audience in order to disseminate information about the DRI/NYF planning process, upcoming public events, and as an additional platform to encourage public comment. Social media is not required, and its use will depend on local context and needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with their networks

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

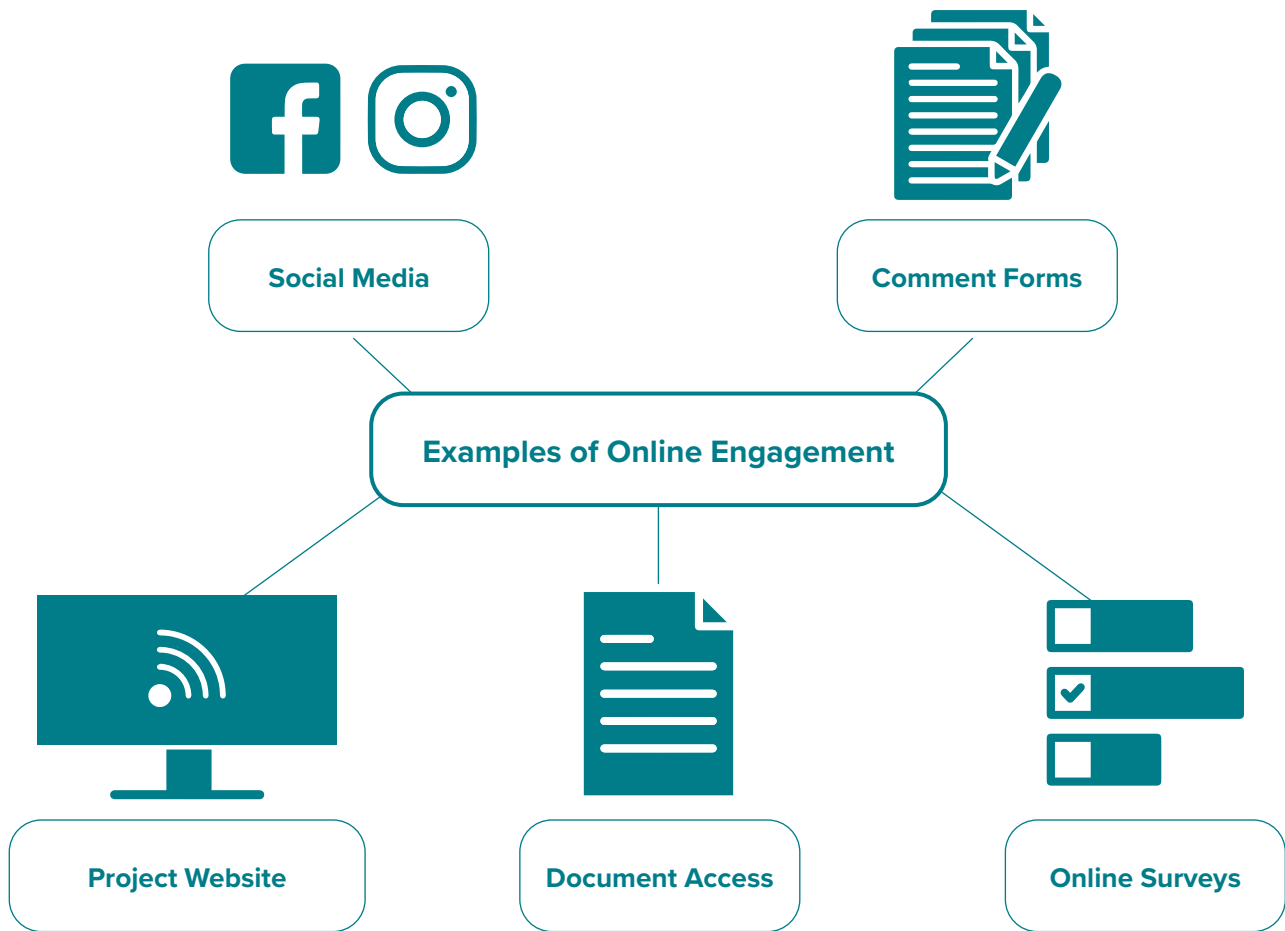
- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Create a project website
- Develop and maintain online content
- Post regularly to the different online platforms to solicit public input and advertise upcoming meetings

SECTION 2.7

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



Project Website Example

Are you interested in seeing what a project website looks like? Click here to see the project website for Amityville (DRI Round 5):

www.amityvilledri.com



SECTION 2.8

Local Outreach Activities

Overview.

While all public engagement should be locally tailored, the consultant team should plan and facilitate local outreach activities to engage a broad range of constituents. Local outreach activities are specifically tailored to engage the local community. These activities differ from public workshops in that they are geared toward meeting members of the community where they already are. Every DRI community is required to conduct at least two local outreach activities, and each NYF community is required to conduct at least one local outreach activity.

What to Expect

Local outreach activities should focus on developing activities that are unique to the community. While all public engagement should take the local context into consideration, local outreach activities should be unique to the individual community and may include activities like setting up a pop-up event at a local festival or school event (see the next page for more examples). These activities should be customized to share and solicit relevant information that will inform and advance the DRI/ NYF planning process. For example, an activity held at the beginning of the planning process may focus on identifying needs, opportunities, and challenges, visioning activities, or soliciting project ideas. Activities held later in the process may focus on gathering community feedback on the proposed projects.

Roles and Responsibilities.

The LPC is expected to:

- Identify existing local events and community meetings where information about the DRI/NYF program can be shared
- Recommend engagement strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community in the past

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Identify existing local events and community meetings where information about the DRI/NYF program can be shared
- Recommend engagement strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community in the past
- Help with event planning and coordination, as needed

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and coordination of all events
- Develop all the materials needed for each event (e.g., large format display boards, brochures, interactive activities, comment cards, sign-in sheets, etc.)
- Facilitate and staff each event
- Set-up and break-down each event

SECTION 2.8

LOCAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Examples of Local Outreach Activities

- Public walking tours of the DRI/NYF area and potential projects
- Pop-ups at community events (e.g., farmer's market, festival)
- Social events like a movie night or restaurant crawl to share and gather information
- Presentations at standing community meetings to share information about the DRI/NYF program and solicit input
- Partnering with local businesses to establish a downtown project information center in a high traffic location
- Collaborating with the local school system to host a workshop with students and faculty



| Geneva Open Storefront
(DRI Round 4)



| Peekskill Pop-Up Event
(DRI Round 4)



| Massena Pop-Up Event
(DRI Round 5)