

Meeting Summary
Village of Endicott Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Public Meeting #1
March 3, 2022
Virtual

I. Welcome and Introductions

On March 3, 2022, the Village of Endicott hosted a public meeting for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom with 80 participants.

Co-Chairs

- Anthony Bates, Village Manager, Village of Endicott
- Dr. Kevin Drumm, President, SUNY Broome

Local Planning Committee Members

- Gary Battestin, Endicott Site Executive, BAE Systems
- Stacy Duncan, Executive Director, The Agency/Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
- Linda Jackson, Mayor, Village of Endicott
- Beth Lucas, Director, Broome County Planning Department
- Joseph Moody, Director of Economic Development, Town of Union
- Peter Newman, Regional President, M&T Bank
- Christopher Pelto, Senior Vice President, Phoenix Investors
- Nikki Post, Director, Southern Tier Community Center
- Pamela Portland, Assistant Superintendent, Union-Endicott School District
- Michael Romeo, President, Little Italy
- R. Ted Warner, Trustee, Village of Endicott

All LPC meetings will be public.

The New York State agencies involved in the DRI include the Department of State, Homes and Community Renewal, Empire State Development and NYSERDA.

The consultant team will be led by BFJ Planning.

II. What is the Downtown Revitalization Initiative?

The DRI began in 2016 as an innovative and action-oriented program to improve the vitality of downtown areas across the state. This year, \$20 million was awarded to each region. Endicott received \$10 million. The outcome of the DRI planning process is the development of a locally developed strategic investment plan.

The fundamental goals of the DRI include:

- Creating an active, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place;
- Attracting new businesses (including “Main Street” businesses), that create a robust mix of shopping, dining, entertainment and service options for residents and visitors, and that provide job opportunities for a variety of skills and salaries;
- Enhancing public spaces for arts and cultural events that serve the existing members of the community but also draw in attendees from around the region;
- Building a diverse population, with residents and workers supported by complementary diverse housing and employment opportunities;
- Growing the local property tax base;
- Providing amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life; and
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by creating compact, walkable development patterns that increase public transit ridership and allow for adoption of district-wide decarbonized heating and cooling; and by supporting efficiency and electrification of buildings, installation of onsite renewable energy generation, and electric vehicle charging.

The DRI plan will:

- Encourage public participation to identify projects to recommend for funding
- Emphasize public and private capital projects such as public infrastructure or private development
- Identify strategic matching grant or revolving loan funds to support capital projects
- Seek to leverage additional public and private funds
- Develop metrics to demonstrate projects’ impact on downtown economic development

The DRI process began in December 2021 and will continue through Summer 2022. In late fall, the State will make an announcement of projects selected for awards in Endicott. Implementation will take place in 2023 and beyond.

The strategic investment plan begins with a downtown profile and assessment and the development of vision, goals and strategies. The process will include three public workshops and monthly LPC meetings. By June, the strategic investment plan will be complete.

III. What Goes into the DRI Strategic Investment Plan?

First, the proposed DRI boundary will be reviewed, refined, and finalized. Second, the vision, goals and strategies will be established. A draft vision has been prepared for review at tonight’s meeting. DRI projects will be recommended to confirm they align with the DRI goals and strategies.

The table of contents for the Strategic Investment Plan will include:

1. Downtown Profile and Assessment
2. Community Vision, Goals, and Strategies
3. Downtown Management and Implementation Strategy
4. Public Involvement
5. Projects Recommended for DRI Funding

Projects that are eligible for DRI funding include:

- **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings:** Projects in this category may include development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, or public uses. They should have a visible and functional impact on the downtown, serving as anchor, catalytic or transformative projects that will provide employment opportunities, housing choices, and/or services for the community. Projects should employ decarbonization strategies consistent with the State's goals under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Construction or rehab of stand-alone parking garages not connected with other uses will not be considered for funding.
- **Public Improvement Projects:** These may include infrastructure projects such as broadband and other communications connectivity, green infrastructure, streetscape improvements, transportation, recreational trails, signage, new and upgraded parks and plazas, public art, and other public realm projects that will contribute to revitalization of the downtown.
- **Grant Fund or Revolving Loan Fund:** A locally managed fund may be proposed to undertake a range of smaller downtown projects such as façade improvements, public art and public realm improvements, and physical improvements to existing and/or vacant commercial or mixed-use space. Projects that are significant, such as new construction, should not be proposed for a fund and instead should be proposed as their own individual project. Funds are typically capped at \$600,000.
- **Branding and Marketing:** Examples include downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors. The costs eligible under this category must be one-time expenses, such as those to develop materials and signage. Ongoing operational costs, such as to fund a downtown manager or maintain a website, are not eligible for DRI funding.

Ineligible projects include:

- **Planning activities.** Following the preparation of the DRI Strategic Investment Plan, all DRI funds must be used for projects that directly implement the plan. Utilizing DRI funds for additional planning is not the goal of the program.
- **Operation and maintenance.** DRI funds cannot be used for on-going or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property upkeep.
- **Pre-award costs.** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the DRI plan is complete and before funding awards are announced is not permitted.
- **Property acquisition.** A DRI project profile may include the cost of acquisition in the budget of a larger redevelopment, but it must also show that the acquisition itself will be, or has already been, covered by another funding source.
- **Training and other program expenses.** DRI is a one-time infusion of funds, and cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training programs, that would cease to exist once the DRI funds have been expended.

- Expenses related to existing programs. DRI is not intended to supplement existing programs or replace existing resources.

Project requirements are:

- Projects must be able to break ground within two years or sooner. Grants to projects that do not meet this goal may be rescinded.
- No DRI awards of less than \$100,000 will be considered to ensure projects are of a significant size and scale to be truly transformative in nature.
- To be considered for DRI funding, a fully-residential project must include at least 8 units and must include an affordable component.
- DRI will not cover more than 40% of privately-sponsored projects, except as described below.
- Leveraging for public and non-for-profit projects is strongly encouraged (local planning committees may set match requirements or goals). If a grant or loan fund is proposed, the state will work with the community to establish appropriate match requirements.
- New and substantial rehabilitation construction projects will be required to meet the Stretch Energy Code, whether or not the locality has adopted that code.
- Privately sponsored projects that commit to meeting higher standards, including efficiency combined with full electrification or the integration of climate resiliency measures, onsite renewables, energy storage or electric vehicle charging equipment, may be eligible for a larger DRI subsidy of up to 50%. Projects achieving these higher levels of performance should also seek incentives from NYSERDA to co-fund their development.

IV. Ways to Get Involved in the Process

There will be two more public workshops in April and June. LPC Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month, from 4 – 6 pm through July 2022. The project website <https://www.endicottdri.com/get-involved> provides information about how to get involved in the process, and includes information about upcoming LPC meetings, public meetings, where to leave comments on the Ideas Wall, and how to participate in the open call for projects. Participants can learn more about the DRI program at www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative.

ONLINE IDEAS WALL

Online Visioning Exercise

- We will take notes from each group tonight and will post comments into the Ideas Wall.
- The Ideas Wall will be open for comment until March 31
- Please post ideas, read what others have written, and start a discussion

The Ideas Wall will be open from March 4 through March 31



Visit www.EndicottDRI.com/get-involved

The open call for potential DRI projects will be used to identify DRI projects sponsored by private or non-profit entities. The intent is to provide an open, fair, and transparent process for the LPC to vet projects. It allows the LPC and consultant team to obtain information in a consistent manner and confirm that the proposed projects meet the program criteria. Submission of proposals through the open call does not guarantee inclusion in the final plan. The LPC may consider other projects outside the open call. The deadline to submit projects is Friday, April 1st. Interested parties are encouraged to visit the [project website](#) to learn more.

V. What is Your Vision for Endicott?

BFJ Planning reviewed the preliminary downtown vision for Endicott, which was adapted from the application for the DRI planning process. The application included a vision, justification for funding and a list of potential projects. The preliminary vision is:

Downtown Endicott is rooted in innovation, with historic assets and high-tech amenities that attract businesses and investment, foster collaboration, and welcome residents and visitors to live, invent, create, and build the future of the region.

The Draft DRI goals are:

1. Foster a high-tech environment in the downtown that attracts businesses, creates jobs, and grows the workforce to expand the local innovation economy.
2. Strengthen connectivity between the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods and establish a strong sense of place to ensure that these areas function as an integrated downtown community.
3. Provide downtown amenities such as improved urban design, recreational opportunities, and arts and cultural resources to attract young professionals to live downtown.
4. Create a mixed-use district that includes housing, retail, restaurants, and cultural and civic institutions that support an active and vibrant community

The team discussed recent development in Endicott, including projects that are part of the Greater Binghamton Fund and iDistrict Revitalization Plan. The team then presented potential projects that were included in the original DRI application. Projects proposed in the DRI application included public projects as well as private and non-profit projects. These can be reviewed in the application, which is on the [project website](#).

VI. Breakout Group Discussions

Meeting attendees were assigned to five breakout groups on Zoom. Each breakout group was assigned a facilitator from the consultant team. Breakout groups were given 30 minutes to discuss the following questions and prompts. For purposes of this summary, comments have been grouped by topic.

Discussion prompts:

1. Introduce yourself and say what you think Downtown's biggest asset is
2. Which ideas and issues should be prioritized in the short term?
3. What is a big idea you would like to see in the long-term future?

4. What excites you most about the DRI?
5. What is the best thing that could happen as a result of the DRI?
6. At the end of the DRI process, what would success look like?

Discussion Categories

Endicott's Assets

- Municipal Electric – discounted electricity
- Walkability of downtown and connections from Downtown to the neighborhoods
- Ethnic/Multicultural heritage in Endicott
- Kmart shopping center
- Huron campus and high-tech companies (existing and future)
- Affordability
- Walkability
- It's like Mayberry
- EPAC
- Museum
- History
- Existing parking - every block has a pass through from Washington Ave to the lots (though parking in rear has challenges, too)
- Birthplace of IBM
- The River
- Different age groups and populations that access downtown
- Location at crossroads -- 5 hours from many major cities.
- Diverse population
- Parking lots. Also off Rt 17. Also close to suburban communities
- Not too many downtowns have the anchors we have
- Huron, BAE, High School Admin building

Economic Development

- *Huron Campus & BAE*
 - BU EDA grant, gigafactory on Huron Campus. Potential synergies.
 - Huron Campus is an economic engine – North Side entrance project should be considered. Would create a better gateway entrance. Also farmer's market on Oak Hill Ave. (in DRI application).
 - Huron Campus – “Three Sister Buildings” – corner of Oak Hill/North Street. Would be good to be demolished and replaced.
 - Endicott Forging site – work is being done on remediation – options may be limited due to need for cap, but could be connected to Huron Campus? Gateway for BAE.
 - Goals— not just filling up Washington Ave but also Huron Campus and other buildings around the Village
- *Kmart plaza*
 - Opportunity to make downtown better, e.g., putting a brewery near Kmart lot
 - Kmart area? How should this change? Transform into a park? What recreational amenities are needed?

- What could go in Kmart area? Could be ideal location for school incubator (Tiger Ventures)?
- Development at the Kmart plaza/McKinley Gateway – anything that is an entrance to the Village will help change the image of the village
- K-Mart plaza – ice rink - multiple baseball fields (look to Diamond Nation in NJ) – regional recreation attraction
- Kmart lot seems like a good place for something like this
- *Redevelopment/Washington Ave*
 - Upgrade outside of buildings on Washington Ave – front and back alley
 - Demolish additional buildings that are beyond repair
 - Existing diversity of restaurants and small businesses that could be boosted by an infusion of investment
 - Endicott has a lot of potential. Washington Ave could be better than what it is.
 - Washington Avenue – bring more businesses
 - Bring Washington Avenue back. It was a bustling place. Look at Saratoga and Owego with their shopping streets. Balanced retail in Endicott, not just alcohol and tobacco shops
 - DT—Endicott Proud. As many Empty buildings on Washington Ave as businesses. Need to fill stores. Reconstruct Washington Ave biz group.
 - Improve stores/buildings on Washington Ave. This would attract more specialty shops, e.g. gourmet food. So people wouldn't have to go to Ithaca/Rochester, e.g.
 - Draw more people from those areas onto the Avenue
 - A lot of places on the Avenue that would make great rooftop eating.
 - If Endicott were to start attracting visitors (for restaurants, bars, and shops), businesses and home buyers. To see activity in neighborhoods around the Avenue.
 - Less vacant storefronts on the Avenue. More foot traffic and restaurants that are thriving vs. minimally attended.
 - People using the Avenue, being outside (shows people feel safe). Local, convenient services so we don't have to go to Vestal to pick up items
 - Washington Ave + residential areas: Little Italy, Union area
 - More shovel-ready sites on Washington Ave.
- *General Economic Development*
 - Invest in the people, support technical skill sets – maybe construction, credit consulting – help to purchase homes, form businesses, etc.
 - Good industrial complex and residential community around it – could invite professionals to move here. Also parks and demographics
 - Need “good wind” behind you, corporate sponsorship, investment for and from local businesses
 - State financial support to implement projects
 - Revitalization itself. Perceived image is negative. This project and Greater Binghamton Fund could be a boon for this area. Many homes in Endicott are EJ houses that have been split into 2-3 units. DRI can help attract businesses to Endicott, can we also motivate those employees to live in Endicott?
 - Activity – lots of ways to bring people and businesses downtown. Generates additional activity and momentum. Even housing.
 - Successful outcome would be lots of people/businesses, enjoying lots of activities (including living downtown).

- Better connection to what is working in Endicott – healthcare and education (esp. higher ed – BU/SUNY Broome). Need to build something here that pulls them west.
- What businesses are missing? Not a lot of amenities for downtown residents. Bookstores, coffee shops, places to gather.
- Kmart area is a brownfield area so future owner is responsible for cleanup. Some uses would allow capping, but requires more study to know what's needed. No recent tests on this property on contamination.
- Old fashioned sweet shop/burgers would do great. Juice bar, healthy options.
- Endicott Forging – could become parking since it has to be capped – could allow for reduction of surface parking elsewhere.
- There used to be great job opportunities to attract young people to stay after college.
- Problem—everyone is hooked on the legacy of IBM and EJ
- IBM is still here but not the same presence
- Dream of manufacturing is gone—need to get creative about how to attract new businesses
- Group to entice businesses to move here.
- Specialty retail, craft store, boutiques, etc.
- Restaurants that can also serve as upscale nightclubs—constant flow of people that visit for different reasons
- Outdoor activities, e.g., North Brewery. Promote more outdoor dining.
- Problem rooted in lack of resources
- SUNY Binghamton was born in Endicott—re-create presence here?
- Private investment
- Industrial businesses
- Niche businesses or activities – craftsman businesses (example: soaps, bakeries, hobbies/goods, breweries)
- Local businesses – homemade ice cream, vegetable and fruit markets
- Opportunity to continue/grow into the future. People who live in the area are older. There is a desire to revitalize for future generations. Great historic stories about the area (IBM and EJ). Young people might not see things that reflect them at the moment.
- -Endicott becomes a recognized leader in innovation (again)
- Success = critical mass. When analyzing project, critical mass is important. Does it generate more momentum?
- Mixed-use
- Vibrancy – people sitting outdoors. Making it a unique destination, somewhere you want to be
- Analysis of what businesses can survive in the downtown environment (getting goods in and out & density of people)
- Eliminate blight, renovate buildings, reinvest in private sector -- \$10 million becomes a \$60 million investment
- Should emphasize private development
- Include new technologies for future
- Partner with businesses
- Restaurant and festival space in Little Italy – delis and bakeries – residential development or mixed-use buildings
- Private projects that pay tax dollars and where individuals are looking to invest money

- Priority should be given to business owners
- Drive-through coffee shop
- Brewery – good option for getting people together

Arts, Culture & Recreation

- EPAC is a gem – could generate arts activities, e.g. recording studio, music stores/lessons, dance studios. Highlight the arts that are here, bring new ones.
- EPAC – so much talent in the area – visual arts, design, fashion, theater, live music, arts manufacturing (could create entrepreneurship opportunities). What kind of arts network could be built on to support this community? Artist lofts, work/live units – designation as an arts district would be key step. Look at Johnson City example, potential involvement with HCR.
- Arts – potential for recitals/events? Connect with local schools. Breweries can be ideal for these events.
- Sporting tournaments, public patios for outdoor eating, indoors/outdoors
- EPAC already brings people
- Events/festivals
- Arts/culture
- Youth sporting events—Near Scranton High school, backcourt hoops/indoor soccer. K-mart Plaza idea? Tournaments, constant influx of people
- More festivals or events
- Destination events every weekend: farmers market, games, run/walk events and paths, art shows, performances, etc.
- Outdoor sports areas would be best
- Ice Rink
- Performance stage on Washington Avenue, plaza for performances
- STCC buildings host youth and families with programs and gym facilities, pool is being renovated, host arts districts
- STCC is the only youth community center the community has
- Opportunity for collaboration between STCC and other youth service providers (YMCA, U-E District)
- Find ways to connect the DRI program to community service and connections (example – Family Fun Nights held in other communities – drinks, games, tabling from organizations)
- Place/center where youth can gather and do activities/socialize
- Outdoor art
- We are close to the city – bring arts, music, etc. to draw people from NYC – keep people in this area after Covid. Promote a “district” like arts, music, food
- Sports – area with turf field for big events where people come together for tournaments, etc. Fundraisers for community – something similar has been done in other areas. This makes it more appealing for hotels, air bnbs, restaurants. Could be an enclosed field.
- Sporting tournaments, public patios for outdoor eating, indoors/outdoors
- Ice rink – checks all the DRI boxes, fills a need/desire. Everything is there, just needs the details. Prime downtown location will allow other things to follow – people/activity, serve the youth. Would be a win for all Broome County by providing tournament space. Could require a hotel!
- Not consensus on ice rink – fiscal concerns.

- Need events (was in the 2016 application). Need people downtown, a way to bring people downtown

Housing

- Potential for affordable housing and mixed-use development
- Getting tenants in houses, getting houses taken care of/spruced up
- Hold landlords accountable for their properties
- Get quality over quantity in housing – increase possible rental prices, take care of properties
- Housing – move away from low-income housing. Build on what we have – ties into people understanding how to get/use credit
- Many single-family homes have been divided, and these units need parking. This limits us – either increase public transportation or create jobs in walking distance, or build more modern housing complexes.

Parks & Trails

- Green spaces and places to walk. Connect the Chugnut Trail to Washington Avenue
- Small green spaces and pocket parks with benches and landscaping
- Green space, green space. Walkable, livable.
- River? Potential for better connection to trail? River is great asset but underused. Needs better access. Issue is DEC controls alterations (floodplain) – not an easy hurdle.
- Trail – could it connect to rail-trail from Vestal? Bike/ped path. Doesn't link directly with downtown Endicott. Problem is the approach from Vestal dominated by flood walls.
- Connections to the waterfront
- Expand the DRI Boundary to include the Chugnut Trail and U-E District property – George Johnson Monument is on the U-E District property
- We have a lot of parks, but recreation is geared mostly to younger kids – need more for older kids, like basketball courts, bike tracks

Public Realm

- Endicott could become a magnet community – people are drawn here. Would help to have a transportation route/bus station, or trolley service. Ways to come to Endicott via transit.
- Need a strong transportation (ingress/egress) system to bring people in.
- Dynamics that have to confront reality. Used to have Endicott merchants' association. Crime is a problem. How to fill the empty stores. Camera system.
- Gateways to Endicott. Expand on GBF plan, spruce up all entrances – Village has property that was recently donated
- Focus on public art and community events among other priorities.
- Revitalize all of Endicott, including public projects
- Beautification is very much needed – current conditions don't reflect community spirit. More green space, trees.
- Broaden the tax base so that the Village doesn't have to worry about funding basic needs (e.g. roads, trash removal, snow removal). Expanded tax base would enhance quality-of-life and services.

- Could Washington Ave. be a pedestrian-only street (whole stretch between North and Main)? Could only happen if alleys/parking lots were significantly upgraded. Concern about impact to businesses, but could also generate more/different types of businesses.
- Main Street corridor – what’s needed? Trees, sidewalk repair, lighting that matches Washington Avenue. Nothing inviting about walking on Main Street – lots of pavement, need for building cleanup. This is a gateway into downtown core.
- Are there any safety concerns with walking around the school? Nothing significant known, but Village recently reduced speed limit. Kids are allowed to go out for lunch – but there aren’t a lot of options, or after school gathering/activities. More youth-centered options on the Avenue would be ideal.
- Idea of replacing surface parking with more structured parking – would take up less space. Need more green between sidewalk and street. Two strategic parking garages would serve needs.
- Parking meters – are defunct, should be removed for aesthetics and safety.
- Areas for EV charging stations – needed.
- Revitalize all of Endicott, including public projects
- Ways to beautify downtown and surrounding neighborhoods?
- Walkable attractions – things that are connected
- Adequate parking for visitors and businesses, clean
- Existing parking - every block has a pass through from Washington Ave to the lots (though parking in rear has challenges, too)
- Mostly shown through vacant properties being filled. Just recently changed code for digital signs – need to keep looking at zoning, get back on track with current times
- Connectivity within the neighborhoods in Endicott
- Parking around Washington Ave – make sure there’s places to park for people visiting businesses
- Zero carbon footprint
- Cluster area developments and large open spaces with parking, outdoor sporting events/ice rink, etc.

Quality of Life/Safety/Branding

- Dynamics that have to confront reality. Used to have Endicott merchants’ association. Crime is a problem. How to fill the empty stores. Camera system.
- Turn the image of Endicott around – change the narrative – Endicott is fun, exciting, inviting, buzzy
- Endicott has attracted young people and young families – average age has gone down 10 to 15 years
- Give people a reason to stay in Endicott – invest in younger people and entrepreneurs
- Emphasize “home of the square deal”
- The opportunity to bring dynamic excitement to downtown that will attract new residents and visitors alike.
- Engage the neighborhoods beyond Washington Ave
- Survey of Seniors at Union-Endicott—Many respond that they won’t stay/come back to the area
- Keep Village intact as a viable municipal entity vs. consolidation
- A jump start. Get people thinking. Get property owners excited. Reinvent ourselves
- Projects that contribute to the health and happiness of the residents.

- Achieving a unique identity that would be recognized outside of this region. Desired environment inciting pride.
- Branding related to Birthplace of IBM
- Success looks like increased foot traffic, more people enjoying the area and businesses
- Need stronghold with minority community -- inclusion
- Community organization WJ Teener – Bucky Pachiano – teen organization that is associated with a capital business or for-profit business
- Expand to include the Southern Tier Community Center
- Vibrant, energetic, have a good feel to it, nice place to have dinner, place where people want to be.
- Needs to be a place to live, work and play. Stay in area because there are things to do, also attract people from other areas.
- The chance to bring the village back to a safe and vibrant place to live
- Workers at BAE don't go downtown—perception of safety issues.
- Crime/safety solutions—focusing on getting to the root cause
- Improved public safety. (I've been burglarized twice. Police are wonderful. Would not stay living in Endicott if the Village did not exist)
- Perception of safety

General

- People and various age groups – invest in the people and the streets: ex. Washington Ave area. Lots could be added
- The opportunity it presents
- Shine a light on the community, bring people together
- Revitalization – something that shifts and transitions us into a future state that is better than current
- Examples in North Carolina (Greenville) – revitalization brought housing, restaurants, trees with windchimes, lights and exciting things happening, accessible and safe.
- Just want to see progress, continue the momentum, stay positive
- What would you like to see change the most? Excessive parking lots/pavement.
- What do high school seniors in Ithaca think of their town?
- People don't come to Endicott as visitors
- Just want to see progress, continue the momentum, stay positive
- Diversity of users, uses, etc.
- Historical connections – bring new and connect existing events
- Opportunity to look holistically at the whole area improvements through the revitalization process. Recognizing community overlapping goals and interests, assessing risks and safety concerns, building a tighter caring community based on empathy.
- What does success look like?
- Selection process
- Lack of investment over many years leads to – infrastructure challenges (water discoloration, water main breaks). Prevents people from wanting to live in Endicott
- With public projects, village will need to maintain – we need tax revenue for this, so makes sense to extend the reach of these DRI funds with private investment

