# DRI Haverstraw – Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #2

# March 10, 2022, In-Person & Zoom, 4:00 p.m.

# Meeting Notes

Raffaela Dunne (VHB) opened the meeting with introductory remarks, welcomed the LPC and asked members to state their name for attendance purposes. After introductions, the meeting was turned over to Mayor Michael Kohut to discuss the process and procedures for recusals.

Following the recusal discussion, Ms. Dunne addressed the public both in-person and virtually on how to provide comments at the end of the meeting. Ms. Dunne then described the agenda for the meeting which included:

* Welcome and Introductions
* DRI Schedule Update
* Public Engagement Update
* Finalize Goals
* Downtown Profile and Assessment
* Project Evaluation Criteria
* Application Projects
* Next Steps
* Public Comment

Ms. Dunne gave an overview of the DRI schedule to date. This included completion of the first LPC meeting and community meeting. The Downtown Profile and Assessment was still being worked on with the draft goals, strategies, and public engagement plan to be finalized.

The meeting continued with Ms. Dunne giving a summary of the first community meeting which occurred on March 3, 2022. Jill Gallant (VHB) thanked members of the LPC for their attendance and participation. The meeting had strong attendance with 80 members of the public participating. To address language barrier challenges, changes to translation services as well as a public engagement working group were discussed. Some overall comments by the public at the first community meeting involving their ideas for DRI Funding were mentioned:

* *Shared office spaces for businesses*
* *More anchors that attract visitors*
* *ADA compliance for existing and new structures*
* *More affordable housing and apartments*
* *Senior housing*
* *Bike lanes*
* *Consistent store signage*
* *More programs/places for teens*
* *Better water access for boaters/kayakers*

Ms. Dunne then opened the meeting for comments by the LPC Members in reference to the first community meeting. Comments were focused on how to increase public participation among the Spanish speaking community:

* *Creation of a video in all Spanish to supplement future meetings*
* *Live translations where an interpreter speaks aloud to the public is better than wearing translating headsets*
* *Better outreach and advertising towards non-English speaking members of the community to increase participation*

The meeting continued with Ms. Dunne reviewing the draft goals for the LPC. The first goal was read aloud as follows:

*Economic and Entrepreneurship – Improve the marketability and profitability of downtown businesses by enhancing their diversity and architectural character and increasing their prominence within the Mid-Hudson region.*

This goal was presented to the public during the community meeting in which several comments were received. These comments provided ideas on how DRI funding could help Downtown Haverstraw’s economy and entrepreneurship. Three comments were selected and shared with the LPC members:

* *Downtown Marketing Campaign*
* *Shared Office Spaces*
* *Spanish events that focus on local businesses*

The LPC members then provided their own comments and ideas on how DRI funding could apply to this goal:

* *Traffic and parking are a challenge faced by downtown businesses*
* *There should be outreach to the Spanish-speaking community for ideas on events*
* *There is a lack of daytime downtown activity*
* *Lack of wayfinding within downtown to let visitors know where attractions and businesses are*

Ms. Dunne then proceeded to review the second Downtown Haverstraw goal which was read aloud:

*Connectivity and Mobility - Strengthen all types of transportation connections, provide environmentally sustainable multimodal alternatives, increase pedestrian connections and access, revitalize gateways, and enhance physical public connections to the Hudson River.*

When presented to the public during the first community meeting, several comments were provided on how DRI funding could better connectivity and mobility. Three comments were selected and shared with the LPC members:

* *Bike paths along the river*
* *More frequent ferry service*
* *Improved street lighting*

The LPC members then provided their own comments and ideas on how DRI funding could apply to this goal:

* *Lack of bike storage downtown*
* *Limited ferry availability decreases access to the Metro North in Ossining*
* *There is a lack of pedestrian connections from downtown to the ferry*
* *There needs to be better access to garbage services (i.e., waste bins) if there are to be more walking/bike connections*
* *Weekend ferry service*
* *Improved bus service*

The meeting continued with Ms. Dunne reviewing the third goal for Downtown Haverstraw. The goal was read aloud is as follows:

*Housing – Support public/private partnerships that result in redevelopment of strategic sites with mixed income housing, commercial uses, public benefits, and sustainable and resilient infrastructure*

When presented to the public at the first community meeting, several comments were provided on how DRI funding could better housing in Downtown Haverstraw. Three comments were selected and shared with the LPC members:

* *Affordable housing*
* *ADA compliant structures*
* *Senior housing*

The LPC members then provided their own comments and ideas on how DRI funding could apply to this goal:

* *Need ways to keep visitors engaged for an entire weekend*
* *Lack of major attractions to bring in visitors*
* *Infrastructure to support community events*
* *Better development/access to High Tor Mountain as a major attraction*
* *Increased visibility and access to Stony Point Battlefield as an attraction*

The fourth and final goal was then introduced by Ms. Dunne. This goal was read aloud as follows:

*Cultural - Nurture and protect the Village’s authenticity as a unique place that is a product of its history and people and that serves both the Village and the region.*

When presented to the public at the first community meeting, several comments were provided on how DRI funding could better housing in Downtown Haverstraw. Three comments were selected and shared with the LPC members.

* *Brick building preservation*
* *Culturally diverse events*
* *Preserve community culture*

The LPC members then provided their own comments and ideas on how DRI funding could apply to this goal. These comments and ideas are listed below:

* *Regular community events*
* *Connect Haverstraw to its history*
* *Increase access to the Hudson River which is part of Haverstraw’s culture*
* *Find ways to integrate technology into the “Haverstraw Experience” this can be smartphone guided tours to show the areas history*
* *Focus on preserving the diversity of Downtown Haverstraw as it is part of what makes the area unique*

Upon no further comments towards finalizing the goals for Downtown Haverstraw, Jill Gallant (VHB) introduced the Downtown Profile and Assessment (DPA). The DPA is a document intended to characterize the existing conditions within the DRI area. It was explained that the DPA was still being drafted but initial trends, weaknesses and strengths within Downtown Haverstraw could be discussed. This information was gathered by reviewing various planning documents related to the Village of Haverstraw as well as recent census data. Ms. Gallant then read the following trends that were identified in the DPA:

*Residential Properties*

* *Rental inventory is limited*
* *Noticeable gap in availability of mid-priced rental units*
* *Steady rise in home sales prices, increased number of sales transactions, reduction in number of days on market*

*Commercial Properties*

* *Limited amount of office space*
* *Limited commercial properties for lease/sale*

LPC members then provided insight on how they interpreted the identified trends. LPC members also indicated how these trends have been affecting their community:

* *There are concerns surrounding the North Rockland Central School District’s capacity in serving additional students as the result of more housing development*
* *It was indicated that North Rockland Central School District has experienced “steady” enrollment in recent years*
* *Community social media pages should be considered for gathering data on “off-market” housing listings*
* *There is a high demand for medical, office and retail space and few vacancies*

Ms. Gallant continued the presentation by reviewing the strengths and opportunities identified in the DPA. These strengths and opportunities help identify assets within Haverstraw that can be built upon through the DRI process. Ms. Gallant read the following:

*Strengths and Opportunities*

* *Population in the DRI Area has been rising over the past decade*
* *The DRI Area and Village are rich in diversity with various ethnicities, religions, traditions and history*
* *The Hudson River is a major asset that allows for scenic views and pedestrian access*
* *The Village’s industrial history and historically and architecturally significant building stock gives the area a sense of place and history*
* *The former chair factory site presents a key opportunity for redevelopment and public benefit*
* *Dense blocks have created a walkable community*

The LPC members largely agreed on the identified strengths and opportunities above. Members also provided their own insight as to what they saw as being strengths within the Village of Haverstraw:

* *Many trails and parks within close proximity to Downtown Haverstraw*
  + *There is an opportunity to further connections among these parks and trails to create a larger trail network*
* *The Hudson River offers a transportation opportunity to neighboring Ossining and other communities both north and south*

Once LPC members finished providing comments towards strengths and opportunities. Ms. Gallant introduced the identified challenges and weaknesses within the DPA. These were identified to try and find ways DRI funding could help create solutions to these problems. Ms. Gallant read the following:

* *Lack of park space and waterfront access despite large waterfront parcels*
* *Median income and homeownership rates significant lower in the DRI area than Rockland County*
* *Lack of large employers within the Village*
* *Renters and homeowners face high levels of housing cost burden*
* *Limited availability of the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry*
* *Lack of wayfinding and pedestrian and bike amenities reduces walkability*
* *narrow streets present challenges to pedestrian and biking amenities*
* *The lack of available office space and lack of developable land limits potential entrepreneurs’ ability to start and grow businesses in the Village.*

LPC Members agreed on the weaknesses presented above and added additional weaknesses they saw within their community:

* *Lack of technology infrastructure which includes efficient broadband access*
* *Little partnership between businesses*
* *Boat access to downtown is limited by the few available docks and boat slips*
* *There is no dock for large transient ships and as such, these ships cannot access downtown businesses*

After comments on the DPA were finished, Ms. Dunne reviewed the process for submitting a project during the open call period which runs until March 24, 2022. The form can be found on the Haverstraw DRI Website (https://www.haverstraw-dri.com/) and assistance with filling out the form would be provided through office hours on March 17, 3-5 PM, via Zoom. It was explained that the information provided through the project form would help create a project profile which is a critical step in formulating the final strategic investment plan. Ms. Gallant reviewed a project profile example from the Potsdam DRI which involved the Potsdam Food Co-op. Ms. Dunne then continued the meeting by reviewing the project evaluation criteria. These are the criteria submitted projects are evaluated against which ultimately guides the process in project selection.

The meeting was then opened to LPC members for questions or comments. Comments were on how projects could receive funding if they were not eligible under DRI requirements or if they were not ultimately selected. It was indicated that through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), multiple funding sources across New York State agencies could be accessed for funding opportunities. The CFA could provide funding options for projects that may not be eligible under DRI criteria or do not ultimately receive funding. Furthermore, it was decided that information related to the CFA would be published on the Haverstraw DRI Website (https://www.haverstraw-dri.com/).

To ensure time for public comments, Ms. Dunne opened the meeting to the public:

* Several members of the public introduced a project that they intended on submitting through the open call for projects. This included a youth performing arts center in the former synagogue building on Clove Avenue. The intention of the project was to give kids in the community an outlet to explore their passion and talents while giving extra child support to families in the area.

With there being time left in the meeting, Ms. Dunne resumed the presentation to give a brief overview of the potential projects that were included in the Village of Haverstraw’s DRI application.

The presentation finished with an overview of the next steps in the DRI Process which involves the following important dates:

* LPC Meeting #3 – April 7th 4-6 PM
* Public Meeting #2 – April TBD 7-9 PM
* Open Call for Projects is currently open until March 24 through the Haverstraw DRI Website: [www.Haverstraw-DRI.com](http://www.haverstraw-dri.com/)
* Virtual Office Hours for Open Call for Projects: March 9 from 9-11am and March 17 from 3-5pm, go to [www.Haverstraw-DRI.com](http://www.haverstraw-dri.com/) for link

LPC Meetings #4-6 Dates (subject to change):

* May 5th 4-6 PM
* May 26th 4-6 PM
* June 16th 4-6 PM

The meeting concluded with several final comments by the LPC members:

* *The May 5th LPC Meeting date may not work for several members and may need to be changed*
* *More outreach should be performed through social media (Facebook, Instagram) for future meetings*