

Meeting Summary

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

March 24, 2022, 5:30 to 7:30 PM

Local Planning Committee attendees:

| Name | Affiliation |
|----------------------------|---|
| Brendan Mehaffy (Co-chair) | City of Buffalo |
| Brenda McDuffie (Co-chair) | REDC |
| Atiqur Rahman | Broadway Hardware |
| Benjamin Hilligas | Matt Urban Center |
| Carl Skompinski | Fillmore Forward |
| Conrad Kickert | University at Buffalo School of Architecture |
| Donna Edwards | Impacted Families Project |
| Fadi Dagher | Cedar Land Development |
| Frederick Gelsey | One In Christ Temple |
| Heidi Romer | Jericho Road |
| Monica Pelligrino-Faix | Central Terminal Corporation |
| Richard Palmatier-Maynard | Friends of the Broadway Market |
| Samaria Turner | Kitchen @ the Market |
| Stephen Karnath | Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services |
| Van Taylor | Van Taylor Production |

Agency attendees:

| Name | Affiliation |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Chris Bauer | Department of State |
| Lenny Skrill | Homes and Community Renewal |
| Johanna Walczyk | Empire State Development |
| Lisa Hicks | City of Buffalo |
| Trevor Griffis | City of Buffalo |

Consultant attendees:

| Name | Affiliation |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Mark Tytko | WSP |
| Stephanie Camay | WSP |
| Nancy Raca | Highland Planning |
| Tyra Jones | Highland Planning |
| Laura Evans | Prospect Hill |

Community attendees:

| Name | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Aniela M ba Thant | Melinda DuBois |
| Kim Baughn | Vivian Waltz |
| Broderick Cason | Judy |
| Chris Hawley | Eric Wojtanik |
| Kat Massey | Mike Kane |
| Drew Canfield | Whitney Skeans |
| Savannah Fedell | Renee Lewan-Hesse |
| Jalonda Hill | Robert Sanna |
| Leslie Vishwanath | Deborah Porter |
| Malik Murray | |

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting opened with Stephanie Camay (WSP) beginning the formal presentation by introducing herself and members. She also explained that this meeting would be a working session for the LPC, and time would be reserved for public remarks/comments at the end of the meeting. Nancy Raca (Highland) did a roll call of the LPC, state partners, and City staff.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Following the introductions, Christopher Bauer (Department of State) reviewed the New York State Code of Conduct for all LPC members. This is a procedure to avoid any conflicts of interest throughout the DRI planning process.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Stephanie led a discussion regarding the role of state agencies, consultants, and City staff in the DRI planning process.

DRI PROGRAM REVIEW

Stephanie provided an overview of the DRI planning process, including the goals of the DRI program, and the types or projects that are eligible for DRI funding. The DRI area has been reduced in size to target the two cultural anchors – Broadway Market and Central Terminal – along with Urban Farm, from the original application to incorporate the LPC input.

Stephanie also provided an overview of the anticipated schedule for the DRI process.

Nancy Raca (Highland) provided an overview of the DRI community engagement process. A Public Engagement Plan details the components of all pieces of community engagement.

DRI AREA OVERVIEW

Laura Evans (Prospect Hill) provided an overview of the DRI area's demographics, including race, ethnicity, income, major employers in the area, and community trends of Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood and the City of Buffalo vs. the DRI study area, using the US Census. Laura also touched on the median household income of residents in this DRI area vs. the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood and the City of Buffalo.

Laura spoke on connectivity in the area and the high use of bus stops and ridership. This DRI area is a high-usage public transportation location to get to main attractions. Anchor institutions such as Broadway Market, Buffalo Central Terminal Campus, Matt Urban Center/Hope House, and Jericho Road Community Health Center provide employment opportunities and are essential in urban revitalization efforts, especially for economic development.

VISIONING SESSION

Stephanie facilitated a visioning activity with the LPC. The vision statement was presented during the public meeting and revised so that the LPC can give input and feedback to discuss during this visioning exercise. Key elements are highlighted, and responses are summarized below:

Special Urban Place Vision Statement

*“The Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood is a **special urban place** in the City of Buffalo-diverse in population and rich in culture, history, and architecture. Its attractive, **safe**, and **connected public spaces** (streets, parks, open spaces and civic buildings), **retail-oriented commercial streets**, and variety of **affordable housing** alternatives are supported by **multimodal transportation options**. Due to its special attributes, the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood is a desired location for **new private investment**”.*

What are the goals and strategies that will help us achieve this vision?

GOAL 1: *Provide employment and affordable housing opportunities to residents*

- Potentially reword this goal to say “Provide **family sustaining wage employment and a range of housing opportunities to residents**”

STRATEGIES

- *Utilizing vacant land for infill housing and commercial development.*
- *Rehabilitate buildings to provide new businesses or mixed-use*
- *Provide opportunities for small businesses to grow their business*
- *Create business incubators*
- *Expand Broadway Market*
- *Provide incentives to residents to open businesses*

GOAL 2: *Improve the safety, walkability, and mobility of the street network*

- Potentially reword this goal to say “*Improve the **health of the community**, safety, walkability, and mobility of the street network*”

STRATEGIES

- *Widen sidewalks*
- *More lighting*
- *Create public spaces*
- *Activate vacant lands*
- *Create an affordable gym for residents*
- *Provide daycare opportunities*

GOAL 3: *Build on the area’s diversity and create a vibrant community*

- Potentially reword this goal to say, “*Build on the area’s diversity and create a vibrant **neighborhood that values current residents***”.

STRATEGIES

- *Focus on buildings on the main corridor (Broadway/Fillmore), rather than dispersed throughout*
- *Support Broadway Market diversity*
- *Support diverse land uses*
- *Expand tourism opportunities*
- *Wayfinding to create activity between nodes*

GOAL 4: *Attract new businesses and commercial activity*

- Potentially reword this goal to say “*Attract new businesses and **economic** activity*”

STRATEGIES

- *Start businesses small – Broadway Market, business incubator*
- *Training infrastructure in place*
- *Allow people to start small*
- *Make streetscapes look better, activate the storefronts*
- *Clean up facades*
- *Reactivate Kmart building – perfect for incubator, training center*
- *Reactivate parking lot on Gibson (public square)*

GOAL 5: *Preserve historical buildings***STRATEGIES**

- *Preserve historical character, residential and commercial, of Broadway-Fillmore*

GOAL 6: *Connect the two cultural anchors*

- Potentially reword this goal to say, ***“Connect the two cultural anchors- **the Broadway Market and the Central Terminal.**”***

STRATEGIES

- *Create reason to walk between two anchors (e.g., program)*
- *Infrastructure – physical connection*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nancy reviewed the community engagement efforts planned for the DRI and touched on the information that can be found on the website such as meeting updates, outreach tools, online surveys, and Instant Input. In addition, the project team is looking for suggestions on how to spread the word, whether it be those who have access to distribution lists, or those on active social media accounts. The consultant team is planning a pop-up event on Dyngus Day at the Broadway Market to help spread awareness and allow residents to take the DRI survey. The first public meeting was held on March 10, 2022. During the meeting, the consultant team introduced the public to the DRI process, presented the Broadway-Fillmore DRI area, and conducted an interactive activity for the DRI vision in which individuals identified the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the Broadway-Fillmore area.

NEXT STEPS

Stephanie described upcoming public engagement and project development activities, which include:

- Dyngus Day Pop-Up
- Open Call for Projects
- In person and virtual office hours
- Develop Draft Projects List
- Local Planning Committee Meeting #3

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Stephanie opened up the meeting to any questions or comments from the LPC. The following comments were made:

Identify vacant lands that are owned by the city.

Looking at the vacant land graph, the city owns about 2/3 of it, but there is also a significant range of private owners as well.

Include Jericho Road as a major employer in the DRI area. There are about 8-10 mental health organizations in that building. There is also a Bengali pharmacy with tons of foot traffic.

There needs to be better garbage pickup – trash cans and bulk pickup. Also, there needs to be a strategy to remove and manage graffiti.

There are a lot of business owners in the community that have no idea that this (meeting) is going on. Can we go door to door or making phone calls to inform business owners? The city can also help spread the word and improve communication.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following input from the Local Planning Committee, Nancy opened up the meeting to any public comments. The following questions were asked.

- Would the city be releasing RFPs to develop the empty lots?
 - Response: This is really a question for the city. If they were going to put together a proposal to develop any lots, it would go to the city. Where it would come into play for DRI is if a proposal from the city was put forth to develop all of the empty lots.
- What is the best way to send the written comments?
- Response: Through the website (www.broadwayfillmoredri.com) or to Stephanie.camay@wsp.com.
- Is this meeting recorded?
 - Response: There will be a summary of the meeting on the website, and we will also post the slides, and it is being recorded but not posted.
- How can the DRI funds be in sync with the Empire funds that will be spent on Broadway Market. Is there any synchronization between the two?
 - Response: We will be getting proposals for new projects and we what we want to focus on is guided by that effort, and what we are all about is creating that vision and encouraging others to submit proposals to help bring the vision to life.
- It is difficult to understand the criteria. Do all projects have to include improving the façade of a building or a visual impact?
 - Response: The projects need to be capital projects. They should be transformative and catalytic. They don't have to necessarily improve the façade, but they have to meet all of the guidelines, not necessarily the strategies but we will be evaluating them based on the strategy. It will depend on the evaluation process if the project is competitive enough.
- What about an inclusive daycare, does that meet the criteria?
 - Response: It would have to be where it is rehabbing the structure/space, bringing that up, for the business to operate.

In addition, the following comments were made:

- Making classic storefronts "rent-ready" is a key goal.
- Offer 10-20k for a business that opens up in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood. Many people in the community cannot afford to start a business and have no access to lending services. Set up a mentor system for the businesses to be successful.
- One of the best ways to highlight neighborhood assets is a website. The DRI should invest in a well-done website for this neighborhood that is user-friendly to attract people into the neighborhood.
- Introduce a multicultural center for information disbursement & home-crafted item sales. Convert the upper floors into affordable housing as well as business offices and health services.
- Target the regeneration of neighborhood-defining buildings, such as the Eckhardt, Union Stockyards Bank, Polish Union Hall, Fillmore Theater, Schreiber Brewing Company, Polish Cooperative Savings & Loan, Spolka, Polish Singing Circle, Corpus Christi R.C. Church Complex, and St. Ann's R.C. Church Complex buildings.
- Identify vacant City-owned lots that can serve as pedestrian walk-throughs on long blocks. Kent Street is an obvious opportunity between Playter and Sweet.
- We need to support incremental developers of average means. Recognize small-scale, mixed-use buildings as opportunities to create new amenities and support working class and immigrant business and property owners. We can continue the successful New York State Main Street grant program for building rehabilitation and streetscape improvements. We're likely to get some great outcomes in the neighborhood soon.
- Bring back BABA, an eastside chamber of commerce.
- Build a cultural garden to bridge the cultural organizations to share their traditions and herbs with all.
- We need a diverse Broadway-Fillmore business association.
- There are three park-like spaces on Paderewski Drive that could be programmed better (and differently from one another), or for that matter, dedicated as parks. Sears Paderewski Park is the only dedicated park and there's movement on that (fundable project!), but 280 Paderewski Drive and 388 & 400 Paderewski Drive are used by residents as parks but aren't dedicated as such.
- At the beginning of each meeting, remind participants what DRI stands for.