

# VILLAGE OF ALEXANDRIA BAY

## LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 SUMMARY

<b>Purpose:</b>	Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #2
<b>Date and Time:</b>	June 24, 2024, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Community Meeting Room, 110 Walton St, Alexandria Bay, NY 13607

### Welcome & Code of Conduct Reminder

#### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) welcomed and thanked those in attendance at Local Planning Committee Meeting #2.

Jaclyn Hakes then continued with a brief overview of the meeting agenda:

- Welcome & Code of Conduct Reminder
- Project Schedule Update
- Community Engagement Update
- Downtown Profile Highlights
- Vision & Goals Discussion
- Open Call for Projects Overview
- Next Steps
- Public Comment

Damon Draught then read the NY Forward meeting Preamble aloud:

*Each Local Planning Committee Member is reminded of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest with respect to projects that may be discussed at today's meeting. If you have a potential conflict of interest regarding a project you believe will be discussed during the meeting, please disclose it now and recuse yourself from any discussion or vote on that project. For example, you may state that you, or a family member, have a financial interest in the project, or you are on the board of the organization proposing the project. At this time, are there any recusals that need to be noted? Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises unexpectedly, and then recuse yourself from discussion or voting on the project. As we continue through the planning process, recusal forms will be required from anyone with an identified potential conflict to be kept on file with the Department of State.*

#### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A



## Project Schedule Update

### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) continued with the Project Schedule and Scope.

#### May:

- LPC Kick-off
- Vision, Goals, & Strategies
- 1<sup>st</sup> Public Engagement

#### June:

- Downtown Profile (Draft)
- Vision, Goals, & Strategies
- Open Call for Projects

#### July:

- Open Call for Projects
- Downtown Profile (Final)

#### August:

- Preliminary Project List
- Project Coordination
- Project Development
- Draft Profiles

#### September

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Engagement
- Strategic Investment Plan (Draft)
- Final Project Profiles

#### October/November

- NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan (Final)

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

## Community Engagement Update

### Discussion

Melia Hema (MJ) then gave an update on the community engagement for Alexandria Bay.

- **Public Open House**
  - May 28 – 6:00-8:00 PM
  - ~30 Attendees
- **Door-to-Door Business Survey**
  - Engaged with 12 Businesses
- **Stakeholder Meetings**
  - Community Organizations
  - Business and Tourism
- **Coffee with Consultants**
  - May 29 – 9:00-11:00 AM



# Community Engagement Update

## Discussion

- **Community Survey**
  - 56 Respondents (6/21)
  - Closes June 30

### *Public Open House – Common Themes*

- Difficult to navigate downtown when driving or walking.
- Village needs a more cohesive look.
- Parking meters should be removed and updated.
- New public restroom for parks and docks.
- Replace sidewalks for accessibility and safety.
- Downtown streetscape beautification: trees and shrubs.
- Increase and improve downtown and waterfront attractions.
- Improve wayfinding infrastructure: digital displays, kiosks, and signage.
- Improve downtown lampposts and lighting.
- Bring farmers market downtown.
- Implement shuttle to help with traffic.
- Improve parking situation with better utilization of lots and/or a parking garage.
- Improve the family friendliness of the Town.
- Attract more quality local businesses.
- Update the beach.

### *Business Questionnaire – Common Themes*

Q1. What is your busiest time of year?

- Summer
- Warm months
- Peak summer (July)

Q2. What improvement could be made downtown to extend that or encourage more people to come downtown more often?

- Sidewalk improvements
- People trip in front of businesses
- Free parking / outdated meters
- Public restrooms
- Streetscaping improvements
- Family oriented community events
- Community based improvements
- Attracting families

Q3. What are the most important improvements you would like to see downtown?

- Sidewalk improvements
- Music events
- Utilize the pavilion
- Host concerts on Casino Island

## Community Engagement Update

### Discussion

#### *Stakeholder Meetings – Common Themes*

##### Community Organizations:

- Pavilion is underutilized, should be used for performances and exhibits.
- Walking trails should be advertised by the businesses.
- Need more community involvement for events.
- Traffic and parking in Summer are unwelcoming to seniors.
- Aging, uninsulated buildings limit business expansion.
- Need to attract year-round visitors.
- Seasonal turnover of village homes hurts the availability of affordable housing.
- Lack of employment opportunities.
- Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities.

##### Business & Tourism

- The business community lacks unity, no project or issue to rally around.
- Need community-wide wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Downtown streetscaping and sidewalk improvements.
- Close off upper James Street for pedestrians.
- Build/restore apartments above retail.
- Find place for downtown farmer's market.
- Village is losing amenities to surrounding communities.
- Need attractions for children and families.
- Difficulty finding seasonal workers.
- Little knowledge on public vs. private docking.
- Need to diversify the local economy.

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

## Downtown Profile Updates

### Discussion

Kevin Schwenzfeier (MJ) presented the Downtown Profile section and explained the following: "The Downtown Profile and Assessment tells a clear and concise story of the NY Forward community — where it is today, how it got there, and where it is going — and provides the logical basis for project recommendations."

#### **Required Components**

- Description of the Study Area
- Demographic Snapshot
- Regional and Historic Context
- Related Recent Plans and Investment
- Physical Setting
- Economic Context
- Housing Assessment
- Key Observations



# Downtown Profile Updates

## Discussion

### Downtown Profile Overview

Alex Bay at a Glance:

The median age of Village residents is higher than the median age in the county, and 25% of the Village's population is 65 or older. Most residents of the Village are homeowners. The population of the Village has decreased since the year 2000.

Residents: 924

Median Age: 51

Homeownership: 41.4%

Housing Units: 804

Median Income: \$57,046

Persons with Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 29.5%

The largest employer of Alex Bay residents is the government (35%). The next largest working sector for the Village is health care (23%).

Kevin Schwenzfeier (MJ) clarified that the demographic information would be more detailed when presented in the written Downtown Profile.

### NY Project Area

- The outlined in red is the proposed NY Forward boundary or study area for Alexandria Bay.
- The NY Forward boundary for Alexandria Bay is focused along the Village's waterfront and includes Casino Island, the primary downtown business corridor, and marina district areas.

### Existing Land Use

- Marinas/Resorts account for one fifth of the total land area within the NYF boundary.
- Followed by Commercial (17%), Vacant Land (15%), Low Density Residential (14%), and Transportation (13%).
- Kylie Peck (DOS) clarified that parking lots are included in the Vacant land percentage.

### Zoning Districts

- The NYF Area is split between the Business, Marine Development, and Residential zoning districts.
- The Downtown Overlay District is completely contained within the NYF Area.

### Parks & Environment

- Downtown recreational assets include the beach, Scenic View Park, Casino Island, and the marinas.
- Downtown cultural assets include historic structures, churches, resorts, and the Upper James Street Dock.

### Environmental Constraints

- The 100-year flood zone and federal wetlands are primarily confined to the immediate shorelines within the NYF Area.
- Steep Slopes are widespread throughout the NYF Area hindering vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

## Downtown Profile Updates

### Discussion

#### Transportation

- There is a wide variation and numerous gaps in the sidewalks of the NYF Area.
- Just two complete intersections exist for crosswalks in the NYF Area.
- Much of the downtown is easily accessible within a five-minute walk.

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

## Vision & Goals Discussion

### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) then spoke about the refined vision that was emailed to the LPC the previous Friday. She explained the following:

#### Community Vision for Downtown

A Vision:

- Unifies a community's focus.
- Provides guidance & direction for downtown revitalization.
- Provides metric for evaluating projects.

Kevin Schwenzfeier (MJ) displayed and read aloud the Vision Statement provided in Alexandria Bay's NY Forward application and then read the revised statement.

#### Vision Statement

*"Nestled along the stunning banks of the St. Lawrence River, the Village of Alexandria Bay envisions itself as a vibrant, year-round destination that celebrates its unique role as the heart of the Thousand Islands. Balancing economic vitality with environmental stewardship, the Village aims to revitalize its downtown as an inclusive hub of local culture, history, and natural beauty. By fostering local business innovation, expanding housing options, enhancing public waterfront spaces, and prioritizing eco-friendly practices, Alexandria Bay is committed to enriching the quality of life for residents and offering an unforgettable experience for visitors. Through collaborative efforts and sustainable planning, Alexandria Bay is a harmonious blend of natural wonder, community spirit, and economic opportunity."*

#### Vision Statement (Revised)

*"Downtown Alexandria Bay will be a vibrant, year-round destination that celebrates its unique character as a riverfront community in the heart of the Thousand Islands, along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. By fostering local business innovation, expanded housing options, connected and accessible public waterfront spaces, the downtown serves as an inclusive hub of local culture, history, and natural beauty. Through collaborative efforts and sustainable planning, Alexandria Bay continues to enrich the quality of life for residents and offer an unforgettable experience for visitors through a harmonious blend of economic opportunities and natural wonders, embracing a renewed community spirit."*



# Vision & Goals Discussion

## Discussion

Kevin (MJ) explained that the revised statement maintains the message of the original vision with added items heard during the community engagement.

Kevin then continued with explaining the importance of goals and strategies and how they support the community's vision.

### **Vision & Goals Discussion**

What goals are important to achieve the Vision for downtown Alex Bay?

#### GOALS should be:

- Realistic;
- Clear and well-defined; and
- Aligned with and supportive of the community's vision.

#### STRATEGIES should be:

- Actionable statements that are specific with local context;
- Derived from opportunities and challenges;
- Relate to the proposed NYF projects;
- Clearly and concisely direct a type of action to help meet a specific goal; and
- Guide the community on how to continue revitalization beyond NYF projects.

#### Challenges in Downtown Alexandria Bay

- Aging buildings that lack insulation limit year-round business opportunities.
- Seniors are deterred from visiting in the summer due to parking and traffic issues.
- Affordable housing options are needed for public employees.
- Seniors are looking for year-round housing opportunities.
- Housing stock is bought for seasonal use only.
- Most employees live outside of the Village.
- Need education about how investments can help improve overall community.
- Need to work on creating buy-in from residents and business owners.
- The business community lacks unity.

#### Opportunities in Downtown Alexandria Bay

- Better utilization of the pavilion as a public space for performances, exhibits, and events.
- Improve relationships with seasonal residents.
- Create community-wide wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Downtown streetscaping and sidewalk improvements.
- Pedestrianize Upper James Street.
- Heated pickleball courts.
- Move Farmers Market to a downtown location.
- Expand opportunities for upper-floor housing.
- Reuse former chamber of commerce property.

#### Alex Bay Draft Goals & Strategies



# Vision & Goals Discussion

## Discussion

### GOAL 1: ECONOMIC VITALITY

Advance Alexandria Bay's economic vitality through the transformation of the economy from seasonal to year-round.

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Foster a supportive business environment through inclusive and cooperative event and development planning.
2. Diversify retail and service offerings to expand employment opportunities and provides locals and visitors with a wider variation in activities and amenities beyond the summer months.
3. Strengthen the relationship between downtown and the hospital through collaboration opportunities to better serve the community's needs and boost the downtown experience.
4. Enhance the aesthetics of downtown through streetscape upgrades and by supporting improvements to existing buildings.
5. Establish a downtown brand to strengthen Alexandria Bay's identity as a riverfront destination within and beyond the region.
6. Improve wayfinding and pedestrian safety to better connect downtown amenities to Alexandria Bay's riverfront amenities.

### GOAL 2: SOCIAL INCLUSION

Enhance social inclusion through improved connections and housing options throughout downtown Alexandria Bay.

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Improve the social and economic collaboration, coordination, and cooperation with the Alexandria Bay community.
2. Increase market-rate and workforce housing stock by supporting the activation of mixed-use buildings to create a variety of housing types to attract year-round residents.
3. Improve downtown Alexandria Bay's pedestrian environment through the prioritization of streetscape amenities, parking, lighting, wayfinding, and ADA accessibility enhancements.
4. Enhance public gathering spaces through local partnerships to revitalize facilities and promote community development.

### GOAL 3: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Improve environmental sustainability to protect and enhance Alexandria Bay's relationship with its natural surroundings and the St. Lawrence River.

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Develop the ecotourism sector to highlight and connect downtown to the area's environmental amenities.
2. Prioritize compact, walkable, and upper-story development throughout Alexandria Bay.
3. Improve resiliency of vulnerable properties through the application of modern design principles, incorporation of green infrastructure, and improved enforcement of the land use code to create a more sustainable Alexandria Bay.

### GOAL 4: CULTURE & HISTORY

Renew and respect Alexandria Bay's culture, heritage, and historic significance.





## Vision & Goals Discussion

### Discussion

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Highlight the historic landmarks throughout downtown to integrate local history into the fabric of downtown Alexandria Bay.
2. Create downtown cultural programming that is reflective of historic traditions to expand the options for experiences.
3. Expand and promote year-round arts and cultural events to increase local tourism.

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

MJ will incorporate the LPC's comments and send the new vision statement for their review. MJ will also revise and edit the goals and strategies according to suggestions made by the LPC.

## Open Call form Projects Overview

### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) then displayed the Open Call for Projects flyer.

#### **Transform Downtown Alex Bay with NY Forward!**

To learn more about NY Forward, project eligibility requirements and to access an official Call for Projects Application form, visit [www.AlexBayNYForward.com](http://www.AlexBayNYForward.com) or scan the QR code above.

For assistance with the Open Call for Projects application, virtual office hours will be available on:

- Wednesday, July 10, 2024, 12:00-1:00 PM
- Thursday, July 11, 2024, 3:00-4:00 PM
- Wednesday, July 17, 2024, 1:00-2:00 PM
- Monday, July 22, 2024, 9:00-10:00 AM

Project proposals will be accepted until July 31, 2024, at 5:00pm.

#### Open Call for Projects

- All project submissions should be feasible, transformational, and ready for implementation in the near-term.
- All project sponsors must complete a NYF submission form with required information through the Open Call, even if project was submitted in the NYF application.
- Please note that not all solicited projects will be selected for NYF funding.
- 40% locally preferred match for private projects (25% minimum required by program).
- The total project cost must be a minimum of \$75,000 to submit a Call for Projects Form.
- Projects <\$75,000 should submit a Small Project Fund Interest Form to demonstrate support for the fund.

Press Release and Flyer to be distributed on June 26th at noon.

Help us spread the word:

- Social Media Posts
- Website Updates
- Word-of-Mouth
- Email Blasts



## Open Call form Projects Overview

### Discussion

Jaclyn (MJ) explained the application and forms for the Call for Projects.

#### Application Forms

- Alexandria Bay NY Forward Project Form
- Small Project Fund Interest Form
- How to Submit Your Project
- Review the Eligibility Criteria and Project Requirements:
  - Review the Local Vision, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria.
  - Fill out the Project Proposal Submission Form.
  - Submit your Completed Application.
  - Available to submit online and mail or hand deliver a hard copy.

#### Project Evaluation Criteria

Alignment with Alex Bay's vision and goals will be used to evaluate all submitted projects.

#### Potential Local Evaluation Criteria

- Potential to leverage additional private and/or public funds, above 40%.
- Public support.
- Transformative potential - elements that improve downtown and how it is perceived.
- Availability of alternative funding sources that are more appropriate than the NYF award.
- Others?

#### Sample LPC Evaluation Worksheet

Jaclyn (MJ) displayed an example of an evaluation worksheet.

All projects submitted through the Open Call will be presented at LPC #3, then the LPC evaluation will begin.

### Key Decisions & Outcomes

N/A

## Next Steps

### Discussion

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) then discussed the next steps for the LPC.

#### Next Steps:

- Open Call for Projects Release – June 26 @ Noon
- Close Community Survey – June 30
- Draft Downtown Profile – July
- Virtual Office Hours – July 10, 11, 17 & 22
- Open Call for Projects Closes – July 31
- LPC Meeting #3 – August 12, 12:30-2:30 PM

Visit the Alexandria Bay NY Forward website to stay up-to-date, view meeting summaries, presentations, materials, fill out a project form, and get involved!



Next Steps	
Discussion	
<a href="http://www.AlexBayNYForward.com">www.AlexBayNYForward.com</a>	
Key Decisions & Outcomes	
N/A	

Public Comment	
Discussion	
Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) opened the meeting for public comment. No members of the public commented. Following the public comment period, Jaclyn Hakes thanked all those in attendance.	
Key Decisions & Outcomes	
N/A	

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections, and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:  
Melia Hema, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee

**Local Planning Committee (LPC)**

Name	Present
Judy Fulmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Damon Draught	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cindy Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Diane Recuperero	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Mark Reynolds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alan Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## State Partners

Name	Present
Kylie Peck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stephen Hunt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Planning Support

Name	Present
Michael Putnam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Molly Briere	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Schwenzfeier	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Melia Hema	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>