

City of Troy Downtown Revitalization Committee
Local Planning Committee Meeting One
February 10, 2022
5:00 to 7:00 PM (Virtual on Zoom)
RECORDED

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Local Planning Commission (LPC) Meeting #1 provided information and introductions to the DRI process as well as space for participants to discuss Troy's vision and goals for the downtown. Introductions were made by the Local Planning Committee (LPC) members, State Agency Staff and Consultants to the project. The code of conduct was reviewed with LPC members. Following this introduction, the consultant, HR&A, provided an overview of the DRI process and DRI-eligible project requirements. HR&A discussed the DRI context for Troy and LPC members contributed to a conversation about the Troy DRI context and vision.

LPC CO-CHAIRS PRESENT

- Mayor Patrick Madden – Mayor, City of Troy
- Roger A. Ramsammy, Ph.D. – President, Hudson Valley Community College with Susan Kalkbrenner

LPC MEMBERS PRESENT

- Chuck Conroy – South Troy Resident Osgood Neighborhood Association
- Denise Figueroa – Center for Independent Living
- Elizabeth Reiss – Arts Center of the Capital Region and Troy Cultural Alliance
- Geoff Brault – Downtown Troy BID
- Heidi Knoblauch –SUNY Albany
- Ivan Mugerwa – Franklin Square Inn
- Jerome Brown – SNUG
- Alejandro Griffiths-Diaz

LPC MEMBERS PRESENT

- Lee McElroy - RPI
- Mike McLaughlin – North Central Troy Resident
- Richard Kiernan – Troy Resident
- Steve Flenory – WB Games
- Tabitha Dunn – Unity House
- Tom Hulihan – Troy Housing Authority
- W. Alejandro Griffin-Diaz – Small Business Owner
- Zack Metzger – Troy Farmers Market
- Kimberly Fredericks – Sage School of Management

STATE PARTNERS PRESENT

- Robert J. Rodriguez, NYS Secretary of State
- Kisha Santiago-Martinez - Deputy Secretary of State for Development, Planning, and Community Infrastructure at NYS Department of State
- Lesley Zlatev– Revitalization Specialist, NYS DOS Planning & Community Infrastructure
- David Ashton – DRI Program Director, NYS DOS Planning & Community Infrastructure
- Mike Yevoli - Regional Director, Empire State Development
- Heidi Pasos – Empire State Development
- Darren Scott– Director of Development, NYS Homes and Community Renewal
- Crystal Loffler– President of Community Renewal, NYS Homes and Community Renewal
- Samuel Parker– Capital Region Representative, NYS Executive Chamber (Governor's Office)

HR&A CONSULTING TEAM MEMBERS PRESENT

- Bret Nolan Collazzi, HR&A
- Christiana Whitcomb, HR&A
- Ariel Dames-Podell, HR&A
- Jonie Fu, Fu Wilmers Design
- Patricia McKee, Fu Wilmers Design

CITY OF TROY STAFF PRESENT

- Steve Strichman, Commissioner of Planning and Development
- Dylan Turek, Director of Economic Development

Meeting Notes:

Lesley Zlatev, Project Manager for the New York Department of State, opened the meeting and introduced the project. The New York Secretary of State, Robert Rodriguez, himself and delivered opening remarks.

The LPC Co-Chairs, LPC members, State Team, and Consulting Team introduced themselves.

Lesley read the conflict of interest.

HR&A, the consultant lead on the Planning Team, presented the objectives of the meeting:

- To understand DRI process and LPC responsibilities;
- To hear LPC member's goals and aspirations for downtown Troy , and begin to craft a vision statement
- To discuss a community engagement strategy moving forward; and
- To review the preliminary project list and the process for sourcing additional projects.

HR&A detailed the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) process and program. The DRI seeks to “seeks to “transform communities ripe for development into vibrant neighborhoods where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work, and raise a family.”

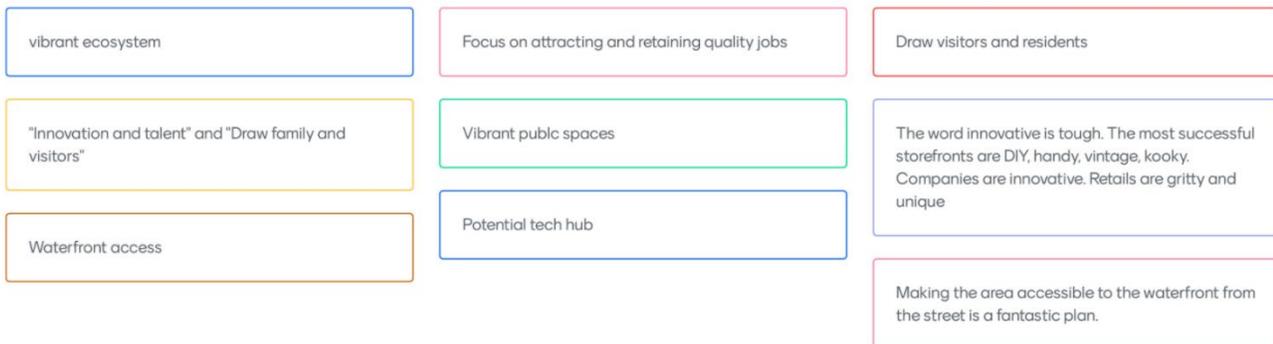
HR&A discussed the roles and responsibilities of the LPC, the New York State Team and the Consultant Planning Team. The tentative schedule and meeting timelines were discussed.

HR&A highlighted lessons from prior DRI studies, and project eligibility requirements.

HR&A presented a brief overview of the Downtown Troy study area's characteristics, recent planning work, and a draft vision statement and set of planning goals that were included in Troy's DRI application, for comment by the LPC.

HR&A presented on the preliminary vision statement. The vision statement focused on Troy's Riverwalk District as a regional center of innovation and talent. LPC members were then invited to share feedback through the Mentimeter interactive platform (screenshots below) and then took part in a live discussion facilitated by HR&A and the LPC Co-Chairs:

What parts of the preliminary vision statement most resonate with you?



Online Polling Comments Continued:

Landmark buildings	artEntertainment	Enhanced traffic flow, including pedestrian
The area outlined is huge. I think we need more focus on the goal, are we uniting that area? We need clarity of purpose	A city that isn't suffocating	When we think about jobs lets define what kind of jobs
What's new should compliment what is exusting	options to live and learn	

HR&A facilitated additional conversation, with notes from the LPC members detailed below:

- Denise – add a reference to diversity of community and that Troy is welcoming and diverse.
- Heidi – focus on good placemaking, creating a place where larger businesses want to locate. Maybe build out language around a “vibrant ecosystem”.
- Liz – Troy has a personality. With this project you are either deepening its personality or softening its edges.
- Make sure people want to come here. Make Troy “more Troy.”
- Deepening, enhancing Troy’s character and personality. Investment from the DRI is in reinforcing coolness – funky, fresh, and fun.
- We take the best of what we like and use this money to invest in it.
- There are also things we may not like that need to be softened.

HR&A asked the group to respond to the question, “WHAT MAKES TROY UNIQUE?” Responses detailed below:

What key words come to mind when you think of the vision for Downtown Troy? 



- We live in a destination – people come here to be part of and support a community. Fell in love with the City the first time they came. Downtown is diverse, inviting, romantic.
- Troy isn’t huge – its relatable and scalable enough.
- Historic buildings with contemporary stores and services. There is a creative problem-solving process going on whether you are making soap, or a video game, a focus on creative outcomes – best coffee, best sandwich...
- Troy is also a technology center with Warner Brothers, RPI, Cogent, etc. Engineers come to visit Troy and fall in love with it, charmed by the historic architecture, realize they can buy a house and have a high quality of life.
- Troy is the alter ego of people sewing, saving furniture... hand-work happening in front of everything – alongside tech startups. It’s the same pursuit of creativity – whether tech or maintaining of buildings or crafts.
- The FOCUS Lab – even it has a Main Street component. Its all about placemaking. We support the jobs by being an attractive place to come and live.
- Love the down to earth blue-collar craftiness, manufacturing history. Troy is very friendly and down to earth. Troy is gritty and we want to continue that.
- Neighborliness. Small close-knit town and community. People feel like they have to help new businesses.

HR&A discussed the purpose of DRI or Objectives of DRI within Troy. DRI is one of many initiatives currently underway within the City. DRI builds on significant recent planning and investment in downtown Troy and substantial growth in population and housing units.

The LPC discussed the question IS THE STUDY AREA APPROPRIATE?

The proposed DRI boundary was described and compared with the boundary shown in the application. Options for boundary changes and the process for such were elaborated on.

- Heidi – The City has intentionally chosen to focus on the river. It may be a larger area but the projects are related to the theme of the river, so it's not too big. We want spur investment downtown and to the north and south.
- Liz – general principle to distribute money responsibly and to share the wealth rather than just concentrate everything in the downtown core, and to make connections to the whole riverfront
- Mike – the study area is bookended by Collar Lofts and 2 River Lofts (the Old Brick) – how great would it be to be able to walk from one to the other?

ARE THERE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH / JOB ATTRACTION BESIDES PLACEMAKING?

- One thing that's missing is a way to grocery shop
- Parking remains a challenge – people want to park near work

HR&A reviewed a proposed public engagement plan and timeline for LPC member input.

Lesley oriented LPC members to the various DRI guidelines.

HR&A detailed action items for the next LPC Meeting. At the next LPC meeting, the Planning Team will discuss current project applications, circulate the stakeholder engagement strategy and review preliminary findings from the downtown profile. LPC members were asked to share comments on the study area, vision, and goals, to promote the open call for applications, and to sign the code of conduct form.

HR&A opened the meeting to public comments, and no one raised their hand to comment.

ZOOM MEETING CHAT

