

Village of Stamford NY Forward
Public Workshop #1 Meeting Summary

Meeting Summary
Village of Stamford NY Forward
Public Workshop #1
Stamford Village Hall (84 Main Street)
Monday, August 10, 2026 – 5:00-7:00 PM

The following document is a summary of the Public Workshop. A [full PDF of the presentation](#) can be found on the project website.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mayor Robert Schneider, Co-Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC) welcomed approximately 30 attendees to the public workshop and provided opening remarks. Mayor Schneider then turned the presentation over to Susan Favate of BFJ Planning. Ms. Favate introduced the NYF Team, which includes representatives from the New York State Department of State, Empire State Development, NYS Homes and Community Renewal, the Governor's Office, as well as a team of subconsultants.



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NY Forward (NYF) Program Overview

Ms. Favate explained that NY Forward is an extension of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program. NY Forward focuses on smaller downtown communities. The State's goals for NY Forward include creating an active downtown with a mix of uses, diverse housing options, enhanced public spaces, and more.

Ms. Favate then outlined the NY Forward timeframe of 9 months, from June 2026 through April 2027. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to engage throughout the NY Forward process, including participation in Local Planning Committee (LPC) meetings and a second public workshop.

The NY Forward process will result in a list of recommended projects developed by the Local Planning Committee (LPC). These projects will be submitted to New York State in a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The State will then review the recommended projects, announce funding decisions, likely in Summer/Fall 2027, and the implementation and reporting phases will begin.

Stamford NY Forward Area Overview

Suzanne Goldberg presented the potential NY Forward area for the Village of Stamford. The LPC members in attendance provided informal consensus on expanding the boundary to the south.

Ms. Goldberg provided a description of the Village's historical context, past planning efforts, and recent investments. She also gave an overview of zoning, land use, road ownership, and natural resources downtown, as well as key demographics, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics within the immediate and broader market area (20-minute and 40-minute driving distance).

Stamford NY Forward Draft Vision

Ms. Goldberg shared the draft vision submitted by the Village in their NY Forward application. The LPC and public will continue to refine this vision statement, using it to guide the development of project ideas.

NY Forward Project Identification

Ms. Favate explained that the Open Call for Projects is the primary tool for soliciting proposals from public, nonprofit, and private project sponsors. All interested sponsors are

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encouraged to submit through this process. Project proposals will be evaluated based on alignment with State and local goals.

Projects with a total cost greater than \$75,000 can be submitted through the standard Open Call Form, while those seeking less than \$150,000 can submit a Small Project Interest Form. Ms. Favate explained that all private project sponsors must provide a minimum 25% match, and all awarded funds are reimbursable, meaning the project sponsor must have access to funding.

The submission period is open through August 28, 2026. Following the completion of the Open Call period, the LPC and consultant team will work with project sponsors to refine their projects.

Roundtable Discussions

Ms. Goldberg then introduced the interactive activity, during which attendees were divided into small groups. Attendees first discussed the vision statement before completing a self-guided worksheet. The activity asked participants to identify the top issues and opportunities in downtown Stamford and brainstorm potential goals and strategies to address them. The workshop concluded with representatives from each table sharing key takeaways from their discussions with the group. A summary of key takeaways, organized by theme, is provided below.

Housing

- Housing is limited, expensive, and often outdated, with particular challenges for seniors and young adults entering the housing market.
- There is a need for a “housing ladder” that allows residents to remain in the community as their needs and household size changes. There is demand for universally accessible housing, senior housing, and smaller housing units.
- There is interest in rehabilitating existing apartments and vacant buildings in downtown Stamford.
- There is support for mixed-income and mixed-use development.

Public Space and Connectivity

- Pedestrian safety is a concern, particularly crossing Main Street. Participants suggested additional crosswalks and traffic-calming measures.
- ADA accessibility, including more convenient accessible parking, should be improved.
- Safer access is needed from the assisted living housing to downtown.

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- Better wayfinding and signage are needed to direct visitors and residents to downtown businesses, parks, the pool, rail trail, and other destinations.
- Opportunities to improve public spaces include landscaping, murals and public art, lighting, trash cans, and park amenities.
- Underused spaces, like the old pool, could be improved with an amphitheater or pavilion.
- There is a need for more public trash cans, specifically at the dog park.
- A publicly accessible kitchen space could be used to address food insecurity.
- Better marketing and awareness for the rail trail, including a potential sculpture park near the entrance, could increase usage.

Employment and Economic Development

- The need for a pharmacy in Stamford was identified as a top priority.
- There are concerns about vacant storefronts and limited commercial options.
- Participants support the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Façade improvements, landscaping, and beautification were viewed as ways to improve the appearance of Main Street.
 - Ideas included a façade improvement fund, vacancy tax/incentives, and tax breaks for new businesses.
- There is a desire to create a farmers' market to support local producers.
- A "buy local" campaign could encourage residents to shop locally.
- Better wayfinding, digital guides, and regional marketing could help visitors discover downtown businesses and attractions.
- Activities during the off season, such as winter festivals, could help support economic development outside of summer months.
- There is a need for more hotels/inns.

Quality of Life

- Participants expressed a need for improved amenities at existing parks, including picnic tables, playgrounds, splash pads, exercise stations, restrooms, and upgrades to the dog park.
- There is interest in creating more indoor gathering spaces, particularly for winter months.
- The old library could convert to a community, youth, or senior center.
- Potential for arts/culture include upgrades to the old gallery, a sculpture park along the rail trail, and a theater.
- There is a lack of full-service restaurants.

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Visioning Questionnaire

11 participants completed the Community Vision Questionnaire. First, participants were asked to select the top five areas of focus for downtown Stamford from 21 themes.

Affordable housing was the most popular, receiving seven votes, followed by historic and cultural resources, sustainability and resilience, growth, community space, and restaurants, each receiving four votes.

The questionnaire also solicited feedback on the draft vision statement. Overall, there was consensus that the vision statement could be more concise and anchored by Stamford's arts and culture, outdoor recreation, food/agriculture, attractive public spaces, and strong quality life, with tourism supporting, not overshadowing, the needs of residents.