



WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE



Downtown
Revitalization
Initiative

Local Planning Committee Meeting #1

July 9, 2026



Photo: EDR

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. DRI Code of Conduct
3. DRI Program Overview
4. DRI Project Selection Process
5. Rome Waterfront DRI
 - DRI Boundary
 - DRI Vision
5. Public Engagement
6. Next Steps
7. Public Remarks





Welcome & Introductions

LPC Co-Chairs, All, DOS

Local Planning Committee

Co-Chair: Jeffrey M. Lanigan, Mayor, City of Rome

Co-Chair: Charles Green, Member, Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Committee;
President and CEO of Assured Information Security, Inc

- **Robert Angelicola**, Representative, NAACP Rome NY Branch
- **Steven Bulger**, CEO, Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN)
- **Jennifer DeWeerth**, Dean of the Rome Campus, Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC)
- **Alicia Dicks**, President and CEO, Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties
- **Lori Frieden**, Realtor, Coldwell Banker Faith Properties
- **Bruce Hairston**, Executive Director, Rome Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Tami Lucia**, Executive Director, Rome Housing Authority
- **Danielle Martin**, Executive Director, Connect-Ed
- **Amy O'Shaughnessy**, VP of Sales & Marketing, Revere Copper Products, Inc.
- **Cameron Stewart**, Realtor, Homes by Cameron Stewart

State Partners & Consultants

- **Stefan Lutter**, Revitalization Specialist, Department of State (DOS)
 - **Paul Bengtson**, Revitalization Specialist, Department of State (DOS)
 - **Allison Madmoune**, Mohawk Valley Regional Director, Empire State Development (ESD)
 - **Mark LaBuzzetta**, Economic Development Specialist, Empire State Development (ESD)
 - **Katherine Stephens**, Program Director, Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
 - **Jillian Newby**, Asst. Regional Planning & Program Manager, Department of Transportation (DOT)
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- **Laura Lourenco**, Senior Project Manager, EDR
 - **Aidan McKibbin**, Planner, EDR
 - **Cheyenne Steria**, Deputy Director of Economic Development Services, MRB Group
 - *and more*
-
- **Michael Goodrum**, Noresco

State Partners & Consultants

Contracting Agencies:

New York Department of State (NYSDOS)

*Lead agency, Public projects

Empire State Development (ESD)

Local development expertise, Private projects

New York Division of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) Community & Housing expertise, Grant and Loan programs

Consulting Agencies:

New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Decarbonization strategies

New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Historic preservation consultation

New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) Consultation for projects on state roads

Environmental Design & Research

*Lead consultant, urban planning, design, public engagement

MRB Group

Economic Analysis

Prospect Hill Consulting

Data & GIS analysis / mapping

STC Design

Project support, decarbonization support, building evaluation

+ NORESKO

Roles

- Guide development of the **Strategic Investment Plan**
 - Review potential **DRI projects** and recommend a selection for DRI Funding
 - Support and learn from **public engagement activities**
 - Attend **regular LPC meetings**; and any working sessions
 - Review and advise on DRI planning **products and activities**
-
- Provide **guidance and expertise** throughout the planning process
 - **Manage** and assist consultants to ensure critical tasks are accomplished
 - Ensure **documents** meet state and local goals
 - **Facilitate** assistance from other State agencies
 - Support the **contracting** of projects awarded
-
- Work with LPC and state to research and prepare **DRI documents**
 - **Facilitate public engagement** with guidance from LPC
 - Assist in the identification and assessment of **potential projects**
 - **Manage** meeting and event logistics and presentations



DRI Code of Conduct

Paul Bengtson, DOS

DRI Code of Conduct

Preamble *“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, you are on the board of the organization proposing the project, or you are a member that believes you or any other member(s) are the subject of improper influence.”*

Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises, 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.

DRI Code of Conduct

- Guidelines, standards, and procedures for Local Planning Committee (LPC) members to follow throughout the planning process
- Members of the DRI Local Planning Committee must always serve and act in the public interest
- All LPC members must **read and sign the Code of Conduct** for Members of New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward Local Planning Committees (Code of Conduct).



Disclosures & Recusals

- Members must identify a potential conflict at the first meeting in which the matter giving rise to the conflict is discussed.
- Members may not vote, or attempt to influence, a discussion or vote on any projects where a potential conflict of interest exists.
- A list of recusals together with the recusal form completed by each recused member will be maintained for each project during the DRI planning process.

Remember **D.A.D.**

- ✓ **D**isclose conflicts of interest
- ✓ **A**ct in the public interest
- ✓ **D**isqualify if necessary

Questions? Contact the New York DOS Ethics Officer:

Anais Vasquez (518) 948-0275, Anais.Vasquez@dos.ny.gov

Voting on Recommended Projects

- All LPC members will vote on a slate of projects to be recommended to the state for DRI funding.
- Voting will take place via an official LPC ballot to be submitted to the State.
- LPC members must recuse themselves from voting on individual projects where a conflict of interest exists.
- LPC members must follow the determinations made by the Ethics Officer in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other applicable laws.





DRI Program & Planning Process

Paul Bengtson, DOS

What is the DRI?

- State-wide investment to reinvigorate local and regional economies by revitalizing downtowns
- Recognizes unique qualities of communities throughout NY State



New York State DRI Goals



**Enhance downtown living
and quality of life**



**Provide enhanced public
spaces that serve those of
all ages and abilities**



**Create an
active downtown with
a mix of uses**



**Create diverse
housing options for
all income levels**



**Provide diverse
employment opportunities
for a variety of skill sets
and salary levels**



**Encourage the reduction
of greenhouse gas
emissions**



**Grow the local property
tax base**

**Local Rome Goals – To be defined
→ Topics for Open House #1 and LPC #2**

End Goal of the Planning Process:

- Consensus on a recommended list of projects for implementation
- Momentum and direction for downtown revitalization
- Submission to the State of a **Rome Waterfront Strategic Investment Plan** containing:
 - Local Vision, Goals, & Strategies
 - Strategic Assessment of the area
 - Summary of public input
 - Project Profiles of recommended projects
 - Roadmap for implementation



DRI from Start to Finish



APPLY

September 2025 – May 2026

- Communities prepared and submitted applications to REDCs
- REDCs nominated communities
- State announced winners



PLAN

July – December 2026

- Local Planning Committees are established
- Community vision and goals are refined
- Projects are identified and refined
- LPC recommends projects to State

YOUR FOCUS IS HERE!



IMPLEMENT 2026 - 2030

- Final plans are submitted to the State
- Projects are selected and awarded (~Q2 2027)
- Implementation begins (~ Q4 2027)

Planning Process



Visioning

Refine the community's future vision, establish priorities and gather input



Opportunities + Challenges

Understand the community's unique characteristics and key opportunities



Project Development + Evaluation

Identify, develop, and evaluate potential projects



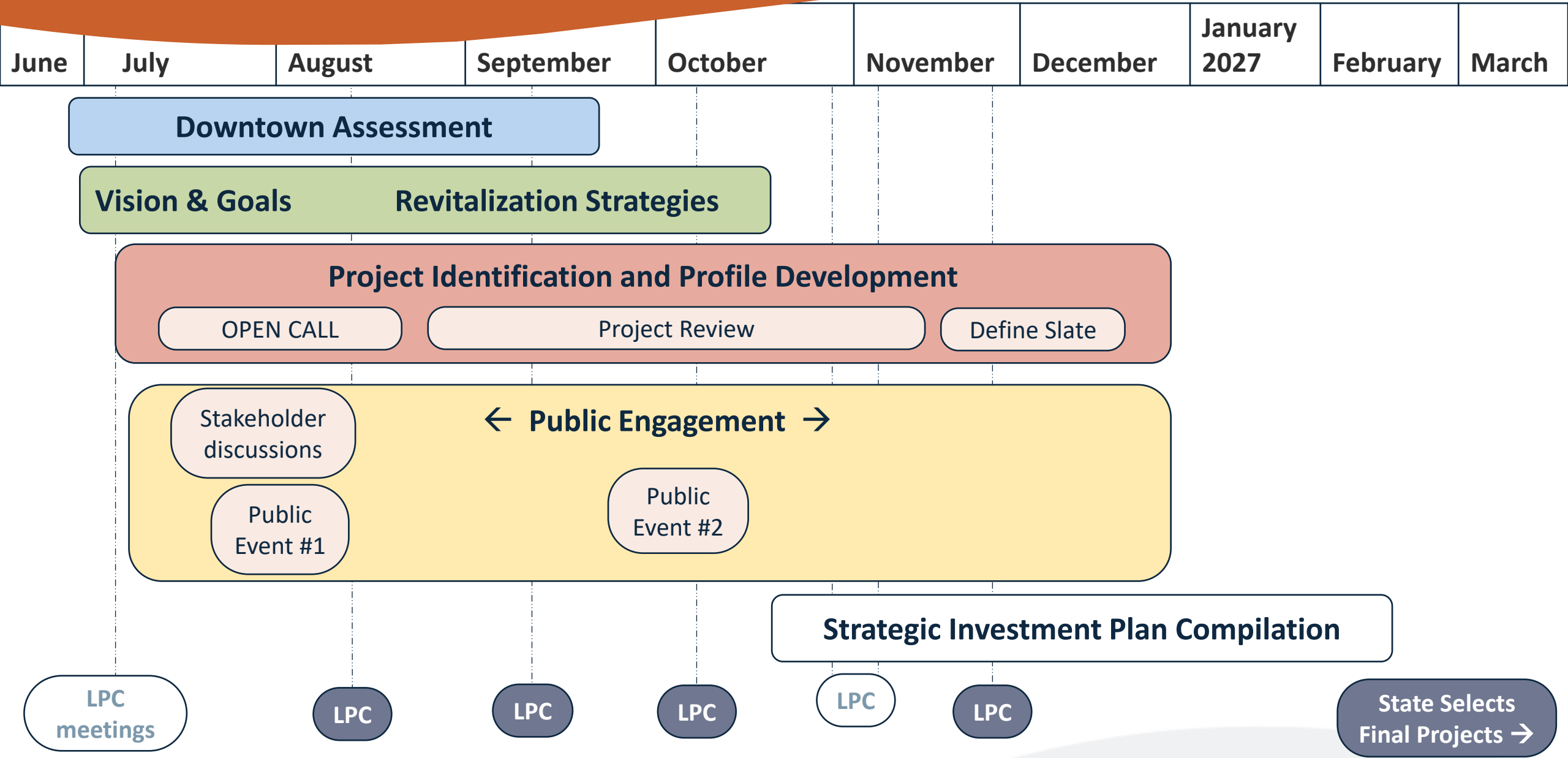
Project Recommendations

Recommend projects that align with the community's goals

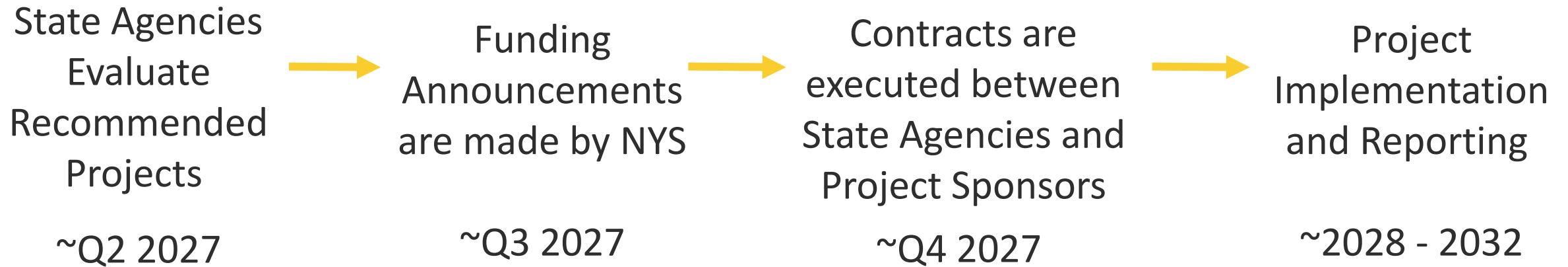
~ 6 Month Timeframe (July – December 2026)

- Each community is led by a consultant team to guide the planning process, develop projects to recommend to the State, and document in a Strategic Investment Plan
- This process helps ensure all voices are heard and projects are carefully considered

General Schedule 2026 (Tentative)



After the Planning Process



- Announcements are typically made in the months following submission of Strategic Investment Plans
- Projects begin implementation as soon as possible



DRI Project Selection Process

Stefan Lutter, DOS, Cheyenne Steria, MRB

Eligible DRI project types



Public Improvement Projects

Streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure, and other public realm projects.



New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings

Development and redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not for profit, or public uses. Development / redevelopment should result in employment opportunities, housing choices or other community services.



Small Project Grant Fund

A locally managed matching small project fund (up to \$600,000) for small downtown projects, such as façade improvements, building renovations, business assistance, or public art.



Branding and Marketing

Downtown branding and marketing projects that target residents, tourists, investors, developers and visitors.

Ineligible Project Types

- **Planning Activities.** All DRI funds must be used to implement projects.
- **Operations and Maintenance.** Funds cannot be used for on-going or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property up-keep.
- **Pre-award Costs.** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the completion of the Strategic Investment Plan and the announcement of funding awards is not permitted.
- **Property Acquisition.** DRI funds cannot be used for property acquisition.
- **Training and Other Program Expenses.** DRI funds cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training costs and expenses related to existing programs.
- **Expenses related to Existing Programs.** DRI funds cannot supplement existing programs or replace existing resources.
- **Stand alone parking projects**

How are projects identified?



All projects submit through an Open Call for Projects, including those from the Rome DRI application

- All potential projects must complete DRI project submission forms and checklists**
- Not all projects proposed will be selected**

How are projects evaluated?

The LPC will evaluate all projects based on the NYS DRI Program criteria and goals and local Schoharie goals:

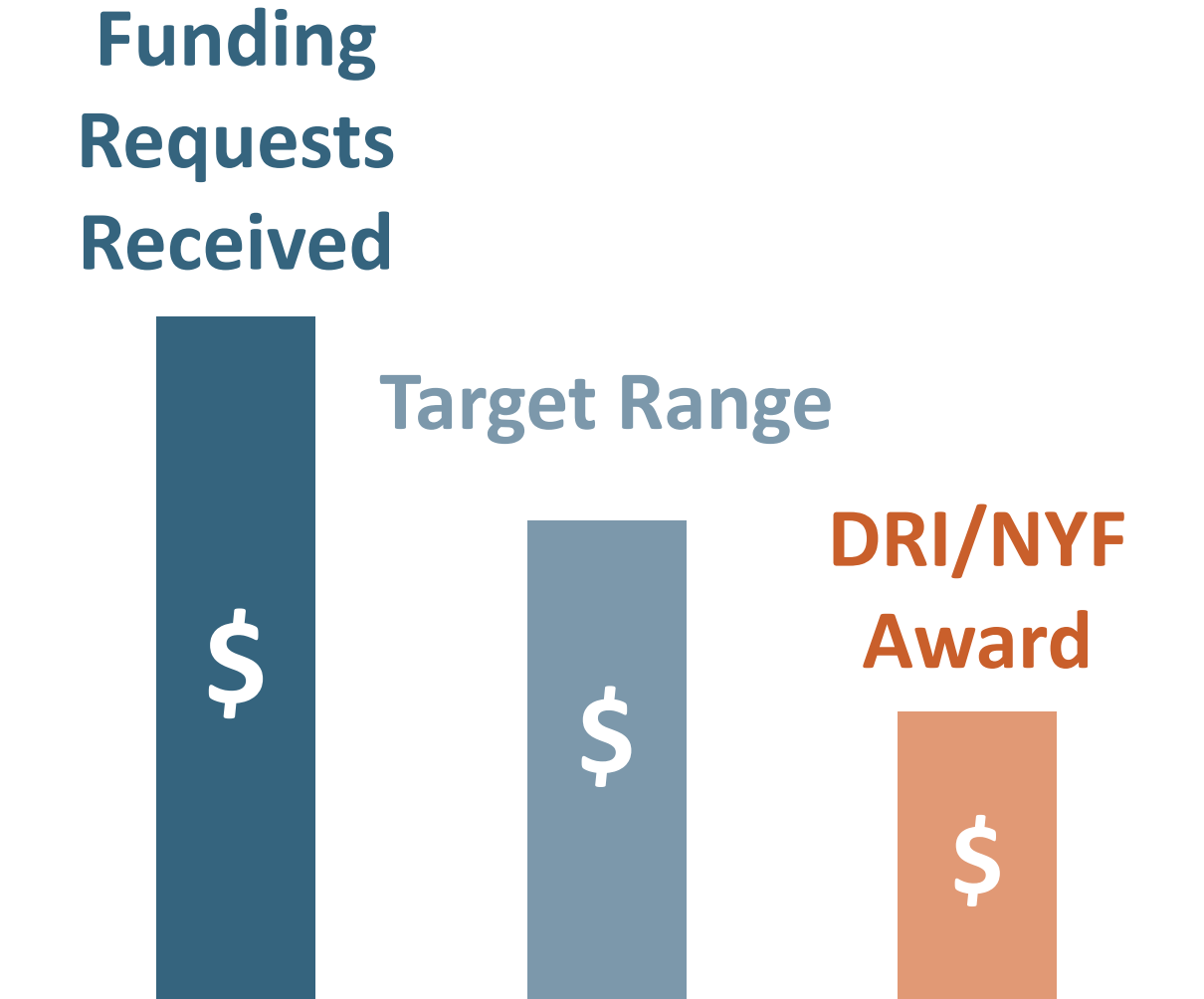
- **Eligible Project.** Projects must be one of the eligible project types.
- **Alignment with Local and State Goals.**
- **Catalytic Effect.** Projects must have a significant positive impact on downtown revitalization
- **Project Readiness.** Projects should be well-developed and ready to proceed as soon as possible upon the award of funding.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** Projects must represent an effective, efficient use of public resources.
- **Co-Benefits.** Projects must result in benefits to the community, beyond just the project developer, such as: additional economic activity and improved quality of life.
- **Community Criteria.** The LPC may set additional criteria for their review (LPC #2 discussion)

Project Evaluation Worksheet (sample)

Yes	No	maybe	COMMUNITY SUPPORT
			The project is supported by the community and in line with its DRI vision.
Yes	No	maybe	PROJECT READINESS
			The project is well developed and poised to proceed in the near term in a way that will jumpstart the redevelopment of the neighborhood. The sponsor has the capacity to implement and maintain the project.
Yes	No	maybe	CATALYTIC EFFECT
			The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment.
Yes	No	maybe	CO-BENEFITS
			The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable and productive environments in which to live and work.
Yes	No	maybe	COST EFFECTIVENESS
			There is a demonstrated needs for DRI funds and investment of public DRI funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

Final Slate of Recommended Projects

- Final slate of projects takes into consideration feedback from the public and is finalized by the LPC.
- The total amount of requested DRI funds will have a higher dollar amount than what will be awarded.



Project Implementation

- All awards are provided as a reimbursement grant – project sponsors must complete work before monies are provided
- Project sponsors will likely need to secure bridge financing to cover costs while project is being completed
- All awards are subject to State requirements, including MWBE goals, competitive procurement, etc.

Project Match and Decarbonization

- New construction, building additions over 5,000 SF, and some substantial renovation over 5,000 SF will be required to meet decarbonization standards
- 25% minimum project match for private projects
- No match requirement for public or non-profit projects
- Total project cost must be a minimum of \$75,000 (except small project fund)
- LPC can set higher match requirements at their own discretion

e.g., Clinton-Kirkland 2023: Private projects had 40% match

Rome DRI decision:

- *Private projects will have a minimum 40% match requirement of total project costs.*
- *Public and non-profit projects will have a 20% minimum match requirement*
- *The minimum total project cost for a stand-alone project is \$250,000*

Open Call for Projects

- All projects must be submitted through the call to be considered (public, private, non-profit).
- Submission period will be open to the public for at least 5 weeks.
- Applicants must complete a submission form with required information. Available online www.RomeNYDRI.com or in hard copy at City Hall.
- Simpler, parallel process for Small Project Fund – must submit a letter of interest.

➤ **NYS is looking for feasible and transformational projects ready to be implemented in the near-term.**

Proposed Projects Timeline:

- **Open Call** - July 11 to August 14
- **Review & Refine Proposals**
mid-August to mid-October (pencils down)
- **LPC final review and selection**
mid-October to November
- **Submit profiles for recommended projects**
November/December

Resources for Sponsors:

- **Introductory Webinar** – July 21st 12:00 p.m.
- **Pre-Application meeting with consultant team** – July 20-31
- **Decarbonization & SHPO Webinars**
- **Consultant advising** - Ongoing

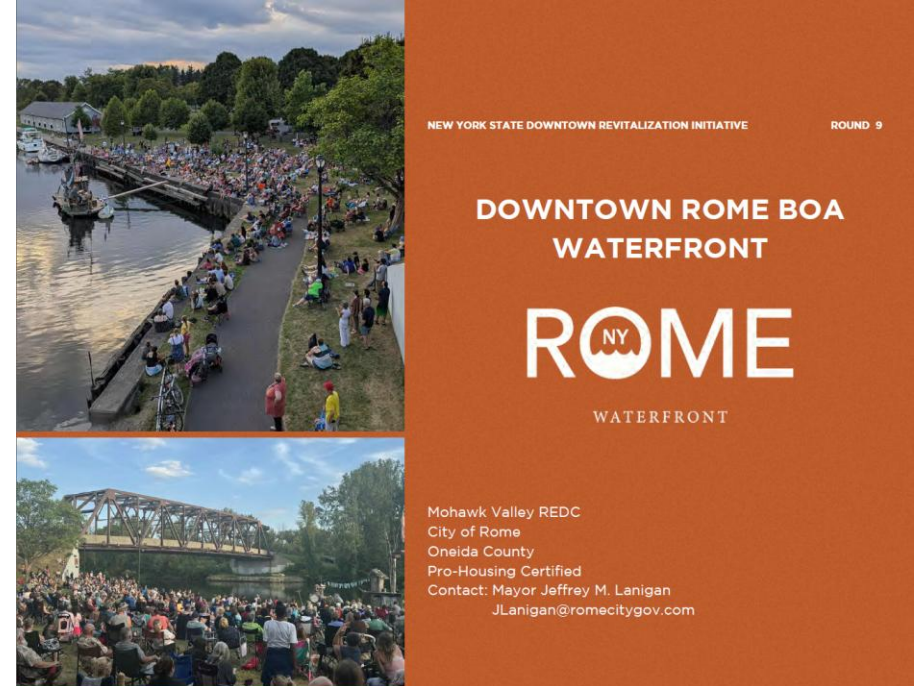


Rome Waterfront DRI

Laura Lourenco, EDR

Winning Application

- Past Investments → Future Potential
- Job Growth
- Quality of Life
- Supportive Local Policies
- Potential Projects



DRI Boundary

Must Be:

- Compact
- Well Defined Downtown
- Easily Walkable

DRI projects must be inside the boundary.

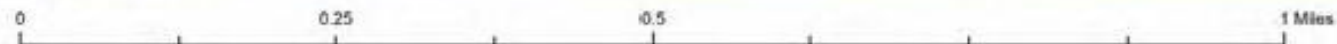
Minor adjustment by LPC permitted with firm justification.

Potential projects near the boundary can apply through the Open Call for LPC consideration (boundary change is not guaranteed).

DRI Boundary - Application



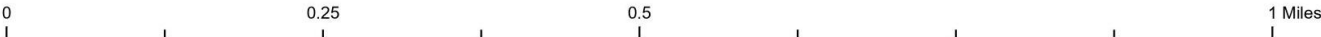
DRI Boundary



Initial Update Proposed



DRI Boundary



Agreed

Vision from Application

Rome's Waterfront District has evolved from industry-only into a vibrant, mixed-use regional recreation asset that elevates the community's quality of life and offers a memorable tourist experience. The district is well-rounded, offering the quintessential live, work, play balance while drawing a unique sense of place from a bygone era of waterfront industry along the canal system.

LPC Questionnaire Themes

1. **Untapped potential and transformation opportunity** – a future regional attraction & economic driver.
2. **Erie Canal, Mohawk River, and industrial heritage as defining assets**
3. **Recreation, natural beauty, and public access to the water** – Leverage strong waterfront assets (Bellamy Harbor Park, canal, trails, exercise, nature) and provide opportunity to spend time here.
4. **Blended mixed-use district with housing, business, dining, and entertainment** – complete live-work-play environment.
5. **Safe, clean, and welcoming environment** – perception important for attracting investment, tenants
6. **Year-round activity** - beyond special events; attractions, restaurants, gathering places, lighting, and activities
7. **Family-friendly and multigenerational gathering places** - fun, peaceful, social, accessible, memorable, and welcoming
8. **Walkability, accessibility, and ease of movement** – ADA and barrier-free design, connected to surrounding districts.
9. **Economic development and business investment** - support existing employers, attract new businesses, and make Rome more appealing as a place to live and work. Visibility, foot traffic, local spending.
10. **Community pride and quality of life** - a memorable visitor destination that Romans are proud of and enjoy using.

Initial Update Proposed

Original

Rome's Waterfront District has evolved from industry-only into a vibrant, mixed-use regional recreation asset that elevates the community's quality of life and offers a memorable tourist experience. The district is well-rounded, offering the quintessential live, work, play balance while drawing a unique sense of place from a bygone era of waterfront industry along the canal system.

Alternative Draft (as accepted)

Rome's Waterfront District is transforming into a vibrant and welcoming, mixed-use destination. Building on its Erie Canal, Mohawk River, and industrial heritage, the district will connect recreation, housing, businesses, dining, and public spaces to support residents, employees, and visitors. By offering places to gather, live, work, and play year-round for all ages and abilities, the district will enhance community pride, quality of life, and Rome's appeal as a regional destination.

Open Houses will invite the public to comment on the vision, goals, and strategies.



Public Engagement & DRI Assessment

Aidan McKibbin, EDR

Public Engagement Methods

- Critical component of the DRI planning process!
- Occurs throughout the process and is tailored to each community's needs.
- Activities should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population.
- Facilitated by the consultant team.

METHODS:

Public Workshops/Surveys (x2)

Local outreach / Pop-ups /
discussion groups

LPC Meetings

Open Call for Projects

Online Engagement -
www.romenydri.com

Role of Public Engagement

- Helps to craft / refine the downtown's vision, goals, and strategies
- Input on project types and community needs
- Feedback on proposed projects and transformative potential in downtown

GENERAL TIMELINE (tbc)

Visioning & Project Ideas:

August - Open House #1

July/August- Stakeholder outreach, Pop-up

Review Potential Projects:

October - Open House #2

Aug/Sept/Oct- Community Outreach

Public Comments/Input

July-Dec: LPC Meetings, Online Comment Form

Initial Public Engagement Discussion

Locations for public open houses?

- Jervis Library and City Hall

Community events / locations for outreach activities?

- Pop-up booths at community events, farmers markets, and summer events

Important community groups or stakeholders we should reach out to?

- Non-profits
 - SFM Skatepark
 - Rome Rescue Mission
- Economic Development?
- Recreation?
- Others?

Hard-to-reach groups?

- Work with the NAACP, YMCA, nonprofit service providers, Oneida County DSS, and other service organizations.
- Engage local partners such as CFLR, MVCAA, Connected Community Schools, Jervis Library, VA, MVCC Rome Campus, Rome City School District/RFA.

Effective channels for notifications?

- RomelQ
- Flyer locations?

Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

- Blighted, vacant, and underutilized properties, including brownfields
- Aging waterfront infrastructure and site readiness needs
- Limited housing availability and affordability
- Lacks daily life, year-round activity, and foot traffic
- Connectivity, walkability, and accessibility gaps
- Safety, lighting, and perception concerns

Opportunities

- Catalytic redevelopment sites along the canal
- Waterfront recreation, tourism, and canal heritage
- Past investment, public support, and developer interest
- Chobani job growth and broader employment momentum
- Supportive local policies, plans, and funding readiness
- Family-friendly mixed-use destination with community pride



Next Steps

Laura Lourenco, EDR

Next Steps

LPC

- Submit signed code of conducts
- Next Meeting – Aug 12, 3:00-5:00 pm

Open Call for Projects

- Launch and Publicize
- Technical assistance - ***start submissions early***
contact consultant team to set up meetings
- Attend Webinar July 21

Public Engagement

- Stakeholder Outreach
- Open House #1 (August)

Downtown Assessment

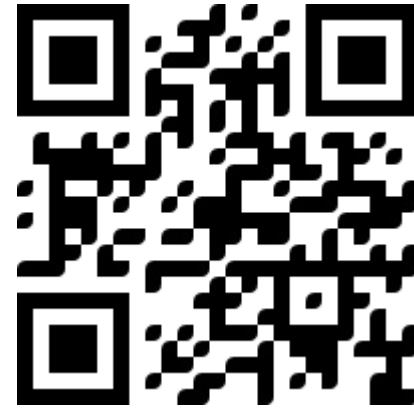
- Research, mapping, data collection



Public Remarks



Thank You!



romenydri.com