

Meeting Summary

Local Planning Committee #1

July 9, 2026

ATTENDEES

LPC Members	NYS and Consultants
• Jeffrey M. Lanigan • Charles Green • Robert Angelicola • Steven Bulger • Jennifer DeWeerth • Alicia Dicks • Lori Frieden • Danielle Martin • Amy O'Shaughnessy • Cameron Stewart	• Stefan Lutter, DOS • Paul Bengtson, DOS • Allison Madmoune, ESD • Katherine Stephens, HCR • Laura Lourenco, EDR • Aidan McKibbin, EDR • Cheyenne Steria, MRB

OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS

- The LPC supported the proposed adjustment to the DRI boundary presented at the meeting.
- The LPC established a minimum 40% match for private projects and a minimum 20% match for nonprofit and public projects.
- The minimum total project cost for projects submitted through the Open Call was set at \$250,000. Projects providing more than the minimum match will be viewed more competitively.
- The LPC supported revising the application vision to use forward-looking language and incorporate additional detail and perspectives gathered through the LPC questionnaire.

Meeting start: 3:07

- Welcome & Introductions
 - Mayor Lanigan welcomed attendees and formally kicked off the planning process.

- LPC members, State agency representatives, and the consultant team introduced themselves.
 - DOS reviewed the respective roles of the LPC, State team, and consultant team.
- Code of Conduct
 - DOS reviewed the DRI Code of Conduct, including how conflict-of-interest and recusal requirements apply to LPC member.
- DRI Program Overview
 - DOS provided an overview of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative as a State investment program focused on transforming downtown areas across New York.
 - Projects recommended for funding must advance at least one of the seven State DRI goals.
 - The planning process will result in a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).
 - The overall DRI process includes:
 - Phase 1 - Application.
 - Phase 2 - Planning, occurring from July through December 2026.
 - Phase 3 - Implementation, anticipated from 2027 through 2030.
 - Major Phase 2 activities include visioning, identification of opportunities and challenges, project development and evaluation, and preparation of project recommendations.
 - Following completion of the SIP, the State is anticipated to evaluate projects in the second quarter of 2027, announce awards in the third quarter, and begin contracting with project sponsors in the fourth quarter.
- DRI Project Selection
 - 4 eligible project types
 - Public improvement projects
 - New development and/or rehabilitation of existing downtown buildings
 - Small project grant fund
 - Branding and marketing
 - Ineligible activities include planning, operations and maintenance, pre-award costs, property acquisition, training and other program expenses, costs associated with existing programs, and stand-alone parking projects.
 - All projects, including projects identified in the DRI application, must be submitted through the Open Call for Projects.
 - Projects will be evaluated based on eligibility, alignment with State and local goals, catalytic potential, readiness, cost-effectiveness, co-benefits, and community-specific criteria.

- An evaluation matrix or worksheet will be used to assess projects against the selection criteria once applications are received.
- The LPC will ultimately recommend a slate of proposed projects to be submitted to the State. The final slate typically requests more funding than is available, often totaling approximately \$12 million to \$14 million.
- DRI awards are reimbursement grants; project sponsors may need bridge financing to cover costs before reimbursement.
- New construction and substantial renovations exceeding 5,000 square feet must comply with applicable State decarbonization requirements.
- **Project Match and Cost Discussion**
 - The State minimum for private projects is generally a \$75,000 DRI request and a 25% match, although projects requesting less than \$250,000 are not typically competitive.
 - For the Small Project Fund, individual awards may range from \$25,000 to \$150,000. The LPC may establish different match thresholds for the Small Project Fund and the regular project pool.
 - The LPC discussed using match percentage as an evaluation factor, with higher-match projects receiving more favorable consideration.
 - Members raised concern that a high match requirement could discourage potential sponsors, while also recognizing that it can demonstrate commitment and help identify serious, ready applicants.
 - Other funding sources may be combined to satisfy match requirements, subject to program rules.
 - The LPC ultimately established:
 - A 40% minimum match for private projects.
 - A 20% minimum match for nonprofit and public projects.
 - A minimum total project cost of \$250,000.
 - Open Call materials should clearly explain that these are minimum requirements and that projects offering a higher match will be more competitive.
- **Open Call for Projects**
 - Potential applicants were encouraged to contact the consultant team before applying to discuss project ideas and application requirements.
 - Open Call materials should clearly explain decarbonization requirements and emphasize that the State is seeking feasible, transformational projects.
 - The Open Call will be promoted through flyers, social media, email distribution lists, and other local outreach methods.
- **Rome Waterfront DRI**
 - The consultant team reviewed the DRI boundary and the State criteria that the area be compact, well-defined, and walkable.

- One adjustment to the application boundary was presented, and the LPC expressed support for the change.
- The consultant team presented an updated vision statement informed by the LPC questionnaire.
- The revised vision adds detail and perspectives not fully reflected in the application and should use forward-looking language such as “is transforming” or “will be.”
- **Public Engagement & DRI Assessment**
 - The consultant team discussed approaches for reaching residents, businesses, organizations, and visitors throughout the planning process.
 - Suggested outreach and promotion methods included:
 - Yard signs featuring a QR code linked to project information and engagement opportunities.
 - Outreach at the Honor America Parade and the Symphony/block party event on July 23.
 - Facebook, email distribution lists, glossy flyers, postcards, sandwich boards, billboards, and assistance from a local sign company.
 - Coverage and outreach through the Daily Sentinel; Sean was identified as a potential contact.
 - Direct distribution through community organizations and stakeholder networks.
 - Potential locations and organizations for reaching audiences that may otherwise be difficult to engage included:
 - MVCC community room.
 - St. John’s Church.
 - The train station.
 - The Terminal Building.
 - The Navigation Center.
 - The waterfront and canal corridor, including trail users and the marina across the waterway.
 - Potential stakeholder partners and networks included:
 - The Chamber of Commerce and Mohawk Valley EDGE/REDC economic development partners.
 - Hamilton College
 - Arts, cultural, and historic organizations, including Fort Stanwix, the Rome Historical Society, Oneida County Tourism, and the Great Loop Association.
 - Canal and waterfront organizations, including the Old Erie Canal Community Working Group and individuals involved in canal history and trail initiatives.
 - The Rome Sign Company and other local businesses able to assist with visible promotion.

- Next Steps
 - LPC members will complete Code of Conduct and recusal documentation.
 - LPC Meeting 2 is scheduled for August 12, 2026, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 - The consultant team will launch and promote the Open Call for Projects.
- Public Remarks
 - A member of the public asked about the extent of the boundary; the boundary map can be seen online at: www.romenydri.com/about
 - Public comments emphasized the canal front as a major 200-year-old community asset and highlighted the value of trails and waterfront access.
 - The canal wall was described as unattractive and a deterrent to boaters stopping in Rome. A commenter suggested that rehabilitation could make a meaningful improvement without requiring an excessive investment.
 - Concern was expressed that increasing the private match requirement could discourage participation while the district is still developing. The LPC was encouraged to remain open to projects with lower DRI requests and to make strong use of the Small Project Fund.
 - A commenter recommended expanding or connecting the boundary to trail systems along the Mohawk River to improve water access, including connections toward Staley and Delta Lake.
 - Public comments also emphasized Bellamy Park, the canal way, and the trail network as important assets for maintaining Rome's status as a trail town and destination and strengthening future grant competitiveness.
- Meeting concluded at approximately 5:00 p.m.