

BALDWIN

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

DRI Baldwin – Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1

November 7, 2019, Baldwin High School, 6:00pm

Meeting Notes

Marwa Fawaz (VHB) opened the meeting with introductory remarks, welcome and informed the LPC what materials were provided in the packets prepared for each member. LPC Co-Chairs Honorable Laura Gillen and David Kapell also provided introductory remarks.

Marwa Fawaz provided an overview of the project team and the role of the consultants.

Amy Pfeiffer (Department of State) discussed the role of the LPC and State involvement. She also explained the Code of Conduct for the LPC (attached to minutes) and explained its importance. She asked each member of the LPC to sign the document and hand it in at the end of the meeting or at their earliest convenience after reading the document.

Ms. Fawaz provided an overview of the DRI program and its intent. She stated the purpose of the program is to identify projects for the 9.7 million dollars of State funding with the intention of identifying projects costing up to 15 million dollars while identifying other funding sources for these projects to act as leverage. Ms. Rudow then provided more details on the DRI Process and discussed the key ingredients to a successful project to be a catalyst for improvements in the downtown. She then proceeded to explain the difference between eligible and noneligible projects under the DRI.

Ms. Fawaz discussed the timeline for the DRI Process.

Abi Rudow (VHB) presented on the DRI Boundary. She explained how the DRI Boundary was expanded from the existing Overlay Boundary, further north to encompass the “Pathmark Property” and the Baldwin High School entrance on Grand Avenue.

The LPC members agreed to the extension of the DRI Boundary north to the Baldwin High School and suggested a further extension on the southern end to incorporate the Kellogg House along Merrick Road.

Ms. Rudow read a draft vision statement that was based off Baldwin’s DRI application.

The Baldwin community envisions its downtown as a thriving, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use corridor, centered around the Baldwin Long Island Railroad Station and along Grand Avenue. Baldwin residents are diverse and engaged and have long recognized the potential for Downtown Baldwin to become a place where residents, commuters, and visitors want to live, shop, dine, and recreate.

Through investments in public infrastructure, strategic leveraging of private development opportunities, and building on a foundation of its existing assets, Downtown Baldwin will thrive as a center of activity and local economic driver that the community needs and has long been working toward.

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The LPC members had no comments on the Draft Vision at the time of the LPC Meeting but were asked to submit comments via email.

Following, Ms. Rudow reviewed the draft goals which were based on the DRI application, previous planning efforts and public outreach.

Goal 1: Enhance and bolster the aesthetic, cultural, and recreational assets of the DRI Area to transform downtown Baldwin to an active and vibrant center that serves the needs of a diverse and engaged community.

Goal 2: Implement public realm improvements to provide a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, and to support future growth in the community.

Goal 3: Leverage publicly-owned properties, new development, and private investment supported by the Baldwin Mixed-Use Overlay District to promote public enhancements and infrastructure improvements for the Baldwin community.

Goal 4: Strengthen the physical and economic resiliency of the entire Baldwin community by promoting mixed-use growth, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, high quality retail offerings, and diverse housing opportunities in the downtown.

The committee was agreeable to the draft goals and will reach out to Ms. Rudow and VHB with additional questions or comments. Draft goals will be sent to committee members.

Ms. Rudow then introduced application projects that were included in the DRI Application. These projects will act as starting points for the LPC and the public to craft the final projects to be submitted to the State for funding. These projects include:

- Reconstruction of the Grand Avenue Urban Renewal Area
- Promote Transit-Oriented Development
- Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Streetscape Enhancements
- Implementation of the Green Infrastructure
- Complement MTA Station Upgrades
- Façade Improvement to Local Retail Businesses

The applications projects were questioned and discussed among the LPC members to further understand them. Ms. Rudow emphasized that these projects are starting points but that a public Call for Projects will be issued to solicit further potential projects from the public.

Ms. Fawaz discussed next steps in the DRI process including LPC working groups, scheduling future LPC monthly meetings, the upcoming Community Meeting (November 20th, 2019), Call for Projects, Community Engagement Plan and the Downtown Profile Assessment.

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LPC Comments

The LPC members asked questions and provided input throughout the meeting. Below are specific comments:

- Isn't the Pathmark Property private? How could we propose a project to be funded on private property?
- We should include the Kellogg House in the DRI Boundary
- Is there a list of the county, town and State funds that apply to this area/Baldwin? Can we be educated on what funds there are already, so we don't duplicate efforts/money on places that have funding already.
- Can you clarify if the money from the State can be used to leverage development on private properties?
- Is there a maximum or minimum amount of money to be used on each project?
- Can the DRI Boundary be expanded once we go through the process?
- Can we allocate certain areas in the DRI Boundary for certain programs such as façade improvements?
- Once you send out the Call for Projects, have you seen any certain number of responses or what does the feedback look like?
- At what point are the businesses told about bidding on projects? Do community projects get the first pick?
- Often when you apply for grants, is there room for grants/projects. Can we bargain or reject?

The meeting was then opened to the public.

Public Comments

- Expanding the boundary north is needed, resist the need to go back to only the Overlay District boundary
- Be cognizant of the needs of the businesses
- When people make proposals, can they come from anybody or do they have to be funneled through the LPC for the Call for Projects.
- My concern is that the DRI Boundary is not reaching all of Baldwin
- Outreach needs to reach all diverse businesses and members of the public. The Public also needs to be educated on what the meetings include.
- We need to make sure we get the word out in regard to everything happening within the DRI Process, there are always the same people at the meetings.
- What is the plan for outreach? I recommend reaching out to PAL and other small community groups to spread the word.
- I agree on expanding the boundary to include the Kellogg house
- The DRI Goals need to include a statement that allows for maximum inclusion of local contractors
- Community involvement need to start at 7:30p.m. instead of 6:00p.m., a lot of parents can't make the meetings/events
- The DRI Goal 4 includes the word "diverse", we need to remove that word as we just need housing opportunities in the downtown in general.

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- Extending the DRI Boundary north of the overlay boundary may result in losing sight of the blighted area around the LIRR, Merrick Road and Grand Avenue
- How do we allocate the \$600,000 funds appropriately?
- People haven't realized that the LIRR property is private and that funding shouldn't go there
- What underutilized parking lots are there in the DRI Boundary?
- What are the retention funds used to keep the funded projects in the future?
- The DRI Boundary is limiting opportunities within Baldwin. The DRI Boundary should be extended to the north to allow ideas and opportunities to be made up there.
- The Kellogg house should be included in the DRI Boundary, it could be used as a community arts center or apart of the library.
- Insight is needed as to how the LPC members were selected. If the members affiliation with their organizations change due to turnovers, will their replacements take over the LPC seat?
- Need to have a better understanding of the funding from the State, where is the money coming from? -State and Homes of Renewal? HUD?
- Can the LPC in their decision process have local business engagement in the DRI Boundary?
- Is there room for additional WMBE?
- LPC should focus on strategic sites and project sponsors as sponsors could carry those projects through
- Traffic is terrible around 2:00pm on the weekdays between Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road on Grand Avenue, how will the DRI Boundary affect traffic especially in this area?