

Date	September 12, 2024 (6-8pm)
Project	Waterloo Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)
Location	Waterloo Middle School - LGI Room, 65 Center Street, Waterloo, NY
Attendees	Urban Strategies Inc., Department of State, Village of Waterloo Mayor and Trustee, one member of the LPC and ~4 Members of the Public
Purpose	Public Workshop #2

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### **Overview**

Two public workshops are planned as part of Waterloo's DRI process. Public engagement through the DRI process will ensure that the Strategic Investment Plan and the projects recommended for DRI funding are related to the community's needs and aspirations. Input from these events will factor into the DRI vision and goals, aspects of the Downtown Profile and Assessment, and the projects that are recommended by the Local Planning Committee (LPC).

### **Purpose**

*The main objectives of Public Workshop #2 were to share the details of 18 proposed projects to the public and to gauge public interest in them. Feedback from the public received at this event will be combined with feedback received through an online survey, which will then be considered by the LPC as part of their evaluation.*

### **Meeting Agenda**

- Brief Overview of the DRI
- Vision, Goals & Revitalization Strategies
- The Proposed Projects
- Providing Your Input Tonight
- Questions & Answers

## ***Meeting Summary***

The following is a high-level summary of the presentation materials from Public Workshop #2. The presentation slides that were used at this meeting, as well as the display panels, are available on the project website: [WaterlooDRI.com](http://WaterlooDRI.com).

Urban Strategies provided opening remarks and hosted a round of introductions of everyone present. Urban Strategies then delivered a presentation, which included:

- An overview of the DRI, touching on the goals of the program, the overall planning process, and the final outcome of the process, being a Strategic Investment Plan and a recommended slate of projects totally between \$12-15 million.
- A summary of the revitalization vision, goals, and strategies that were developed with in put from the LPC and the public.
- An overall summary of the number of projects received, the total project costs and DRI funding request, and the general location of projects within the DRI area (e.g., projects clustered around Main/Virginia and public realm projects extending out from the core of downtown).
- An overview of the anticipated benefits of different DRI project types (new development/rehabilitation of existing buildings, public improvement projects, small grant funds, and branding/marketing strategies).
- A summary of each of the 18 projects being considered by the LPC, including a description of the project, the total project cost, and the DRI funding request.

## ***Questions & Answers***

Urban Strategies opened the floor to questions from the public, which are paraphrased below.

- A member of the public asked a question about how the State ensures that projects that receive funding are implemented. The DRI is a reimbursable grant, so funding is not released until a project is complete.
- A member of the public asked a question about the Legion's project and whether they had undertaken any work to keep their building in a good state of repair. The Legion has undertaken some improvements to their building (e.g., a new front stairway), but as a non-profit organization, they have limited resources. They Legion

has also expanded the scope of their project to have a broader benefit to the general public, including landscape improvements and improvements to the banquet hall.

- A member of the public asked whether there was any consideration for the risk associated with the types of land uses being proposed (e.g., market demand). The project team includes a market consultant who looks the types of businesses that might be successful given Waterloo's demographic context. As Waterloo is not anticipated to grow substantially, he has suggested that businesses that encourage more outside spending (e.g., businesses that have a broader geographical draw or tourism-related) would be more successful. In some cases, project sponsors will provide letters of interest to demonstrate that there is potential demand for the type of commercial space that they are proposing.
- There was general discussion around the opportunity of remote workers or people that commute to larger centers a few days a week. Small-scale office spaces, as Healthy Kids has proposed, is an attractive amenity for people looking for this lifestyle, as they provide a place to hold meetings and give people a place outside the house to work.

## ***Public Input***

Urban Strategies then invited participants to share their thoughts of the revitalization strategies and 18 proposed projects and a set of interactive engagement panels. Regarding the 18 projects, the following questions were posed:

- Do you think this project will have a significant positive impact on downtown Waterloo? (Yes, Somewhat, No)
- Does this project align with Waterloo's revitalization vision and goals? (Yes, Somewhat, No)
- What do you like about this project?
- Do you have any other thoughts or concerns about this project?

Input from this activity is documented at the end of this meeting summary. However, as a similar activity is being hosted via an online survey to get further input, these results are considered preliminary. The results from this Public Workshop will be consolidated with the survey results, and will be reported back at LPC Meeting #5 scheduled for October 9, 2024.

#	Project Name	Question 1			Question 2			Question 3	Question 4
		Does this project have a significant positive impact on Downtown?			Does this project align with Waterloo's revitalization vision and goals?			What do you like about this project?	Do you have any other thoughts or concerns about this project?
		Yes	Somewhat	No	Yes	Somewhat	No		
1	Renovate the American Legion and Enhance the Entrance to the Historic District	60%	40%	0%	80%	20%	0%	Project provides updates for vets in the community	
2	Renovate 39 West Main Street into a Multi-Functional Building	20%	80%	0%	67%	33%	0%		
3	Unlock the Third Floor of 10 West Main Street and Improve its Façade	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Improvements to structure facing Hwy 20 and consistent source of income + local office space	Recommendations to consider rentable community office space for remote professionals to have a formal space for use outside home office
4	Restore Kendig House as a Sort-Term Rental	50%	50%	0%	50%	50%	0%		Due to the presence of a B&B downtown and number of vacation rentals nearby, concerns that the project may not make reasonable return and would be better down the line
5	Renovate the Street of Shops and Achieve Full Building Occupancy	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Concerns related to occupancy and that the façade was also fixed a few years prior. Question raised about whether it will be done right this time
6	Build the Grange Hall Food and Entertainment Hub	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion to have a rotation of small startup restaurants to garner interest with low overhead costs. A question asking "Adjacent buildings?" (Note: These are not included as part of proposal)
7	Rehabilitate 1 East Main Street for Four New Apartments	100%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a		
8	Renovate 30 Virginia Street for Three Apartments	50%	50%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion to remove the addition in the front and make the whole building's façade brick
9	Relocate and Expand the National Memorial Day Museum	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion to open year round, or at least on weekends and that these public spaces has the potential to draw in visitors
10	Redevelop Village Hall for Housing and a New Municipal Building	100%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a		Suggestion to incorporate design from existing downtown buildings for cohesion. The project sponsor mentioned they would pursue without DRI funds.
11	Expand and Enhance the Waterloo Recreational Center	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Potential benefits for youth	
12	Continue the Main Street Public Realm Improvements	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion that the greenery would be more beneficial down Main Street than in the turn lanes
13	Enhance Washington Street as a Gateway to Downtown	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Member of public mentioned frequently biking down the road to get to the Canal and would feel safer in the street	
14	Establish a Multi-Modal Hub and Gathering Place on the Southwest Block	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion for a permanent pavillion for events like farmers market, would bring about appearance of the market and create a stable permanent location
15	Improve the Connection between Oak Island and Main Street	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion to have a canoe/kayak kiosk with potential to partner with Waterloo KOA and/or canal rentals across from speedway 5/20. Another suggestion of ez-dock.com for accessible canoe and kayak launch. Observation that the 2023 Sanbar Park in Webster project looks similar to this.
16	Transform Huff Street into a Pedestrian-Bike Zone along the Canal	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Such public projects have immediate benefits on the Village and that it would improve pedestrian access	
17	Establish a Small Project Grant Fund to Continue Downtown Waterloo's Revitalization	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	Visual appeal	
18	Develop Marketing Materials to Promote Downtown Waterloo as a Place to Visit and Invest	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%		Suggestion for marketing to emphasize the location of Waterloo "between the two finger lakes" and all the restaurants/wineries. Also a new website for the Village with specific info on Waterloo