

# City of Gloversville

## Downtown Revitalization Initiative



**Downtown  
Revitalization  
Initiative**

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a comprehensive approach to boosting local economies by transforming communities into vibrant neighborhoods where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work, and raise a family. In light of the impact COVID-19 has had on communities, it is more important than ever to support the revitalization of downtowns and its businesses, infrastructure, and other critical community assets.

Gloversville was awarded \$10 million in December 2021 as one of the Mohawk Valley recipients of the statewide Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Guided by a Local Planning Committee (LPC), Gloversville is developing a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) for its downtown. The SIP will examine local assets and opportunities and include creative and ambitious strategies to achieve the downtown vision and direct future development and investment. The SIP will include detailed project profiles for the recommended economic development and community projects that will leverage additional investment on top of the State's \$10 million award. The SIP will be developed by the LPC, with public input occurring between February and May 2022. The final selection of projects will be made by the State in late 2022.

Opportunities for public engagement and input will be provided throughout the DRI process, as outlined in this Public Engagement Strategy approved by the LPC. The strategy outlines the specific level, type, format, and purpose of community engagement throughout the planning process that will encourage participation from a broad and diverse population. It identifies key stakeholders and outreach mechanisms.

Milestones that will influence the Public Engagement Strategy include:

- December 2021: State agencies and consultant team begin work with Gloversville.
- January 2022: Local Planning Committee formed.
- February 2022: Draft Downtown Profile, conduct stakeholder outreach, identify potential projects.
- March 2022: Finalize Downtown Vision and Goals and review potential projects.
- April/May 2022: Finalize downtown revitalization strategies and recommended projects list.
- June 2022: Draft DRI Strategic Investment Plan.
- July 2022: Final DRI Strategic Investment Plan.

## II. PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

### DRI Application

During the preparation of the City of Gloversville’s Round 5 DRI application, the City and DRI Application Committee solicited input from the public through:

- a virtual open house (April – May 2020) on needs, opportunities, and vision for the downtown
- a virtual open house (Aug-Sept 2021) on the DRI vision statement and potential transformational projects
- a livestreamed presentation hosted by the Downtown Development Specialist

Over 300 people participated in these outreach events, which were held remotely due to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic and captured a cross-section of the City’s residents. The public was also engaged in recent complementary planning and placemaking efforts including the Downtown Development Strategy, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (ongoing), the Brownfield Opportunity Area study (ongoing), and the Comprehensive Plan that informed the DRI application.

### Kick Off Meeting

A kick-off meeting was held December 22<sup>nd</sup> with municipal leaders and staff, State agencies, and the Elan Consulting Team. The meeting introduced the DRI and reviewed the scope, preliminary schedule, milestones, and deliverables and discussed related issues including the public engagement process. The Elan team provided an overview of DRI program goals and discussed the downtown boundary. Preceding the meeting, a walking tour through the DRI area was held. Conversations focused on potential projects and development opportunities that would advance the vision for downtown.

## III. STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBILITY

### Stakeholders

The DRI planning process will seek to engage key stakeholders including:

- City Residents
- Local Business Owners
- City of Gloversville and County Officials, Boards, and Departments. May include:
  - City of Gloversville, including Historic Preservation Dept., Housing Authority, Public Works, Finance, Division of Buildings, Recreation Commission, and Neighborhood Quality Administrator.
  - City Police and Fire Departments
  - Gloversville Transit System
  - Fulton County, including County Planning Office, Veteran’s Service Agency, Office for the Aging and Youth, Community Services, and Highways and Facilities Department.
- Community, Local, and Regional Organizations. May Include:
  - Gloversville Public Library

- Gloversville Enlarged School District
  - I Can Breathe and I Will Speak
  - Senior Groups (e.g. Gloversville Senior Center, Kingsboro Towers residents, Forest Hill Tower residents, Estee senior apartments residents)
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Glove Cities Arts Alliance
  - Glove Theater
  - The American Legion Post 137
  - FC Veterans Service Agency
  - Nathan Littauer Hospital
  - The Family Counseling Center
  - Lexington Foundation
  - Fulmont Community Action Agency
  - Fulton-Montgomery Farmers Market Association (FMFMA)
  - Fulton Montgomery Community College
  - Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District
  - Environmental Groups
- Economic Development Interests. May include:
    - Downtown Development Specialist Office
    - Gloversville Economic Development Corporation
    - Gloversville Community Development Agency
    - Gloversville Merchants Association
    - Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
    - Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce
    - Fulton County Economic Development and Environment Standing Committee
- State, and Federal Agencies and Organizations. May Include:
    - New York State Department of State (DOS)
    - New York State Empire State Development (ESD)
    - New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
    - New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
    - New York State Department of Labor (DOL)
    - New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
    - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
    - New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)

### Accessibility and DRI Venues/Platforms

Stakeholder outreach will include a focused effort to engage people who may not typically participate in planning programs such as seniors, youth, disadvantaged populations, and people with disabilities. These efforts may include pop-up outreach in cooperation with downtown venues and community organizations as well as distribution of materials through local email lists, websites, and storefronts. Advertisement materials will provide guidance on how to request accommodation (e.g. language interpretation, auxiliary aids) so those with special needs can participate effectively. Event venues will be ADA accessible and online materials will include accessibility features (e.g. compatibility with screen readers and translation

applications) where possible. Outreach approaches will be discussed with relevant local organizations and revised as appropriate during the process

#### IV. ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The following engagement techniques that may be used throughout the DRI process:

- Local Planning Committee Meetings
- Public Open Houses, Surveys, and Presentations
- Interviews and Focus Groups
- Pop-ups / information stations
- Project Website and contact form

Each one is explained further below. As the process unfolds, it may be appropriate to modify the Public Engagement Strategy to best capture public input.

##### Event Formats and COVID-19

A combination of formats will be employed to facilitate broad participation including from community members who maybe be unable to attend events live or in-person. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, events may be held remotely, in part or in full to allow for unrestricted participation. Tools and platforms familiar to the community will be utilized including Facebook (livestream and video), Zoom webinars, YouTube videos, and online surveys. DRI events will adhere to public health and safety guidelines.

##### Local Planning Committee Meetings

A Local Planning Committee (LPC) has been appointed by New York State to ensure that the DRI SIP will reflect the interests and priorities of the community. The LPC includes representatives from key public, private, nonprofit, and institutional stakeholder groups and organizations:

**Co-Chair: Vincent DeSantis**, Mayor of the City of Gloversville

**Co-Chair: Wally Hart**, Executive Director of the Lexington Foundation and member of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (REDC).

**Kevin Chamberlain**, Founder/Owner, Upstate Coffee

**David Halloran**, Superintendent, Gloversville Enlarged School District

**LaShawn Hawkins**, Founder, I Can Breathe and I Will Speak, Inc.

**Mark Kilmer**, President/MVREDC Support, Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce

**Janelle Krause**, President, Glove Cities Arts Alliance

**Jenni Mazur**, Liaison, Gloversville Recreation Commission; City Clerk, City of Gloversville

**Michael Medina**, Owner, Fulton County Barbershop

**Aya Mustafa**, Community Member

**Geoff Peck**, VP Population Health, Nathan Littauer Hospital

**Christine Pesses**, Community Member

**Ronald Peters**, President and CEO, Fulton County Center for Regional Growth

**Greg Truckenmiller**, President, Fulton Montgomery Community College

**Marcia Weiss**, Councilwoman, 1st Ward

**Purpose:**

The Local Planning Committee (LPC) helps oversee the DRI. The LPC will provide input on local issues; review draft and final documents; assist in the public outreach process; and assist in the review and selection of key projects to be recommended for DRI funding in the Strategic Investment Plan.

**Approach:**

LPC meetings are working meetings conducted by the LPC Co-Chairs to provide for discussion among members and presentations on scheduled topics. They will be held approximately monthly from February – May 2022. Throughout the process, subcommittees and group exercises may be scheduled to explore development opportunities in the DRI area. Members will be encouraged to participate in all DRI events.

**Public Participation and Outreach:**

All LPC meetings will be open to public observers and publicly noticed. Opportunities for live public comment (written or verbal) may be provided at the discretion of the Co-Chairs. The public will be able to submit written comments at any time through the project website, which will also provide links to meeting materials and recordings. The public may also submit comments through the public City of Groversville Facebook Page which will post meeting information and videos.

**Format:**

LPC meetings will initially be held via videoconference. Public observers may join as webinar attendees or view the livestream on the City of Groversville Facebook Page. The meeting recordings will be made available on this page following the meeting. Links and participation information will be provided on the project website and on associated outreach materials. Subsequent meetings may be held in-person at a local ADA accessible venue such as the Glove Theater with adequate room for public observers. Where possible, these meetings will also be livestreamed and recorded for remote participants.

## Public Open Houses, Surveys, and Presentations

The DRI planning process will include a series of public events that are intended to inform and educate, to

solicit and receive input, and/or to build support for the Strategic Investment Plan. Three public events are planned:

**Public Open House #1 (February) :**

**Purpose:**

A Public Open House will be held February 10-23 to introduce the public to the DRI planning process and solicit their input on the draft vision, goals, and strategies. The open house will include excerpts from the Downtown Profile and Assessment, a description of the selection process for DRI projects, and an invitation to submit project proposals to the Open Call for Projects.

**Approach:**

The first Public Open House will be held after the first meeting of the LPC. It will coincide with the Open Call for Projects. A summary of feedback received through the open house will be presented at the second LPC meeting.

**Format:**

Public Open House #1 will be held virtually. It will open with a live public webinar that will introduce the topics of the Open House, demonstrate how the public can participate, and respond to general questions. This webinar will be recorded and posted online for later viewing. The virtual open house will use the interactive Survey Monkey platform to present information using a series of “boards” with text and graphics and to collect feedback through survey-style questions and comment boxes. The virtual open house will be designed using an accessible format and will be available for a week to allow the public to participate at their convenience.

**Public Open House #2 (March):**

**Purpose:**

A second Public Open House will be held at the end of March (tbc) to present and solicit feedback on the full list of potential DRI projects as well as the strategies to achieve the DRI goals.

**Approach:**

The second public open house will be held after the LPC has identified the full list of potential DRI projects and is timed to coincide with their review of these projects. A summary of feedback received through the open house will be presented to the LPC to inform their review before they narrow the project list at LPC meeting #3.

**Format:**

TBD: Public Open House #2 may follow a virtual format similar to Public Open House #1 or may adopt a hybrid format if conditions allow. A hybrid format would include an in-person open house with a series of interactive boards where participants could view and comment on the DRI strategies and potential DRI projects. To facilitate broader participation, a virtual survey on the projects and

strategies would be launched in parallel and remain open for at least a week.

### **Public Presentation (May):**

#### **Purpose:**

A final public event will be held in early May (date tbc). The event will present the contents of the draft DRI Strategic Investment Plan including the projects recommended to the state for DRI funding.

#### **Approach:**

Part education, part celebration, this event will be designed to build momentum for implementation among municipal partners, residents, the business community, regional leaders, developers, and funding partners.

#### **Format:**

TBD: Fully virtual or hybrid. A virtual presentation would present the Strategic Investment Plan in a live webinar with opportunities for Q&A that would be recorded and posted online for later viewing. A hybrid format would feature an in-person presentation that would be recorded and/or livestreamed.

## **Focus Groups and Interviews**

#### **Purpose:**

Interviews or focus groups will be held to solicit input from stakeholders on key issues and themes identified for Downtown Gloversville. These might cover topics such as complete streets, equity and inclusivity, economic development, arts and culture, youth and families, seniors, veterans, parks and recreation, environment/sustainability, community services, healthy food, or others.

#### **Approach:**

Interviews and Focus Groups will be held early in the DRI planning process (February) with key stakeholders and groups identified with the City and LPC. These discussions will help to identify critical issues and opportunities to incorporate into the Downtown Profile; DRI Vision, Goals and Strategies; and the design of transformative public and private DRI projects. They may also help to identify priorities for the LPC to consider in their project review and selection process.

#### **Format:**

Formats will be determined on a case-by-case basis with each individual or group. Discussions may be conducted in-person using a round-table or charette format or via phone or videoconference.

## **Pop-ups and information stations**

Alternative methods may be used as needed to collect input from larger or harder-to-reach groups. These

formats would meet people “where they are,” for example, using pop-up information booths, guest presentations at standing meetings, or interactive comment boards.

### Project Website and Contact Form

A project website <https://www.cityofgloversvilledri.com/> will serve as a 24/7 central information hub for the Gloversville DRI. The site will include general information and resources on the DRI planning process, information on past and upcoming events including participation links, event materials and recordings, a form to subscribe to the project mailing list, and a contact form for public comments. The site design will consider accessibility for different users and devices.

## V. OUTREACH

All members of the public, including identified community and interest groups, will be invited to attend public DRI events. Outreach methods will be refined with the LPC and Planning Partners, considering what has worked (and what has not worked) for public projects in the past. In addition to general outreach, targeted methods may be used to reach groups that are traditionally underrepresented at such public events. As a foundation, the approach will include traditional media and online outreach tools. The City and consultant team will distribute media materials, with the support of the LPC.

Outreach techniques will include:

- **Project Mailing List:** A mailing list will be developed from available contact lists, online subscribers, potential project sponsors, and participants sign-in sheets from DRI events. This will form the basis for email distribution of information about the DRI process and events.
- **Event announcements:** Fliers will be developed and posted in the community and/or on relevant online sites including the project website <https://www.cityofgloversvilledri.com/>, City of Gloversville website and Facebook Page, and Downtown Gloversville website and Facebook Page. Fliers and email announcements will also be made available to the LPC, DRI mailing list subscribers, managers of popular social media pages (e.g. My Gloversville, Front Page Gloversville) and other stakeholders to distribute to their networks.
- **Multi-media:** Live videos, interviews, and webinars may be used to promote DRI events and opportunities include the open call for projects and public events. These will be shared on conventional and social media channels.
- **Coordination with Local Media:** The consultant team will provide information to the City of Gloversville in close coordination with State agencies and the LPC prior to public meetings, project-related local events, and the release of Draft and Final Documents for public review. The City will manage media releases. Local media will be invited to attend LPC meetings and public events. Outreach will include local radio, TV, and newspapers (e.g. WENT, Leader Herald, Daily Gazette, WNYT13)

**VI. KEY CONTACTS**

**City of Gloversville:**

**James Hannahs**

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**New York State Department of State (DOS):**

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**Consultant Team (Elan):**

The Consultant Team assigned by the state will facilitate the DRI planning process and provide technical expertise on the Strategic Investment Plan. The primary contacts for the Consultant Team are:

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**VII. SCHEDULE**

A general project schedule is included below. As events are added and dates are finalized, they will be announced online and through the channels describe above.

	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
LPC Meeting #1	█					
Downtown Profile & Assessment	█	█				
DRI Vision and Goals	█	█				
Open Call for Projects	█					
Public Open House #1	█					
Focus Groups & Interviews		█				
Potential Project List		█				
LPC Meeting #2		█				
Strategies to Achieve the DRI Goals	█	█	█			
LPC Potential Project Review		█	█			
Public Open House #2			█			
LPC Meeting #3			█			
Draft Strategic Investment Plan			█	█	█	
LPC #4 and Final Recommended Projects List				█		
Public Presentation and LPC Meeting #5				█	█	

Strategic Investment Plan Comment Period							
Final Strategic Investment Plan							