CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS BRIDGE DISTRICT
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #2
NOVEMBER 14, 2019
AGENDA

• Welcome
• Public Engagement Recap
• Vision, Goals and Strategies
• Key Findings: Downtown Profile
• Overview of Project Review Process
• Next Steps
• LPC Comments and Questions
• Public Comment
• Time will be reserved for public comment at the end of the meeting.

• A public workshop is taking place immediately following this meeting.

Thank you for taking the time to attend this meeting.

We appreciate your thoughts, comments, and feedback, and look forward to your continued participation in Niagara Falls’ DRI planning process.
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RECAP
OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Project proposals are due on Thursday, December 5th, 2019 at 4PM.

The project submission form can be accessed online at WWW.NFDRI.COM and will be available in hard copy at Niagara Falls City Hall.
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Project Team Calls
- Local Planning Committee Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Focus Group Meetings
- Youth Engagement
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Project Webpage
- Storefront Outreach
SAVE THE DATES!

- Tuesday, December 10th, 2019
- Tuesday, January 14th, 2020
- Tuesday, February 11th, 2020
- Tuesday, March 10th, 2020

Additional meetings may be required in to inform preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan.
STOREFRONT ENGAGEMENT

WHEN?    NOVEMBER 18, 2019 | 10 AM – 4 PM
WHERE?    TRAIN STATION (HERE!)

- Public is invited to stop into the train station to share feedback and gather information on the DRI process
- Centralized location for informational materials
VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES
VISION FRAMEWORK

VISION

guiding framework for the DRI Strategic Investment Plan

GOALS

conceptual ideas that the DRI Plan & proposed projects should address

STRATEGIES

specific outcomes the DRI Plan should achieve & metrics for tracking project impacts
WHAT IS THE DRI AREA’S GREATEST ASSET?

- Location/Geography (6 responses)
- Buildings (3 responses)
- People (2 responses)
- Prosperous
- Property
- Bi-national
- Gorge-view
LPC VISIONING EXERCISE

WHAT IS THE DRI AREA’S GREATEST CHALLENGE?

- Blight (2 responses)
- Attitude/Cynicism/Perception
- Economy/Financing
- Buildings
- Disinvestment
- Disconnect/ Engagement
- Crime
- Revitalize
LPC VISIONING EXERCISE

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE THE DRI AREA IN 5 YEARS?

- Vibrant (5 responses)
- Change/Progress
- Robust/Busy/Prosperous
- Diverse
- Enjoyable
- Revitalizing
- Growing
WHAT ONE PROJECT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT?

• Restaurants/Grocery store (3 response)
• Housing (2 responses)
• Streetscape Improvements/Pedestrian Travel
• University Participation
• Creative Class
• Family Activities
• Diverse set of projects
DRAFT VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE DRI AREA WILL BE DRAFTED FOLLOWING THE RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC WORKSHOP AND PRESENTED AT THE NEXT LPC MEETING.
DOWNTOWN PROFILE
DOWNTOWN PROFILE

- Documents land use and socio-economic patterns, transportation systems, and recreational networks
- Highlights Niagara Falls’ DRI area unique characteristics and assets
- Identifies challenges and opportunities
REGIONAL CONTEXT

NIAGARA FALLS IS WELL POSITIONED TO ATTRACT ADDITIONAL RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND VISITORS.
RELATED EFFORTS

RECENT EFFORTS IN NIAGARA FALLS HAVE LAID A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE NIAGARA FALLS DRI

- Main Street Revitalization Study (2001)
- Comprehensive Plan (2009)
- Niagara Gorge Restoration Study (2011)
- Reimagining the Niagara Gorge and North End (2014)
- Proposed Downtown Rezoning (2019)
- Bridge District Urban Design Plan (2019)
RECENT INVESTMENT IN THE CITY IS GENERATING SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM

• International Train Station
• Heritage Center (US Customs House) Renovation
• Robert Moses Parkway Removal
947 people live in the DRI area, representing 1.9% of Niagara Falls’ total population.

Total population of the DRI is projected to decline, but at a slower rate than past trends.
The DRI area has a high number of residents ages 51 and older.

The DRI area is diverse in terms of race.
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

INCOME AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES SUGGEST THAT MORE SUSTAINABLE WAGE JOBS ARE NEEDED IN THE DRI AREA.
SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS IN AND PROXIMATE TO THE DRI AREA PROVIDE CRITICAL PUBLIC SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT.
The majority of residents in the DRI rent their homes. Monthly rental rates in the area are affordable.
APPROXIMATELY 72% OF HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN THE DRI DO NOT HAVE A VEHICLE; THEREFORE, ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND A WALKABLE CORE ARE CRITICAL.
ZONING AND EXISTING LAND USES HELP TO CREATE A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN.

A 5-minute walk (1/4 mile) from Main and Cleveland Intersection

A 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) from Main and Cleveland Intersection
THE DRI AREA IS WELL CONNECTED TO WESTERN NEW YORK, FINGER LAKES REGION AND INTERNATIONALLY THROUGH AN ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.
THE DRI AREA AND SURROUNDING AREA OFFERS CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES, ALL OF WHICH PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DEFINING THE CITY’S UNIQUE IDENTITY.
HEALTHY LIVING

ALMOST THE ENTIRE DRI AREA IS WITHIN A 5-MINUTE WALK (1/4) OF A PARK AND HEALTHY FOOD RETAILER.
THE DRI AREA HAS ACCESS TO SEVERAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE AMENITIES.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

FLOOD RISKS ARE MINIMAL IN THE DRI AREA.
MARKET ANALYSIS

MARKET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES WERE ANALYZED FOR:

• Housing
• Retail and Services
• Office
• Tourism
HOUSING MARKET

TRENDS:
• Decline in households
• Extremely high vacancy
• Dated & subpar quality housing stock
• Affordable options

OPPORTUNITIES:
• Rehabilitate vacant or underutilized buildings/spaces for housing
• Create new amenities/build sense of place to induce demand
• New housing not currently on the market
• Commuters
TRENDS:

• Projected growth in higher earning households and 65+ households

• Aging community

• There is a high prevalence of seniors living alone within the DRI

OPPORTUNITIES:

• Adapt/create housing units that cater to the 65+ population:
  • Maintenance free rental and condominium options
  • Places for socialization
  • Alternative/innovative senior housing concepts
RETAIL MARKET

Retail Gap by Category

- Restaurants/Other Eating Places
- Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages
- Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers
- Used Merchandise Stores
- Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores
- Florists
- Other General Merchandise Stores
- Department Stores
- Book, Periodical & Music Stores
- Sporting Goods & Hobby Stores
- Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores
- Shoe Stores
- Clothing Stores
- Health & Personal Care Stores
- Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores
- Specialty Food Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores
- Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers
- Electronics & Appliance Stores
- Home Furnishings Stores
- Furniture Stores
- Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores

Niagara Falls DRI (blue) and the Downtown Trade Area (red)
RETAIL MARKET

TRENDS:

• 2nd largest industry in Niagara Falls, after Health Care and Social Services.

• Buildings/spaces generally outdated; high vacancy rates; relatively low lease rates

OPPORTUNITIES:

• Fill/create/activate 1st floor commercial/retail spaces

• Bring in visitors & residents

• Fill existing retail gaps:
  • Restaurants/eating places
  • Clothing stores
  • Specialty food stores
  • Building materials and supplies dealers
OFFICE MARKET

TRENDS:

• Low demand for traditional office space

• Demand for medical office space within Niagara County of 54,000 SF, of which the majority (30,000 SF) is focused in Niagara Falls.

OPPORTUNITIES:

• Cater to aging demographic by incorporating health amenities/services into downtown.

• Examine alternative office space concepts (incubator, co-working)
Edge Factor @EdgeFactorShow · Nov 4
@EdgeFactorShow had a ribbon cutting ceremony for their NEW office in @NiagaraFallsNY today! We are proud to support the @NiagaraUniv initiative to revitalize downtown Niagara Falls!
TOURISM MARKET

TRENDS:
• Tourism is key driver of local/regional economy
• Projected to grow 19.7% in NF by 2029
• Tourism spending is not captured in downtown today

OPPORTUNITY:
• Capture tourism spending
• Invest in wayfinding and marketing
• Promote walkability from Falls area to DRI area
TOURISM MARKET

OPPORTUNITIES:

• Authenticity, Local Flavor, Genuine Experience
• Weekend Trips and Short Getaways
• Food Tourism
• “Bleisure” Travel
• Solo-Travel
• Children-led decisions
• Social Media (ex: Instagram)
OPPORTUNITY ZONES

OPPORTUNITY ZONES PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO ATTRACT ADDITIONAL PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO THE DRI AREA.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Aging population and projected population decline
- Low median household income and limited employment
- High concentration of rental households and vacant units
- Older building stock in need of updates
- Compact, walkable and connected downtown
- Major employers and institutions located in/near the DRI area
- Natural/historic/cultural assets
- Available space for retail/housing investments
- Untapped tourism market
OVERVIEW OF PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS
## Project Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment with DRI Goals</strong></td>
<td>Projects are aligned with and advance City and State DRI goals</td>
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<td><strong>Catalytic Potential</strong></td>
<td>Projects are likely to spur additional investment in the DRI area</td>
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<td><strong>Project Readiness</strong></td>
<td>Projects have realistic timelines and are poised for implementation</td>
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<td><strong>Community Benefit</strong></td>
<td>Projects demonstrate benefits to the broader NF community, not only the project sponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness + Feasibility</strong></td>
<td>Projects leverage other funding sources and cost estimates are feasible and realistic</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity</strong></td>
<td>Project sponsors clearly demonstrate capacity to implement and sustain a successful project</td>
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PROJECT PROFILES

- Detailed Description
- Responsible parties
- Renderings, site plan and graphics
- Estimated costs & funding sources
- Consistency with local and regional plans
- Community support
- Anticipated revitalization benefits
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Timeframe for implementation
KEY MILESTONES

NOV – DEC 2019
- Project Development
- Identification of Additional Projects
- Project Review + Preliminary Project List

JAN 2020
- Project Review and Evaluation
- Draft Project Profiles

FEB 2020
- Recommended Project Identification

MAR 2020
- Final Project Profiles
- Final DRI Strategic Investment Plan
NEXT STEPS
NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
• Public Workshop #1 (following this meeting)
• Stakeholder meetings (On-going)
• LPC Meeting #3 (December 10, 2019)

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN
• Open Call for Project Proposals
• Confirm Vision, Goals, and Strategies
• Complete Downtown Profile
• Preliminary Project Development
LPC: QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS
PUBLIC COMMENT
PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL AND FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

• State your name and affiliation (as applicable)
• Please limit comments to 3 minutes

Please Note:

• The project team is available to respond to questions more in-depth at the public workshop!
• Please check the following websites for additional information and clarification
  • www.NFDRI.com
  • https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative

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