

**Village of Farmingdale NY Forward**  
Public Workshop #2 Meeting Summary

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**Village of Farmingdale NY Forward**  
**Public Workshop #2**  
**Farmingdale Public Library (116 Merritts Road)**  
**Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - 6:30-8:30 PM**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Farmingdale Mayor Ralph Ekstrand, Co-Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC), welcomed approximately 15 attendees to the public workshop and provided opening remarks. Mayor Ekstrand then handed the presentation over to Noah Levine, Associate Principal of BFJ Planning, who briefly went over the agenda for the evening. He introduced the NYF Team, which includes representatives from the New York State Department of State, Empire State Development, NYS Homes and Community Renewal, the Governor's Office, and the Consultant Team, led by BFJ Planning with support from subconsultants. The members of the LPC were also introduced.

**NY Forward (NYF) Program Overview**

Suzanne Goldberg, Senior Planner at BFJ Planning, gave an overview of the project timeline, explaining that the process is more than halfway through. She also explained the various components of the process including monthly LPC meetings and ongoing community engagement. At the end of the process, the project will result in a recommended list of projects for implementation and the submission of a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to New York State.

Ms. Goldberg then presented the NY Forward area for the Village of Farmingdale. The area is generally defined by Merritts Road to the west and Oakview Avenue to the east. The southern boundary follows the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) tracks, extending from South Front Street to Melville Road and Sullivan Road, just south of Fulton Street. All NY Forward projects must fall within this defined boundary.

Ms. Goldberg then explained the process for identifying and selecting projects for funding. All proposed projects are being reviewed and evaluated by the LPC using NY Forward program criteria and alignment with community goals.

The Open Call for Projects was the primary tool for soliciting proposals from public, nonprofit, and private project sponsors. All interested sponsors were encouraged to apply during the submission period, which ran from mid-June through July 2025. Flyers were

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distributed both online and in-person (in English and Spanish). The Village conducted direct outreach to local businesses, including those within the Village's Business Improvement District (BID). In addition, the project team held one-on-one meetings with potential applicants and other community members interested in learning more about the application process and the types of projects eligible for NYF funding.

### **Farmingdale NYF Vision & Goals**

Eshti Sookram, Planner at BFJ Planning, then described the process for developing the vision and goals for the Downtown. An overview of community engagement efforts was shared. Outreach events included monthly LPC meetings, a pop-up at the Fire Department Spring Street Fair on Main Street, and the NYF public workshop on June 17. An online Ideas Wall ([www.FarmingdaleNYF.com](http://www.FarmingdaleNYF.com)) was also available for residents to share ideas.

### **Discussion of Potential NYF Projects**

Project proposals will be evaluated based on alignment with State and local goals, catalytic potential, readiness, eligibility, cost-effectiveness, and potential co-benefits. A total of 11 projects were submitted through the Open Call for Projects, five public and six private. These projects were refined to account for the eligibility of funding requests, public benefits, and feedback from both the LPC and the community.

The five Village-sponsored projects represent a funding request of approximately \$5.7 million, while the five private projects account for about \$513,000 in requested funds. Together, the funding request totals \$6.2 million. The State asks the LPC to recommend between \$6 and \$8 million in funding requests.

The project team then reviewed the submissions received from the Open Call for Projects. Below is a list of the proposed projects. More details can be found in the presentation slides, including project descriptions.

#### ***Public Projects***

- Performing Arts Center
- Historic Thomas Powell House Repairs & Renovations
- Streetscape, Signage, and Village Green
- Fulton Street Traffic Calming
- Small Project Fund

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### **Private Projects**

- Lithology Brewing
- L.I. McGrath's
- The Barnyard
- Croxley's
- Zuzu on Main

### **Open House**

Following the presentation of projects, the project team opened the floor for questions and comments from the public. Around the room, display boards provided additional project details, where attendees could leave written comments and speak one-on-one with members of the project team.



*Workshop attendees reviewing boards with potential projects.*

The following is an overview of the audience discussion and feedback gathered:

### General

- There was a concern that the private projects were mainly bars, and there was a preference that NYF should not fund these businesses. The project team explained that dining and drinking establishments were the only private projects submitted, despite multiple outreach efforts to all downtown businesses.
- Clarification was requested on who ensures projects are implemented properly. It was explained that once the State selects projects for funding, each sponsor will enter into a direct contract with a State agency such as the Department of State or Empire State Development.

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#### Performing Arts Center

- Concerns were raised about the proposed size of the theater, with some suggesting a 400-seat venue would be more profitable. Other attendees felt the proposed size was appropriate for the Village, given the success of other theaters and the types of programming that would occur. Village representatives explained that studies of similar Long Island theaters show smaller venues are typically more sustainable and financially viable.
- Parking loss from the proposed theater was also discussed, with suggestions that the Village secure additional spaces. The Village clarified that it would not purchase new properties until they determine if the project is being awarded.
- The performing arts center was generally seen as a great asset for the community.

#### Thomas Powell House

- Renovations and repairs at the Thomas Powell House were viewed as important for preserving Farmingdale's local history.

#### Streetscape, Signage, and Village Green

- It was noted that Main Street feels very unsafe for pedestrians. Suggestions included directing pedestrians toward the safest crossing areas and adding traffic humps to slow both cars and pedestrians.
- Concerns were raised about safety near the railroad at Main Street and South Front Street, particularly for people with limited visibility.
- There was a request for additional lighting between the LIRR parking area and Main Street, especially near the potential Performing Arts Center site.
- Attendees asked if new landscaping projects would cause Village taxes to rise. It was explained that these improvements are relatively minor.
- A suggestion was made to include alleyway improvements between iSmash Farmingdale and the Physical Therapy office, connecting one of the rear parking lots to Main Street.
- There was a request for accessible walkways on Main Street.

#### Fulton Street Traffic Calming

- The Fulton Street Traffic Calming project was viewed positively. Attendees also highlighted other unsafe intersections in the Village that should be addressed.

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#### The Barnyard

- It was noted that the Barnyard is at a key intersection in the Downtown, and improvements there would be well received.

#### Zuzu

- There was concern about using grant funds for improvements that new businesses, such as Zuzu, could have accounted for during construction.