



# **Local Waterfront Revitalization Program**

## **Town of Germantown**

### **Task 1**

#### **Project Initiation Meeting Summary**

**February 2021**

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**Department  
of State**



The Town of Germantown is in the process of developing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) that will express the Town's vision for its waterfront. The LWRP will promote public access and recreational opportunities, identify sustainable approaches to mitigate climate change impacts, stimulate economic development, and plan connections to the Hudson Valley Greenway Water Trail and Empire State Trail. The Town's efforts are being supported with funding provided by the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) and follow the NYSDOS' approach and work plan.

Task 1 of that work plan is the Project Initiation Meeting. The goal of the Project Initiation Meeting is to review and agree upon the project scope and schedule, project requirements, roles and responsibilities, the selection process for procuring consultants, involvement by the municipal attorney, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) compliance requirements, MWBE requirements, ADA requirements, the number of public meetings and techniques for public involvement proposed for the project, and any other information which would assist in project completion, as defined in the work plan. In addition, the composition of a project advisory committee shall be discussed during the project initiation meeting. The Contractor, or a designated project partner, shall prepare and distribute to all project partners a brief meeting summary clearly indicating the agreements reached at the meeting.

The meeting was held on **January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021** via zoom with Lisa Vasilakos, the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) project manager for the NYSDOS, members of the Town's LWRP committee (project advisory committee), Jan Borchert, Jo Hills (as note taker) and Barbara Hughey, as well as, the committee chair, Jen Crawford, in attendance.

Due to a delay caused by COVID-19, the Town's LWRP Committee has been meeting since February 2019 while the official grant execution was not until January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Committee used the time to start preparing deliverables for other tasks of the work plan. During the Project Initiation Meeting, the draft project advisory committee list (Task 2), including roles and responsibilities, and the draft Request for Proposal document (Task 3), including selection process for procuring consultants were discussed.

The meeting began with a broad overview of project scope and schedule, project requirements, reporting requirements, the involvement by the municipal attorney and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) compliance requirements. In response to that the attending Committee members asked the following, more specific questions.

**How do communities do outreach currently (during the pandemic)?** Mostly, communities are using online meeting software, recording the meetings, and then making them public as well as publishing meeting summaries on their website. Some communities even use breakout sessions to allow discussion of specific topics in smaller groups. One particular community was utilizing minimally advertised outdoor pop-up events to only attract small groups. Tools like online surveys and attractive visuals can also improve engagement. Further, public meetings at outdoor locations during spring or summer time might be an option.



**What are best practices to ensure inclusion of minorities and underrepresented groups?** The recommendation is to invite a member of that specific community to help set up a meeting for that specific community and to help pass information on to their community; that includes church groups, seniors, youth groups and others. Translating materials for the public like flyers into other languages can also be a tool to improve engagement from certain minorities; the DOS can potentially help with this via the Office of New Americans.

**How do we ensure ADA compliance?** To include community members with impaired hearing, video transcription can be an option, creating closed captions for meeting recordings. The DOS can most likely help with this.

**When is the Committee's first Status Report due?** Status reports are expected bi-annually, the first being due early July.

**Is it common for towns to have a Local Waterfront Revitalization Study as detailed as Germantown does? How do towns include that existing knowledge into the LWRP inventory (Task 9)?** There is a lot that can be used from a detailed study like Germantown's. Some of it will need to be updated and repackaged, like population data (new census), land use and local laws. Also check Brownfield Opportunity Area Plans: <https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/brownFieldOpp/index.html>

**At what point in the LWRP planning process would a Federal Coastal Consistency application for development projects located within Germantown be required to consult with the Town of Germantown? Is there a mechanism for the Town to be notified and included in the review of development projects before the LWRP is finalized?** The ODP Project Manager was unsure, and would have to ask within her department. We all acknowledged that a driving motivation behind the Town's pursuit of an LWRP is to promote public access to the Hudson River. The Committee expressed interest in being involved in the review of any development project along the Hudson River shoreline to the maximum extent permissible.

The following agreements were reached during the Project Initiation Meeting:

OPD Project Manager will

- look into and share what other communities have done to engage minorities and underrepresented groups;
- Follow up on mandatory ADA requirements, as well as possible Transcription services / closed captioning that could be used for public meeting recordings;
- Follow up on ways, if any, for the Town of Germantown to be included in federal coastal consistency reviews during the LWRP planning process.

The Committee Chair will

- notify OPD Project Manager of the Committee's monthly Zoom meetings;
- follow up with Project Initiation Meeting Summary (Task 1);



- provide status report end of June;
- follow up on WMBE for RFP;