

NY Forward - Capital Region Athens

Local Planning Committee (LPC)
Meeting #2
July 14, 2025



NY Forward

Welcome!

LPC Meetings are working sessions of the LPC

- These meetings are open to the public, but are not intended as interactive public workshops.
- The public is welcome to observe committee meetings and submit comments to AthensNYF@gmail.com
- During the final 15 minutes of the meeting, the public is also invited to ask questions and provide comments.

How to get involved:

- We want to hear from you! There will be many other ways for community members to get involved.
- Visit the Athens NYF website to send comments: www.AthensNYF.com
- There will be one more public workshop and additional opportunities to provide feedback. More details will be posted to the website.

Agenda

- Opening Remarks
- Code of Conduct
- Updates: Planning Process & Engagement Activities
- Downtown Profile & Assessment
- Public Workshop #1 Overview
- Vision and Goals
- Public Comment
- Closing Remarks



Public Workshop #1



Opening Remarks

Mayor Amy Serrago



Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct - Preamble

Each Local Planning Committee Member is reminded of their obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest with respect to projects that may be discussed at today's meeting. If you have a potential conflict of interest regarding a project you believe will be discussed during the meeting, please disclose it now and recuse yourself from any discussion or vote on that project.

For example, you may state that you, or a family member, have a financial interest in the project, or you are on the board of the organization proposing the project.

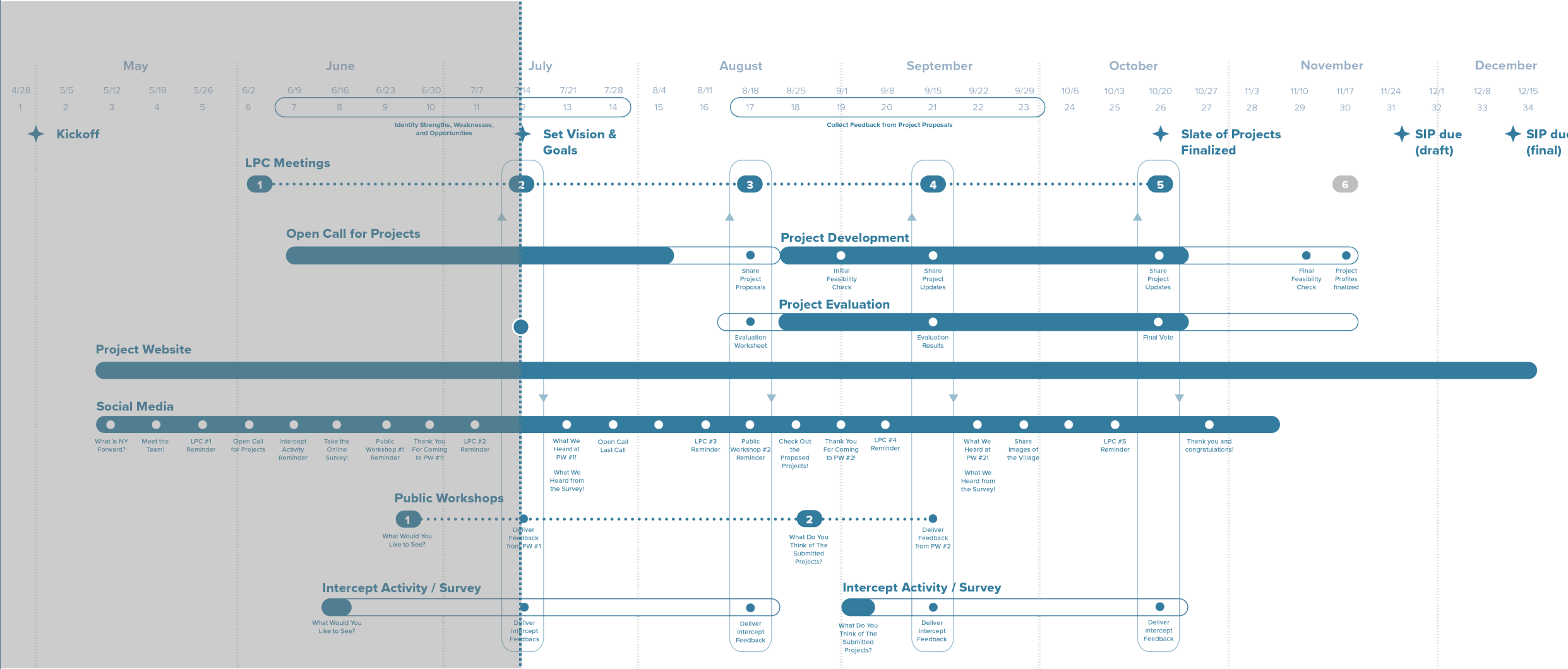
*We do not currently have any conflicts of interest on file. **Do any LPC members need to make a disclosure to the Committee at this time?***

Please inform the LPC co-chairs during the meeting if the need to disclose a conflict arises unexpectedly, and then recuse yourself from discussion or voting on the project.



Updates: Planning Process & Engagement Activities

We Are Here!

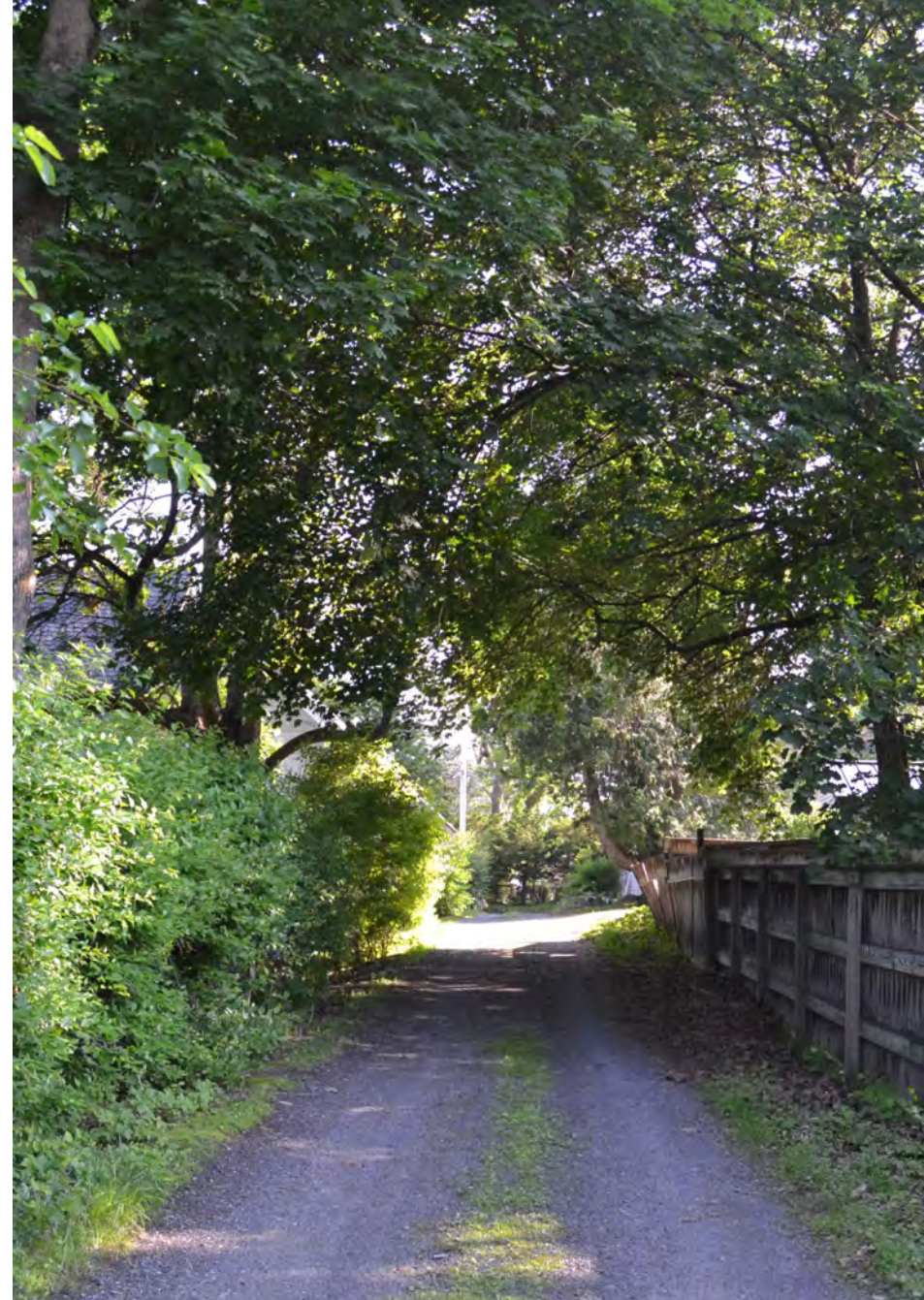


What's been done so far?

- ✓ May 19 AthensNYF.com went live
- ✓ **June 4** **LPC Meeting #1**
- ✓ Jun 9 Open Call for Projects released
- ✓ Jun 18 Postcards delivered
- ✓ **Jun 26** **Public Workshop #1**
- ✓ Jun 30 – Jul 10 Office Hours / Technical Assistance sessions
14 sponsors joined to discuss their projects!
- ✓ **Jul 14** **LPC Meeting #2 – IN PROGRESS**

What's on the horizon?

- ❑ Aug 4 Open Call for Projects Closes
- ❑ Aug 18 LPC Meeting #3
- ❑ **Aug 28** **Public Workshop #2**
- ❑ Sep 15 LPC Meeting #4
- ❑ Oct 20 LPC Meeting #5
- ❑ Nov 17 LPC Meeting #6 (if needed)



An aerial photograph of a town, likely in New York State, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The town is situated along a body of water, with a prominent dock and pier extending into the water. The background is dominated by a dense forest of green trees. The title "Downtown Profile & Assessment" is overlaid in large, bold, black text.

Downtown Profile & Assessment

Downtown Profile and Assessment

- Will provide a **clear, concise, and compelling** narrative that articulates the story of the region and the downtown area.
- Will allow the reader to **understand why this downtown will benefit from the NYF program** and provide a **logical basis for the projects** recommended for NYF funding.
- Will give the reader a sense of the downtown – its **unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges**.
- Is not intended to provide a comprehensive technical description of the downtown, but rather a **summary of the demographics, market conditions, and other characteristics** to ensure that the project proposals included in the SIP are realistic and appropriate.
- Will provide some analysis and **highlight any relevant key factors or trends**.

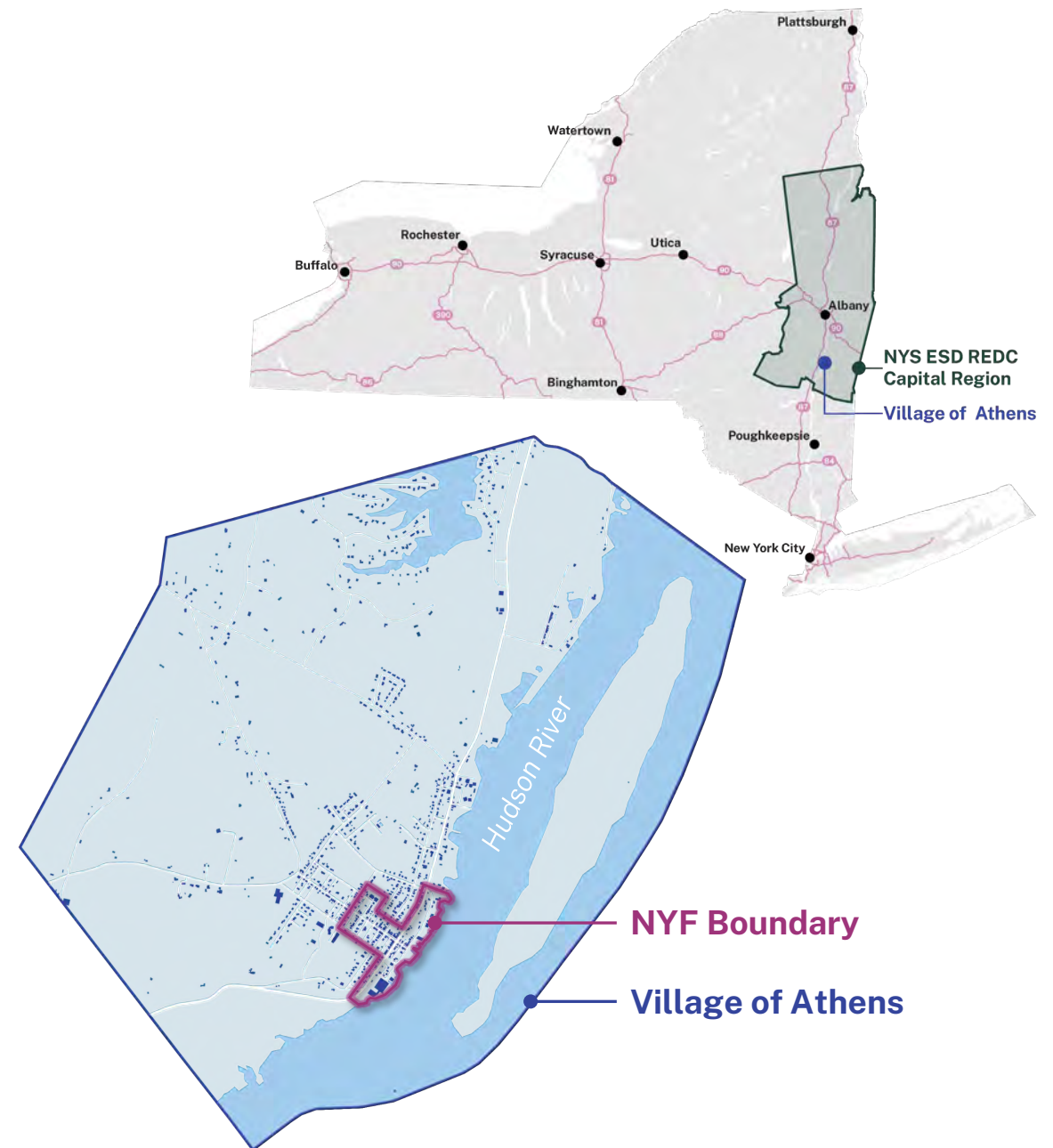
Downtown Profile and Assessment

1. Overview
2. History and Trajectory
3. Recent Plans
4. Recent Investments
5. Alignment with REDC
6. Physical Planning Context
7. Socioeconomic Conditions
8. Employment and Commuting
9. Real Estate Market
10. Key observations



1. Overview

- Historic village on the west bank of the Hudson River, across from Hudson, NY
- Home to a historic districts and over 300 buildings on the National and State Historic registers of various styles of American architecture
- The Village covers 3.4 square miles of land, with a population of ~1,877 (2023)



2. History & Trajectory

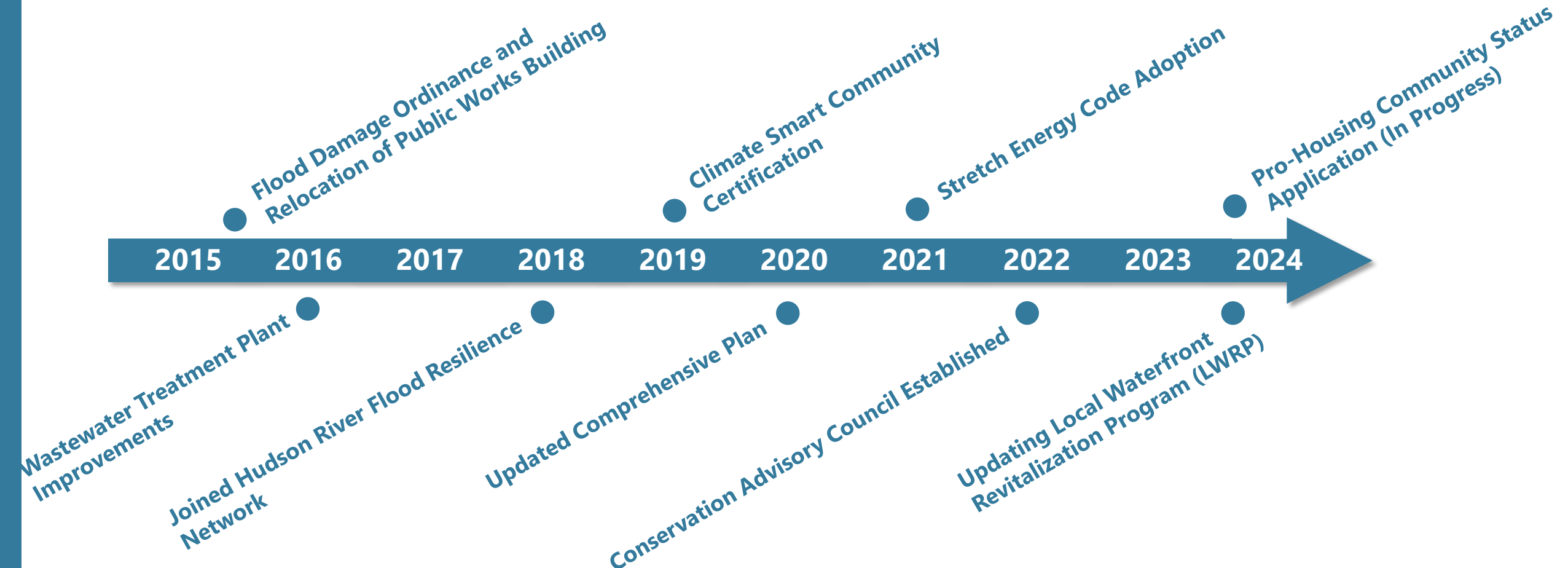
- 1500s** Land was occupied by the Mohican Native Tribe.
-
- Mid 1600s** Land “purchased” from the Mohican people in 1665. Area then named “Loonenburgh,” a Dutch settlement.
-
- Late 1700s** 1790s planned community, “Esperanza” envisioned by French speculators – was not realized. Black Horse Inn constructed in 1791.
-
- 1815** Cotton and textile manufacturing, based on raw materials from the South continued to be a profitable industry through the 19th century.
-
- Mid 1800s** Hudson-Athens Ferry and port offered thriving hub for ship building, brick making and ice harvesting.
-
- Late 1800s** Major roads built to connect Athens to the interior of New York.
-
- 1900s** Brick Row Historic District recognized for its 27 Greek Revival rowhouses.
-
- 2000s** Athens celebrated bicentennial as an incorporated village.



Plan of Esperanza, 1795

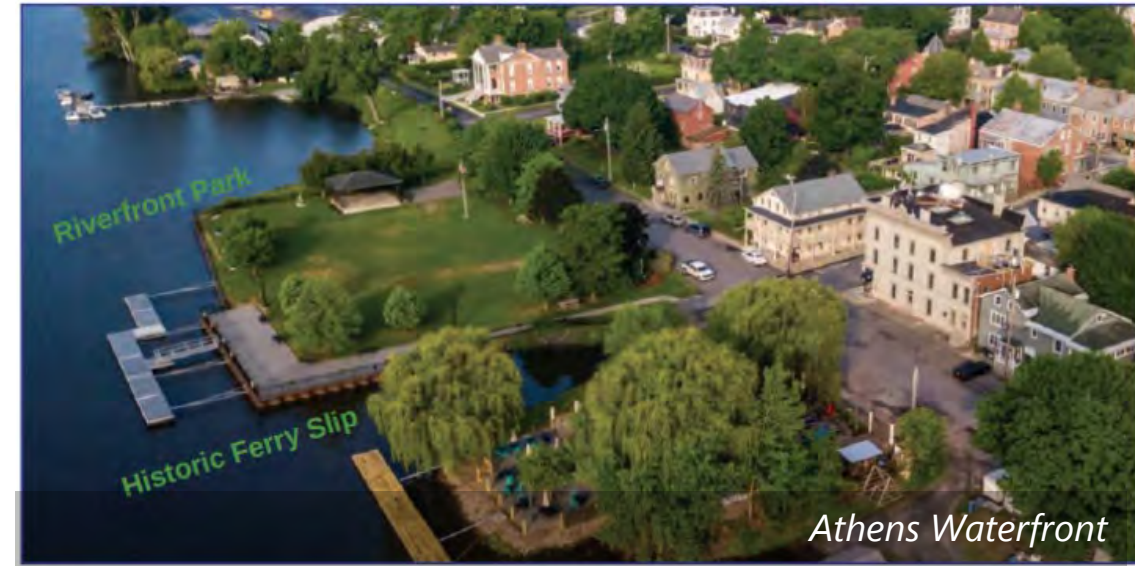


3. Recent Plans and Policies



4. Past and Proposed Investments

- Over \$34.6M in Public and Private Investment
 - Awarded \$1.55M for sewer upgrades and \$800K for water treatment upgrades
 - Built new public works department (2021)
 - Branding and signage
 - Friends of Athens' new app for tours
 - Stewart House Hotel \$1M investment (2017)
 - \$5M Elco Boat Factory rehab
 - \$5M Brice Marden memorial garden



5. Alignment with REDC

As a NYF community, Athens will be designated a “rural catalyst” by the CREDC.

Focus areas for the Capital Region are projects within 10 miles of rural catalysts that promote:

People – workforce development

Place – placemaking

Innovate – entrepreneurship

Grow – targeted tech industries



6. Physical Planning Context

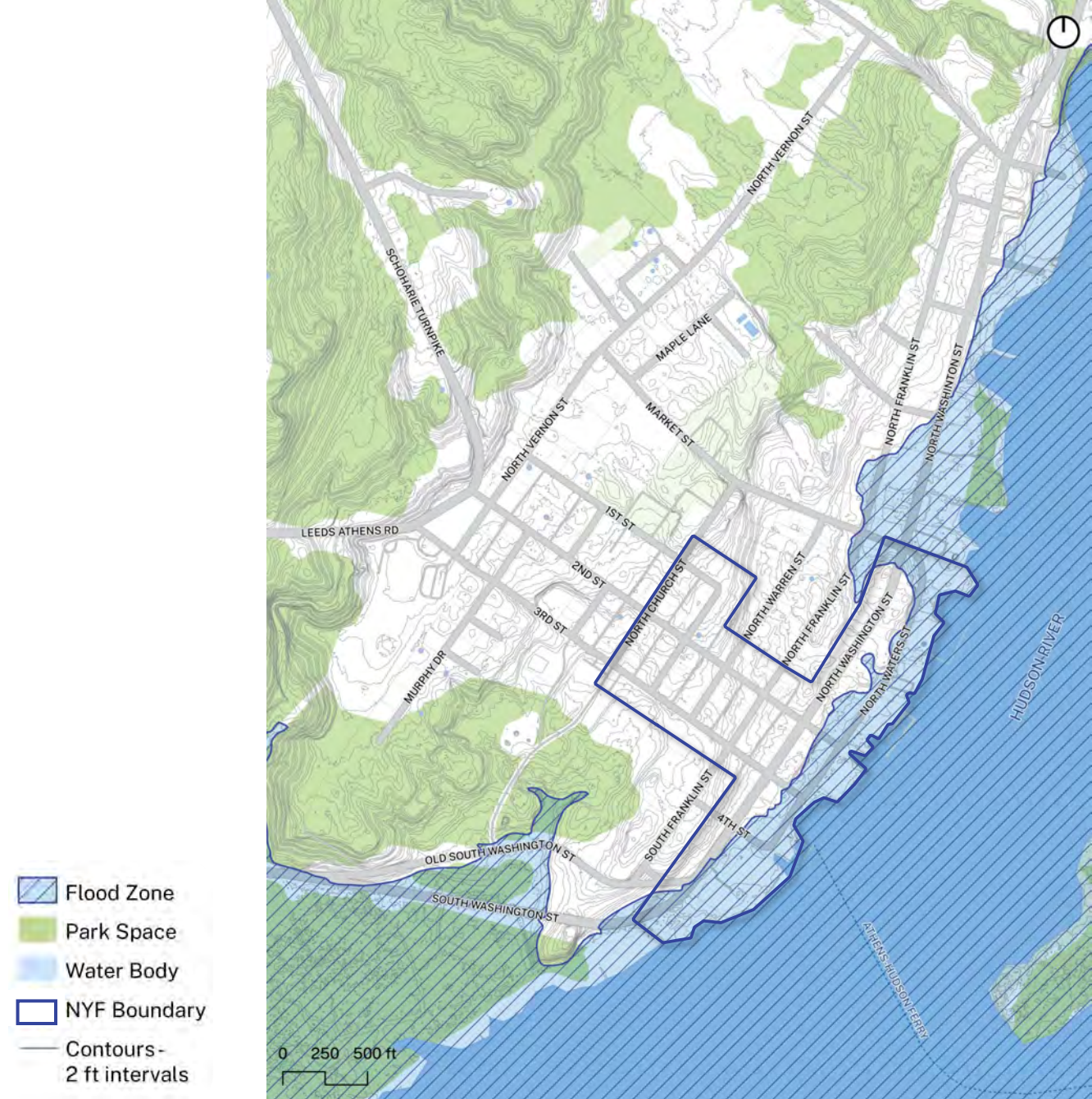
- Geography & Ecology
- Architecture & Urban Form
- Streets, Circulation & Parking
- Parks & Open Space
- Land Use & Zoning



Village of Athens

Physical Planning Context: Geography & Ecology

- Athens is set on a small plateau between the foothills of the Catskill range and the Hudson River
- The Hudson River is still tidal in this area, so the waterfront is impacted by both riverine flooding and sea level rise
- There are significant wetlands in and along the river in this area (Middle Ground Flats, Vosburgh)
- The upland areas are a mix of deciduous forest and farmland



Physical Planning Context: Architecture & Urban Form

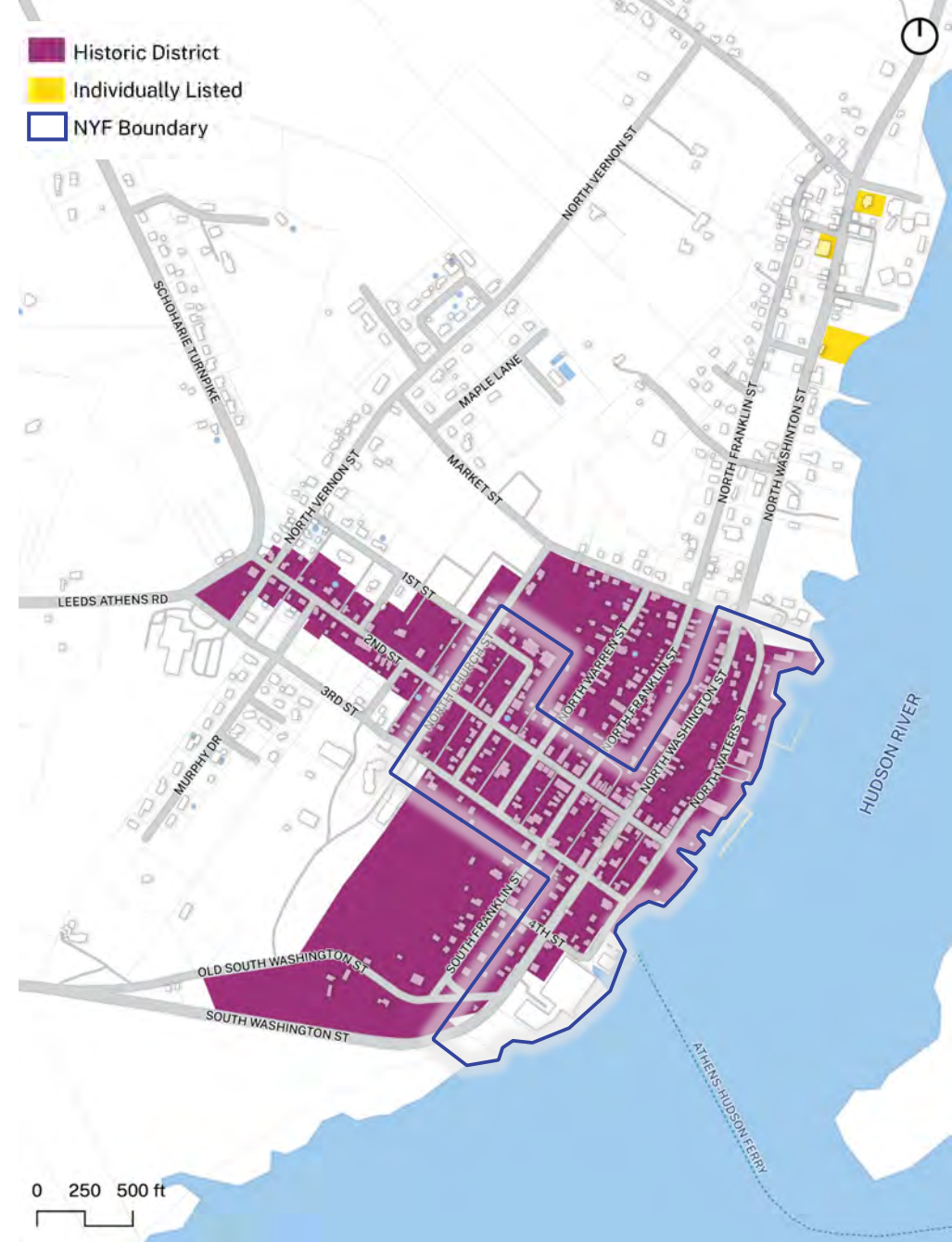
- National historic districts with over 300 buildings on the National and State Historic registers, in addition to individually-listed properties
- Victorian, Greek Revival, and Federal homes from the 17th – 19th Century
- Compact, walkable, mixed-use core



Athens Antiques



Athens Cultural Center



Physical Planning Context: Streets, Circulation & Parking

- State Route 385 runs thru Village, connecting along the Hudson River to Catskill and Coxsackie
- Schoharie Turnpike and Leeds Athens Rd connect west to US-9W
- Walkable and narrow local streets in traditional grid layout, reflecting 18th and 19th Century influence
- 2nd St is the primary commercial corridor



Athens Second Street



Physical Planning Context: Parks & Open Space

Athens Riverfront Park

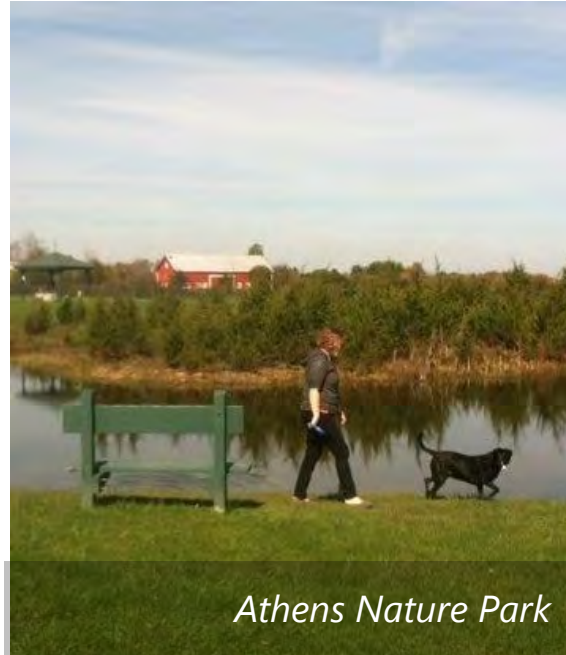
- Offers picnic spots, walking paths, a concert bandstand, and riverfront views.



Athens Riverfront Park

Athens Nature Park and Bunker Hill Dog Park

- 9 acres of nature park and pet-friendly recreation area.



Athens Nature Park

Little League/Village Green

- Features youth baseball/softball fields, playground, and basketball courts



Source: Local Guide

Athens Cemetery

- Historic cemetery located on Market St near the First Reformed Church-Athens



Source: Upstater.com

Physical Planning Context: Land Use & Zoning

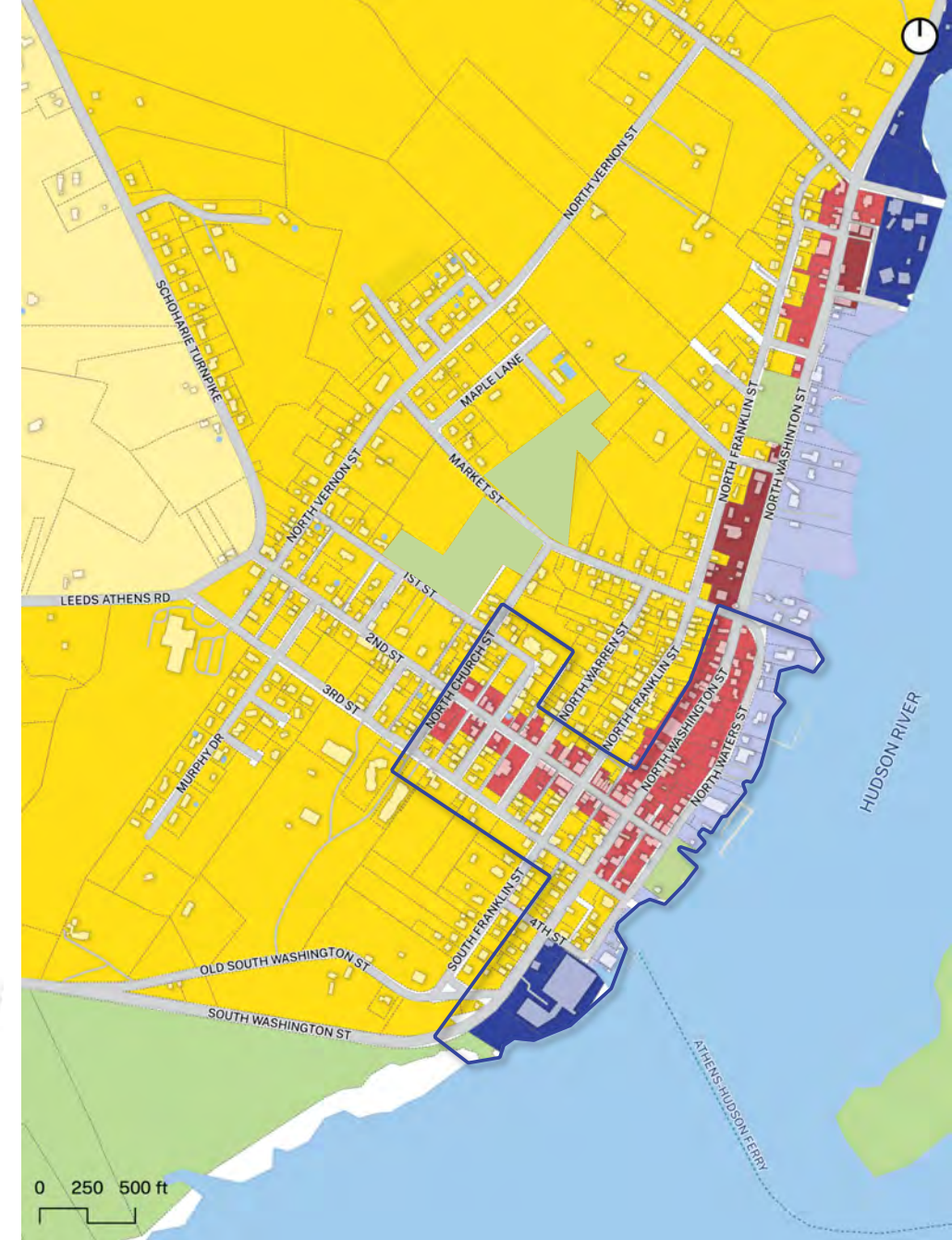
Land use and zoning are governed by **Village of Athens Planning Board** and **Zoning Board of Appeals**

Planning Board

- Reviews and approves/disapproves all proposals affecting land use

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Interprets the Code
- Reviews applications for special use permits and area and use variances



Physical Planning Context: Land Use & Zoning



Residential (Medium Density)

- Allows for single family homes on large lots, promotes open space and low population density



Residential (Low Density)

- Single and two-family homes, moderate growth and housing diversity



Commercial

- Permits retail, office, service and promotes job creation



Commercial Residential

- Mixed-use zone for residential and small-scale commercial uses



Waterfront

- Preserves riverfront access for recreational, residential and commercial use



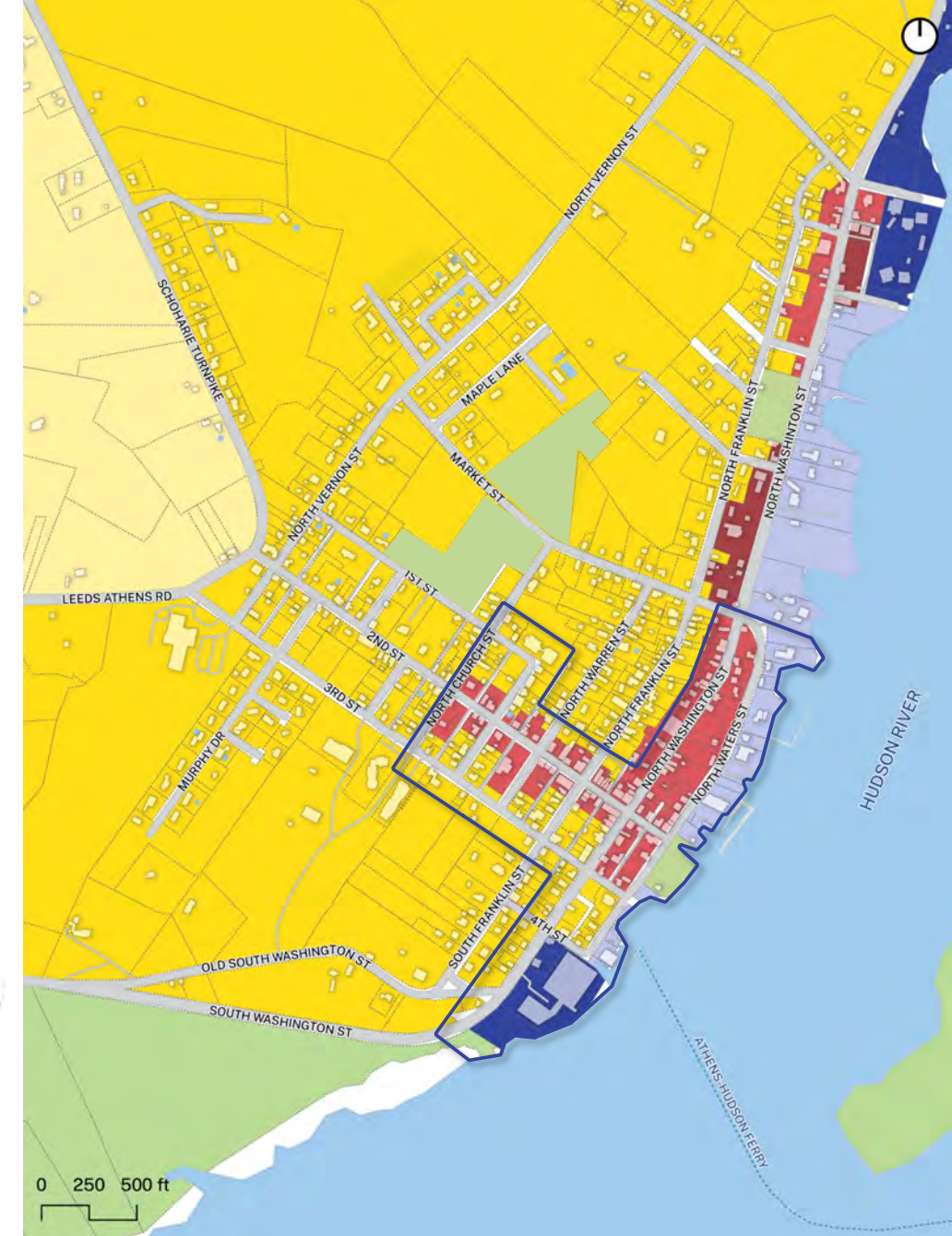
Mixed Use Waterfront

- Blend of housing, business and recreation along waterfront



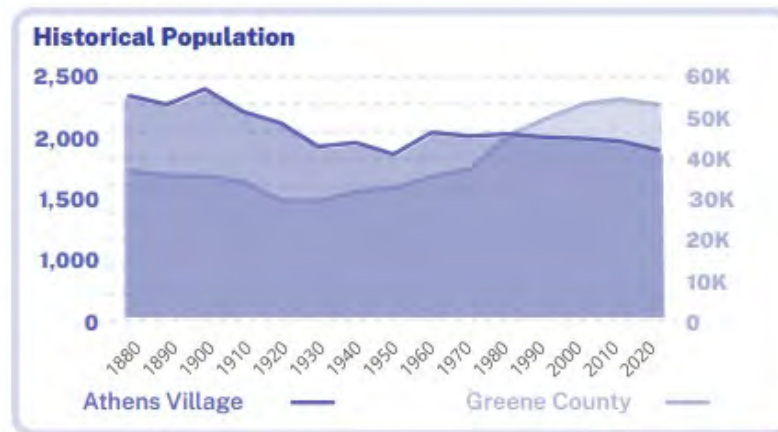
Open Space

- Protects natural areas and scenic views, limits development



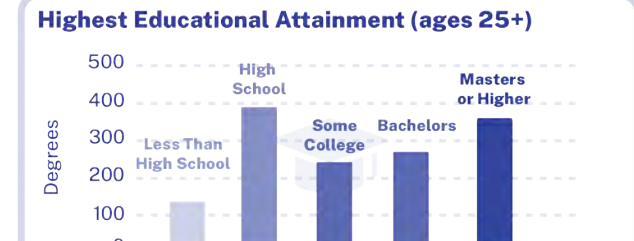
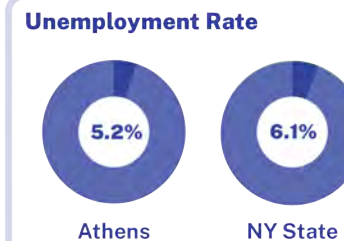
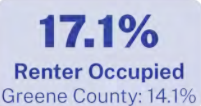
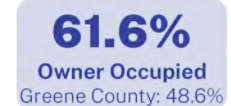
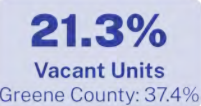
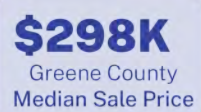
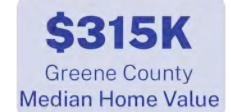
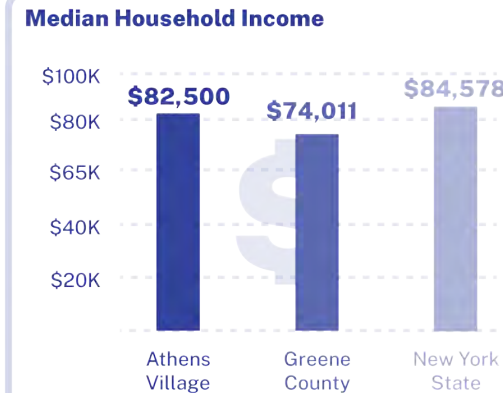
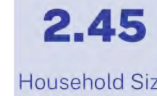
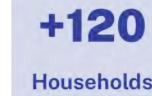
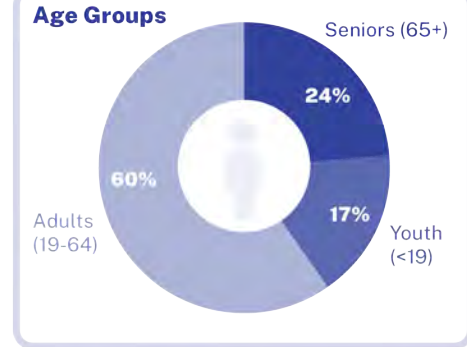
7. Socio-Economic Conditions

- Population in the Village has increased over the last decade, after being basically flat since the 1960's.
- The median age in the Village is significantly higher than NYS.
- Greene County experienced significant growth since 1920 which appears to have levelled off.
- Athens Village has a higher median household (~\$83K) income compared to Greene County (\$74K)



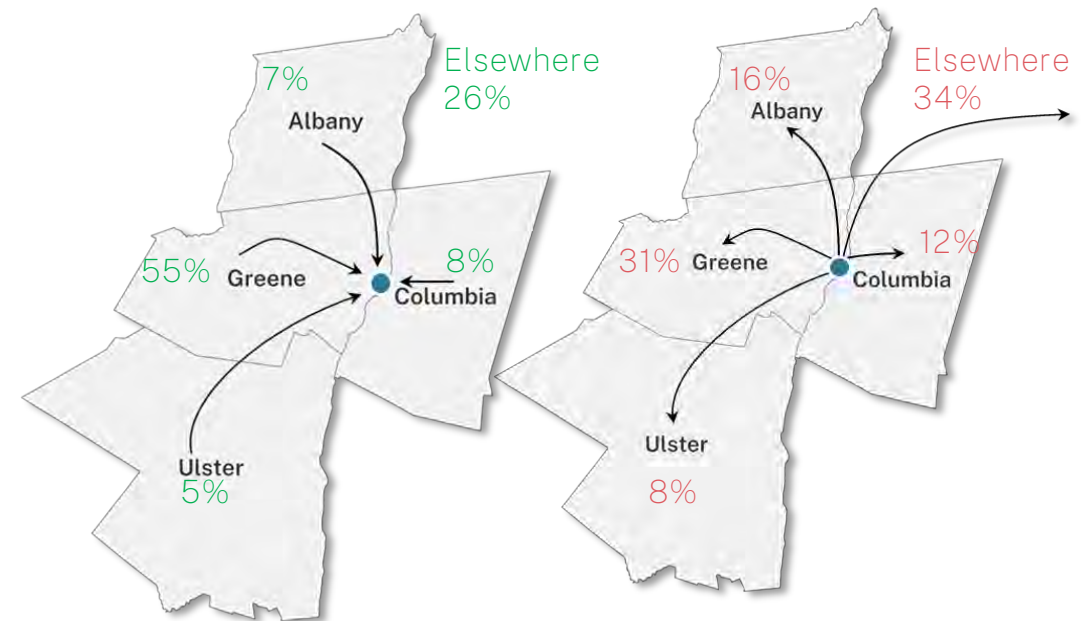
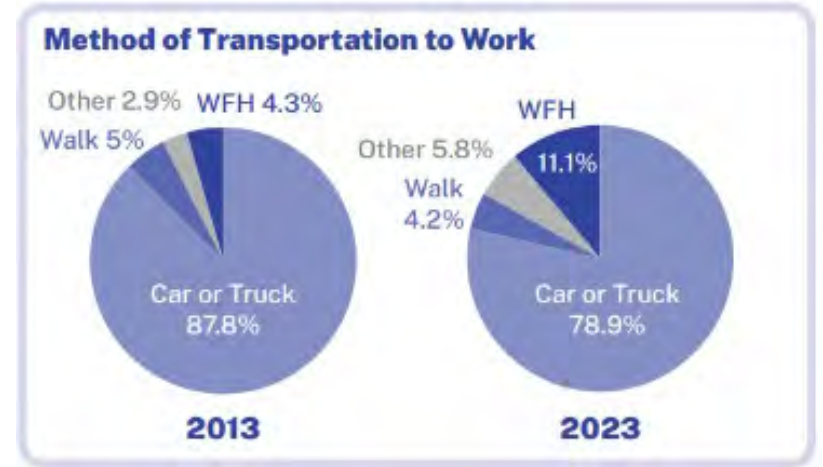
Athens Demographic Snapshot

Data Source: Census American Community Survey (2013-2023)



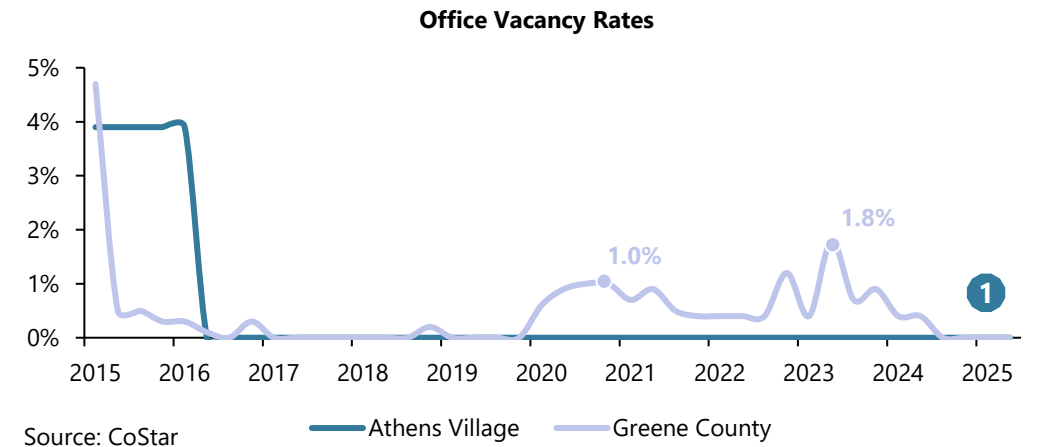
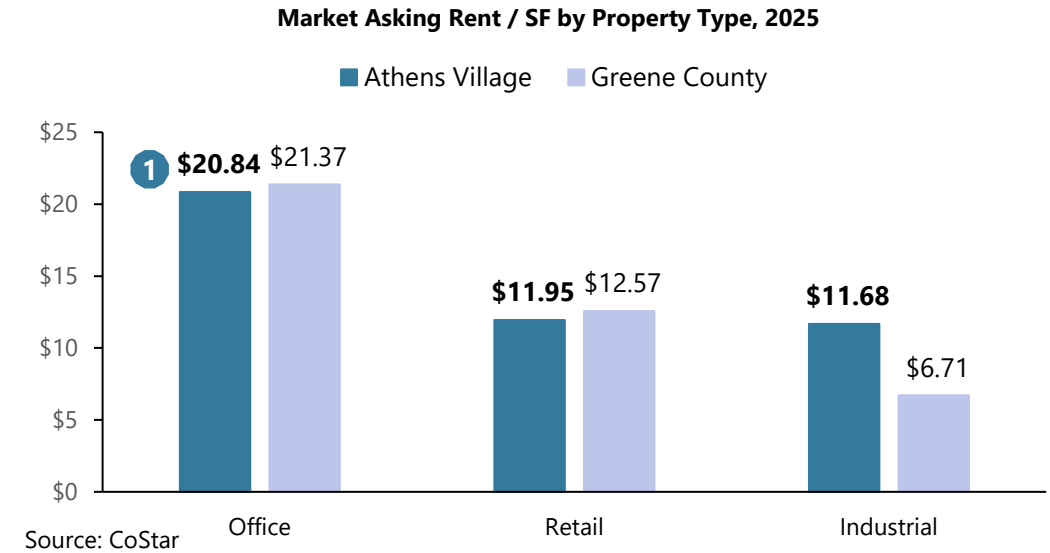
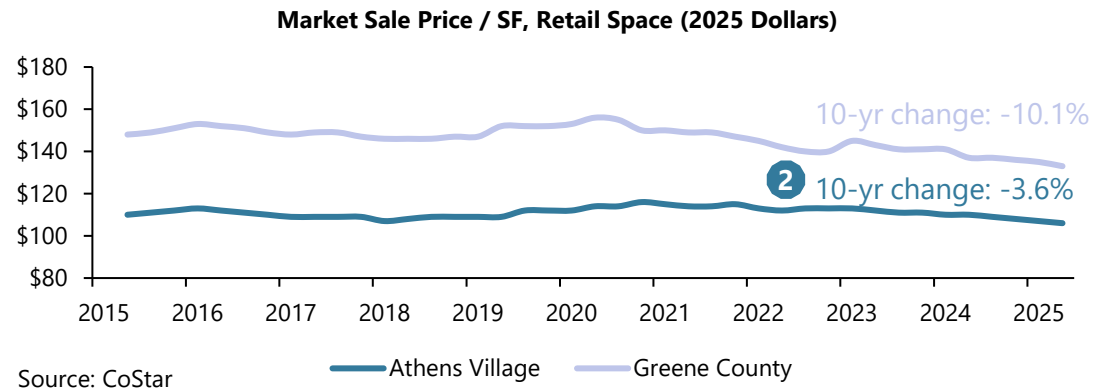
8. Employment & Commuting

- **Work-from-home** increased from 4.3% in 2013 to 11.1% in 2023.
- Majority of people drive a **car** or truck, however, this percentage decreased by almost 10% over the last decade.
- Small cohort consistently **walks** to work.
- More than half of Athens workers commute into Athens from Greene County.
- About 30% of Athens residents commute outside of Athens to elsewhere in Greene County, and 16% commute to Albany.



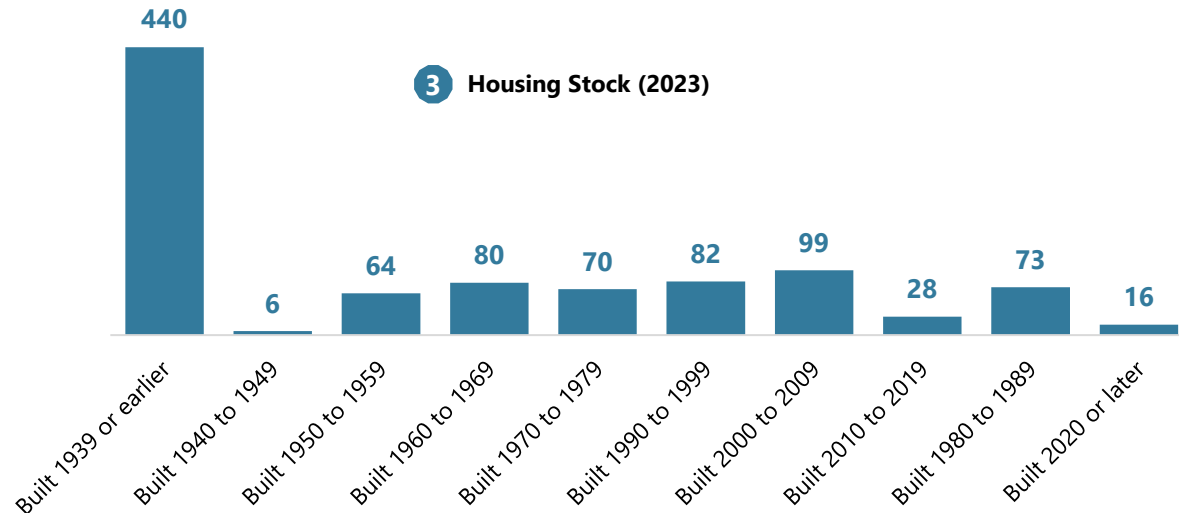
9. Real Estate Market

- 1 Office appears to be the strongest segment, given low vacancy and higher rent/sf compared to retail and industrial.
- 2 Price of retail space continues to trend slightly downward in both Athens and Greene County.



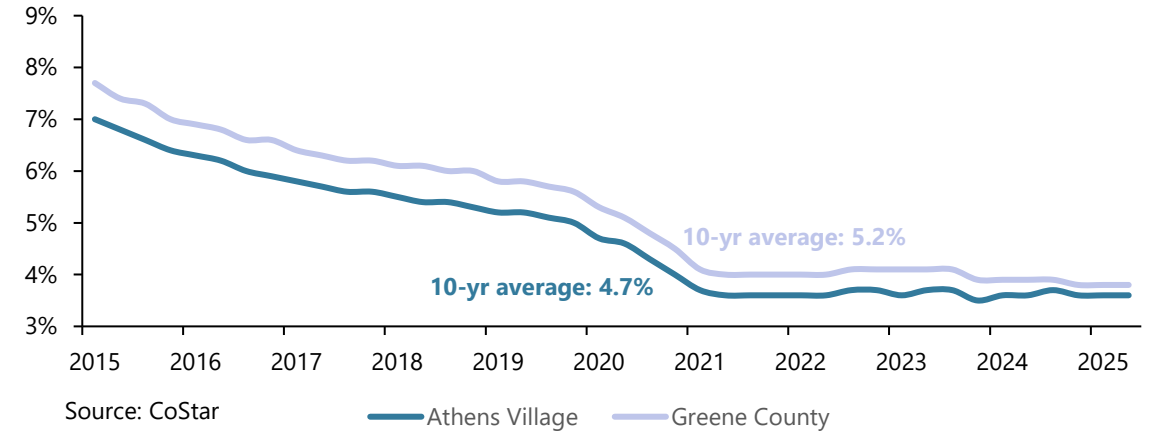
9. Real Estate Market

- 1 Multifamily vacancy rate outpaced Greene county – signaling Athens may be more constrained in terms of available units.
- 2 Despite low vacancy, Athens rent per sf declined steadily.
- 3 A striking 446 units (nearly 47%) were built before 1950, indicating an aging housing stock.

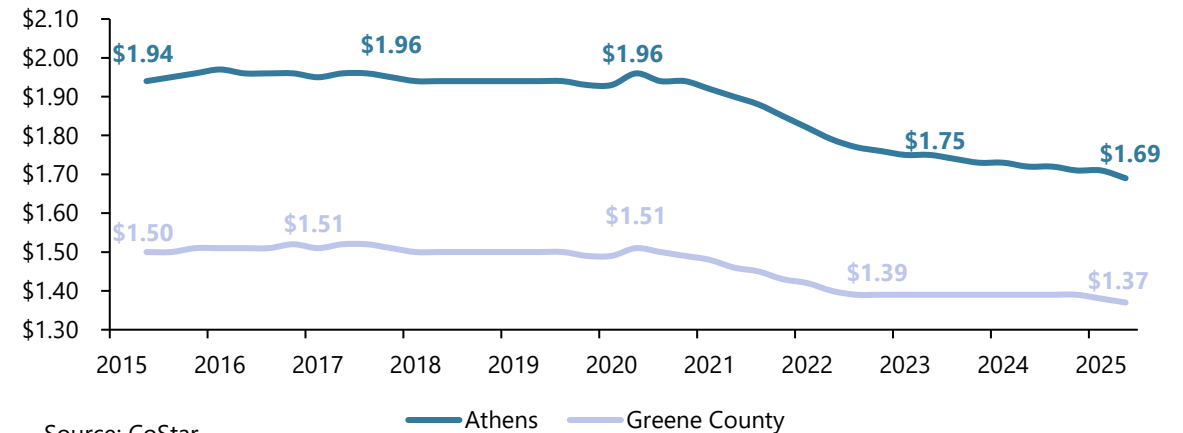


Source: ACS DP04 5-Year estimate

1 Multifamily Vacancy Rates



2 Multifamily Rent Per SF (2025 Dollars)



10. Key Observations

Opportunities

1. **34.6M invested** over five years in public infrastructure, private business, and nonprofit projects
2. **New local businesses**, including Athens Rooster, Seconds Restaurant, Lighthouse Liquors
3. **Adaptive reuse** of the historic buildings
4. **Historic charm** and Hudson River views attract new residents, second-home buyers, and visitors
5. **Affordable housing market** compared to larger cities
6. **Creative influx** fuelling cultural vibrancy and housing demand
7. **Community-driven** planning and strong civic engagement
8. **Mixed-use revitalization** supporting remote workers and young families

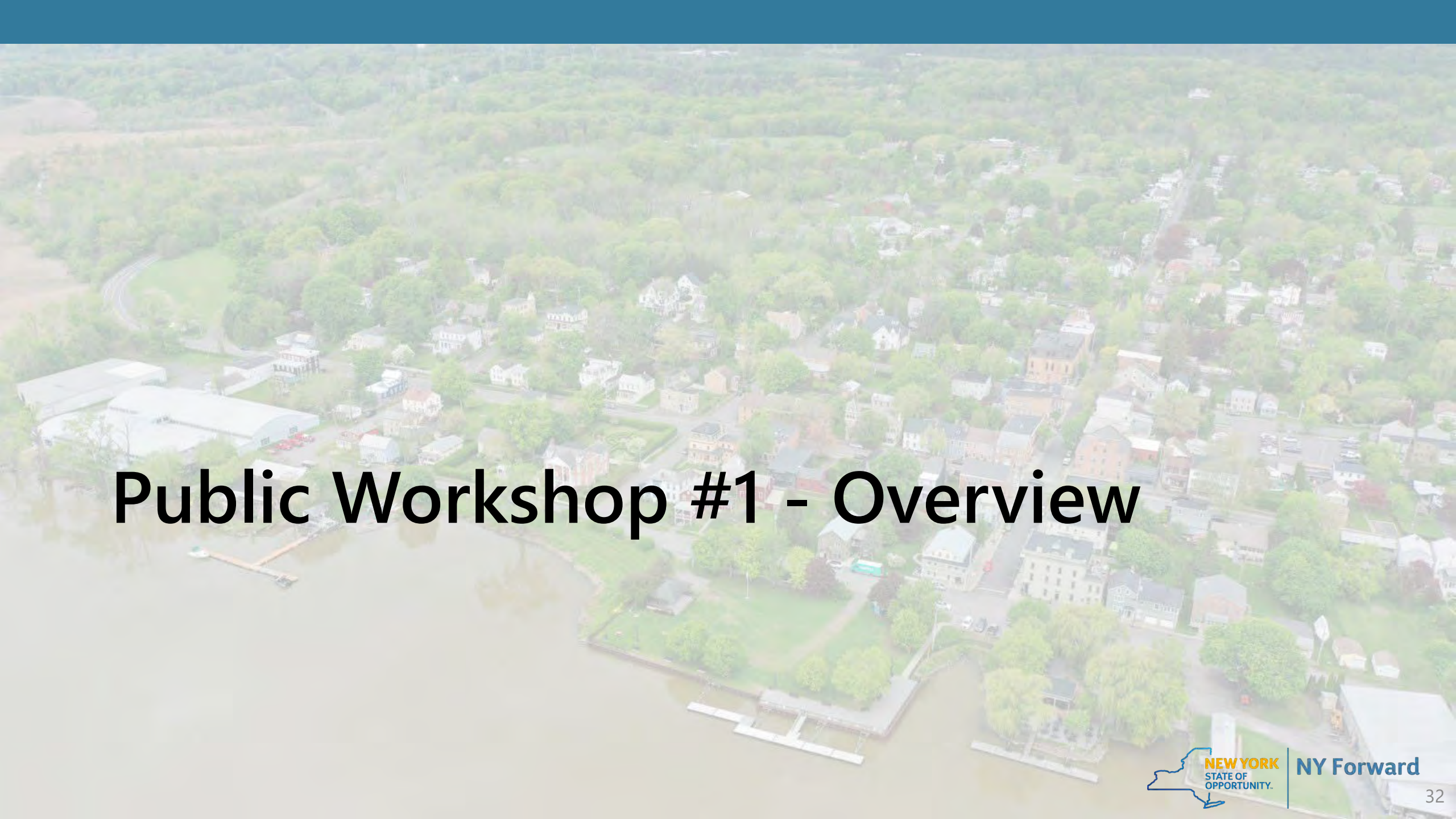
Challenges

1. **Limited local employment** – residents commuting to Albany and nearby areas for work
2. **Need for sustainable, year-round activity** to reduce reliance on seasonal tourism
3. **Increasing construction cost** and cost of restoring historic buildings
4. **Rising home prices** impact affordability for long-time residents
5. **High vacancy rates**, especially in off-season months
6. **Aging population** and youth outmigration
7. **Service gaps** in parts of the village, including transportation
8. **Flood risk** from Hudson River and climate resilience are growing concerns

Athens NY Forward

athensnyf.com



An aerial photograph of a town, likely in New York, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a river in the foreground. The town is surrounded by dense green forests and rolling hills. The text "Public Workshop #1 - Overview" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Public Workshop #1 - Overview

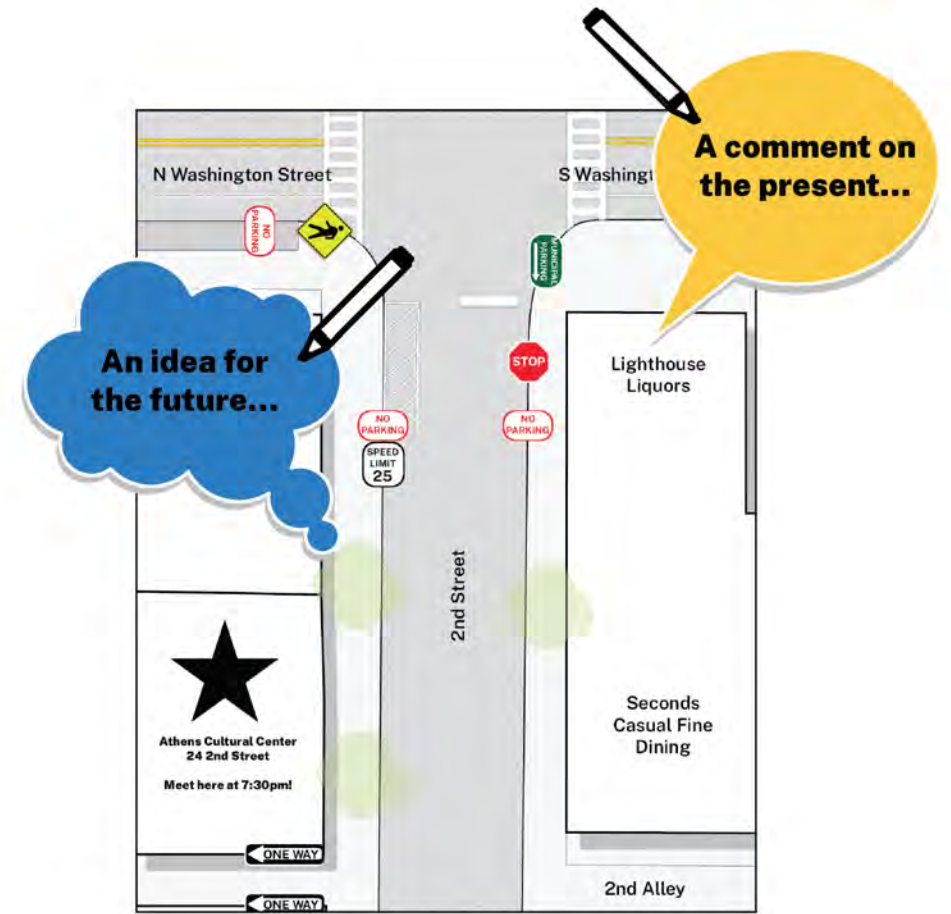
Public Workshop #1- Overview

- Opening remarks from Co-Chair
- NY Forward Overview Presentation
 - Public Q&A
- Breakout Activity
 - Walking tours of 2nd St and Riverfront
 - Comments on present & ideas for future
 - Sharing thoughts on vision and goals
- Group Discussion

Vision & Goals Activity

Share your vision and goals for downtown Athens!

Add your **comments on the present**  and **ideas for the future**  on the provided shapes and place them over the walking tour map.

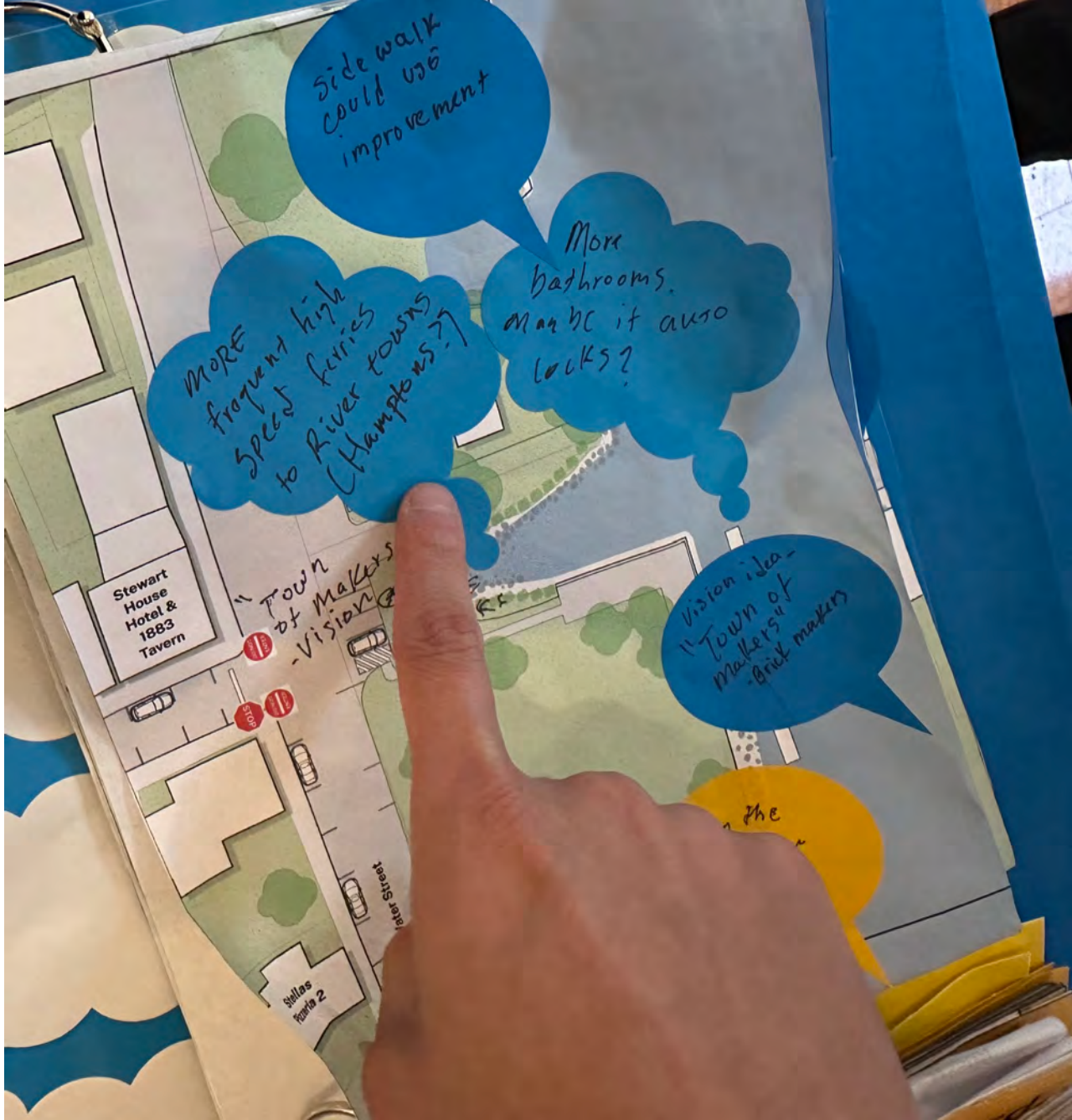
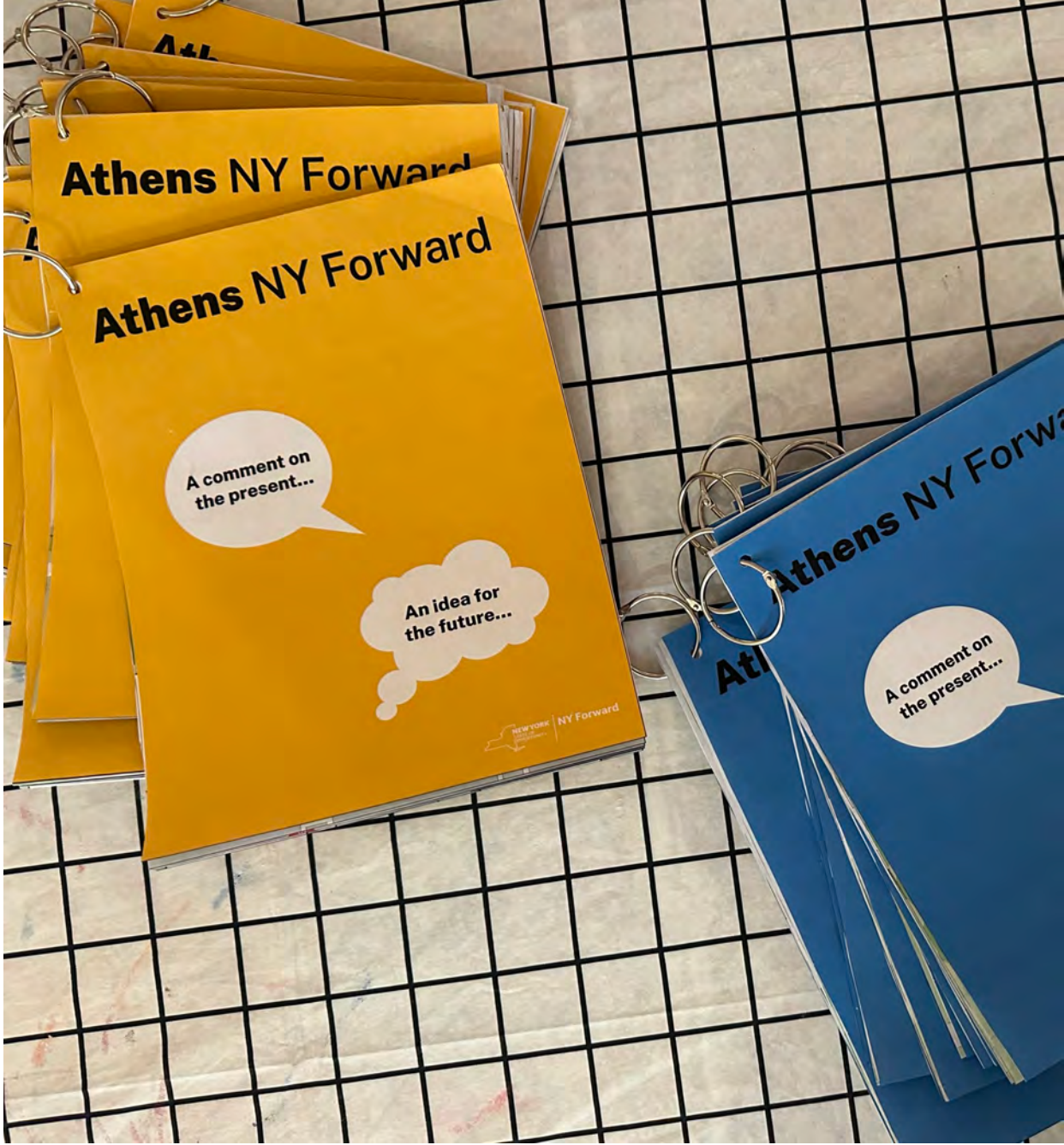


Who was there?

- About **25** Participants
- State team
 - NY DOS: Matt Smith
- Consultant Team
 - Buro Happold: Ian Nicholson, Mauricio Vasquez
 - Interboro: Dan D'Oca, Kate Chapman, Lexy Bogdanovic



Public Workshop #1 – Welcome Table











Feedback from the Walking Tours

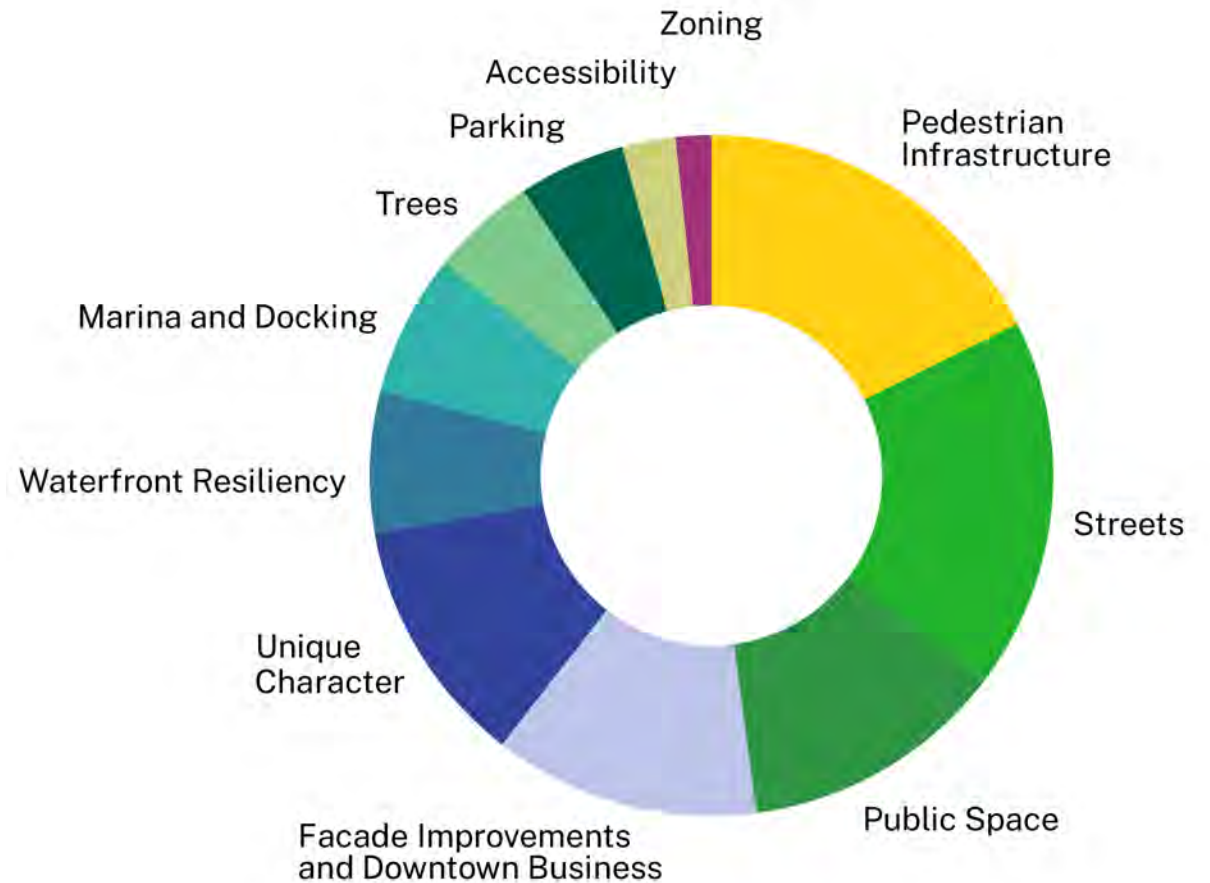
- We heard **54 comments** from the 2nd Street Group
- We heard **27 comments** from the Riverfront Group
- We heard **41 comments** when we reconvened for a group discussion



122
comments!

Feedback from the Walking Tours

- **22 comments** about pedestrian infrastructure
- **21 comments** about streets
- **16 comments** about public space
- **15 comments** about façade improvements, beautification, and downtown business
- **14 comments** about Athens unique character
- **8 comments** about waterfront resiliency
- **8 comments** about docking and the marina
- **7 comments** about trees
- **6 comments** about parking
- **3 comments** about accessibility
- **2 comments** about zoning



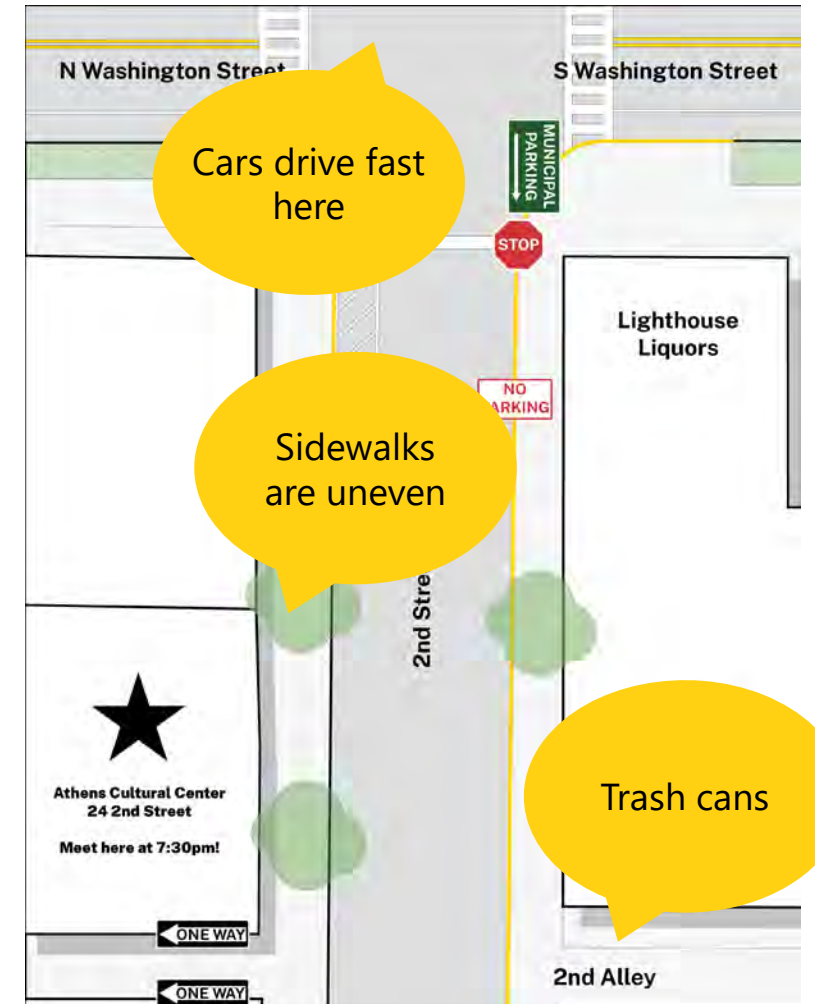
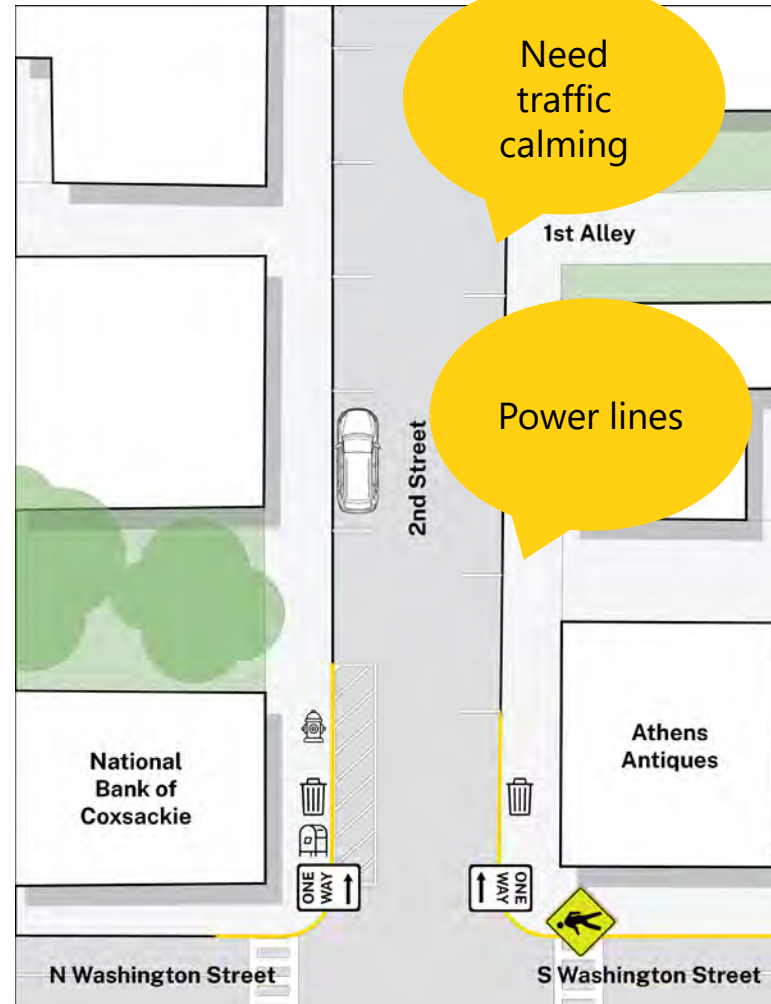
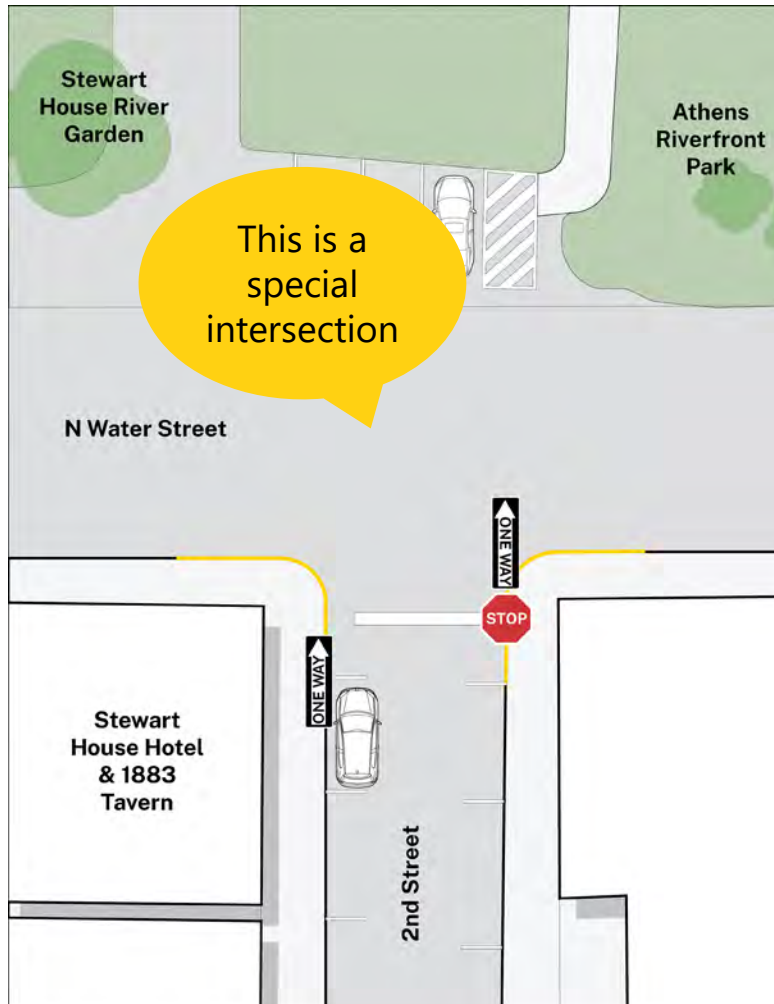
What We Heard About the Riverfront



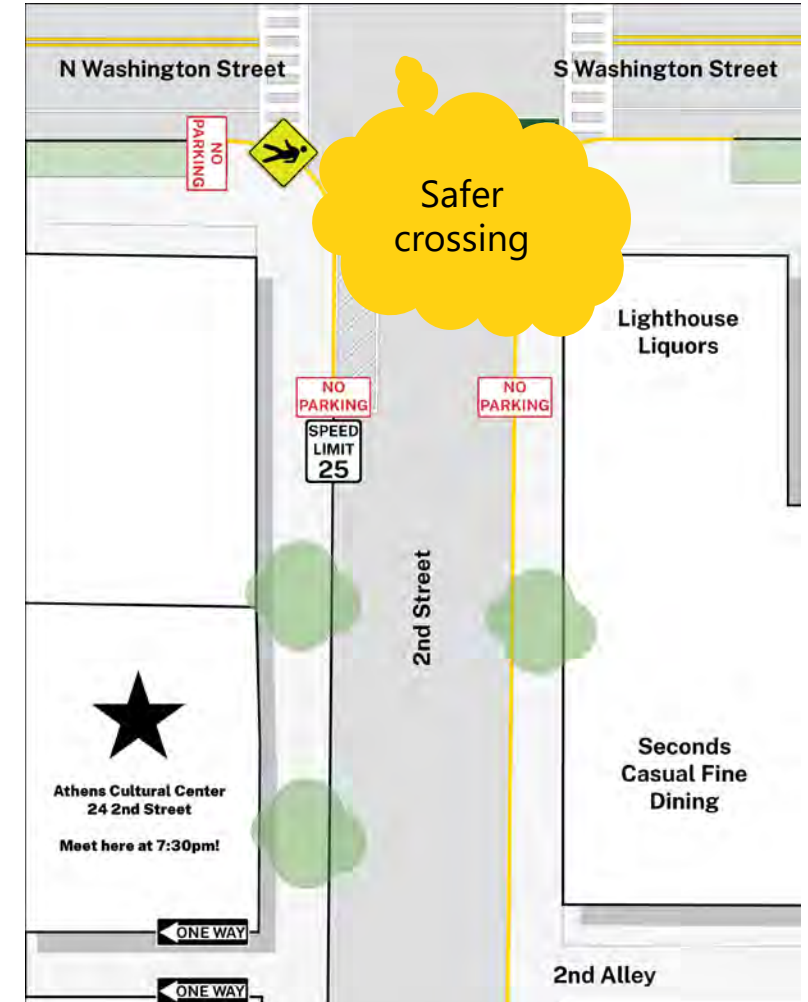
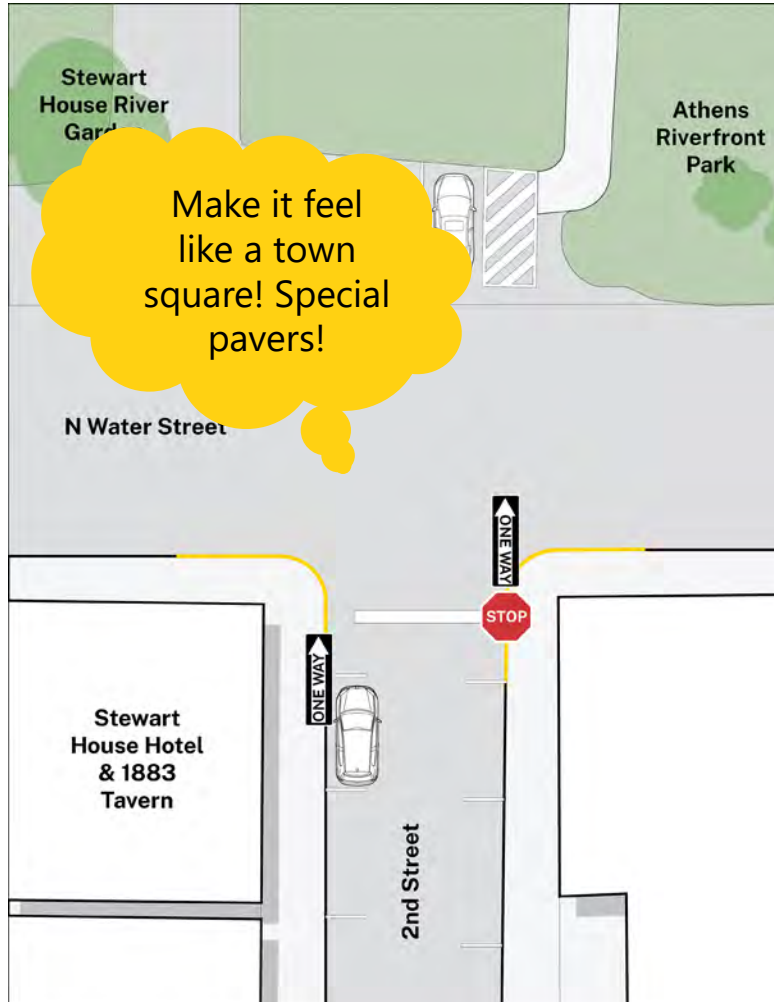
Dreams About the Riverfront



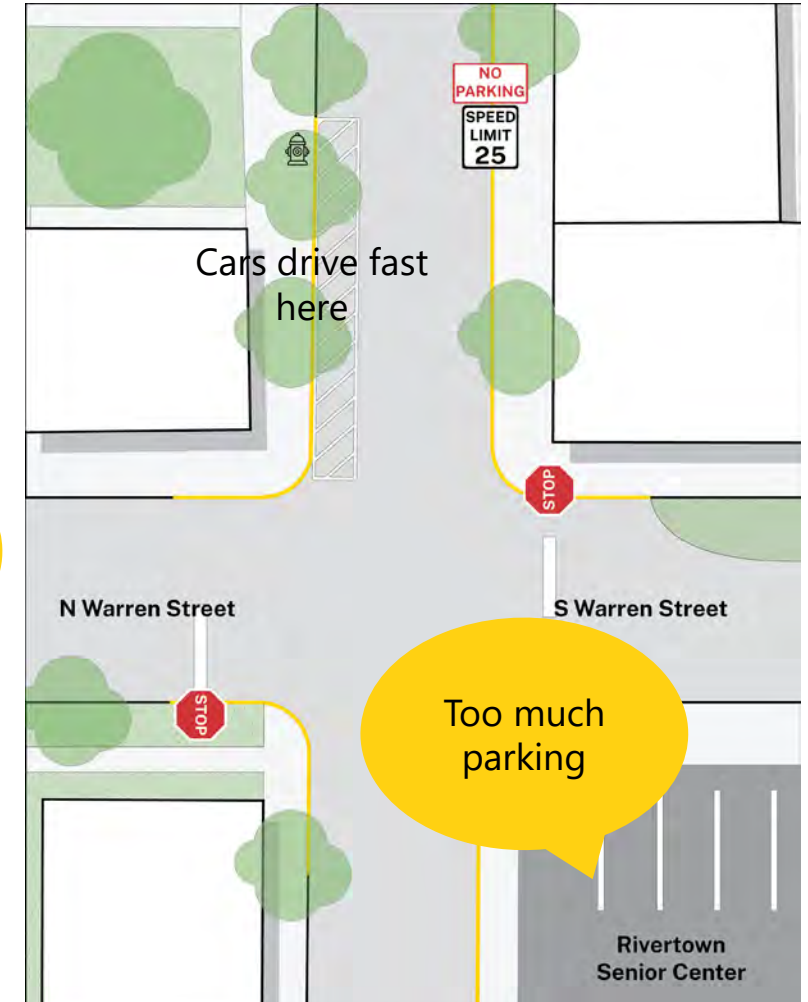
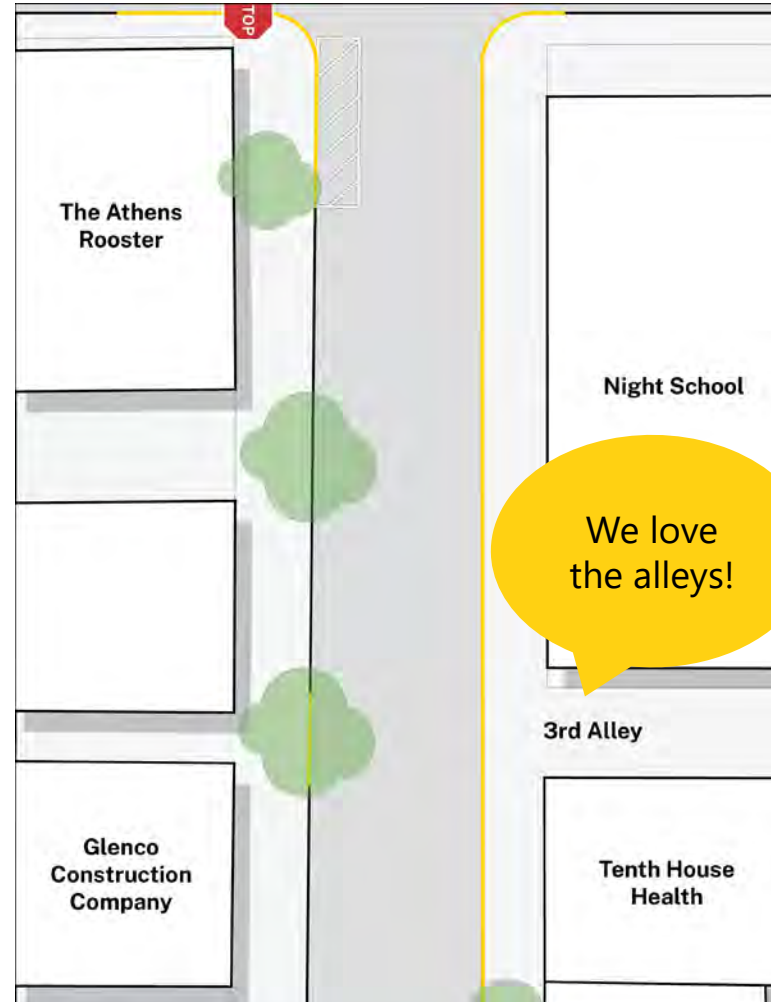
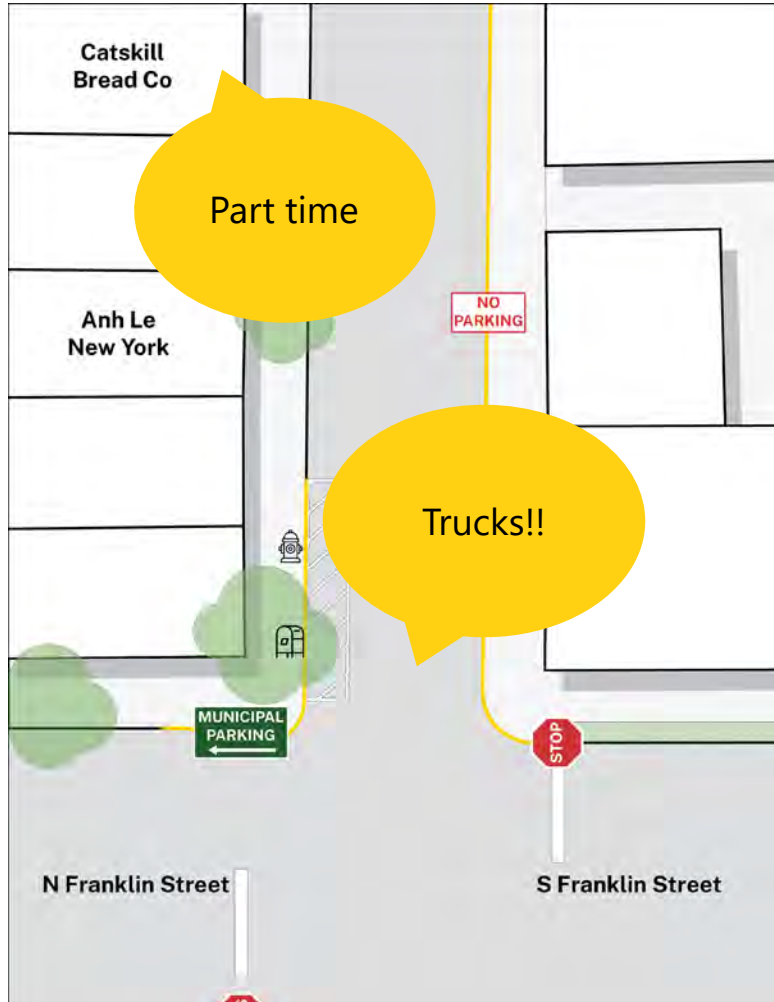
What We Heard About Second Street



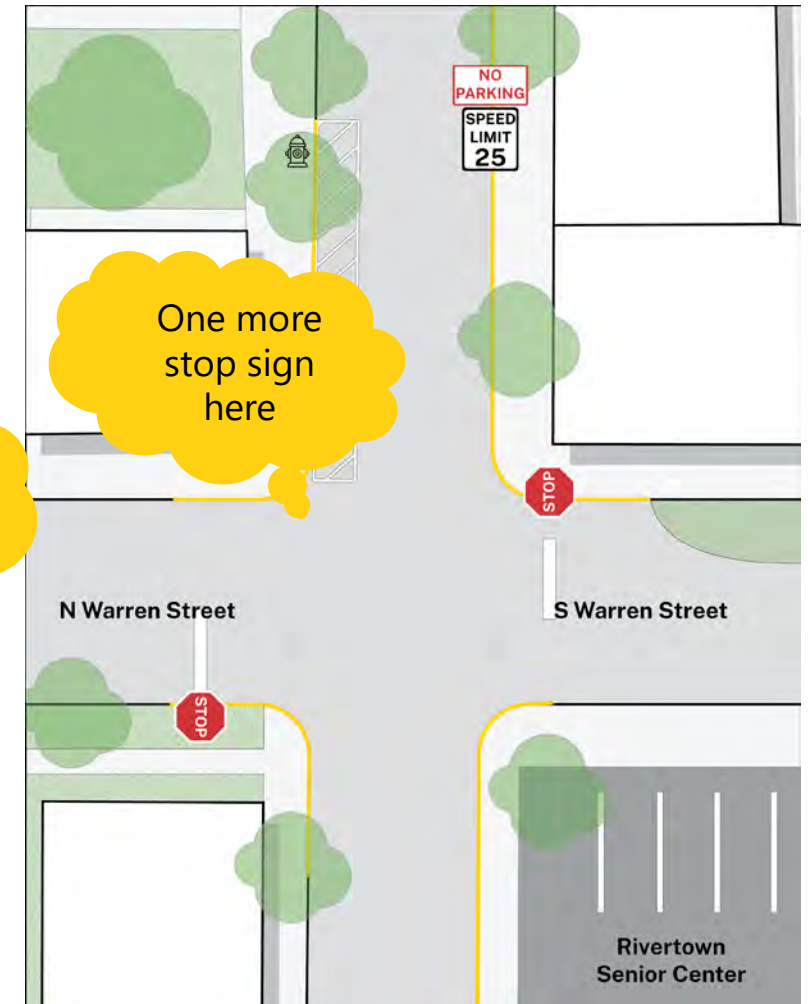
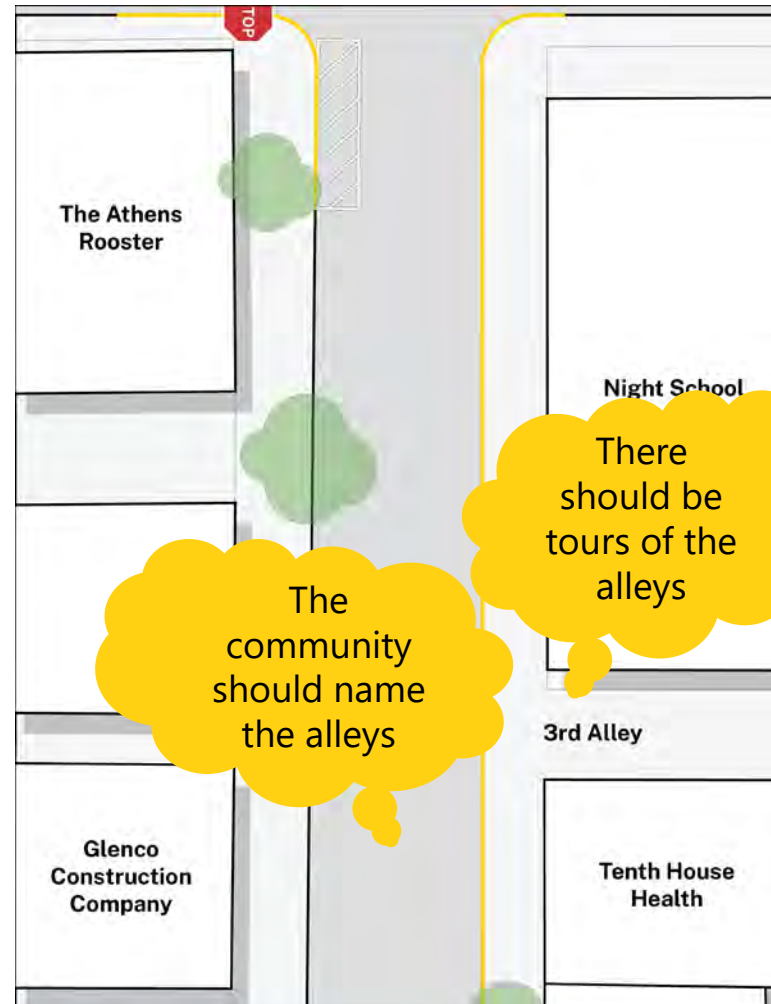
Dreams About Second Street



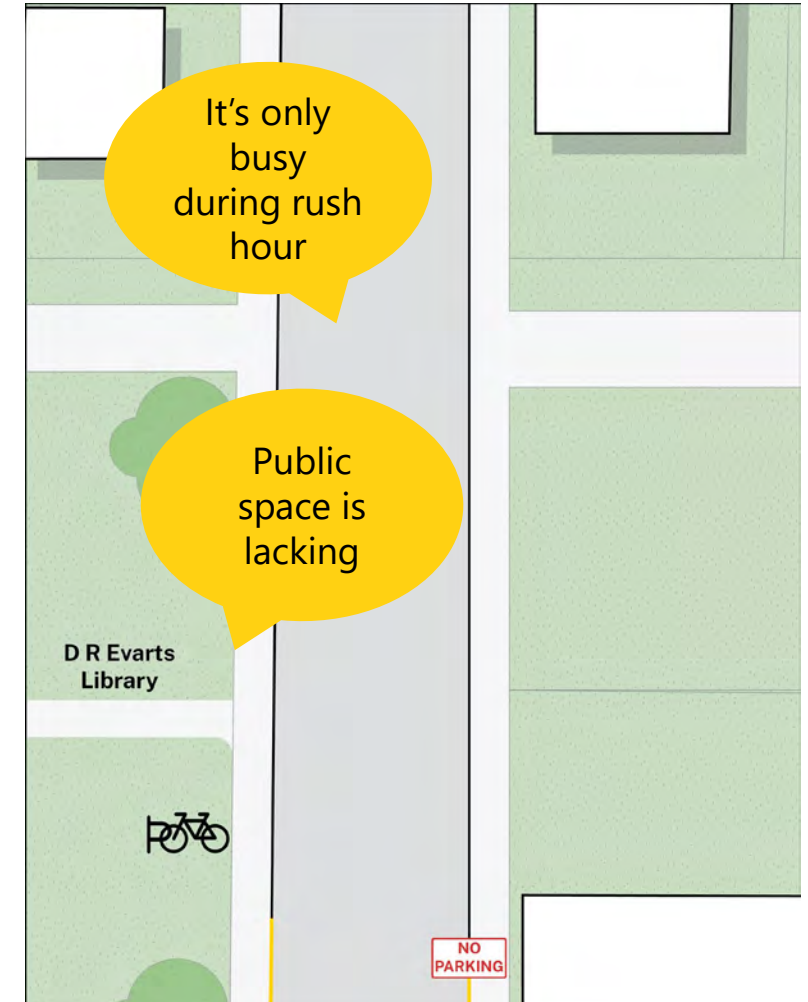
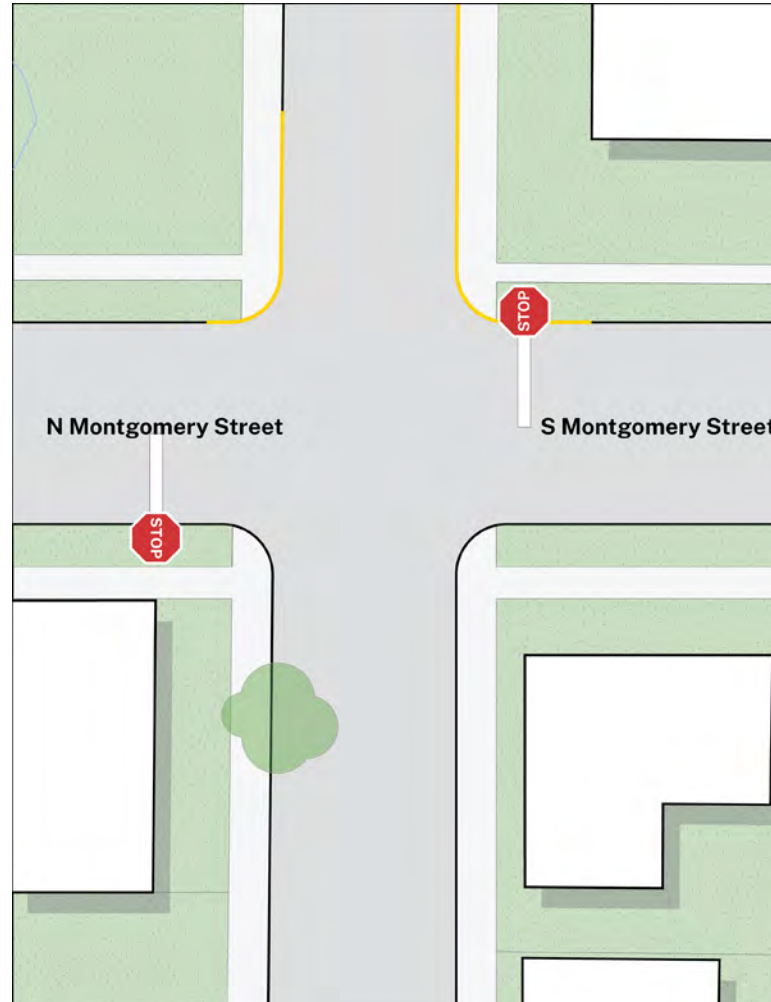
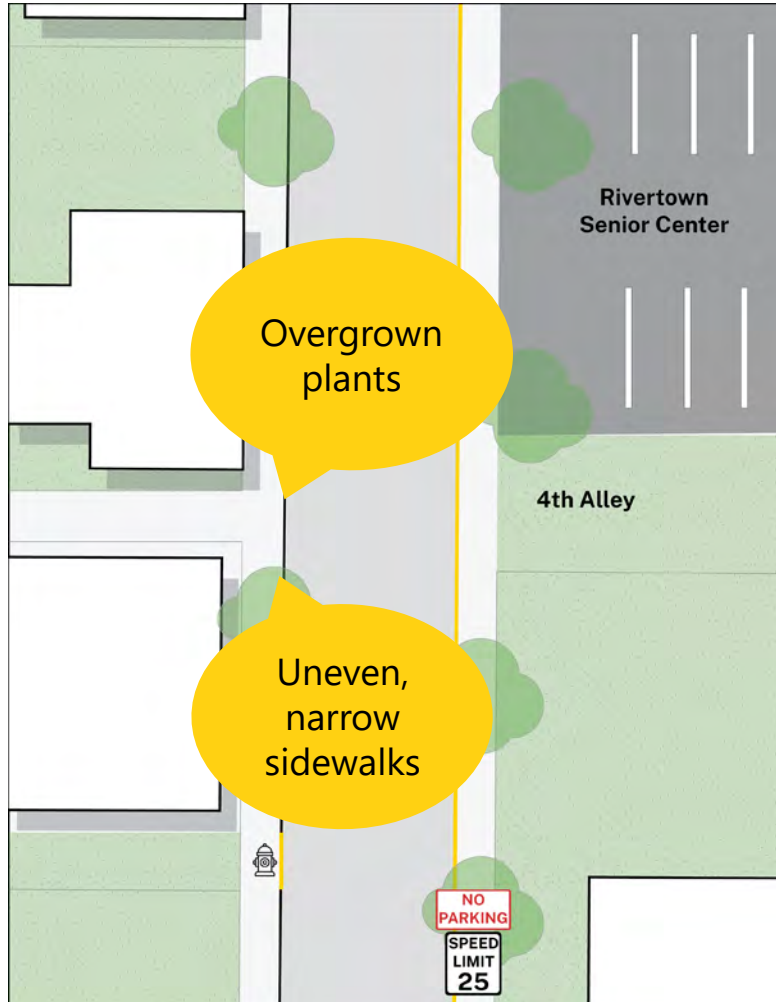
What We Heard About Second Street



Dreams About Second Street



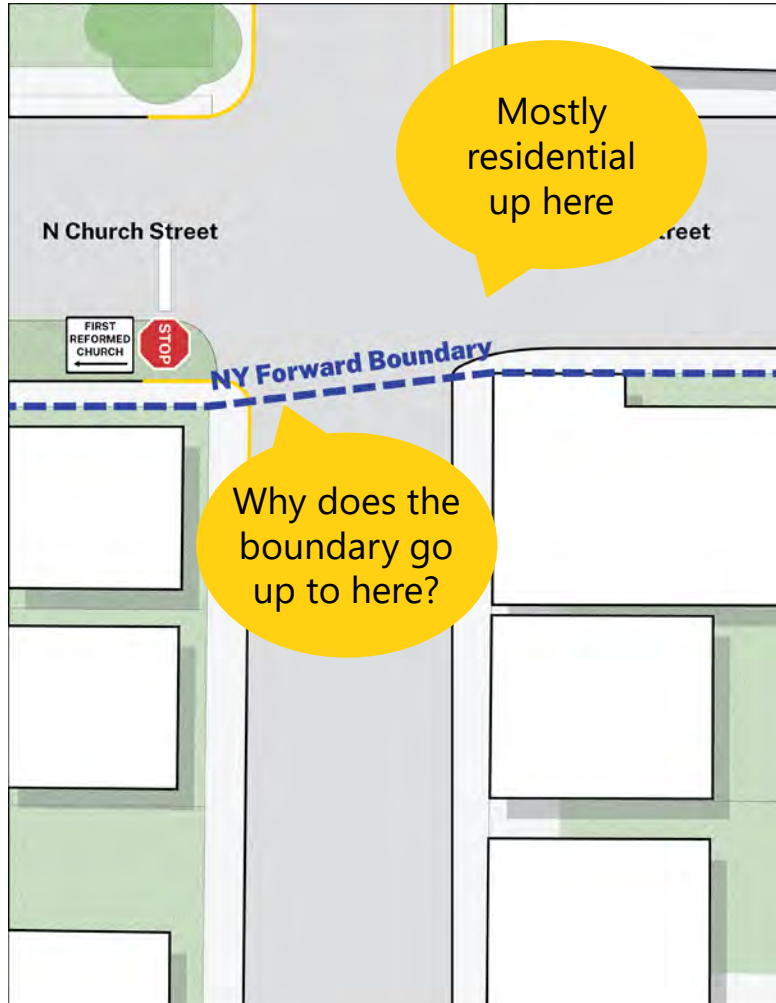
What We Heard About Second Street



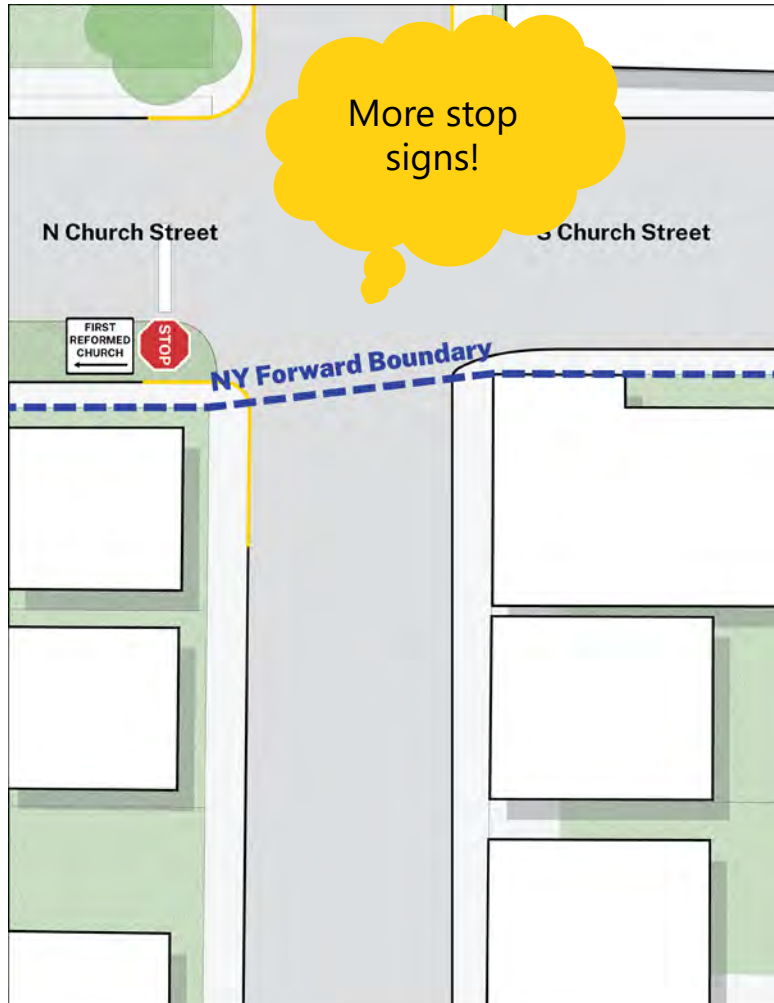
Dreams About Second Street



What We Heard About Second Street

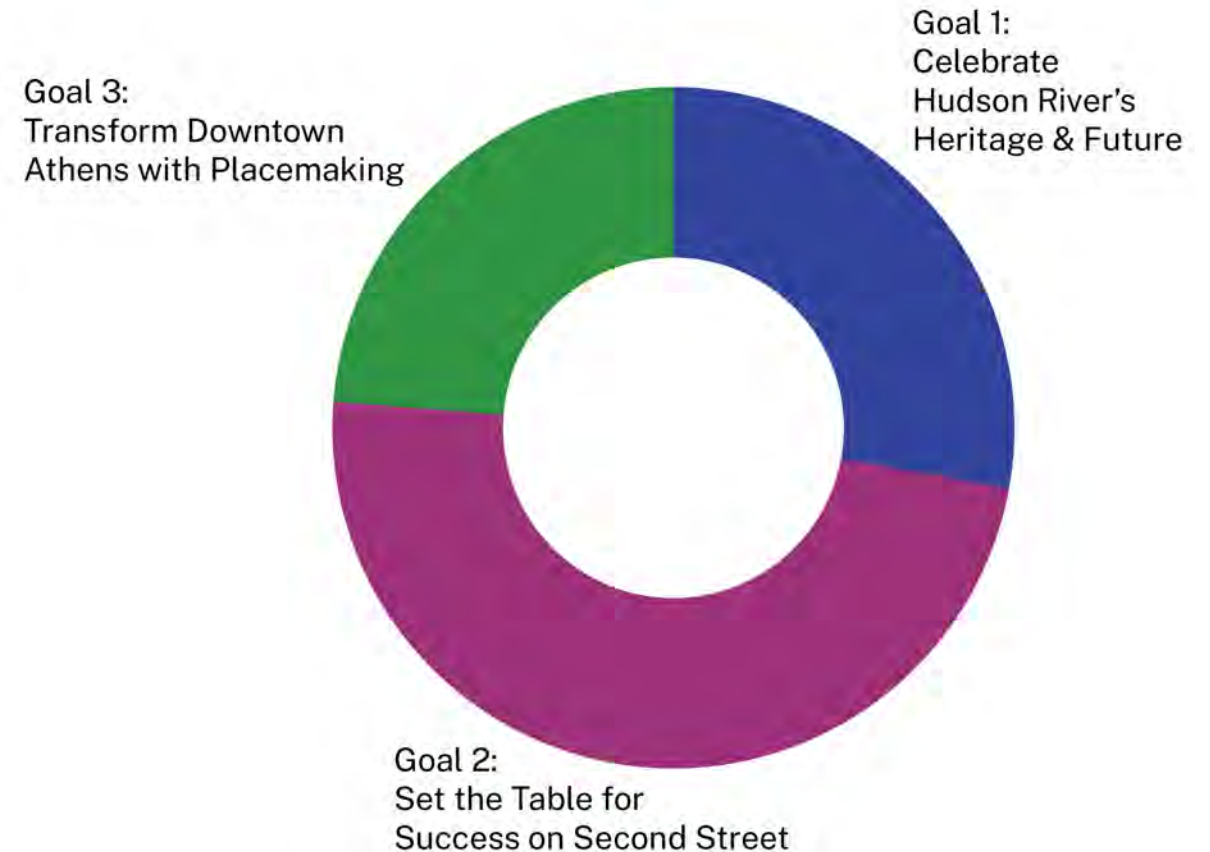


Dreams About Second Street



Feedback from the Walking Tours

- **34 comments** for Goal 1
- **59 comments** for Goal 2
- **29 comments** for Goal 3



What We Heard About Goal 1

- Increase the amount of **docking** along the Riverfront
- Add more **bathrooms** at Riverfront Park
- Protect against **flooding** and replace bulkheads
- Restore the ferry slip
- Celebrate the **river** and the **views** it offers downtown

What We Heard About Goal 2

- Widen the **sidewalks** to allow for larger tree pits and more space for pedestrians
- Improve **accessibility** around downtown
- Implement **traffic calming** and **complete streets** standards
- Plan **parking** around the Riverfront park and ferry carefully
- How can we mark the intersection of Second Street and Water Street to create a **town square**?

What We Heard About Goal 3

- Keep the Riverfront Park an **open space** to allow for picnicking, kite flying, pitch and catch, etc.
- Indicate **waterfront access points** through signage and wayfinding
- Improve opportunities for **recreation**, such as kayaking
- Restore the **building facades** to keep in character with the village
- Call attention to the **alleys** and their unique potential
- Increase the amount of **retail** downtown

Feedback from workshop activity

- Emerging Themes:
 - Increase docking space and access to the waterfront
 - Protect and strengthen the waterfront
 - Restore facades along 2nd Street
 - Improve pedestrian infrastructure
 - Upgrade downtown buildings and sidewalks to meet ADA compliance
 - Activate the alleys and explore their unique potential

"We can enhance downtown while maintaining the unique character of Athens. Let's not ruin it by fixing it."

We want to hear more!

Athens NY Forward

[Home](#) [Process](#) [Meetings](#) [Team](#) [Open Call](#) [LPC Documents](#)

[Take this Survey to give us your feedback!](#)

Welcome to Athens NY Forward!

The NY Forward process, led by the New York Department of State, has awarded the Village of Athens \$4.5M to develop a Strategic Investment Plan and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization.

[Learn More About NY Forward](#)

LPC Meeting #2

Monday July 14th
6-8pm

Athens Volunteer
Fire Department
39 3rd Street

Open Call for Projects is Live!

Submit the [Open Call Form](#) by 4pm on Monday August 4



Vision and Goals

Preliminary Downtown Vision

From Application

“ ***Looking toward the future while honoring the past***

We honor our heritage and celebrate our Hudson River waterfront roots. Our vibrant historic downtown has unparalleled potential. Kickstarted by thriving businesses on Second Street, our commitment to innovation and sustainability drives prosperity, enhances quality of life, and offers an unforgettable experience for visitors at a mixed-use, port-of-call for the Capital Region. We aspire to remain a welcoming village with a low-key, laid-back vibe that celebrates family and community. We're connected to world class art, culture, recreation and choice of housing that attracts visitors and boaters and makes Athens our home, generation after generation.

”

Proposed Downtown Vision

Alternative 1

The Village of Athens is a welcoming, laid-back community with a vibrant historic downtown deeply rooted to our Hudson River waterfront. Our commitment to innovation and sustainability will drive prosperity. Our world-class art and culture will offer visitors an unforgettable experience. Our investments in recreation and housing will enhance quality of life and make Athens our home, generation after generation.

Alternative 2

The Village of Athens is a unique place that celebrates its quirks. We will honor our heritage by restoring our historic downtown. We will celebrate our Hudson River roots by expanding waterfront access for all. We will drive prosperity by committing to innovation and sustainability. We will welcome visitors with world class art, culture, and recreation. We will nurture our low-key, laid-back vibe to welcome new families to our community, to make Athens our home, generation after generation.

Proposed Downtown Vision

Alternative 1

The Village of Athens is a welcoming, laid-back community with a vibrant historic downtown deeply rooted to our Hudson River waterfront. Our commitment to innovation and sustainability will drive prosperity. Our world-class art and culture will offer visitors an unforgettable experience. Our investments in recreation and housing will enhance quality of life and make Athens our home, generation after generation.

Alternative 2

The Village of Athens is a unique place that celebrates its **idiosyncrasies**. We will honor our heritage with continued restoration of our historic downtown. We will celebrate our Hudson River roots by expanding waterfront access for all. We will drive prosperity by committing to innovation and sustainability. We will welcome visitors with art, culture, and recreation. We will nurture our low-key, laid-back vibe to welcome new families to our community, to make Athens our home, generation after generation.

Finalized Downtown Vision

“ The Village of Athens is a unique place that celebrates its distinct charm and diversity. We honor our heritage with continued restoration of our historic downtown. We embrace our Hudson River roots by expanding waterfront access for all. We drive prosperity by committing to innovation and sustainability. We welcome visitors with art, culture, and recreation. We nurture our low-key, laid-back vibe to welcome new families to our community, to make Athens home, generation after generation. ”

Preliminary Downtown Goals

From Application

- **Goal 1:** Celebrate Hudson River's Heritage & Future
- **Goal 2:** Set the Table for Success on Second Street
- **Goal 3:** Transform Downtown Athens with Placemaking



Second Street, Downtown Athens

Preliminary Downtown Goals

From Application

- **Goal 1:** Celebrate Hudson River's Heritage & Future
- **Goal 2:** Set the Table for Success on Second Street
- **Goal 3:** Transform Downtown Athens with Placemaking

Key themes identified at Public Workshop

- Increase access to the waterfront
- Protect and strengthen the waterfront
- Restore facades along 2nd Street
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure
- Upgrade downtown buildings and sidewalks to meet ADA compliance
- Activate the alleys and explore their unique potential

Proposed Goals

- Expand public access to the Hudson River
- Upgrade accessibility of downtown buildings and sidewalks
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety
- Enhance impact of historic charm of facades and alleys
- Activate downtown retail opportunities



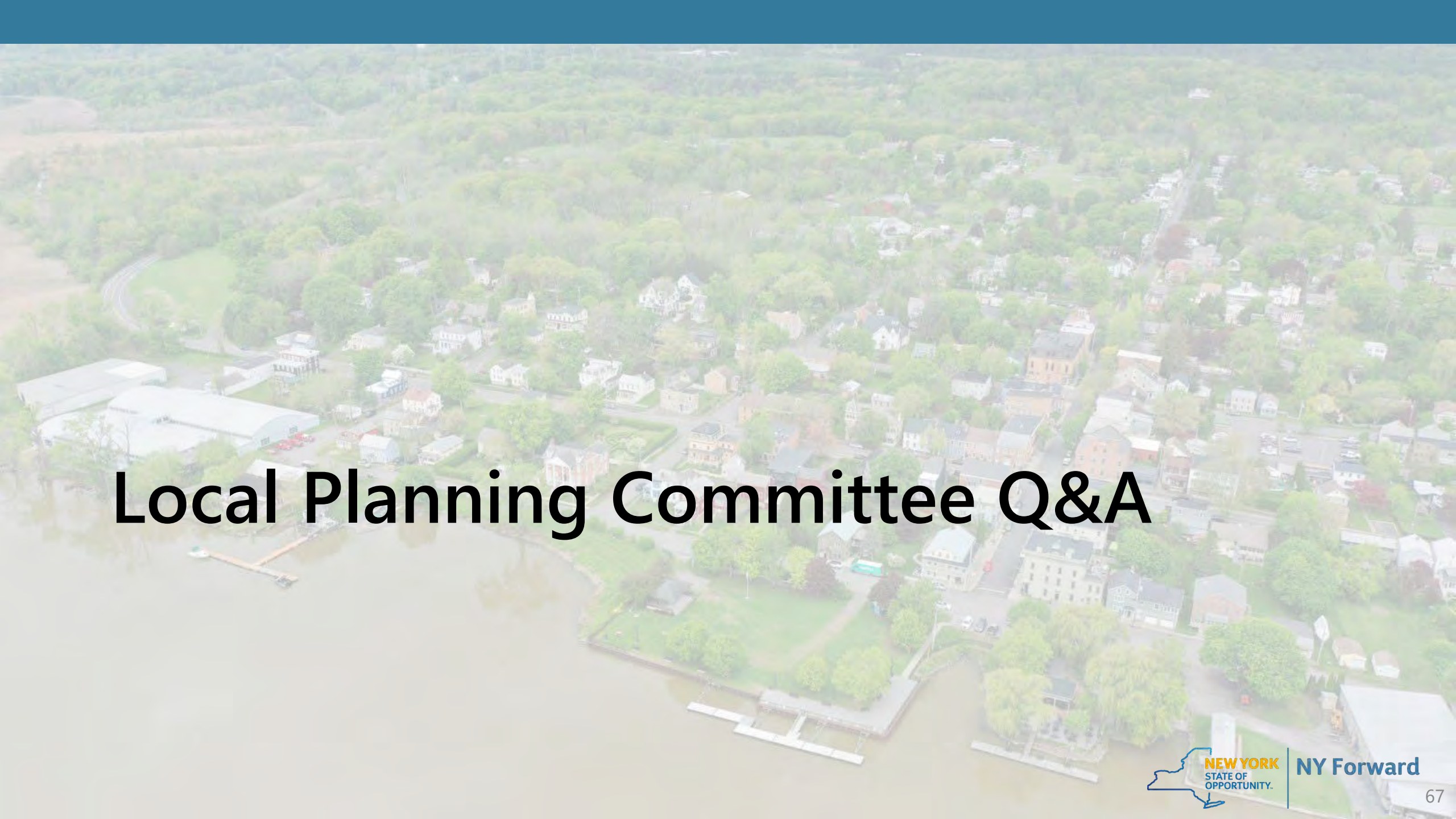
Athens Riverfront Park

Finalized Goals

- Expand public access to and from the Hudson River
- Upgrade safety and accessibility of downtown buildings and public spaces
- Enhance impact of historic charm of facades and alleys
- Attract downtown retail opportunities
- Increase availability, quality, and choice of housing



Athens Riverfront Park

An aerial photograph of a small town, likely in New York, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, a river in the foreground, and a large forested area in the background. The text "Local Planning Committee Q&A" is overlaid in the center.

Local Planning Committee Q&A



Public Comment

please submit comments to
AthensNYF@gmail.com



Closing Remarks

Mayor Amy Serrago

Next steps

- ✓ Continue to support Project Sponsors working towards 8/4 due date
- ✓ Stakeholder discussions / local outreach activities
- ✓ Begin preparing for LPC Meeting 3 and Public Workshop 2
- ✓ Develop revitalization strategies based on agreed vision and goals

Open Call - DUE

8/4

4:00 pm

AthensNYF@gmail.com or
hard copy to Village Hall

LPC Meeting 3

8/18

6-8 pm

**Athens Volunteer Fire
Department**

Public Workshop 2

8/28

6-8 pm

**Athens Municipal
Building**

Thank you!



NY Forward