Synthesis of Fall Public Engagement Events

Events: Public Workshop #1 (Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Village Hall, 2 Elting Court)

"In Case You Missed It" Online Survey (Tuesday, September 22, 2026 –Tuesday, September 29, 2026)

Coffee With Consultants (Wednesday, September 23, 2026 9:00-11:00 a.m., 12:00-1:30 p.m. Cohen's Bakery, 89 Center Street)

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Context and Purpose

Public engagement is a key component of the NY Forward process and includes workshops and targeted days of engagement. The following synthesis provides a summary, general observations, and key themes and takeaways that arose from Public Workshop #1 and the accompanying "In Case You Missed It" Survey, as well as the Coffee with Consultants event.

Events Summary

Public Workshop #1

Public Workshop #1 took place on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Ellenville Village Hall, located at 2 Elting Court, Ellenville, NY.

The workshop was designed as an open-house-style event to educate participants about the NY Forward process and the Open Call for Projects, while soliciting initial input and feedback on the vision for Ellenville and its downtown revitalization goals. Representatives from the Consultant Team were available to answer questions and facilitate the workshop activities. Additionally, printed Open Call for Projects applications were available, and information about the Coffee with the Consultants event was also provided.

Workshop attendees took part in interactive activities that comprised three separate stations that participants were able to cycle through. Each station featured corresponding informational materials, boards, or maps. At each station, members of the Consultant Team explained the station prompts, facilitated discussion, and captured feedback in real time.

Forty-two (42) members of the public attended Public Workshop #1 in addition to members of the Local Planning Committee, Village staff, and the Consultant Team. Stakeholders represented a diverse set of perspectives and were eager to learn more about the NY Forward process and share feedback and ideas for revitalizing Ellenville's downtown.

The workshop was comprised of the following stations:

- **Station 1: NY Forward and Open Call for Projects**

  An educational PowerPoint presentation was displayed on a continuous loop at this station to allow for members of the public to learn more about the NY Forward process, the Ellenville NY Forward boundary, and the Open Call for Projects.

- **Station 2: Ellenville Vision and Goals**

  Three statements were posted to solicit response that would ultimately inform the Ellenville Vision and Goals. Those statements were as follows: "When I walk through downtown Ellenville, I want to feel _____," "Downtown Ellenville should feel like a place where people can _____," and "What would contribute to creating that future downtown Ellenville?" Community members shared their ideas by writing responses on Post-it notes and placing them on a board alongside the displayed statements.

- **Station 3: Opportunities and Challenges**

  This station functioned as an interactive mapping station where members of the public were asked to identify locations within the Ellenville NY Forward area that represented opportunities or challenges for downtown revitalization. While looking at a large-format NY Forward boundary printed map, participants used Post-it notes to indicate where in the downtown there are opportunities to grow and improve upon, and areas where there are challenges/barriers for revitalization, missing pieces in the downtown, or areas needing improvement.

In Case You Missed It" Online Survey

To provide an additional opportunity for members of the public to share feedback, an online "In Case You Missed It" survey was made available on the Ellenville NY Forward website (www.ellenvillenyforward.com) from Tuesday, September 22, 2026, through Tuesday, September 29, 2026. The survey was advertised on flyers posted to the Village's website and social media pages and circulated to the LPC and stakeholders. The survey mirrored Public Workshop #1, with each of the questions prompts, and boards, and maps from the stations at the workshop embedded for reference. The survey provided an opportunity for people who were unable to attend the in-person workshop to share their perspectives on the future of downtown Ellenville. The survey received sixteen (16) responses, which are summarized in this synthesis.

Coffee with the Consultants

Coffee with the Consultants took place on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Cohen's Bakery, located at 89 Center Street, Ellenville, NY. This informal opportunity allowed for potential project sponsors to meet with the Consultant Team, discuss project ideas, and ask questions about the NY Forward process and more specifically about the Open Call for Projects. 15 to 20 prospective project sponsors attended.

Key Themes

Feedback collected from Public Workshop #1 and the online survey revealed the key themes listed below. These themes will help shape Ellenville's vision and goals. For a full list of comments, please see Exhibit A.

- **Desire for a more active, welcoming, and community-oriented downtown.**
  Participants described a downtown where residents and visitors can gather, shop, dine, participate in events, and spend time in a safe, inclusive, and vibrant setting.

- **Interest in downtown business activation, arts and culture, and building reinvestment.** Feedback emphasized the importance of filling vacant storefronts, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, improving building façades and property conditions, and expanding arts, music, cultural, and community programming.
- **Need for attractive public spaces and improved connections throughout downtown.** Participants identified opportunities for parks, streetscape improvements, trees, lighting, seating, public art, pedestrian safety, accessibility, wayfinding, and stronger connections between downtown outdoor-recreation assets and surrounding neighborhoods.

In addition, the results of the two interactive stations and the online survey are summarized below:

Ellenville Vision and Goals

Key themes that emerged from Station 2 included creating a downtown that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and reflective of community pride. Suggestions pointed toward a more vibrant and walkable downtown with active storefronts, diverse businesses, arts and cultural activities, attractive public spaces, and amenities that support residents and visitors year-round.

Opportunities and Challenges

Key themes that emerged from Station 3 included opportunities to improve and activate downtown public spaces, commercial corridors, parks, and outdoor-recreation assets. Participants identified potential improvements related to streetscape conditions including trees, lighting, sidewalks, wayfinding, public art, and pedestrian and bicycle connections. Feedback also identified vacant or underutilized properties, inactive storefronts, building conditions, limited visitor amenities, and safety concerns as challenges affecting downtown revitalization.

"In Case You Missed It" Online Survey

The online survey results were generally consistent with the feedback received at Public Workshop #1. Respondents identified opportunities to activate vacant storefronts and underutilized properties; improve Liberty Square, Center Street, Canal Street, and Berme Road Park; and strengthen connections between downtown, parks, trails, and other outdoor assets. Respondents also emphasized the need for additional trees, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, lighting, wayfinding, affordable housing, visitor accommodations, and year-round businesses, events, and cultural activities.

Village of Ellenville
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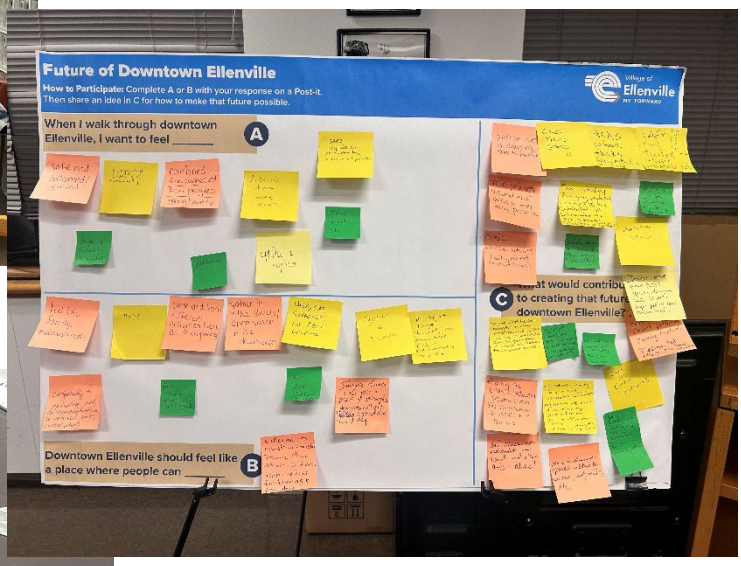






Exhibit A: Public Comments

This section presents the responses and comments received during the in-person workshop and the corresponding online survey, and a summary of the general feedback received through the online survey.

Station 2: Ellenville Vision and Goals
When I walk through downtown Ellenville, I want to feel ____
Safe and welcomed / quaint
Energy and a feeling of community
Nourished and connected; feel progress; young/youthful
Safe & culturally stimulated
Included
Like it's their hometown.
Safe, inspired by the community, a sense of pride.
Uplifted + inspired.
Energized. Inspired. Safe.
Welcomed and safe
Energized and excited by a bustling upstate town. Storefronts filled, people visiting, activities to do
Excited
Curious
Included
Safe and excited
Lit up, safe, and knowing what is where. Trees!
A strong sense of community!
Safe and welcomed
Vibrancy, and a sense that the town has more going on than only catering to a tourist or thrift shop/antique crowd. The history of the town includes production of goods and as a home to makers. I'd like to see an element of that tradition continue. It should be more than a 2-3 season town.
Safe
Like I live in a nice village upstate.
Safe and peaceful.

Safe
I want to see buildings that aren't covered in paper, don't have random people selling junk out front (good riddance to the lady at 69 center), I want business that are open and relevant to this community, and I also want to see a replacement for Publik House. That bar catered to a lot of people who aren't going to go to any newer more city focused place and those folks need a place to go.
Sad
Downtown Ellenville should feel like a place where people can ____
Gather in the streets / open space in the downtown.
Walk, eat, socialize, and feel welcome.
Grow a family.
Do lots of things! Shop, eat, play, work, relax, stroll, + most importantly spend time.
Eat. Shop. Walk/Bike. Entertained.
Immerse themselves in the past & present of Ellenville—historically + culturally. + desire to spend more than 1 day.
Welcome—to invest in real estate, business, share their cultures. Have options for touring & amenities.
Feel like family, establish roots
Thrive
Come and learn different activities from art to engineering
Comfortably & enjoyably eat, do recreational activities, be informed, enjoy cultural events
From a diverse background come together
Afford to live and want to visit
Eat, shop, hang, explore, enjoy
Visit and have things to do/see
Roam and shop safely and interact with their neighbors in a well-considered public space that feels alive
Live safely and affordably
Walk around and shop and eat
Walk safely, and comfortably and have options.
Walk and play safely!
Spend time in an attractive safe and interesting environment

Find unique things and enjoy themselves while doing so.
Not be concerned about guns being fired, the after effects of domestic violence, not have to worry about constant police presence in CERTAIN areas of the village because it is so necessary
Walk into shops, get a drink or an ice cream, chat with people on the street.
Socialize and enjoy public space.
Enjoy each other, the stores, museum, library.
Meet, gather, get their needs met by local businesses, not worry about getting hit with a baseball bat/shot/etc.
Enjoy themselves, have a great dinner, listen to music, see a good film or theater production
What would contribute to creating that future downtown Ellenville
Diverse uses for shopping, entertainment
Good third spaces
Parks; indoor parks; free activities for kids
Craft; paint; theatre; music; martial arts
More policing around the area & feel their presence
Film industry; bringing productions + money to the Catskills with Ellenville as the gateway; jobs, money, life!
Refresh tired facades + public spaces
Music; outdoor activities; healthy mindset (stores/restaurant)
Including houses of worship & their programs & communities
Maker space
Explore what has been successful in other small-town communities and see how success can be promoted to make the town area alive.
SIGNS & ART. Signs to direct people to businesses and mural paintings to make people feel welcomed & give life to the village.
More small businesses; improved parks + rec facility; bike lanes; music venue.
Cleaner, more green public spaces that are well lit, with ample seating. New benches, trees…
Social gatherings; parades, festivals; designated place for bigger events.
Finding the balance between growth within the community for locals + tourists.
Incentives + funding for ppl to start businesses—grants + rent concession. Regular events that draw neighboring communities, not just one-off summer events. A hotel or other place for tourists.

Cars & Coffee Events.
Safe spaces, more investment in visual and other arts. Music!
More inclusive spaces—culturally diverse art, music, etc.
Spaces & events that feel they are for everyone and participation.
A central location for visitors and locals to share information, storefronts that are not vacant, facades that are fresh and clean, businesses that are all handicap accessible, water supply that is clean and safe, a park that is maintained safe for all kids and adults and free to use.
Filling the downtown with actual stores
more open businesses, better access to regular, affordable mass transit to NYC
For starters, a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly central downtown focal point - a reimagined Liberty Square. The Common Good is a great, new anchor on one side and as other solid anchor points are established around the Square, the village needs a more open and inviting center (close Bogardus Pl below Liberty St, plant trees and grass). Create a nexus space where people feel comfortable and inspired to gather. Maybe the improved gazebo on 209 is relocated to the square.
Affordable housing
helping new businesses, more parking, safer neighborhoods
Trees! better and clean signs, maybe perpendicular/sticking out to be able to see from down the street. filled and cute store fronts.
O+ Ellenville Music Art Wellness
More life in the center of the village. More stores and things that are family oriented, for example: a walking plaza where there could be free public music and entertainment
Maker spaces and support for existing makers in the village.
Perhaps more foot patrol and police officers actually mingling with people in the community
Plant a lot of trees. Get rid of endless parking lots. Get rid of vacant storefronts.
Stable sidewalks, high quality crosswalks, traffic calming elements, trees and plantings, benches
Better organized law enforcement. Mental health resources.
My previous answer answers this as well.
Restaurants, art galleries, music venues, movie theater
More affordable, safe and clean housing for middle- and low-class residents, hotel or options for visitors to stay while they visit our village, no empty storefronts, support for businesses to add more jobs and update buildings
Filling the downtown with stores, restaurants, open space for picnics and activities, making it a walkable downtown with plenty to do

More open businesses, tourism support. Marketing, and a branding improvement, better access to regular, affordable mass transit to NYC
Beyond the reimagined Liberty Square, create a sense that the downtown area is meant to be walkable, so improvements like better street lighting and maybe less of an emphasis on how many parking spaces we have (always overly emphasized).
Wi-Fi, affordable housing, better services for our unhoused friends, affordability
Investments by businesses and locals
Same as 2. Bike lanes?
My time and expertise in Music, Art, and Festival production!
Prosperity and job opportunities for the local population
Condemning the houses of slumlords who don't pay taxes, and tearing the houses down…evicting chronic criminal activity and the people related to it
Trees (if you actually water them!), less asphalt, activated prime real estate isn't a local embarrassment (Simon's upholstery, Nu-all Furniture, Orlando's Food Mart). Also, it would help to not have loud trucks and motorcycles racing down Canal and Centre.
More seating, traffic calming, more trees
Help people in need.
Code enforcement needs to step it up and really get these undesirable landlords in line. Owners of buildings also need to be more motivated to do something with their vacant spaces (I'm looking at you 1 Market and the upstairs of the TCG building). This is also somewhat out of this scope, but the BBQ area at Berme Park is sad and needs some attention. There's been talk of getting the local community out into nature and a nature bus is absolutely not the answer. This community needs a world-class well-designed BBQ area that is a true destination where they can gather with their friends and family.
Maybe a park, more trees, rehab old buildings

Station 3: Opportunities and Constraints

Bring back the "knife" museum and combine with others
Branding marketing and wayfinding through downtown
Tax incentives for old factories
Mural for DEP
Wayfinding, improved lighting, sidewalks beautified
Streetlights! Many are not working + none work on main parking lot.

Support for library plaza expansion
Walkable sidewalks from school to downtown
Furniture store near church and spectrum SVES. Open Youth Center. I'm a retiree from SLCH and BOCES and will be happy to work there at minimum wage.
Develop the park! Movie nights
Upgrade lighting and greenery on canal street
pocket park at main and center needs a facelift
Year-round rec space for all ages: bowling, pinball, shuffle board. Could be for profit.
Trees and café seating on canal
Better public use of Mill Street Park (Bocce Courts?)
Parking for family of Ellenville
Youth center and school activities
Pedestrian bridge
To create a safe public space to generate a sense of community, exchange ideas, things to use, protected from traffic, opportunities for conversation
Community-build playground, well-maintained, programming
Be the 1st to develop a permanent secure/safe facility (develop law/procedure) for those who have received Medicaid/housing for more than a certain number of years. Would save hundreds/millions of dollars having them in a vicious continuous circle in the DSS/Medical Systems
Center street could use some love. It currently feels like the forgotten side of downtown. Similarly, Canal street needs to be filled, currently at least 50% of the shops are closed/not occupied. Liberty Square could be such a great space for green space outside of the Hunt. Also the Hunt Memorial should be WAY more utilized than it currently is. Finally, Berme Road park is such an amazing asset, but we need to make it more than just a ball field and some minimal playground equipment. Where is the visitors center to welcome people to the Gunks. Maybe rentals? Dog park to welcome new folks and community members alike. It should be utilized way more than it currently is.
Shadowland Stages, Borscht Belt Museum, better access to regular, affordable mass transit to NYC, outdoor seating for restaurants has big (and fairly unique) appeal, better marketing and labeling of trailheads within that zone.
The Ellenville boundary is wide for this grant - plenty of spots could improve. I think the Village should focus on what will have the most impact for the largest group of people the soonest (so giant projects like the former Norbury Theater feel too massive).
Liberty Square - mentioned above.

Berme Rd Park is a jewel. Some improvements would make it exceptional.
Mill St Park at Center/Water St is tragically under-appreciated.
Lean in to and improve the outdoor activity aspect of this beautiful area.
Improve Berme Park, Smiley Carriage Road, O&W rail trail
Center St vs Canal St.
The MOTEL! connecting the everything east, let's say of Cohens, and Ann st(?) to the more western/central parts. (and i guess the same on the other side of 209.)
Market Street, Canal Street, over to the Library across Rt 209 and near the school and farmers market!
Development of the lot to the right of the post office, year around activities at the farmer's market, office of tourism, a modern affordable motel.
The block of center street is just east of 209, addresses 70-85 are a big opportunity. it's a highly visible, accessible, and core area of town that's pretty vacant.
Worst offenders of useless businesses doing nothing include Simon's Upholstery, Nu-all Furniture, and Orlandos Food Mart. They sit their empty uninviting and make Ellenville look depressed.
Better connect our green spaces to our downtown commercial district. Better pedestrian & cycling infrastructure from Berme road park to the main section of canal and center streets, rail trail connector from Berme road park to the rail trail by sewer plant.
Going back to my previous answer, maybe that bbq section of Berme Park is within this boundary (it's a little hard to tell on this map). If that's the case, and if the Village wants to do something that is truly for the bulk of the community and not just the city transplants, a well designed world class bbq area is definitely something that would be incredible.
There is no walkable place for essentials - groceries, staple items etc. We could really use that which will bring people to the area and then stay for all the shops, restaurants etc. More activities or more year round and diverse programming at Shadowland will also help bring new folks.
$, sustained visitation
Many Ellenville residents have limited financial resources (for example, don't own a car), so improvements should work/include everyone. The parks are free, so better parks are good for all. Would again emphasize pedestrian-centered projects. Maybe dedicated bike lanes in places and improved signage, both downtown and near/at the parks. Create an environment where all residents feel comfortable (if they are able - ADA considerations would also be great of course!) walking to Berme Rd Park from downtown, for example. If they don't feel comfortable, is it because of the distance or some other reason that might be mitigated by structural improvements.
Missing pieces, so many. trees. Less churches, empty or otherwise.
Not exactly sure
Need hotels for singles and families so people will come for the weekend; single weekends

The block bounded by canal, liberty/bogartus, maple, and hermance is another area of the core that's lacking cohesion and some way of connecting its purpose better to the rest of what's otherwise the prime street in the village.
The challenges are that we do not aggressively enforce the behaviors that make the village trashy. Dog shit, loud and speeding vehicles, vacant stores being used for 'storage'. We cut down trees at the first sign of them causing a problem and all we care about is endless parking.
Planting trees and expanding sidewalk width on Canal street from Maiden Ln to Berme Rd would make a big difference. The road space is too wide on Canal street on this stretch and should be narrowed to slow traffic (many cars speed as they come down 52 from Cragsmoor and narrowing the road has been proven as a way to slow speeds). If we narrow the road in this stretch there is more space for wider and accessible sidewalks to connect downtown Ellenville to Berme Road Park and there can also be trees planted all along the route (currently quite barren).
There is definitely opportunity at Bob Mangels. That could be a great fishing/bird watching destination with funding to build it out. I've long had a vision of building a raised walkway that loops around the perimeter of the park so it can remain wild/pollinator area with educational/informative signage.
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Have more to share? Share your ideas for downtown here! (Online Survey Only)
Bus station that would lure a carrier to have regular service NYC to Eville
Improve Berme Park, Smiley Carriage Road, O&W Rail Trail
O+Ellenville and satellite of Kingston Festival, I have worked for for 5 years. I am a tax paying resident of Kerhonkson-Wawarsing and would like to focus my hometown efforts moving forward!

I don’t know what it’s going to take to make this Village the way it used to be. People cared about people you could leave your doors unlocked. You could walk around any street in this village at midnight and not fear for your life. I wish I did have all the answers but unfortunately I don’t. With the exception of the businesses on Canal Street I don’t see much hope for the rest of this Village. Normally I am an optimist but living here now and seeing what I see… It’s very sad
Get rid of chain link fences. Make it difficult to sit on prime real estate and do nothing.
Thank you for the work you do.
There was a lot of momentum a few years ago, and I really feel that it is waning. Ellenville government is doing a great job, but the same can't be said for the Wawarsing leaders. I think people might be afraid to invest here. I myself was one of those and ended up buying in a different Village.