

Binghamton Just Transition Site Reuse Study

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Public engagement is an essential component of any effective Site Reuse Strategy. The purpose of this Community Participation Plan is to delineate (1) the obligations of the City of Binghamton, the Consultant Team, and the project Steering Committee (collectively known as the "Project Team"); and (2) how the public will be informed and involved in the Binghamton Just Transition Site Reuse Study. Various forums and outreach methods are identified in the Community Participation Plan to engage all interested parties in developing and creating the Study.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Just Transition Site Reuse Planning Program is designed to provide technical services to help communities mitigate any negative impacts of pending or future fossil power plant closures. NYSERDA is taking proactive steps to assist communities in their planning for the transition to 100 percent zero emission electricity by 2040 as required by the State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The study will evaluate the impact, potential alternative uses, and strategies necessary to address the closure of the Binghamton Cogeneration Power Plant at 22 Charles Street in the City of Binghamton.

The Binghamton Just Transition Program will have planning services provided by selected Site Reuse Planning Contractor, LaBella. The study encompasses several key components, such as an analysis of the site's existing conditions, an economic and market assessment of the community, formulation of an Alternative Reuse Plan, a public health impact evaluation, and environmental assessments, including demolition and abatement reports. In executing these components, the LaBella team is responsible for providing a comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment, Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, marketing materials for the site, site plans, workforce development strategies, non-site-specific community revitalization strategies, and a customized public engagement plan tailored to the community's needs.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee has been formed to facilitate the preparation of the Binghamton Just Transition Site Reuse Study. Comprised of elected officials, City staff, a Broome County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) representative, and County Planning, the Committee will be advisory to contribute, review, and offer feedback on documents associated with the Study. The Steering Committee's "kickoff meeting" will take place in May 2023.

Program, outline the project's intent and scope, and gather initial input for the Study. Additional Steering Committee meetings will be convened throughout the Binghamton Just Transition Site Reuse Study process.

As the primary group directing the development of all planning documents, the Steering Committee will be presented with Study planning documents during meetings and supply the consultant team with feedback and critiques before finalization. Additionally, during celebrations and events, the Steering Committee will be tasked with disseminating information about the project within their professional networks in Broome County and across their community.

Steering Committee members will also play a crucial role in ensuring the NYSERDA Just Transition plan reflects the values and aspirations of the Binghamton community.

The members of the Binghamton Just Transition Steering Committee include:

- Sarah Glose, Director of Economic Development, City of Binghamton
- Joel Boyd, Asst Director of Economic Development, City of Binghamton
- Pat McGinnis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, City of Binghamton
- Dr. Juliet Berling, Director of Planning, Housing, and Community Development, City of Binghamton
- Dan Maerkl Commissioner of Public Works, City of Binghamton
- Ron Lake, P.E. City Engineer, City of Binghamton
- Megan Heiman, Deputy Mayor, City of Binghamton
- Beth Lucas, Director of Planning & Economic Development, Broome County
- Brendan O'Bryan, Director of Community & Economic Development, The Agency Broome County
- Jen Yonkoski, Executive Director, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS)

The Steering Committee will meet a minimum of three times beginning in May 2023.

HYBRID FORMAT

All meetings and open houses will be in-person and via internet-based video conferencing. This online format enables participants to view presentations by consultants and listen to discussions among Steering Committee members. In addition, during the public comment segment of the Steering Committee meetings and the general comments period of the open house meetings, the public will have the opportunity to interact with the consultant team and Steering Committee by asking questions.

Meeting materials will be accessible on the Binghamton Just Transition [website](#) the day following the conclusion of the meeting. The public can submit comments or inquiries at the meeting using an online survey.

All meetings will be documented, and minutes will be prepared as an integral part of the Just Transition Site Reuse Plan.

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMPONENTS

Public involvement is a crucial aspect that will significantly impact the outcome and success of the project. Therefore, the Binghamton NYSERDA Just Transition Study planning process will employ diverse tools and methods to guarantee that all interested parties are appropriately informed about project events, key project milestones, and draft materials requiring review. The following tools and techniques will be utilized to achieve this public engagement objective:

- **Stakeholder interviews:** Engaging with stakeholders in one-on-one or small group interviews will provide valuable insights and help identify concerns, priorities, and opportunities specific to the community.
- **Public Meetings:** Regularly scheduled public meetings will allow community members to stay informed, voice their opinions, and contribute to decision-making.
- **NYSERDA Just Transition Kickoff Meeting:** This initial meeting will introduce the project's scope, objectives, and timeline to stakeholders, setting the stage for an inclusive planning process.
- **Open house to present draft Site Reuse and pre-development strategies:** An open house will showcase draft site reuse plans and pre-development design, allowing the public to provide feedback and engage in discussions with project team members.
- **Final Open House - Public presentation of Final Reuse Study findings:** The culmination of the planning process will be presented at a final open house, where the public can review the study findings and discuss the proposed strategies and recommendations.
- **Website:** A dedicated project website, or a page on the City's website, will provide a central hub for up-to-date information, meeting materials, and opportunities for public input, ensuring accessibility for all interested parties.
- **Media:** Utilizing local media outlets, such as newspapers, radio, social media, and television, will help disseminate information about the project and its progress, reaching a wider audience within the community.
- **Additional outreach strategies:** The project team will employ other targeted outreach efforts, including, email newsletters, and flyers, to promote public engagement and foster a sense of ownership among community members.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Throughout the Binghamton planning process, key individuals identified by the Steering Committee will be interviewed. These interviews will be conducted in person or via telephone, and their results will be summarized. In addition, the Project Team will aim to engage with a diverse range of people from various backgrounds for the duration of the project. These groups are likely to include:

- **Elected and government officials:** These individuals play vital roles in representing the community's interests, implementing local statutes, and receiving and owning all products. As a result, their active involvement in the planning process is essential. The officials participating may include (but are not limited to) the Mayor, City Council members, and other relevant representatives.

- Community groups, organizations, and non-profits: These entities serve numerous functions within the community and can be either informal or formally recognized. Examples of organizations with a potential direct interest in the Study operating in the City of Binghamton and surrounding areas include (but are not limited to):
 - Broome County Chamber of Commerce
 - Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study
 - Broome County IDA (The Agency)
 - Neighborhood groups
- Property and business owners: As the Study planning process will involve discussions about future land use and reuse policies, property and business owners (direct stakeholders) connected to lands identified in the Study are encouraged to actively participate.
- Real Estate and Economic Development contacts: Real Estate Developers, brokers, and agents, educational and other organizations that contribute or have knowledge of economic development drivers for/in the City and region.
- General public: To gather community input on various topics raised during the planning process, three public meetings will be held to facilitate discussions regarding the Study and the site's future. The general public's involvement will help gather information on the Study, provide input, and share their vision with local leaders and the Project Team.

The consultant team will initiate the engagement process by conducting telephone interviews with key stakeholders to identify project-related issues and opportunities. The information obtained during these meetings will inform the public engagement process and may lead to modifications to the public engagement plan. Stakeholder interview questions may include:

- What are the current assets in the neighborhood?
- What are the impediments to redevelopment in the neighborhood?
- What potential opportunities could the plan support?
- Does your community's neighborhood need improvements to public realm amenities or infrastructure?
- Are there uses you want to see more or less of in your community, including within the existing Former Cogeneration Power Plant site?
- Are there any stakeholders not already included that we should be sure to involve in the process?

- Are there any hot-button issues we should be aware of that haven't already been discussed here?

PUBLIC MEETINGS

There will be three public meetings during the planning process. Like the Steering Committee meetings, all public meetings will be held in a hybrid format with virtual and in person options.

Public Meeting 1: Kickoff

Objective: To inform the community of the process and confirm the vision and goals in the City's application and prior planning studies. As part of this initial public meeting, the initial findings of the Former Cogeneration Power Plant's existing conditions report and Economic and Market analysis will be reviewed.

Format: 90-minute, in-person open house with a virtual component.

Participants: Stakeholders and the general public

Schedule: TBD (June 2023)

Roles: LaBella and the NYSERDA Project Manager will summarize the Just Transition Site Reuse Plan process. The consultant team will divide participants into breakout groups. Each group will examine a map of the study area and will be asked to identify by category what is important to them, what is needed in the study area, etc. Breakout groups will report back to the group as a whole. The LaBella team will then record and summarize comments from the meeting.

Public Meeting 2: Review of the Draft Site Re-use and Pre-development Strategies

Objective: Using information gathered during the analysis and site identification stages, draft Site Reuse and pre-development strategies will be presented for public input. The public will be allowed to review and provide input on the draft recommendations either in person at the public workshop or via an online survey following the public workshop. Public comments received will be considered and incorporated into the Draft Reuse Study as necessary and appropriate.

Format: 90-minute, in-person open house with a virtual component. Suggested outdoor location.

Participants: Stakeholders and general public

Schedule: TBD (Target: September 2023)

Roles: LaBella will present the draft Reuse Plan recommendations and proposed strategies and take questions and comments from the public, including the vision and goals identified by the steering committee, using visual display boards. Community members may comment on potential projects and plan components by visiting stations throughout the meeting room and speaking with consultant team members. The LaBella team will then record and summarize comments from the meeting.

Public Meeting 3: Final Reuse Strategy for the City of Binghamton

Objective: A public information meeting will be held to present the final Site Reuse Plan. The Steering Committee will review and approve the Final Reuse Plan before the public information meeting. The public will be allowed to review and provide input on the draft recommendations in person at the

public workshop or via an online survey to follow the public meeting. Public comments received will be considered and incorporated into the Study as necessary and appropriate.

Format: In-person open house with a virtual component.

Participants: Stakeholders and general public

Schedule: TBD (Target: December 2023)

Roles: LaBella will present the final Site Reuse Plan recommendations and take questions and comments from the public. The LaBella team will then record and summarize comments from the meeting.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The consultant team will establish a project website or work with the City to populate their website with information on the Just Transition program. The website or info on the City's website will help with and/or may include the following:

- Share content with the public (i.e., meeting summaries, maps, concepts and plans, pictures, links, etc.);
- Public outreach (i.e., public workshop announcements, etc.);
- Obtain public input (each post/page will include information on how to provide comments); and
- Conduct online surveys (i.e., Survey Monkey)

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff from the consultant team, Steering Committee members, and/or Town staff may also engage the community in non-traditional community engagement formats if time permits with the schedule. Potential additional community engagement opportunities include:

- Local presentations: Presentations to community groups.
- Booth at a community event: A presence at an event to provide community members with information about the program and to gather input. The Steering Committee will establish appropriate event(s) or settings.