

AMERICAN
RESCUE PLAN ACT
ARPA

CITY OF KINGSTON
ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN
2022



The City of

Kingston, NY

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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Kingston Stakeholders:

Coming upon nearly two years since the COVID-19 epidemic first started to severely impact the City's way of life, while there are signs of progress mitigating the spread of the virus, the pandemic is still disrupting many aspects of Kingston's economy and living conditions. Fortunately, City staff and elected leaders, the business sector, regional officials, parties in the non-profit sector, and residents of the City as a whole have come together and are cooperating on responding to and overcoming the social and economic

effects that are rippling through all parts of Kingston's and Ulster County's economy. Also meeting this moment of crisis, the Federal government made significant funding available to the City under the American Rescue Plan, in order to enable an effective response to and recovery from the epidemic and the social and economic havoc it has wreaked.

Within these pages, my administration has set forth an ***Economic Recovery Plan*** that details how \$17.3 Million in Federal support and stimulus funding is proposed to be applied over the next five years in order to comprehensively restore community health and wellness and implement a broad and sustainable local economic recovery.

We all depend on good health, decent homes, quality jobs and infrastructure, and a vibrant economy. Through careful planning and working together we can ensure that Kingston remains a great place to live, work and play.

I request your active involvement in putting this ***Economic Recovery Plan*** into action.

Steven T. Noble
Mayor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR – Steven T. Noble

COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT – Honorable Andrea Shaut

COMMON COUNCIL

January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023

- ▶ Honorable Barbara Hill, Ward 1
- ▶ Honorable Carl Frankel, Ward 2
- ▶ Honorable Reynolds Scott-Childress, Ward 3
- ▶ Honorable Rita Worthington, Ward 4
- ▶ Honorable Naimah Muhammad, Ward 5
- ▶ Honorable Anthony Davis, Ward 6
- ▶ Honorable Michael Olivieri, Ward 7
- ▶ Honorable Steven Schabot, Ward 8
- ▶ Honorable Michele Hirsch, Ward 9

ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASK FORCE

- ▶ Steven T. Noble, Mayor
- ▶ John Tuey, Comptroller
- ▶ John Schulthels, P.E., City Engineer
- ▶ Summer Smith, Director of Communications & Engagement
- ▶ Ruth Ann Devitt-Frank, Director of Grants Management

CITY OFFICE & DEPARTMENT HEADS

- ▶ Daniel Baker, Assessor
- ▶ Amanda Bruck, Director of Community Development
- ▶ Suzanne Cahill, Director of Planning Department
- ▶ Jackie DeCicco, Executive Secretary of Civil Service Office
- ▶ Ruth Ann Devitt-Frank, Director of Grants Management
- ▶ Emily Flynn, Director of Health & Wellness
- ▶ Barbara Graves-Poller, Corporate Counsel
- ▶ Judith Hansen, Water Department Superintendent
- ▶ Stephan Knox, Director of Building Safety
- ▶ Kyle McIntosh, Director of Information Technology
- ▶ Ed Norman, Department of Public Works Superintendent
- ▶ Chris Rea, Fire Chief
- ▶ John Schulthels, P.E., City Engineer
- ▶ Bartek Starodaj, Director of Housing
- ▶ Lynsey Timbrouck, Director of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Egidio Tinti, Police Chief
- ▶ Ellsa Tinti, City Clerk
- ▶ Summer Smith, Director of Communications and Community Engagement
- ▶ Tawana Washington, Director of Human Rights



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One of the many vibrant murals created for the annual O+ festival enlivens this public space; celebrates Kingston's rich history, culture, and diverse population; and contributes to attracting visitors and residents who bolster the City's standing as a regional hub for the arts.

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The midtown arts district supports and nurtures an inclusive arts community in the City of Kingston while contributing to the ongoing growth of a creative economy.

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 - 5. Suzanne Cahill, Director of Planning Department**
 - 6. John Schultels, PE, City Engineer**
 - 7. Daniel Baker, Assessor**
 - 8. Kevin Corte, Director of Housing**
 - 9. Chris Rea, Deputy Fire Chief**

10. Lynsey Timbrouck, Director of Parks and Recreation
11. Egidio Tinti, Police Chief
12. Summer Smith, Director of Communications and Community Engagement
13. Judith Hansen, Water Department Superintendent
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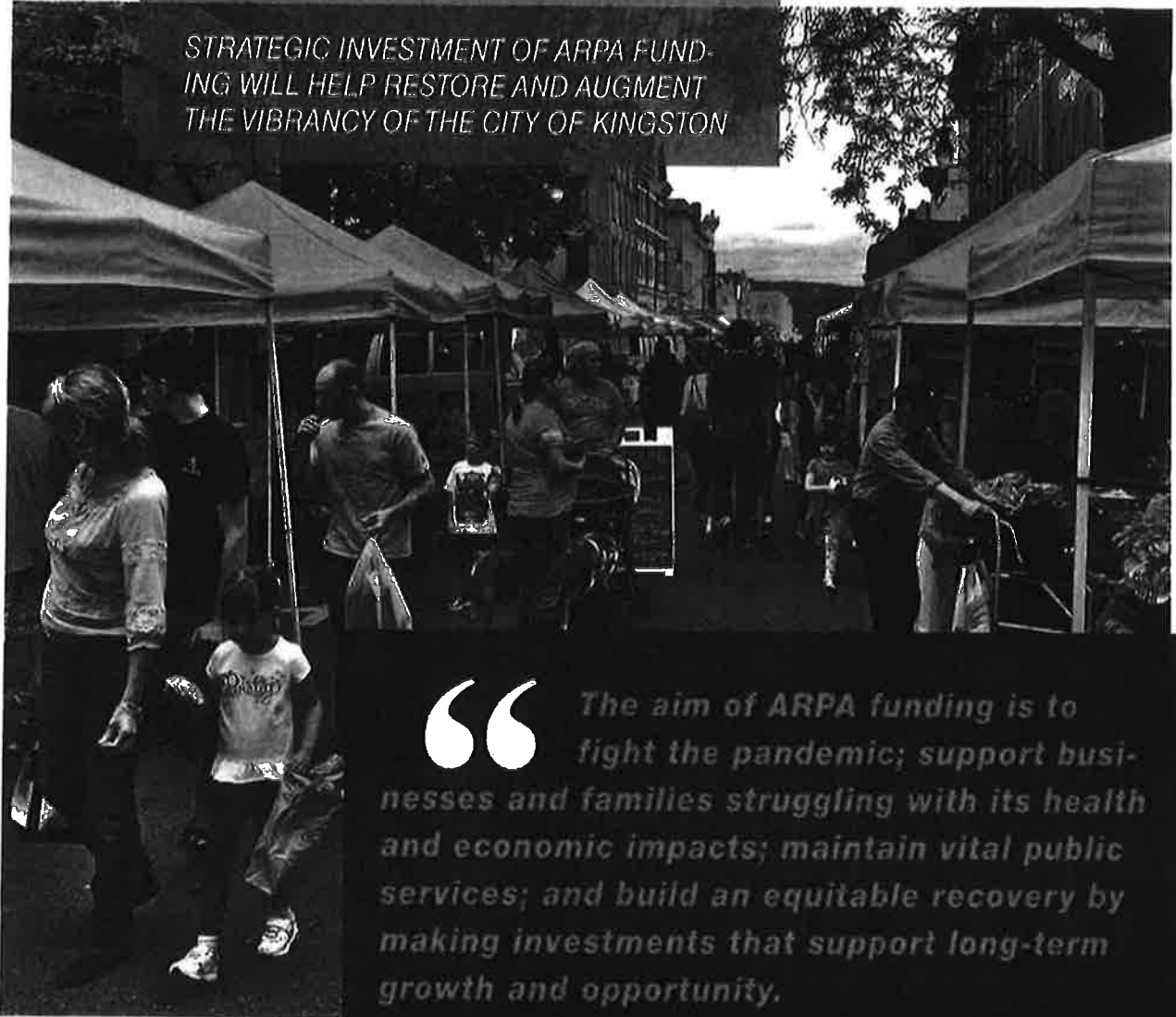
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STRATEGIC INVESTMENT OF ARPA FUNDING WILL HELP RESTORE AND AUGMENT THE VIBRANCY OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON



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The aim of ARPA funding is to fight the pandemic; support businesses and families struggling with its health and economic impacts; maintain vital public services; and build an equitable recovery by making investments that support long-term growth and opportunity.

The careful planning that has gone into creating this Economic Recovery Plan has generated actionable strategies that will help the City of Kingston wisely invest the ARPA funds to achieve these important goals that are fundamental to restoring and strengthening the vitality of our community.

- STEVEN T. NOBLE

Mayor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ARPA OVERVIEW

The City of Kingston has excellent systems of planning. Likewise, over the last 10 plus years, there have been actions to form multi-party collaboration, strengthen community-based systems, and establish policies and programming that are geared to aiding overall economic development and community health and wellness. Still, COVID-19's onset significantly disrupted City life and the underlying economy of Kingston and the surrounding region. Fortunately, the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides the Kingston City government with a unique opportunity to invest in public health protection and to structure action in order to overcome economic hardship and strengthen the community.

The \$17.3 Million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds made available to the City of Kingston from the US Treasury are proposed to be strategically scheduled and implemented according to this ***Economic Recovery Plan***. The plan will advance public health, safety, and wellness while restoring beneficial business activity to mitigate any lasting impact the pandemic may otherwise have had on the City. It will also support economic development actions, including improvements to broadband, water, and sewer infrastructure as one component of a multi-pronged strategy that will propel the City's economy forward.

As a result of ARPA funding allocations proposed in this ***Economic Recovery Plan***, there will be a strong, immediate and broad-based community recovery from the pandemic. At the same time, these resources are strategically aimed to bolster the economic foundation and stimulate economic growth into the foreseeable future.

PURPOSE & PROCESS OF PLAN

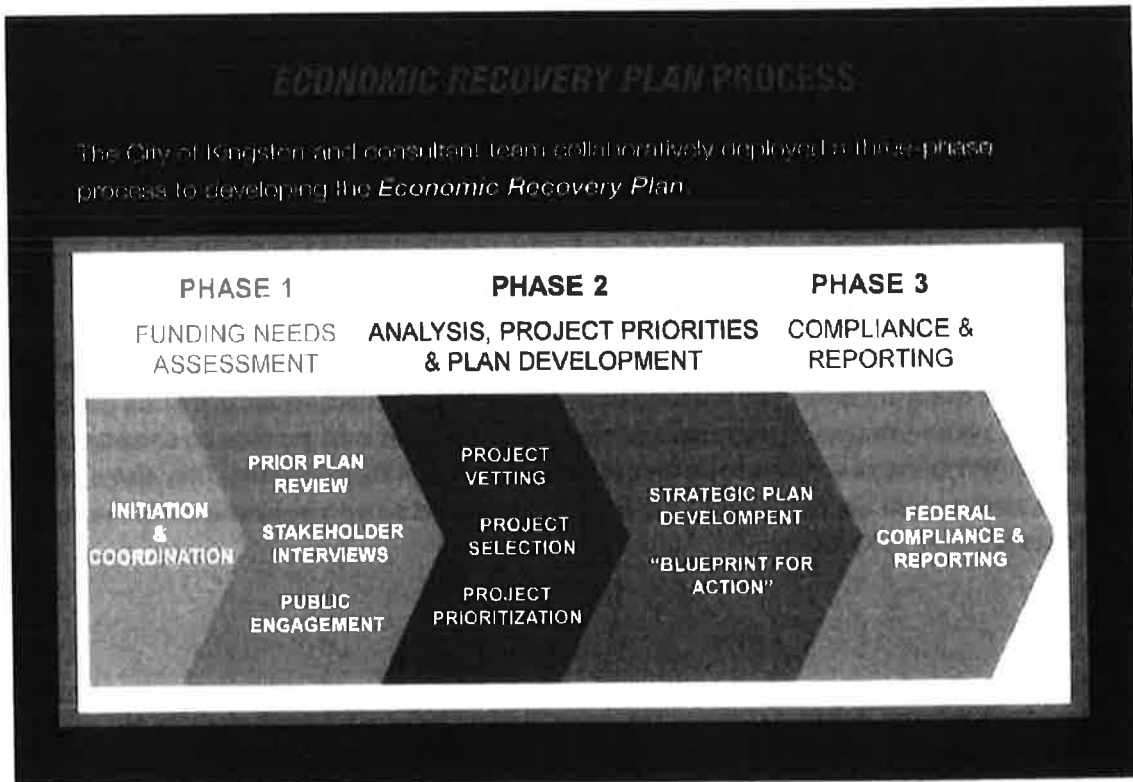
This Plan was formed using a community-based needs assessment that explored the ways the community is being impacted by the pandemic and identified the priority projects that are scheduled to advance under this plan. These implementation actions will at least partially be underwritten by available ARPA funds as a means to prepare and catalyze capital improvements. They also comprise strategic actions that are designed to generate a strong and broad-based economic resurgence from the pandemic in Kingston.

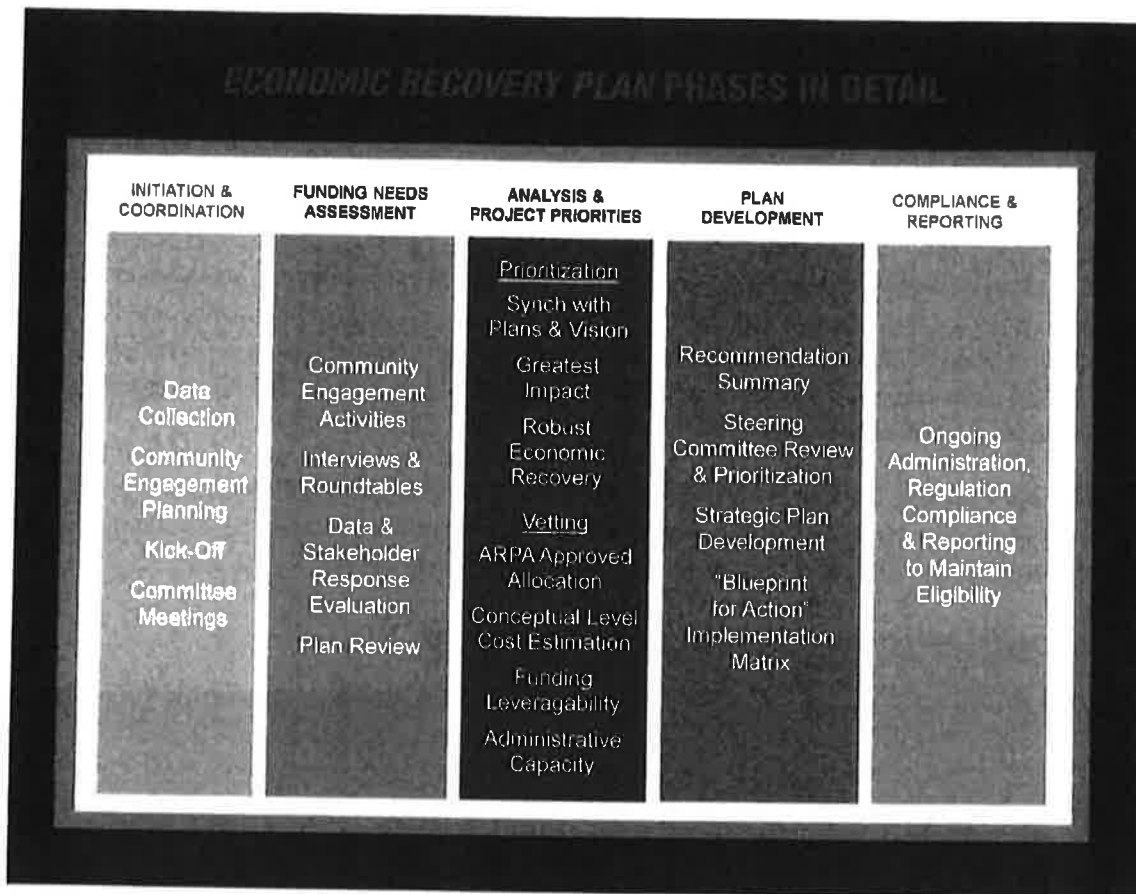
The Plan presents goals for funding and the evaluation criteria that were used to assess whether and how an array of potential projects could generate the desired economic recovery in the community. This evaluation is meant to identify the ways that various projects may align with goals. It was also used to review the relative strengths of different actions compared with one another. Based upon the evaluation criteria, 46 ARPA projects emerged that the City will invest in from a broader set of 156 possible actions that were identified.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN PROCESS

The process of *Economic Recovery Plan* formation generated a broad base of public awareness and support. A major component consisted of a rigorous needs analysis. Varied voices from the community were consulted and provided guidance on needs and the form of possible action. Consulting many people from different groups, who are involved in different parts of Kingston or in varied sectors, helps ensure that the input obtained is balanced and reflects a realistic identification of pressing social and economic issues. It also helps in identifying valid and salient opportunities to restore and enhance the economy, as well as protect public health.

Flowing from the outreach, there was identification of alternative potential ways to use the funding in order to deliver large impacts and support a speedy and robust recovery. There was also an effort to pinpoint the role the City government can play in helping shape investment. The process of project vetting also sought to identify how to generate large and broad benefits for the community. Moreover, it involved identifying particular ways spending can be applied to cause desirable changes in local policy and fundamental improvements in the overall economy.





Based upon the types of project identified, 8 different ARPA allocation categories were established. Projects were ranked across 12 different scoring categories to identify the projects with the highest community benefits. From these projects, 46 actions were elevated for funding. These 46 actions were aligned across these 8 funding categories to be put in motion to advance a resilient economic resurgence.

This Strategic Plan meets the mandates of ARPA. It is in sync with the development vision as expressed in the City's 2016 Comprehensive Plan and many varied supporting subject-specific plans that have been formed in recent years in order to aid resource development and management. The strategic actions in this **Economic Recovery Plan** are designed to address the remediation of COVID and stimulate a broad and equitable economic recovery from the pandemic. By examining the potential fit of proposed ARPA actions against current projects, programs, and plans, there is effort to ensure that these policies and investments will work in concert with past efforts and not have negating effects.

FINDINGS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A key part of plan formation encompassed a program of public involvement that was used to define how the pandemic is influencing the Kingston community and economy. This same opinion gathering provided for identification of the resources needed to implement the *Economic Recovery Plan* to optimally address the many identified needs.

It will not be possible to act on every single recommendation, but this process of input gathering has beneficially tapped into the vast knowledge of residents and the business and non-profit community. Through commentary on experiences people are facing, examination of policies, projects and programming, and feedback on local context, many insights were gained about particular issues, the places where action can be targeted, and unique ways the pandemic is influencing public health and the local economy. It identified pinch-points, highlighted potential priorities for action, plus it generated perspectives on the rationale for and ways to design and implement the actions that are proposed and which have been strategically assembled within this *Economic Recovery Plan*.

The 'Needs Assessment' section of this Plan describes in more detail the techniques used to garner public feedback. It also summarizes key themes frequently discussed and identified as cross-cutting issues which should be addressed within action strategies identified in the 'Funding Plan'.

HIGHLIGHTS

FINDINGS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- ▶ The housing environment is highly stressed and requires a multifaceted response.
- ▶ There is a need to assist small business in immediate need, incentivize creation of employment opportunities, and stimulate desirable economic development and expansion.
- ▶ Invest in revitalizing / enhancing Broadway and the Uptown, Midtown and the Rondout cores, and other key connecting corridors.
- ▶ Advance community wellness using the Live Well Kingston framework.
- ▶ Promote workforce development/ job training and employee-employer matching.
- ▶ Celebrate and support Kingston's diverse cultures, which add to the City's vibrancy.
- ▶ Strategically upgrade aging subsurface infrastructure through prioritization and readiness.
- ▶ Address pent-up and newly emphasized needs for modernizing City buildings and parks.
- ▶ Support healthy growth and development of the City's youth, and implement programs that inclusively bolster autonomy and leadership and aid socialization and educational enrichment.
- ▶ Expand Wi-Fi and assess and build speed and reliability of broadband systems.
- ▶ Increase local food production and procurement and stimulate food system development to address food insecurity.
- ▶ Continue to stimulate active transport and bolster transit service.
- ▶ Establish coordination and communication between parties to leverage resources and advance community development.

FUNDING PLAN

As the *Economic Recovery Plan* investments come together, the City of Kingston has identified key funding allocation categories that are critical to the City's economic future. Investing in multiple categories will effectively continue to re-build the economy that was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The allocation categories are organized to invigorate the roots of Kingston's economy while supporting essential community and social infrastructure that will provide for a versatile local economy. By strategically allocating funds through the identified categories, the City will establish a broad-based recovery that supports innovation and desirable change, while seeking to leverage additional funding to achieve fuller actions. The 8 allocation categories the City has identified are presented below.

PROPOSED ARPA FUNDING PLAN

Action Category	Budget
1. Arts, cultural, & tourism development projects	\$1,465,000
2. Business districts development / business (re)development fund	\$1,200,000
3. Housing action projects	\$4,335,000
4. Non-profit service support	\$1,225,000
5. Parks & greenways improvement fund	\$1,250,000
6. Public health protection / General public support & safety	\$2,125,000
7. Vital community infrastructure projects	\$4,545,000
8. Administration, program delivery, and premium pay	\$1,165,000
TOTAL ARPA PROPOSED BUDGET	\$17,300,000

The table above shows the proposed Economic Recovery Plan budget. The proposed budget is allocated across 8 funding categories which include 46 individual ARPA projects. Budgets for each allocation category are provided below, while detailed information regarding each category is provided within the Funding section of this Plan.

1. ARTS, CULTURAL, & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Project #	Action Description	Budget
121	Support Wayfinding Plan Implementation	\$935,000
94	Advance Arts & Tourism	\$25,000*
91	Fund internship opportunities in art and tourism sector	\$15,000*
93	Small, individual artist grants	\$60,000*
90	Workforce development investment to aid/ catalyze arts industry	\$35,000*
135	Establish arts economic development seed funding	\$30,000*
139	Create special events grant program for arts, cultural, and tourism events	\$375,000*
		\$1,465,000

2. BUSINESS DISTRICTS DEVELOPMENT/ BUSINESS (RE)DEVELOPMENT FUND PROJECTS

Project #	Action Description	Budget
119	Business (Re)Development Fund	\$750,000
140 / 149	Assist minority-owned and woman-owned business enterprises (stabilize MWBEs). Establish incentive funds local businesses can access to expand/hire	\$125,000*
120	Support/fund County-level program(s) to assist City businesses	\$275,000*
114	Initiate creation of a technology center (incubator)	\$50,000*
		\$1,200,000

3. HOUSING ACTION PROJECTS

Project #	Action Description	Budget
27	Support Land Bank rehab of single-family homes on City-owned properties	\$1,000,000
29	Structure transfer of more properties to Landbank for rehabilitation and buy-downs	\$100,000*
88	Provide more funding for energy efficiency upgrades program	\$250,000
6	Update eviction policies and rent stabilization laws	\$50,000*
26	Continue to support the Landlord Ambassador Program	\$250,000
28 / 108	Rehabilitate vacant / abandoned City properties. Establish direct incentives for housing rehabilitation (citywide) / aid housing quality	\$885,000
151	Counteract housing distress/ displacement. Support homeless persons/ households	\$1,000,000
106	Establish pool to incentivize affordable units development & leverage state / federal financing	\$1,000,000*
		\$4,335,000

4. NON-PROFIT SERVICE SUPPORT

Project #	Action Description	Budget
Multiple	Non-Profit Service Providers Services/ Support Program	\$1,225,000

5. PARKS & GREENWAYS IMPROVEMENT FUND

Project #	Action Description	Budget
Multiple	Parks & Greenways Improvement Fund	\$1,250,000*

6. PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECTS

Project #	Action Description	Budget
4	Form food systems strategic plan to address food insecurity	\$50,000*
142	Partner with County on mental health crisis 1st responder service	\$700,000*
36	Bolster safety protocols to ensure parks programming carried out safely	\$10,000*
55	Heighten police community engagement/ involvement, i.e. implement bike patrolling	\$10,000*
59 / 35	Establish an Emergency Communications Plan; updated existing Disaster Plan	\$100,000*
60	Secure soft/hardware to enable inter-departmental communications during hazard events	\$50,000*
86	Implement software to enable electronic site/building plans reviews	\$80,000*
7	Support implementation of ADA accessibility in City	\$100,000*
40	Expand/build-out public Wi-Fi around City properties, including Neighborhood Centers	\$150,000
38 / 39 / 43	Develop construction drawings to renovate the City's three neighborhood centers	\$225,000*
136 / 138	Upgrades to City Hall to replace HVAC and touchless fixtures	\$400,000*
3	Invest in cybersecurity/ remote work support software	\$50,000
33	Develop Fire Station construction drawings.	\$200,000
		\$2,125,000

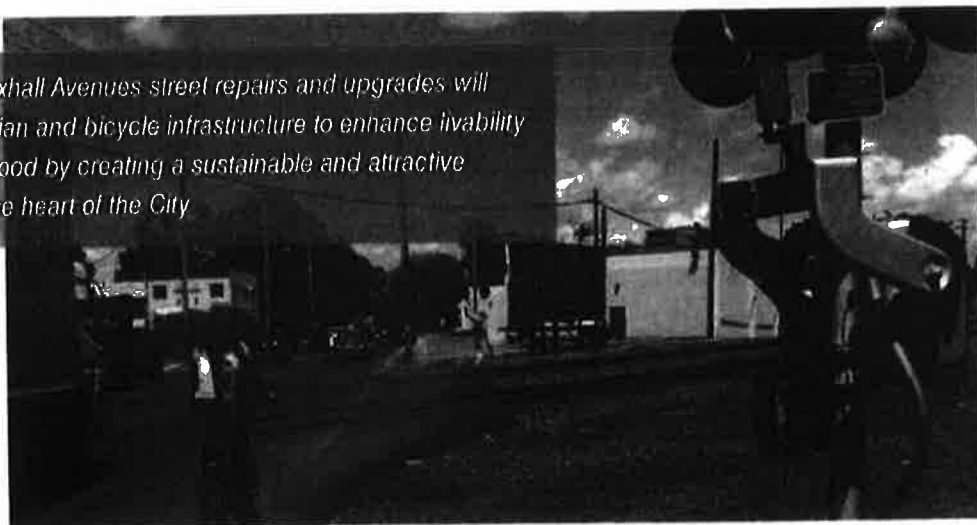
7. VITAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Project #	Action Description	Budget
10 / 69 / 15	Improve Henry Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue/allocate investment in City's sidewalk system on Henry Street Henry Street Lead Line Replacement Pilot project Support sanitary sewer upgrade on Henry Street 	\$1,120,000
22	Design Flatbush Ave / Foxhall Sewer reconstruction & complete street upgrade	\$475,000*
11	Develop a study to replace/standardize 17 pump stations and replace 2 pump stations	\$1,200,000
21	Obtain camera and smoke testing equipment (for sewers)	\$75,000
68	Develop a lead service inventory to identify locations to address	\$75,000*
64	Purchase equipment to address new lead service requirements (water system)	\$150,000
14	Design Albany Ave. complete street with sanitary & storm sewer comprehensive fix	\$1,000,000
65	Repair one water tank	\$350,000
95	Assist County efforts to increase/improve public transit in the City	\$100,000
		\$4,545,000

8. ADMINISTRATION, PROGRAM DELIVERY, AND PREMIUM PAY

Project #	Action Description	Budget
160	Plan Development, Administration and Program Delivery	\$855,000
34	Premium Pay to Essential Workers	\$300,000
		\$1,155,000

Flatbush and Foxhall Avenues street repairs and upgrades will improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to enhance livability in the neighborhood by creating a sustainable and attractive streetscape in the heart of the City



COMPLIANCE & REPORTING SUMMARY

ARPA PROJECT AND FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The U.S. Treasury has detailed a number of compliance and reporting requirements. The City of Kingston falls in the category of ARPA reporting for local governments that have a population less than 250,000 and an allocation of greater than \$10 Million. Based on this category, the City is responsible to report quarterly on projects and expenditures using the U.S. Treasury reporting portal. The U.S Treasury Department urges the implementation of a set of internal controls to best meet compliance and reporting requirements. The **Internal Controls Best Practices** table below, provided by the U.S Treasury, presents a sample of internal controls recommended.

Best Practice	Description	Example
Written policies and procedures	Formal documentation of recipient policies and procedures	Documented procedure for determining worker eligibility for premium pay
Written standards of conduct	Formal statement of mission, values, principles, and professional standards	Documented code of conduct / ethics for subcontractors
Risk-based due diligence	Pre-payment validations conducted according to an assessed level of risk	Enhanced eligibility review of sub-recipient with imperfect performance history
Risk-based compliance monitoring	Ongoing validations conducted according to an assessed level of risk	Higher degree of monitoring for projects that have a higher risk of fraud, given program characteristics
Record maintenance and retention	Creation and storage of financial and non-financial records	Storage of all sub-recipient payment information

ARPA OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

The City of Kingston will receive \$17.3 Million in Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impacts. ARPA, signed into law on March 11th, 2021, is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus intended to catalyze the United States' recovery from the economic and health effects of COVID-19 and the ongoing recession. This influx of federal funding provides essential resources to help individuals, households, and communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic not only recover, but thrive. The Act delivers direct and flexible aid to America's municipalities to provide much-needed relief and recovery.

The pandemic exacerbated deficits and posed unprecedented challenges for public health and the economy. The ARPA legislation is intended to address public health and assist areas of concern including public safety; businesses and economic sustainability; vaccine access; food security; housing needs and rising housing costs; addiction; and mental health. The City plans to pursue qualifying projects that will address long-standing infrastructure issues and meet the needs identified as being the most pressing with projects that deliver the largest public benefit.

The funding provided under ARPA provides the City of Kingston with the opportunity to make strategic investments in long-lived assets as well as cover temporary operating shortfalls until economic conditions and operations normalize. The City aims to address the needs of the community with a balanced approach that assists economic recovery in all sectors, including by potentially bolstering tourism; small business; improving water, sewer and broadband infrastructure; and addressing other identified local and governmental needs. The City is seeking to maximize the opportunity provided by the ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and its efforts to optimize the allocation of these funds by generating a broad base of support and guidance in the development of the strategic plan.

GENERAL PURPOSES ALLOWED FOR ARPA ALLOCATIONS

The segment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocated to state, county, and municipal governments are Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. These allocations have been made to help local governments “turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.”¹ Recipients, including the City of Kingston, may use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for the following eligible uses:



SUPPORT PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENDITURES

Fund COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff.



ADDRESS NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Address economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector.



REPLACE LOST PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUE

Provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic.



PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Support those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors.



INVEST IN WATER, SEWER, AND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Make investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support wastewater and storm-water infrastructure, and expand broadband internet access.

Within the categories of eligible uses, recipient communities have flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet community-specific needs.

¹ *State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Fact Sheet* – United States Federal Reserve, May 2021.

SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide resources to meet the need for an unprecedented public health response from state, local, territorial, and tribal governments through the provision of care for those impacted by the virus and through services that address disparities in public health that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Communities may use this funding to address a range of public health needs across COVID-19 mitigation, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and public health resources. Eligible projects, programs, services, and funding uses include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Vaccination programs and testing.
- ▶ Personal protective equipment purchases.
- ▶ Support for vulnerable populations to access medical or public health services.
- ▶ Public communication efforts.
- ▶ Enhancement of healthcare capacity, including alternative care facilities.
- ▶ Enhancement of public health data systems.
- ▶ Capital investments in public facilities to meet pandemic operational needs.
- ▶ Ventilation improvements in key settings like healthcare facilities.
- ▶ Mental health treatment, substance misuse treatment, and other behavioral health services.
- ▶ Crisis intervention and services or outreach to promote access to mental health and social services.

ADDRESSING THE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS CAUSED BY THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

According to data provided by the United States Treasury, the COVID-19 public health emergency resulted in significant economic hardship for many Americans. As noted by the Treasury, more than 20 million jobs were lost between February and April 2020 "as businesses closed, consumers stayed home, schools shifted to remote education, and travel declined precipitously." To address the negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are eligible for projects, programs, services, and funding uses that serve households, small businesses, and industries impacted by COVID-19. These eligible funding commitments include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Delivering assistance to workers and families, including aid to unemployed workers, job training, aid to households facing food, housing, or other financial insecurity.
- ▶ Supporting small business to address financial challenges caused by the pandemic and aid in a rebound by deploying loans, grants, in-kind assistance, and/or counseling.
- ▶ Speeding the recovery of the tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors, supporting industries that were particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 emergency.
- ▶ Rebuilding public sector capacity, by rehiring public sector staff and/or building internal capacity to successfully implement economic relief programs with investments in data analysis, targeted outreach, technology infrastructure, and/or impact evaluations.

SOURCE: *State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Fact Sheet* – United States Federal Reserve, May 2021.

- ▶ Addressing the disproportionate public health and economic impacts of the crisis – and the exacerbated health and economic inequities – impacting the hardest-hit communities, populations, and households including low-income communities, vulnerable communities, and communities of color by:
 - Addressing health disparities and the social determinants of health.
 - Investing in housing and neighborhoods, such as services to address individuals experiencing homelessness and affordable housing development.
 - Addressing educational disparities.
 - Promoting healthy childhood environments.

REPLACING LOST PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUE

State and local governments that are facing budget shortfalls may use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to avoid cuts to government services. The U.S. Treasury has established a methodology by which each recipient community can calculate its reduction in revenue or elect the standard allowance of up to \$10 million.

PROVIDING PREMIUM PAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Many essential workers who have put their physical well-being at risk to meet the needs of their communities during this public health crisis have not received compensation for the heightened risks they have, and will continue to, experience. Local communities are authorized to commit State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to projects, programs, services, and funding uses including, but not limited to:

- ▶ Grants to private employers of essential workers who must be physically present at their jobs including, among others: staff at nursing homes, hospitals, and home-care settings; workers at farms, food production facilities, grocery stores, and restaurants; public health and safety staff; childcare workers, educators, and school staff; and social service and human services staff.

INVESTING IN WATER, SEWER, AND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Permissible funding commitments include investments in necessary improvements to communities' water, sewer, and broadband infrastructures. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to those that:

- ▶ Address the impacts of climate change.
- ▶ Build, expand, upgrade, or improve an array of drinking water infrastructure such as facilities, transmission, distribution, and storage systems, including the replacement of lead service lines.
- ▶ Address wastewater infrastructure needs, including constructing publicly-owned treatment infrastructure, managing and treating stormwater or subsurface drainage water, facilitating water reuse, and securing publicly-owned treatment works.
- ▶ Address broadband shortfalls and promote high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband coverage to support participation in remote school, healthcare, and work.

SOURCE: *State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Fact Sheet* – United States Federal Reserve, May 2021.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The City of Kingston's ***Economic Recovery Plan*** was formed after months of research, community engagement, and dialogue with stakeholders who have a vested interest in the City's recovery. The ***Economic Recovery Plan*** recognizes the unique opportunity made available through receipt of ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, and it serves as a guiding mechanism for local leaders to identify, prioritize, and address immediate and long-term needs exacerbated and created by the pandemic. This Plan is a living document and will continue to evolve as the City responds to COVID-19.

Community feedback was used to inform the ***Economic Recovery Plan***, while complying with federal guidelines to craft a Plan for the use of ARPA funds. The underlying purpose is to optimize the allocation of the pending \$17.3 Million of ARPA funding in order to alleviate, recover, and mitigate against COVID-19 and its associated impacts. This Plan aims to integrate social and economic programming with the implementation of capital projects in order to address disparities in the City, foster a strong public sector as a partner, and simultaneously leverage greater resources and collaboration that will advance the Plan's recovery goals.

PROCESS

In order to efficiently and effectively evaluate the needs of the community and develop recommendations, the City assembled an ***Economic Recovery Plan*** Task Force. This steering group consisted of Mayor Noble along with several department heads knowledgeable about the ARPA eligible impact areas.

The Task Force guided action to develop the City's ***Economic Recovery Plan***. Weekly advisory meetings were held for the purpose of clear and consistent correspondence, tracking the schedule, and adjusting to unforeseen or new information pertaining to COVID-19 and the local and regional recovery.

In conducting its guidance and review of a prospective use of ARPA funding, the Task Force helped:

1. Frame and prioritize issues;
2. Conduct internal analyses;
3. Undertake community outreach, public engagement and/or public information, and;
4. Prepare for providing implementation support as appropriate and necessary.

The City of Kingston hired Laberge Group as a consultant to provide support on ARPA related matters and assist in fulfilling its mission to identify and fund strategic initiatives that will maximize the benefits derived from its allocation of ARPA aid, promote long-term fiscal health of the City, and comply with US Treasury guidelines and requirements. Laberge Group was responsible for review of previous planning documents and programs, conducting community engagement, developing project needs and prioritization, and forging the **Economic Recovery Plan**. A robust Community Engagement Process was implemented to guide the plan's development.

The Community Engagement Process was a critical component of planning, and it guided development of the **Economic Recovery Plan**. Robust outreach was performed by the City and the **Economic Recovery Plan** Task Force. Public input and feedback was obtained through a series of surveys, meetings, and workshops that engaged City staff, key stakeholders, and the general public.

KEY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES INVOLVED:

1. **Community Survey** – The Community Survey was available both online and in-person for optimal response. Additionally, the survey was available in English and Spanish as the City is home to a relatively high percentage of Spanish-speaking households.
2. **Two (2) Public Meetings** – These were held in October 2021 to inform and engage the public. They were conducted virtually over Zoom as a result of COVID-19 precautions. Recordings were made readily available, in English and Spanish, on the EngageKingston website.
3. **Eighteen (18) Department Head Interviews** – These one-on-one interviews conducted over three months discussed needs for specific projects, program stabilization, expansion, or future direction.
4. **Five (5) Roundtable Sessions** – Broad community-wide stakeholder invitations to the roundtables were circulated throughout the City. These stakeholder consultations, held in October and November 2021, included small focus groups and examined how aid could help various community groups and organizations within Kingston recover from the pandemic.
5. **Four (4) Individual Stakeholder Interviews** – Stakeholders unable to participate in a roundtable session were invited to request one-on-one discussions to share insights on key topics and COVID-19 challenges, and how ARPA funds could be used to benefit the community as a whole.

Following the engagement process, **Economic Recovery Plan** goals were established and potential projects were identified. In an effort to align with the City's overarching objectives, previous plans were considered in order to contemplate ways to build consistency with these and achieve momentum advancing key aligned initiatives. Included in the Appendix to this Plan is a projects matrix that lists a set of potential actions that were identified as needed in order to advance and bolster the economic recovery and public health. Following ARPA eligibility and funding guidelines, over 150 potential programmatic recommendations were determined which can aid the City's social and economic recovery.

A subset of projects were selected for advancement according to this plan after they were classified by ARPA funding allocation categories and assessed for their relative merits and how they fit with

community and project goals and could be expected to generate desirable impacts. The ultimate ranking to select projects that would be assigned for implementation within these categories of economic recovery investment involved making hard choices based on project scoring and community benefit.

Project rankings and selections were made based on scoring criteria that aligned with the City's short-term priorities and long-term vision. The twelve criteria used to determine project ranking, which are described in detail in the Funding Plan section of this plan, included establishing whether a prospective project:

- ▶ Involves an asset considered essential to the functioning of the community and the economy.
- ▶ Is consistent with a need previously identified in a community planning document (such as the Comprehensive Plan) and is an established policy objective.
- ▶ Has a high level of project readiness, including detailed rationale, cost basis information, and appropriate documentation.
- ▶ Constitutes an investment that will stimulate economic growth.
- ▶ Protects public health.

PLAN ADOPTION

Upon completion, the Draft **Economic Recovery Plan** was referred to the City's elected Common Council. During this time, the Plan objectives and strategies underwent Common Council consideration as well as evaluation by the Finance Committee. Prior to plan adoption, a public meeting was held in conjunction with the Common Council's review and consideration. This meeting was promoted well in advance to heighten attendance and participation was encouraged during the meeting. Comments and insights provided by the public were evaluated for potential incorporation when refining the final plan. The final revised plan was then returned to the Common Council for adoption.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The City of Kingston, located in the southern portion of New York on the west bank of the Hudson River, serves as the County Seat for Ulster County. Kingston is one of the oldest cities in the country. As of the 2019 Census, the City has an area of 7.49 square miles and a population of 3,191.5 persons per square mile. The City is 91 miles (146 km) north of New York City and is 59 miles (95 km) south of the State's capital, Albany. Kingston is grouped within the New York metropolitan area around Manhattan by the United State Census Bureau. Due to its strategic location and access to both the railroad and canal connections, the City became a transport hub within the nineteenth century.

Dating back as far as 1614, Kingston is well-known for its rich history and vibrant cultural life. As early as 1614, the Dutch established a trading post at Ponckhockie and the Dutch cultural influence remained strong through the nineteenth century. The first permanent settler, Thomas Chambers, was recorded in 1653. By 1654, European settlers began purchasing land from the Esopus Native Americans, and in 1661 the settlement was granted a charter as a separate municipality.

The City was designated as New York's first state capital during the Revolutionary War, being one of the largest Hudson River settlements at the time, and was burned by British troops in 1777.

NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE CITY OF KINGSTON

There are ten (10) neighborhoods within the City of Kingston, which include the Lucas/Hurley, Washington Ave, Wilbur, Uptown, Rondout, Midtown, Albany, Flatbush, The Avenues, and Ponckhockie. The Uptown Stockade Area was the location of the first capital of New York State, Midtown is largely commercial and is home to the historic City Hall, and Downtown is located within the Rondout-West Strand Historic District on the City's waterfront. The Uptown Stockade Area, the Rondout-West Strand Historic District, and the Downtown Waterfront Area are recognized on the National Register of Historic Places. As one of the nation's oldest cities, Kingston has undergone substantial change throughout its history to meet the ever-evolving needs of its people while celebrating its contributions to the state and national landscape.



POPULATION

As of the 2020 Census, the City has a population of 24,069 and is Ulster County's most populous area. Kingston has experienced a slight population increase between 2010 and 2020 from 23,893 to 24,069 revealing a degree of urban growth. Unlike the City, Ulster County experienced a minor decrease in population between 2010 and 2020 from 182,492 to 181,851.

There are various causes that can lead to population growth especially when considering urban areas such as Kingston. These causes include, but are not limited to, the natural increase in population, migration, industrialization, commercialization, advancement of transport, and urbanization. Between 2020 and 2021, migration was one cause of population growth within the City in response to COVID-19. New York City residents migrated north to the City of Kingston and other nearby places in the midst of the pandemic to retreat from high density living. As a result, displacement has occurred within the last two (2) years posing unprecedented challenges for the community. The impacts of this population gain are City-wide and cross-sector, impacting housing, education, job opportunity, and access to resources.

	2010	2018	2010 to 2018 Change	2010 to 2018 Percent Change	2020
Total Population	23,893	23,210	-683	-3%	24,069 (+ 859 from 2018)
Age					
<20	5,732	5,362	-360	-6%	N/A
20-29	3,334	3,469	135	4%	N/A
30-44	4,589	4,712	123	3%	N/A
45-64	6,599	6,072	-527	-8%	N/A
65-74	1,674	2,042	368	22%	N/A
75-84	1,231	943	-288	-23%	N/A
85+	734	590	-144	-20%	N/A

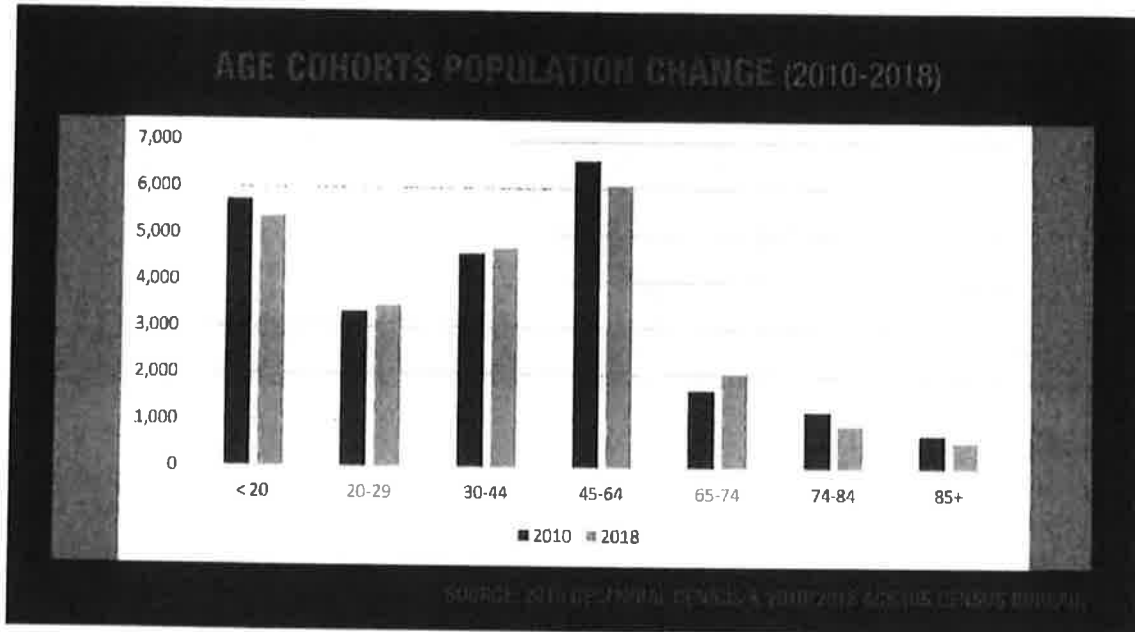
SOURCE: 2010 & 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS & 2018/2019 ACS (US CENSUS BUREAU)

The resident median age in 2019 was 37.2. As per the 2010 Decennial Census, the largest age cohort within Kingston ranges from 45 to 64, the second largest age cohort is all persons younger than 20, and the third largest age cohort ranges from 30 to 44. The age cohort, 65 to 74, experienced a 22% increase between 2010 and 2018, which is significant when compared to all other cohorts listed. Although there was an increase in the cohort, it has minimal effect on the median age because it is the third smallest cohort within the overall population.

Ulster County appears to have an aging population as the median age has increased from 41.2 in 2010 to 43.7 in 2018. Census 2019 estimates indicate the median age for Ulster County is 44. Therefore, there is nearly a seven (7) year difference in median age between Ulster County and the

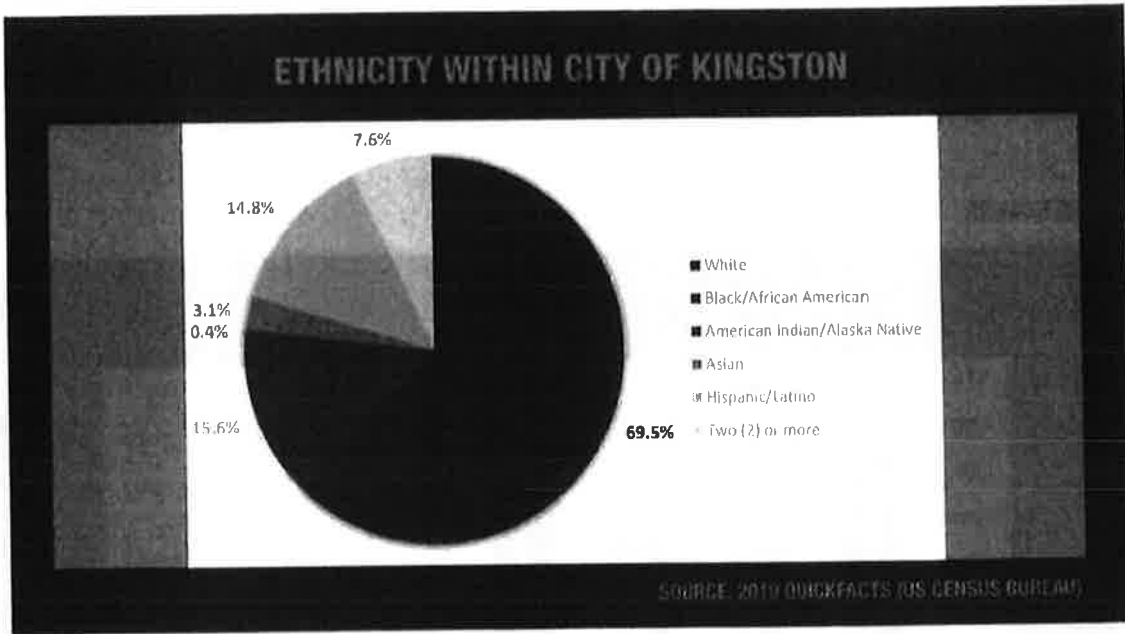
City of Kingston. This is consistent with the widely accepted notion that young adults/professionals typically migrate to urban centers for job opportunity and the fast-paced lifestyle.

HOUSEHOLDS



U.S. Census Data for years 2015-2019 indicates the average household size in the City of Kingston is 2.46 persons, and some 82.4% of the population has been living in the same house for over one (1) year. Residents and stakeholders, alike, have expressed their concern for resident displacement as a result of COVID-19, the housing shortage, and lack of affordable units.

In terms of access to technology, 89.25% of households within the City have access to a computer while 83.2% of households have a broadband and internet subscription in 2019. These percentages are not indicative of the quality of technological resources. Therefore, although a household may have internet, it cannot be assumed it is reliable. COVID-19 highlighted the importance of technology in the twenty-first century. Technology granted educational institutions and places of employment the capacity to work remote during the shutdown. This reliance also shed light on inequitable access to resources, which in turn, directly impacts access to opportunity.



ETHNICITY

The City of Kingston is heterogeneous, which contributes to its vibrant and distinguishing characteristics. Reflected in 2019 estimates, 17% of households speak a language other than English at home, which reflects the diverse communities within Kingston. Despite these diverse backgrounds, they all have one thing in common, Kingston. Kingston is home to many, and just as the City impacts the lives of those who live there, those who live there shape the City. Kingston embraces, celebrates, and embodies the custom and traditions of its residents.

EDUCATION

Census 2019 estimates indicate 84.8% of the City population has obtained a high school degree or equivalent, while only 26.8% have received a bachelor's degree or higher. Many local organizations involved in workforce development trainings expressed interest in maintaining online programs to supplement in-person classes. On the other hand, art organizations expressed their concern for online learning because nothing can replicate the dynamic discussion and interaction that takes place within the classroom.

INCOME

Income levels in Ulster County are stagnant or declining except for the highest earning households. In fact, the lowest earning households have experienced the largest decline in income between 2010 and 2018, with incomes decreased by 14.3% accounting for inflation. The 2018 median household income in Kingston was \$51,299. The per income capita in the past twelve (12) months in 2018 was \$27,716. Some 19.2% of the population was deemed "persons in poverty" according to the Census data, which includes the youth population.

HOUSING

There is a total of 10,592 housing units in Kingston with 1,231 (12%) units classified as vacant. The City of Kingston has a relatively older housing stock. A quarter of Ulster County's housing units were

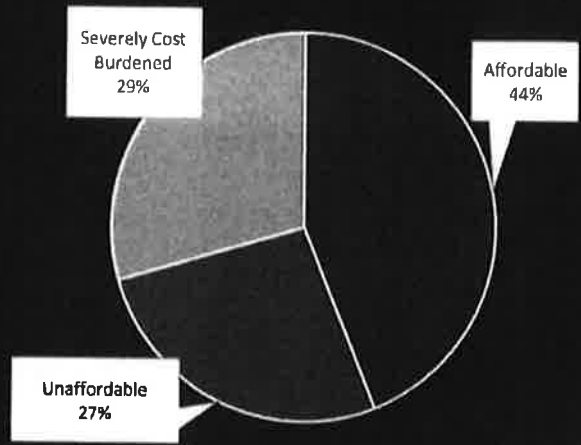
built over eighty years ago and nearly 60% built over 50 years ago. Older houses have a higher risk of containing lead-based paint, needing substantial structural repair, and replacement of major systems like heating or plumbing. In addition, the lack of insulation and lower quality windows result in higher heating and cooling costs. Comparatively, over half (51%) of Kingston's housing stock was built prior to 1940, and less than 10% of the housing stock was built post-1980. Housing rehabilitation has been offered and assisted through City's Community Development Department.

CITY OF KINGSTON HOUSING COST BURDEN ALL INCOME LEVELS

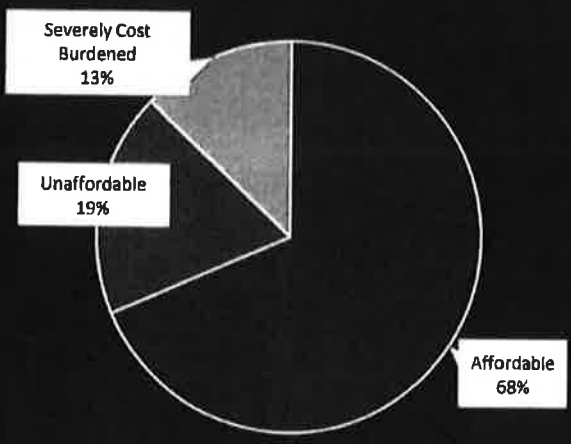
“With people moving to Kingston during the pandemic, housing access has become a huge crisis. Rents are too high and landlords are requiring more and more documentation to lease a place. City people are outbidding each other with cash offers, making it near impossible for people who already live and work here to purchase a home.”

“I am incredibly fortunate and have housing security in a way I see many long time Kingston residents lack.”

RENTERS HOUSING BURDEN



OWNERS HOUSING BURDEN



ALL DATA IS BASED ON THE 2019 CENSUS AND THE 2019 HOUSING COST BURDEN SURVEY.

The housing stock in urban centers, including the City of Kingston, are mostly renter occupied. This coincides with 2018 ACS Data showing 41% (4,356 units) are owner occupied, and 47% (5,005 units) are renter occupied. Data provided by US HUD and the 2018 ACS indicate that 29% of renters within the City of Kingston are severely cost burdened (spend more than 50% of their total income on housing costs), while another 56.1% of renters are moderately cost burdened (spend more than 30% of their total income on housing costs). Nearly half of the housing units within Kingston are renter occupied, and more than half of those renters, almost one-third of the City's population, is moderately to severely cost burdened.

According to the Ulster County Housing Action Plan (2021), median wages are down 4% county-wide. Additionally, renters have disproportionately low wages when compared to homeowners. Owner occupied household income went down by 3% while renter household income dropped by 13%. The median gross rent is \$1,050, median home value is \$177,500, monthly home cost with a mortgage are \$1,738, and monthly home cost without a mortgage is \$756.

	# of Residents Employed in Industry	% of Employed Residents	Avg. Industry Wage in Ulster County
Retail Trade	1,397	11.9%	\$30,475
Finance/Insurance	745	6.3%	\$65,787
Healthcare/Social Assistance	2,464	21.0%	\$43,258
Educational Services	1,274	10.9%	\$34,658
Accommodations/Food Services	1,041	8.9%	\$22,288

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

NYS Department of Labor research found that the top five (5) industries within the City of Kingston include: retail trade, finance and insurance, healthcare and social assistance, educational services, and accommodations/food services. When combined, these industries account for 59% of employed residents. It is crucial to note that several of these industries were identified as those hardest hit by COVID-19 with an emphasis on healthcare, educational services, and food services. Food services, showing the lowest paid wage average in Ulster County, were impacted tremendously during the pandemic leaving the low-earning residents financially vulnerable.

GOALS OF THE PLAN

OVERVIEW

Kingston's \$17.3 million American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocation will be strategically allotted in a planned schedule of investment designed to address the City's pressing needs. This investment schedule is organized in order to recover from and mitigate the severe effects of COVID-19, inclusive of its many associated social and economic impacts. Importantly, this local program of economic recovery and stimulus is intended to enable a broad-based response to and dynamic emergence from the pandemic.

Community involvement is critical to economic recovery. Accordingly, there was outreach to identify needs arising around the pandemic. The broad-based input gathering generated understanding of particular ways COVID-19 has and is impacting the Kingston community. It helps pinpoint strategies for economic revitalization through examination of local context, exploration into dimensions of need and is based upon a review of past planning.

The interested public, City elected officials, municipal department heads, and identified local stakeholders as key partners and participants were all requested to supply perspectives. By consulting people of varied backgrounds, the objective was to obtain robust insights in defining the recovery plan's goals.

RECOVERY VISION

The overarching aim of this *Economic Recovery Plan* emphasizes a broad and sustainable recovery. The process and tactics that may be used vary by topic, location, or objective. Recovery for the City of Kingston means supporting the whole community, protecting public health, and fostering robust economic development. Recovery aims to provide for resilient local systems, improve critical infrastructure conditions, address the housing crisis, increase public and active transportation, enhance educational opportunities, and prompt equitable outcomes that reinforce Kingston as a great place and community.

PROJECT GOALS

The following goals advance the City's vision and were established based on guidance from the community. Challenges created or exacerbated by the pandemic were identified and discussed preceding the identification of response goals, recognizing that many aspects of everyday life were significantly affected by COVID-19, ranging from the economy to public wellness.

TRAJECTORIES PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Steve Noble of the City of Kingston, NY, declared a State of Emergency in March 2020 and a city-wide shelter-in-place recommendation went into effect to reduce the risk of Kingston community members being exposed to and contracting the virus. All city schools closed, after-school and parks department programming was suspended, non-essential City meetings were cancelled or postponed, and organizations and businesses were required to cut capacity by 50% for regular business as well as for all events and other gatherings. Essential City services continued by appointment only.

As a result of these emergency measures, the City encountered unforeseen expenses for which we request reimbursement from FEMA:

- ▶ To protect City staff and the public they continue to serve during the pandemic, we conducted comprehensive facility disinfection and purchased additional PPE and disinfectant supplies for offices and public areas at City Hall, fire houses and equipment, and the water department. Cleaning/disinfection began in early March and has continued regularly since then. Additionally, in April 2020, the water department contracted for professional emergency cleaning of the water filtration plant that serves the entire City in order to mitigate risk when a plant employee tested positive for COVID.
- ▶ The City collaborated with Ulster County to establish a centrally located COVID drive-through testing site in Midtown Kingston, which is home to US Census Tracts 9520, 9521 and 9519. These tracts have poverty rates of 24.6%, 22.5%, and 20.3% respectively (ACS 2018 5Year Survey) and are the poorest in all of Ulster County. Moreover, although the City's overall population is 18.9% Black or African American and 14.5% are Latino or Hispanic, 64% and 67.5% of these residents respectively live in Tracts 9520, 9521 and 9519 combined. We purchased traffic cones to delineate lanes for safe traffic control and committed to providing ongoing police security for this site. The testing site opened in April 2020 and has operated continuously since then; it will continue to operate into the foreseeable future.
- ▶ As per the New York State Education Department, 61% of students enrolled in the Kingston City School District are considered economically disadvantaged and qualify for free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch (data.nysed.gov); when schools closed, most of these students immediately lost access to regular meals. In response, the City, County and a group of local community service organizations formed the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative (KEFC) to alleviate food security risks for vulnerable residents. From March through June, the Mayor's office and other city staff provided physical and financial support to the KEFC hotline and distribution centers. This included grants to two organizations that specialize in food distribution to the needy and an agreement with the local YMCA to provide a central space for distribution. The City also rented tenting and refrigeration units for storage of purchased and donated food.
- ▶ The YMCA center closed at the end of June, but the Hodge Community Center and People's Place Pantry, which began operating as distribution centers in March, continue to do so. Funding the City provided to the Collaborative supported staff and supplies at these

two centers between March 18 and May 15, 2020. Additional City of Kingston Statistics (ACS 2018): 18% of all residents live in poverty 28.6% of all children live in poverty 14.5% of people are from a Hispanic or Latino ethnic background 69.9% White 16.9% Black or African American 6.9% Mixed Race 6.3% Other

2. The City of Kingston requests reimbursement for overtime costs incurred by our Police Department between the end of August 2020 and March 26, 2021. We also request reimbursement for a COVID-19 health and safety direct mail piece that was distributed to over 15,000 households in order to reach all Kingston residents with important pandemic information and contact numbers in March 2020.

The Police Department continued to provide security at the City's COVID-19 testing site, which had originally opened in spring 2020. Kingston's first reimbursement request submitted in October 2020 included dates from the site opening to the end of August 2020. We now request reimbursement for additional Police overtime hours spent providing security at this same location from the end of August through March 6, 2021, when the testing site closed. The testing site was located in Midtown Kingston, which includes the three highest-poverty census tracts in Ulster County, NY (Poverty Rates are 24-26%). The neighborhood is also home to the City's highest number of minority residents. All testing was free of charge. The direct mail piece mentioned above was sent to all households in the City of Kingston in March 2020, when the Mayor declared a citywide State of Emergency.

The mailer included basic facts about COVID-19 and important contacts for additional information and food resources. It was printed in both Spanish and English; Spanish is the first language of over 16% of residents and many do not speak any English. The City engaged a local mailing house to print, assemble, and post this important informational piece. Copies of the flyer are included as attachments.

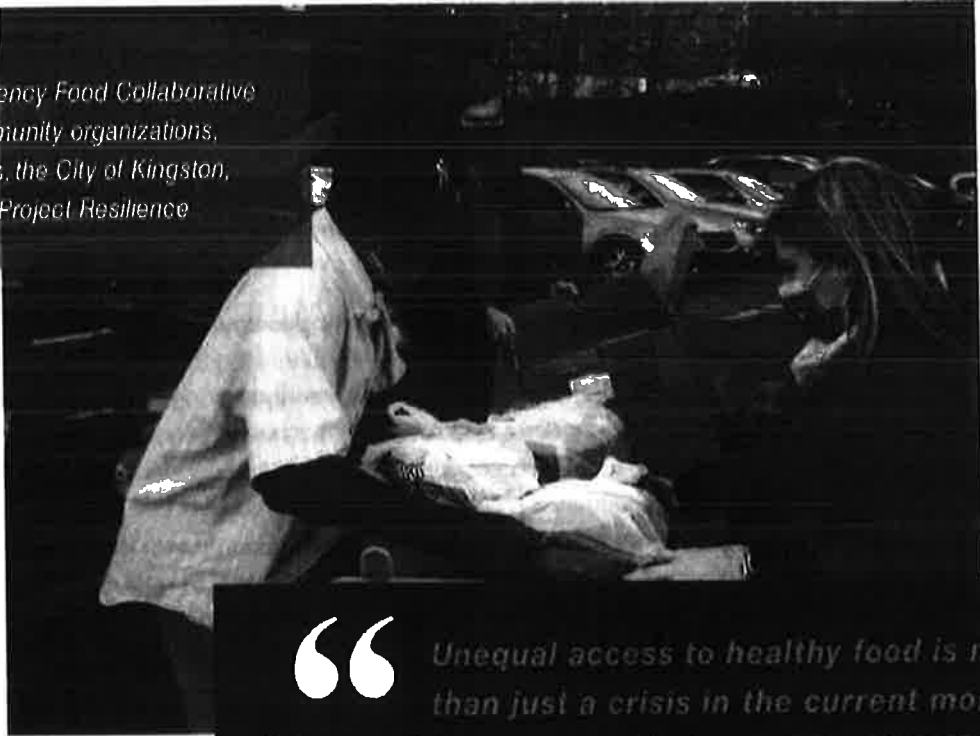
3. The City of Kingston, NY requests reimbursement for overtime costs incurred by our Police and Fire Departments between January 17, 2021 and June 18, 2021 at our area's COVID-19 vaccination sites, which Ulster County established and managed. Kingston is the largest municipality in Ulster County, with just under 24,000 residents. Its overall average poverty rate is 18%. The Police Department began to provide security at the City's first vaccination site located at the Kate Walton Field House on January 17 and continued to do so until this site closed on March 20, 2021. The Fire Department provided EMS services at the same vaccination site during the same timeframe. This vaccination site was on the Kingston High School campus in Midtown Kingston, which includes the three highest-poverty census tracts in Ulster County, NY (Poverty Rates are 24-26%). The neighborhood is also home to the City's highest number of minority residents. All vaccinations were free of charge. When the Kate Walton Field House closed, a new, larger vaccination site opened in a vacated Best Buy store at the Hudson Valley Mall in Kingston. This location is on the Ulster County bus route, which has enabled residents relying on public transportation from across the County to travel to the site. It continues to serve as a vaccination site while the City has also scheduled pop-up locations in specific neighborhoods and times to accommodate even more residents in Kingston. The Fire Department has continued to provide EMS staff at all vaccination sites. The Police Department's OT activities were fully completed in March 2021.

In addition to these efforts to reduce the risk of Kingston community members being exposed to and contracting COVID-19, other public health needs emerged in the community, including mental health and food security.

The shutdown in Spring 2020 brought a shift away from in-person, onsite schooling and work. Quarantines changed community activity patterns and disrupted income streams. This resulted in substantial food and economic insecurity. It became evident that many students depended on school-supplied meals. Food insecurity quickly extended beyond students and is an issue that still remains community-wide.

Mental health has been severely impacted as well. Lost jobs, affordable housing challenges, and people quarantining together (or conversely, quarantining in isolation) have exacerbated stressful household environments. This impacted persons of all ages, and the City has seen an overall increase in broadly defined mental-health related needs.

Effectively addressing the current spectrum of health and wellness challenges will require public sector investment in a broad and interdisciplinary array of services and the implementation of a range of strategies executed by many parties.



The Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative is a coalition of community organizations, community members, the City of Kingston, and Ulster County's Project Resilience

“ *Unequal access to healthy food is more than just a crisis in the current moment. It is a social emergency that requires rethinking how our community lives and works together.*”

*TROYELLEN DIXON
Kingston Emergency Food
Collaborative (KEFC)*

MAYOR NOBLE STOPPED IN TO VISIT
VINCENZO'S PIZZA IN UPTOWN KINGSTON.




“ Our small businesses are the heart of our economy, keeping locals employed and passionate entrepreneurs bringing in the money that keeps our neighborhoods vibrant.”

- Citizen or stakeholder who completed the
City of Kingston Economic Recovery survey - 2021

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS & EXPAND THE ECONOMY


Numerous local businesses of many types have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 leading to temporary and permanent shutdowns. Many businesses adjusted operations to remain open, but continue to face steep challenges posed by the pandemic. Unfortunately, many businesses have not received assistance, and those that did, reiterate there are still major challenges to overcome. Street reconstruction in Midtown during this time has further created challenges for service businesses and institutions. Other challenges include an increase in cost of goods, lack of workforce/labor, and social distance guidelines. In advancing this goal it is essential to understand how to keep a diversity of businesses operating and growing. There are many ultra-small businesses including minority-owned enterprises and these may require quite specialized and targeted assistance. It is also evident that needs can vary from operation to operation and that regional level economic development support systems and partnerships will also play a role in aiding a strong and resounding commercial recovery.



The pandemic has impacted the way of life in Kingston and has shown that community systems can be challenged or stressed when least expected. Kingston is a truly great City, but aspects of infrastructure are aging and have been in place for over a century. Surface infrastructure, such as streets/bridges, are visibly in need of repair. Sidewalk Improvements range in level of need throughout the City. Water and sewer systems require modernization. There are numerous lead service lines throughout the City that must be replaced.

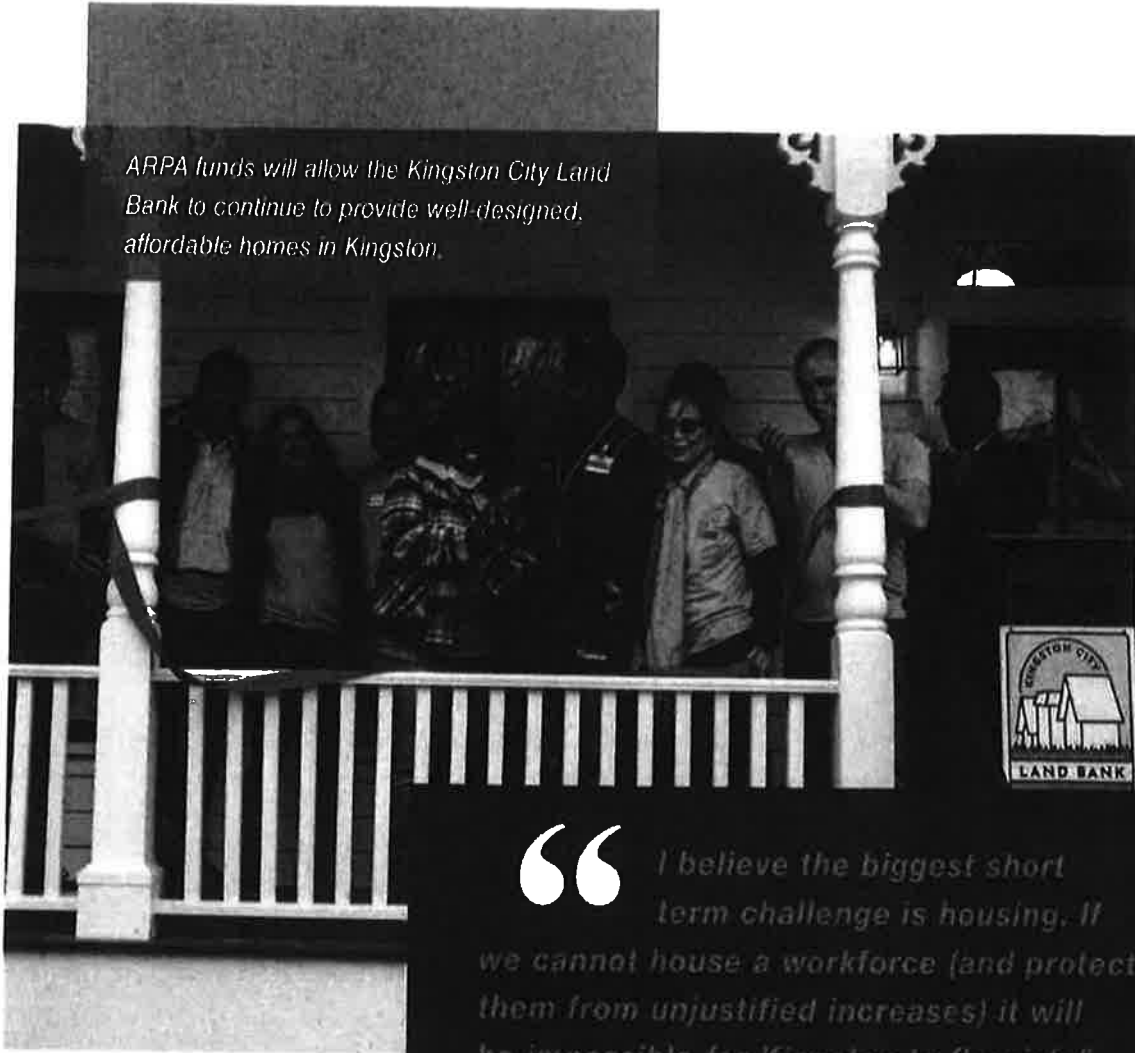
Public Works staff is commended for keeping these aging systems operational, but investment needs are backlogged. In order to cost-effectively advance surface-level improvements, sub-surface upgrades should occur first to avoid unnecessary costs. Moreover, if municipal capital facilities are not kept in a state of good repair, this can transform into an issue of public health and safety caused by a malfunction. Infrastructure that is not properly maintained and upgraded as necessary is also likely to inhibit desirable growth and private investment that can help transcend economic slowdowns such as the one caused by the pandemic.

This goal promotes strategic investments in infrastructure that are fundamental to achieving and sustaining the basic quality of life in the City. It recognizes that the local government facilities touch on many aspects of everyone's lives and all residents benefit from quality public facilities, such as parks, public safety, emergency services, and public buildings. Moreover, this goal promotes investment to achieve new or higher levels of service, such as better communications enabled by quality broadband service. It also registers a need for local government to help keep other vital systems and networks secure and functioning. This includes supporting the smooth functioning of hospitals, the public health system, energy systems, the food sector (including urban agriculture), and essential financial and commercial services.



The City of Kingston recognizes that funding is needed to aid those significantly affected by COVID-19, inclusive of vulnerable, underserved and underrepresented communities. Resources to help those more likely to face disparities or encounter stress are needed to help alleviate extreme circumstances. In instances this may involve structuring targeted investments. The ***Economic Recovery Plan*** dialogue has sought to understand needs arising where there are lower income levels. Strategy implementation will seek to facilitate some resource outlays which support the City's diverse cultures, its immigrant population, youth, and older persons, as well as its non-English speaking communities.

ARPA funds will allow the Kingston City Land Bank to continue to provide well-designed, affordable homes in Kingston.



“

I believe the biggest short term challenge is housing. If we cannot house a workforce (and protect them from unjustified increases) it will be impossible for Kingston to flourish.”

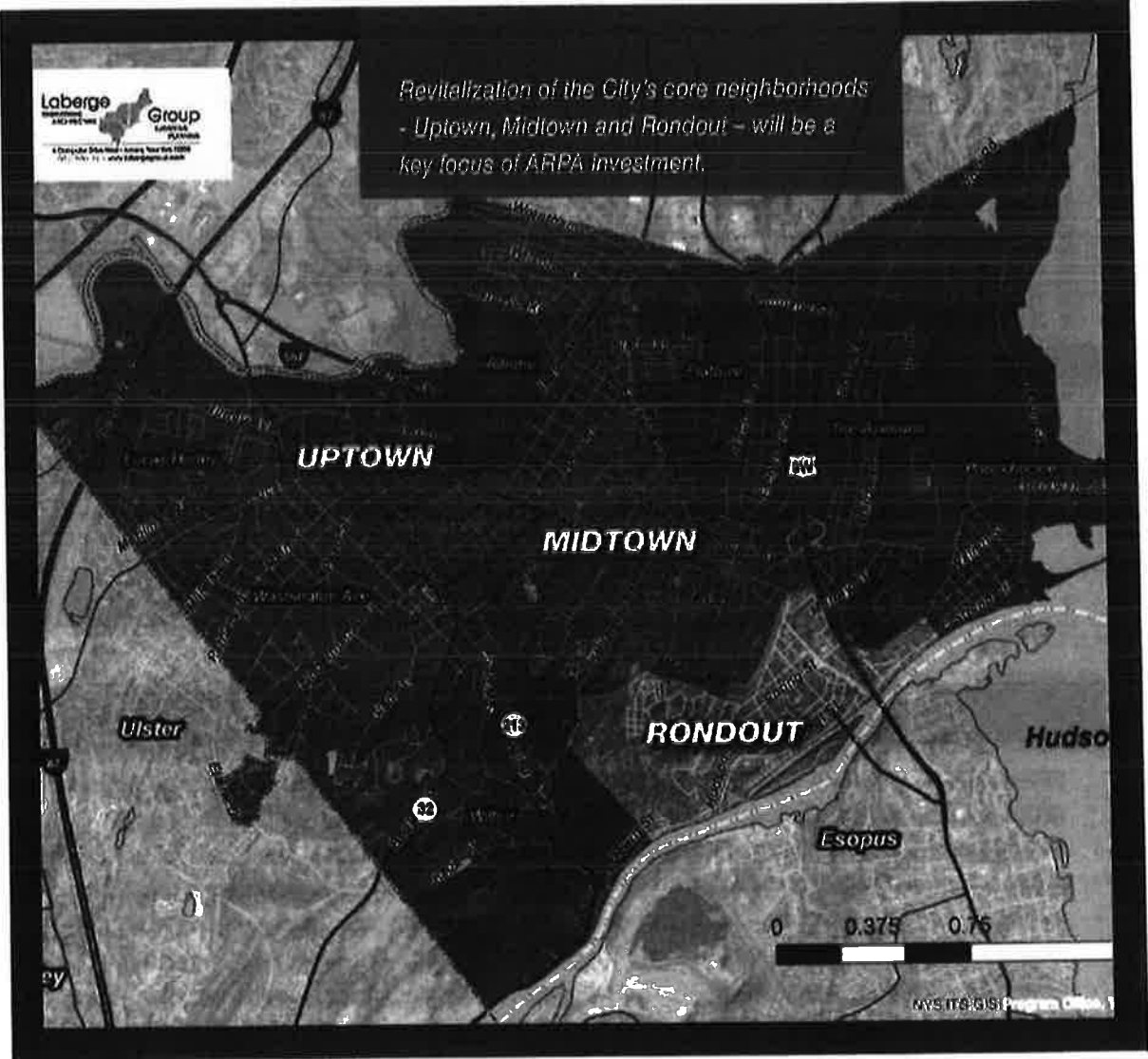
– Citizen or stakeholder who completed the City of Kingston Economic Recovery survey – 2021

GROW THE HOUSING SUPPLY & SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD SECURITY

Housing is an essential need. The issues of housing affordability, availability, and security were significantly heightened by COVID-19, and these factors continue to negatively impact the City. A population influx in the midst of the pandemic resulted in resident displacement, higher housing costs, and extremely tight housing supplies. This goal encapsulates undertaking multiple possible interventions to increase and diversify the housing stock; add affordable options; improve housing security; and provide accessible supportive services. The goal of bolstering the supply of housing includes preserving and enhancing the quality of existing stock in the City. The goal of alleviating housing insecurity includes examination of potential actions related to the eviction moratorium, rent escalation, high utility costs, and the transition to less intensive reliance on fossil fuels.

REVITALIZE THREE CITY CORES & STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Kingston has a strong and unique community character and identity that underpins the community and its economic base. The efforts to provide for community health and wellness and expand the economy should be applied to reinforce the Broadway spine and other key corridors, and to reinforce sense of place and build on the unique mix of assets within the Uptown, Midtown and downtown Rondout centers. Simultaneous with this, the investments should support and bolster strong and healthy neighborhoods.



ACCESSIBILITY & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

The topic of improving public transit availability and frequency of service was a theme raised during community discussions. The consensus was that overcoming limited public transportation options, through partnership with the County, would have a propelling effect on the area economy. It would vastly improve transport equity and the ability for people to live without a car, while it leverages and magnifies the complete streets, trails and bicycling infrastructure improvements already implemented. Fostering multimodal and active transport will also generate a more livable community and it can enable quality infill and growth in the housing supply as well as in commercial and mixed-use settings. Art galleries, restaurants, theaters, and resource centers depend on attendance. Increasing accessibility through convenient and affordable and well-planned transportation choices and programming will be widely beneficial.

SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

There is an aim to support an inclusive educational experience that fosters youth enrichment and healthy, lifelong learning. Shifting from in-person to remote learning not only affected the format of education, but also its quality. Lack of engagement, interaction, and physical activity impacted students during COVID-19. Not all students have access to electronic devices (computer, tablet, or cell phone) that are needed to access virtual classes, and likewise, not all students have access to reliable Wi-Fi. Thus, this goal embodies select efforts by the City to help people access necessary technology, broadband and Wi-Fi services as well as the associated skills they need to succeed. As for the latter aim, aiding educational opportunity can ensure that people have access to various forms of training and occupational enrichment, which can help match qualified and well-trained individuals possessing skills in high demand with modern job opportunities with higher relative wages. This will aid in the realization of a highly diverse and competitive overall Kingston economy.

The goal to foster educational opportunity also embodies support for creative pursuits among persons of various abilities, aptitudes, and interests. It also involves investing in the City as a community that provides residents with a high standard of living by providing the quality of parks, facilities, and internet connectivity that are an integral part of daily life.

PROGRESS SUSTAINABILITY

This ***Economic Recovery Plan*** is intended to help the City of Kingston provide for robust community and economic development in immediate coming years and to plan for the highest quality future that will support all of the City's population for years and generations to come. An important goal of this Plan is to integrate sustainable solutions throughout ARPA-funded project implementation. These sustainable objectives include long-term goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; adding green buildings; maximizing opportunities for mixed-use development

and infill; improving walkability as well as multimodal and active transport; establishing additional quality greenways and open spaces; increasing land use efficiency; and improving the food system. Increasing multi-party and departmental communication will be an important strategy employed toward attaining these enhanced sustainability goals. This focus on increased sustainability will foster increased resiliency and preparedness in case of other hazard events or technological disruption in the power grid.

LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES & SYNERGIZE INVESTMENTS

Synergize means to “combine or coordinate the activity of two (2) or more agents to produce a joint effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.” The public engagement process revealed not only the large aggregate efforts and investments of local and regional organizations and enterprises, and diverse initiatives, but also the inclination to coordinate and align resources. This goal seeks to spark and promote conversations between many entities in Kingston. When efforts can align or combine, this can provide the power to make a substantial and long-lasting difference in the community. In addition to inter-party collaboration, ARPA funds should be attempted to be used to leverage and maximize existing resources in response to COVID-19. Funding can be used to assist businesses, organizations, and others recover from the pandemic while also supporting their capacity to invest in and sustain Kingston as a unique place.

STRATEGIC & SYSTEMIC APPROACH

Achieving recovery and resilience from COVID-19 requires a systemic approach. ARPA funds should be strategically allocated for optimal recovery and long-term impacts. COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges and exacerbated existing issues in the City. The ***Economic Recovery Plan*** is intended to address large hurdles faced by the community with emphasis placed on aiding those heavily affected by the pandemic. There will be an effort to advance effective and proactive investments and policies.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

EXISTING PLAN REVIEW

Over the last decade, the City of Kingston has provided for long-range planning and has taken significant strides toward establishing a framework for strategic decision-making and modernization in order to meet the ever-evolving needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors. Various planning documents have been created and/or updated to serve as guidelines to improve the overall quality of life and guide the future of Kingston forward. Although unforeseen, COVID-19 and its associated impacts generate an opportunity to address longstanding challenges in Kingston that were heightened as a result of the pandemic. Forging strong consistency between past planning and the current pandemic response will ensure that unique needs are likely to be met. This consistency will bolster key aspects of Kingston's social and economic base.

In preparation and development of the City of Kingston's **Economic Recovery Plan**, previously adopted and drafted plans were reviewed in great detail by the Planning Team. These plans were used to confirm community values and priorities, as well as provide an in-depth examination of previously recommended programs or projects that could potentially aid in the recovery of the City. Furthermore, the community engagement provided for within the economic recovery planning process helped identify key strategies that continue to be a priority for the City.



THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/MASTER PLAN – KINGSTON 2025 (2016)

The **Economic Recovery Plan (ERP)** is organized in alignment with **Kingston 2025**, the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2016. **Kingston 2025** identifies Guiding Principles and Initiatives that address areas such as housing, open space, economic development, transportation and mobility, historic preservation, and public facilities. Many strategies promoted within the Comprehensive Plan have the potential to aid the recovery process. Project proposals eligible for ARPA funding were examined through the lens of **Kingston 2025** to prioritize the City's long-term goals and community vision.

There are some notable Comprehensive Plan strategies that have not yet been completed. These partially or incomplete strategies that continue to be of need within the economic recovery process include:

- ▶ Supporting physical rehabilitation, energy efficiency, and improvements of homes through grants or low interest loans;
- ▶ Advancing homeownership of low- and moderate-income persons;

- ▶ Fostering and leveraging economic development partnership;
- ▶ Promoting job training and workforce development programs;
- ▶ Encouraging specialized retail and service uses to build on the existing business asset base; and
- ▶ Increasing use of public transit and expanding transit infrastructure.

SUBJECT SPECIFIC PLANS THAT COMPLEMENT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT (2018)

The *Wayfinding Assessment* focuses on improving navigation to guide visitors and residents around the City of Kingston, market Downtown Kingston assets (including the City's "hidden jewels"), and help direct visitors to Downtown and other city destinations from Kingston's major arteries. The underlying aims of each of these objectives are to create a sense of place and to promote economic development.

Many strategies are multidimensional and can contribute to the fruition of more than one specific objective, and thus, should receive consideration during the development of the *Economic Recovery Plan* to the extent that they coincide with ARPA eligible projects or strategies, including:

- ▶ Assisting economic recovery by improving placemaking, connectivity, and mobility. These improvements will foster economic development by supporting tourism and increasing economic activity from residents.
- ▶ Fostering sustainability by facilitating non-vehicle, multi-modal transport.
- ▶ Addressing inequitable transportation access to educational and economic opportunities.

The strategies proposed within this Assessment are accompanied by detailed budgets and implementation guidelines. Implementation of these strategies will significantly aid reuse of place and can progress development of the arts and the core areas of the City.



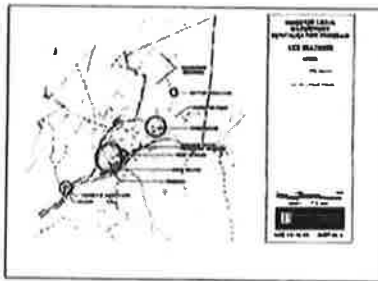
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2021)

The City of Kingston is the first city in New York State to earn the title of the Silver-certified Climate Smart Community. The City has reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by over 20% by 2020. To date, it has converted its entire 2,200 streetlight system to LED, and has initiated a multi-million dollar redesign of its transportation system. The *Kingston 2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP)* presents the subsequent series of strategies to further the City's efforts. Objectives identified in the *CAP* that strongly correspond with ARPA goals include, but are not limited to, educational and workforce cleantech opportunities, expand bus routes and schedules, increased walkability and bikeability, increased housing density, and increased local food production.



PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN (2013)

The mandated shutdown heightened the need for parks and outdoor greenspace throughout the City of Kingston. The **Parks & Recreation Master Plan** is intended to guide the continuation of strategic improvements and development of parks, recreational facilities and services within Kingston. Nature-based learning and integrating recreation into new development were two (2) topics discussed during the public outreach process. Park improvements and development has been reinforced as highly advantageous to creating a healthy city. There are many parks and recreation capital improvements identified as needed and desirable. The pandemic has influenced some priority setting, but it underscores the importance of quality parks, trails, and recreation facilities in the creation of Kingston as a healthy and livable city.



LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (1992)

The **Local Waterfront Revitalization Program** aims to promote economic development and revitalization of the City's local waterfront revitalization area while assuring the protection and beneficial use of coastal resources. The **LWRP** identifies potential improvements to water-enhanced and water-dependent uses, which strongly corresponds with the City's park system, the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the **Economic Recovery Plan**.



OPEN SPACE PLAN (2019)

The **Open Space Plan** promotes responsible stewardship of important resources throughout the City of Kingston such as maintaining clean drinking water, protecting natural habitats, providing recreational opportunities, and positioning the City to mitigate against impacts of climate change. Strategies identified within this plan align with the **Economic Recovery Plan** goal of advancing community resiliency. The identified strategies support local food production through the creation of urban community gardens and the protection of farmland, both of which will improve community resiliency by helping to alleviate food insecurity.

ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN (2022)

Kingston has a robust arts and culture component throughout the City and as such, many stakeholders from this community were asked to participate in the roundtable sessions. The arts stimulate a creative economy and contribute to the City's vibrancy. Data provided by Americans for the Arts, an advocacy group, demonstrated how arts and culture improves outcomes in education, social justice, and health and wellness sectors. An emphasis on the arts and attention to the arts-based community and economic development are seen as providing a creative, dynamic, and innovative environment. The *Economic Recovery Plan* aggressively ties into this subject-specific plan.

ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN, 2022



CITY OF KINGSTON, NEW YORK
**ARTS & CULTURE
MASTER PLAN 2022**

VISION ESTABLISHED IN THE ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

We envision Kingston as a city where arts and culture can connect our diverse populations, celebrate our unique energy, educate people about our rich histories, enliven our landscape with public art, provide economic opportunities, and support both long-term and new residents so all can prosper.

PRIORITIES



CREATIVE ECONOMY

Promote and create alternative space, workforce development, and economic opportunities.



CONNECTIVITY AND COLLABORATION

Improve communication and local organizational capacity, build and strengthen civic partnerships.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

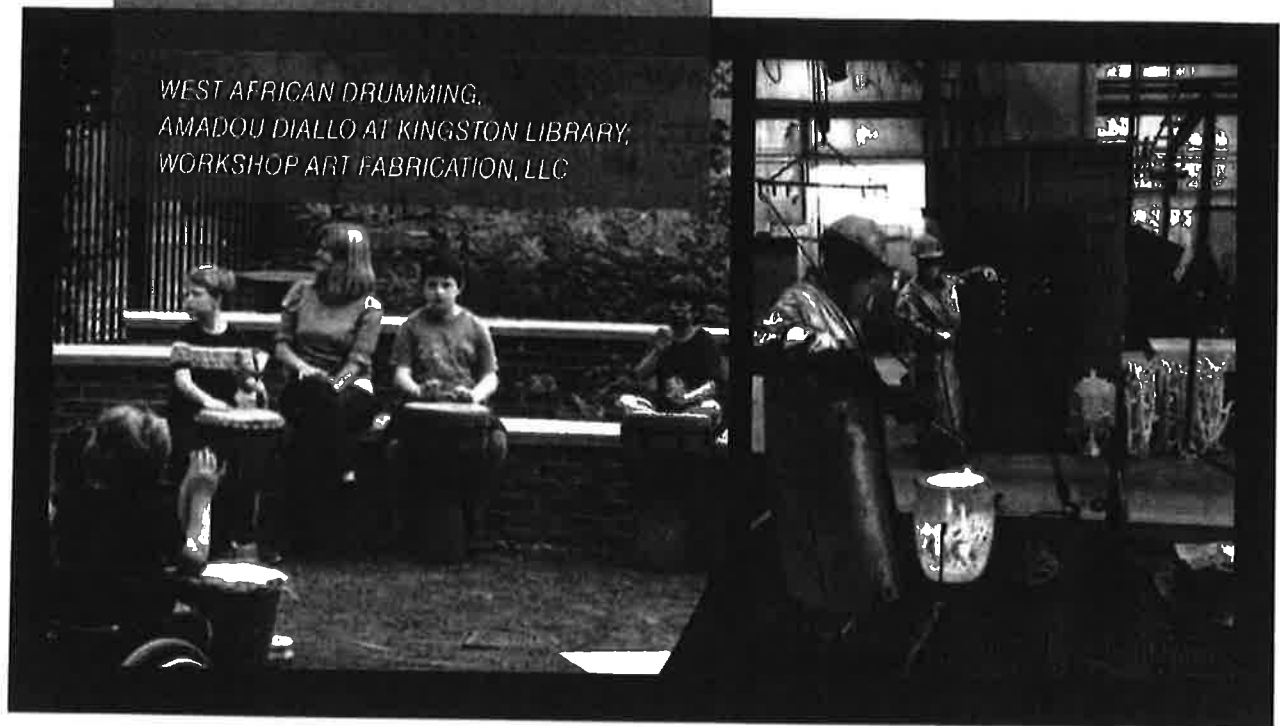
Celebrate Kingston's cultures of multiple ethnic, linguistic, racial, and abilities.



POLICY AND FUNDING

Streamline support and policy for arts and culture.





CONSOLIDATED PLAN STRATEGY (2019)

This **Consolidated Plan** ("**Con Plan**") provides a basis and strategy for the use of federal funds granted to the City of Kingston by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The Priority Needs outlined in this plan include: Increasing Decent Housing, Fostering Neighborhood Stabilization, Expanding Economic Opportunity, and Addressing Homeless Needs in the Community. **Con Plan** alignment with the **Economic Recovery Plan** objectives includes, but is not limited to: affordable housing assistance; housing rehabilitation and accessibility improvements; youth and community public service programs; parks and recreation improvements; public safety initiatives; and lead hazard prevention.

MOVING FORWARD

Many strategies established in existing plans and program initiatives align with and qualify as eligible projects or initiatives under ARPA regulations. Therefore, there have been efforts to weave these into the City's **Economic Recovery Plan**. Advancing and capitalizing upon subject-specific builds into the general plan for successful and meaningful implementation. Not only does this boost consistency of City goals and objectives, but this approach also heightens resiliency and addresses subject-specific concerns throughout Kingston.

EVALUATION OF CITY DEPARTMENT NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Interviews were conducted in October and November of 2021 with all City Department Heads as well as the Mayor to assess specific needs, challenges, and deficiencies created and/or exacerbated by COVID-19. These meetings served to identify concerns and recommendations specific to each department. Some key findings are provided below which contribute to Plan development and the effort to alleviate, recover and mitigate against COVID-19 and its associated impacts.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

There were 18 informational interviews conducted with various department heads as well as the Mayor. The interviews typically lasted an hour. They sought to gain insights on each particular division or office and characteristics of its operations such as: rough departmental budget, number of staff either full or part time, and mission and operating characteristics. This delivered perspective on how all aspects of the City administration were dealing with and overcoming the pandemic.

OFFICIALS CONDUCTED INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS	
▶ Glenn Nobis, Mayor	▶ Kyle McIntosh, Director of Information Technology
▶ Daniel Baker, Assessor	▶ Ed Norman, Department of Public Works Superintendent
▶ Amanda Brock, Former Director of Community Development	▶ Chris Rea, Fire Chief
▶ Kevin Bryant, Former Corporation Counsel	▶ John Schulmeis, P.E., City Engineer
▶ Suzanne Cahill, Director of Planning Department	▶ Summer Sims, Director of Communications and Community Engagement
▶ Kevin Corle, Former Director of Housing	▶ Lynsey Brodzicki, Director of Parks and Recreation
▶ Jackie DeGoo, Executive Secretary of Civil Service Office	▶ Egidio Itri, Police Chief
▶ Emily Flynn, Director of Health & Wellness	▶ Lisa Tini, City Clerk
▶ Judith Hanson, Water Department Superintendent	▶ Tawana Washington, Director of Human Rights
▶ Stephen Knox, Director of Building Safety	

FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

Each department or office was clearly impacted by COVID. However, staff was responsive and agile in adjusting work organization to deal with the City offices close-down and the limitation on no direct public access to City buildings. There was also flexibility and responsiveness demonstrated as work shifted from more routine operations to dealing with the variety of contingencies that arose during the pandemic, or as work was adjusted in order to achieve safe social distancing.

Specifically, as a result of COVID-19, there was also an effort to use the interviews to understand how the pandemic influenced services and users or clients that a particular department served. This analysis particularly worked to identify the way the pandemic and economic slowdown was impacting the effort to deliver services/ programming, plus it sought to understand how the response in each division was organized and the degree to which the department head may have considered this effective. Looking forward, there were also requests for the department heads to identify the investments that they may suggest undertaking in order to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Not surprisingly, a major theme that arose within the findings based on a comparison across all departments was a need for adjustments of work places in order to achieve social distancing and safe work environments. At the pandemic's outset, office staff typically transitioned to remote work locations and conducted day-to-day business virtually. As could be reasonably expected, communication was sometimes challenging with staff distributed across a combination of home and office work environments. See Appendix for a full summary.

INNOVATE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

As staff responded, there were efforts to upgrade city information technology and security to support the altered work flow within the administration. Technological upgrades and innovative work practices were evident across all departments. The City implemented emergency communication upgrades to improve coordination across departments and to prepare for a future spike in COVID-19 cases.

There clearly is a need for multiple types of physical investments within public buildings themselves, inclusive of more technology upgrades. Based on the interviews, budgeting is available in this **Economic Recovery Plan** for information technology upgrades, including cybersecurity and remote work capacity or enhanced wi-fi connectivity.

PUBLIC BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Likewise, based on departmental interviews, there are investments added to the **Economic Recovery Plan** that can aid and reinforce the establishment of safe indoor environments. These investments would be used to improve air conditioning (HVAC) systems and to advance implementation of touchless fixtures such as activated doors or lavatory systems operated with sensors.

Even during the peak of the lockdown, critical staff, such as fire fighters, police officers, and public works employees, needed to be on-site in order to carry out essential services and maintain critical systems. In those cases there were efforts to stagger and re-organize work schedules so there was a lower density of workers in places such as lunch rooms at one time.

It was indicated that to a large extent it was possible to carry out operations of police and fire and the public works division with relative safety. In some instances space limitations did arise, because there was not enough room to provide for strong social distancing within existing buildings and rooms.

ASSESSING CDBG-CV CARES RESOURCES CAPABILITY ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Coronavirus Aid Relief, & Economic Security (CARES) Act, or 'CDBG CV Cares', is a unique new program operated by the U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). This program was setup by Congress to provide grants to local governments to prepare for, and respond to the spread of COVID-19. These funds are intended to serve locations where there are higher concentrations of low and moderate income persons. The CDBG CV activities are allowed to encompass public service activities and facilities improvements. The Kingston administration is using this Economic Recovery Planning process to identify optimal ways to blend and leverage the effective application of ARPA and CDBG-CV Cares resources.

Just after passage of the federal funding intended for use in dealing with the effects of COVID-19, the City received roughly \$400,000 as its CDBG-CV Cares allocation. Initially, the CDBG-CV Cares funding was used to help stabilize and support distressed businesses, in the form of very low interest loans.

At this point in pandemic response planning, City officials hope there will be additional CDBG-CV Cares "entitlement funds" that Kingston, as a central city with a sizable low and moderate income population, will be eligible to receive, by formula, within a forthcoming 2nd Round of CDBG Cares disbursements. The Administration has identified a set of potential actions it could seek to undertake using CDBG-CV Cares resources, with an aim to provide greater public health protection and aid the CV response.

One particular priority that has emerged within this **Economic Recovery Plan** needs assessment is the desire to take more actions to physically bolster public buildings as safe places for the effective conduct of public business/ public services, and as safe havens for the public. Most City public buildings have been identified as having unique facility improvements needs. At the same time, it has become apparent there are similar improvements that can almost universally be advanced across all types of buildings.

One location that is being considered as a prototype in this regard is City Hall. This facility is already in the process of receiving a facade improvement, with simultaneous energy efficiency/ weatherization improvements, such as upgrades of City Hall windows. Yet, a need remains to upgrade doors, and improve internal air exchange and handling through Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system improvements. There is also a need to add touchless fixtures, such as within lavatories. These types of public building/ facilities resiliency actions aim to protect staff and general public health at these properties.

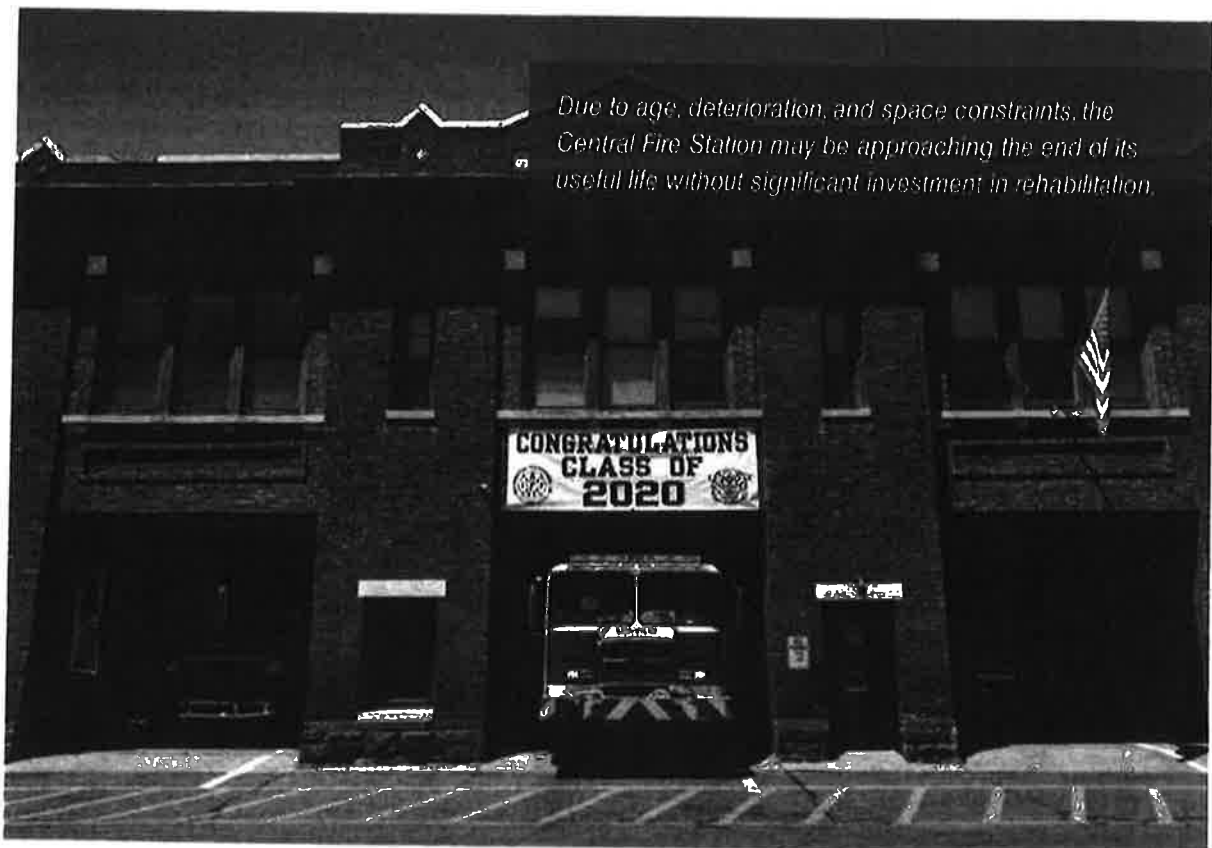
It has been identified that City hall is not in a location that qualifies for the expenditure for CDBG-CV Cares funding. Thus, a notion has emerged of allocating some ARPA funds for advancing the modernization of City Hall, while it may be preferable to attempt to leverage action using CDBG CV Cares grant financing for efforts to modernize and increase the functionality of the neighborhood centers, particularly the Rondout Center. It is also preferable to try to prioritize some improvements at the Hodge Center. It is also hoped the City may be eligible to pursue competitive, discretionary CDBG-CV Cares grants funding according to as yet unreleased but possible forthcoming notice(s) of funding opportunity.

FIRE SAFETY BUILDING NEEDS

It is important for safety personnel, including firefighters, to be provided with isolated areas in which to change clothing and shower to promote decontamination while maintaining a distance deemed appropriate to prevent the spread of virus. Existing configurations at two of Kingston's three firehouses have space limitations that may not be adequate to properly mitigate virus spread. In addition to these space constraints, the East O'Reilly Street Central Fire Station, which is an essential public building that serves a key role in managing public safety, is in poor physical condition to the extent that it may not be operable in the foreseeable future. Despite the demonstrable need to either replace or fully modernize the Central Fire Station, it is beyond the feasible scope of this **Economic Recovery Plan** to fund this type of large scale architectural design or renovation because of the budgetary requirements. For a fiscal undertaking of this scope, it will be necessary to secure an architectural study with budgetary information.

PUBLIC WORKS & CAPTIAL NEEDS

Interviews with the City Engineer, Water Superintendent, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, and staff from the Department of Public Works indicate an opportunity to coordinate projects to realize cost-savings. For instance, if street upgrades are being undertaken - such as sidewalk enhancements or the addition of bike lanes - this opportunity can be used to implement a coordinated approach in which underlying water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer infrastructure are modernized at the same time. This approach is economical both in the short-term, by maximizing construction investments,



and over the longer term, by reducing the need for costly ad-hoc repairs and reducing the amount of stormwater that enters sanitary sewers and reduced capacity at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Based on the interviews conducted, the preferred approach is to identify locations to work on these key initiatives simultaneously. The Albany Avenue, Foxhall Avenue, and Henry Street corridors are locations that emerged as priorities. Allocating ARPA funds to initiate engineering designs for these projects may support the targeting of federal and state grant funds that would defray a significant portion of the capital costs. This is part of a larger strategy employed throughout this plan to identify

opportunities to leverage small investments of ARPA funding to secure larger federal and state investments with the City of Kingston.

WATER, STORMWATER, AND SANITARY SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Like many communities throughout the state and across the country, Kingston is faced with managing – and therefore often repairing – aging water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Proactive improvements to these systems will mitigate the need for costly ad-hoc repairs while reducing the workload of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. These improvements will also benefit the community by safeguarding public health and safety; increasing environmental sustainability; and supporting economic development.

Wet Weather Impact: Combined vs. Separate Sewer Systems

Source: EPA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & PLANNING COORDINATION

There are active efforts to ensure that Community Development, Housing, and Planning work is conducted efficiently and effectively, and to enhance the administration's ability to assist partnerships in addressing pressing community issues. The City is working to ensure that public properties achieved through foreclosure can be efficiently disposed of and directed to non-profit partners who can help structure productive reuse of these assets through the creation of new home ownership opportunities. There is an opportunity to carve out clear roles for these divisions and ensure that they can help free up any available City resources. For planning and permitting reviews, the pandemic has shown that new technologies can aid workflow and levels. Adoption of technological advances will be an important step as the City seeks to aid an increase in the supply of housing.

STAFFING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

For the *Economic Recovery Plan* to be successfully implemented, it will be critical that selected projects achieve the envisioned impact and that synergies between and among the component projects are optimized. The \$17.3 million in ARPA investments will involve multiple infrastructure and community projects to be implemented in a relatively short time period.

It will also be critical that the City continues to provide strong central leadership during the implementation phase. The implementation phase will require support from a dedicated and a cohesive internal management team whose members have clearly established roles and responsibilities. This team will be responsible for executing the City's *Economic Recovery Plan* successfully and in a timely manner. To foster successful implementation, it is recommended that the City establish an internal organizational framework and operating guidelines that establish expectations regarding project results, reporting, and compliance.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS NECESSARY TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT ARPA OBJECTIVES

- ▶ City-wide government commitment to the vision of the City of Kingston's *Economic Recovery Plan*.
- ▶ Delivery of Quality Projects and Services.
- ▶ Integration between and among the initiatives.
- ▶ Timeliness of individual project initiation and completion.
- ▶ Ongoing communication of projects between and among partners and ongoing process for community/public input and feedback.
- ▶ Compliance system and procedures to meet all Federal project and fiscal rules, regulations and reporting requirements by the City and sub-recipient organizations. Specific roles and responsibilities should be established and assigned to assure for the necessary accountability.
- ▶ Project leader to oversee ARPA implementation for the five year reporting period.
- ▶ Strong project management for each individual project – both City projects and sub-recipient projects.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT ARPA PROJECTS

During the pandemic the City did not expend large amounts of resources on overtime. An examination of how the pandemic promoted shifts or escalation in workloads appears to show that:

- ▶ The IT Department experienced increased demands for assistance as it aided more online remote work.
- ▶ Based on interviews with the Police Chief and the Fire Chief, it does not appear there was concern for increased levels of calls; however, it was noted that staff did take-on the risk of this dangerous work and there was personal and household stress that accompanied it.
- ▶ Since overtime was avoided, other Departments appear to have shifted workloads to focus on high priorities. This has impacted overall completion of other necessary work.
- ▶ It appears that department managers, as exempt staff, sometimes worked long hours dealing with the heightened workload.

An important planning consideration within this Plan is how to effectively organize the Economic Recovery workload so that defined projects are effectively implemented and completed within the allotted time and utilizing available budgetary resources.

The pandemic has tightened the labor market and limited the pool of potential applicants for a number of occupations. As a result, the City, like many other organizations, has position openings. These staff vacancies are contributing to some lag in completing projects. Moreover, the overall administrative workload has been high due to issues that have emerged during the pandemic.

The following provides an overview of several of the City Departments that have been tasked with COVID-19 responses or are anticipated to be tasked with responsibilities in order to understand their capacity.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Department is a staff of three (3) positions including the Director, an Administrative Assistant, and Housing Rehabilitation Specialist. The Administrative Assistant is employed full-time, and the Rehabilitation Specialist is employed full-time, splitting time with part of the Assessor's Office. A primary function of the Department is the management of U.S. Department of Housing (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds the City receives on an annual basis. The Director is also the Executive Director of the Kingston Local Development Corporation.

The Community Development Department has experience in managing Federal funds and program compliance requirements. However, given the current workload and existing compliance requirements, the Department indicated that it currently does not have capacity to take on a significant role related to ARPA funding without additional staff.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Engineering Department, headed by the City Engineer, has two (2) staff vacancies. This staffing shortage is influencing the rate of completion of sewer, storm sewer, and other capital projects, excluding any water and recreation capital projects.

OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT

The Office of Grants Management currently consists of a Director of Grants Management, a Grants Manager, and one half of a staff position in the Comptroller's Office, who assists with reimbursements from government agencies and vendor payments. A second position to be shared with the Comptroller's Office is soon to be added. Grants Management is responsible for grant writing, contract management, compliance, and reporting to foundations and NYS and federal funding agencies. The current grant portfolio includes over \$50 million dollars of capital and non-capital investments in over 45 active projects. The Office also manages projects that do not have a City department assigned to project management.

The Office does not oversee or manage the Federally funded CDBG. Considering the capacity of the existing administration to advance the ARPA workload, there is also a staffing shortage in the Office of Grants Management. One FTE grants management position is currently vacant there.

HEALTH & WELLNESS DEPARTMENT

The Health and Wellness Department is gearing-up to implement a non-ARPA grant from the New York State Department of Health. The grant implements creating healthy schools and community, which aligns with the Live Well Kingston initiative. This grant generated funding for a second full-time employee in the department. The Department will be hiring another DOH funded position to bring staffing up to a total of three (3), inclusive of the Director. This anticipated position may have some time allocated to aid in the implementation of ARPA projects that align with the Live Well initiative.

IT DEPARTMENT

The IT Department, independent of ARPA, is seeking to increase its staff by roughly one FTE. It is experiencing a high level of public records requests according to New York State law.

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

The Assessing Department is experiencing a high level of work. In an effort to keep the assessment database inventory current and help keep an equitable tax burden, the Department expressed the need for one additional FTE staff member.

WATER BOARD

The Water Board, while a separate governmental board within the City, is interpreting that new laws termed as "lead surface requirements" represent an unfunded government mandate that is causing the City to take action in order to remediate lead in drinking water systems. The Water Board's Superintendent indicates there will be a need to add one (1) new FTE staff as a way to assist compliance with these requirements.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Finally, there was some organizing and hiring of seasonal staff in order to implement higher safety measures and protocols within recreation programs due to the pandemic. The Recreation Director would seek to sustain funding in order to be able to retain these additional recreation program staff positions.

COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

The Comptroller's Office manages all the finances for the City of Kingston. In addition, the Office manages the fiscal compliance of several federal grants with the exception of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) which is the responsibility of the Department of Community Development. While the Comptroller's Office is well poised to manage the administration of the ARPA program and fiscal compliance, it will necessitate additional resources due to the magnitude and frequency of compliance requirements. The Mayor's budget proposed a new Junior Accountant position to be shared with the Office of Grants Management. It is anticipated that this position will be dedicated 25% to ARPA to assist with the mandated compliance components.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PUBLIC MEETINGS

A multi-pronged engagement process was used to obtain meaningful and accurate feedback from the interested public on challenges faced throughout the community due to the pandemic and the slowdown. This same outreach identified opportunities available for catalyzing and sustaining economic recovery.

Public participation lasted three months. It coincided with the beginning phase of the project, starting just after the kick-off. All results are depicted within the detailed Appendices that are attached to this Plan.

Overall, this engagement program generated results using the following tools:

- ▶ **A 20-question 'Economic Recovery Plan Needs Assessment public opinion survey** (questionnaire) completed by over 100 participants, either online or in physical form.
- ▶ **Two project public information/ input gathering meetings**, conducted remotely over Zoom software platform, one of which provided Spanish interpretation. The video recordings of these two meetings are available on the City's EngageKingston public website and project platform. These meeting videos have been viewed multiple additional times since posting.
- ▶ **Five subject-oriented stakeholder roundtables**, attended by over 50 individuals. These informative discussions among key stakeholders with knowledge about various subject disciplines provided valuable information and insights regarding particular needs that have arisen within different sectors and geographical areas of the community. The roundtables generated understanding about stresses and opportunities for action. These discussions were also used to help characterize issues and possible responses in the housing, business, recreation, tourism, arts, and the more broadly defined non-profit sectors.

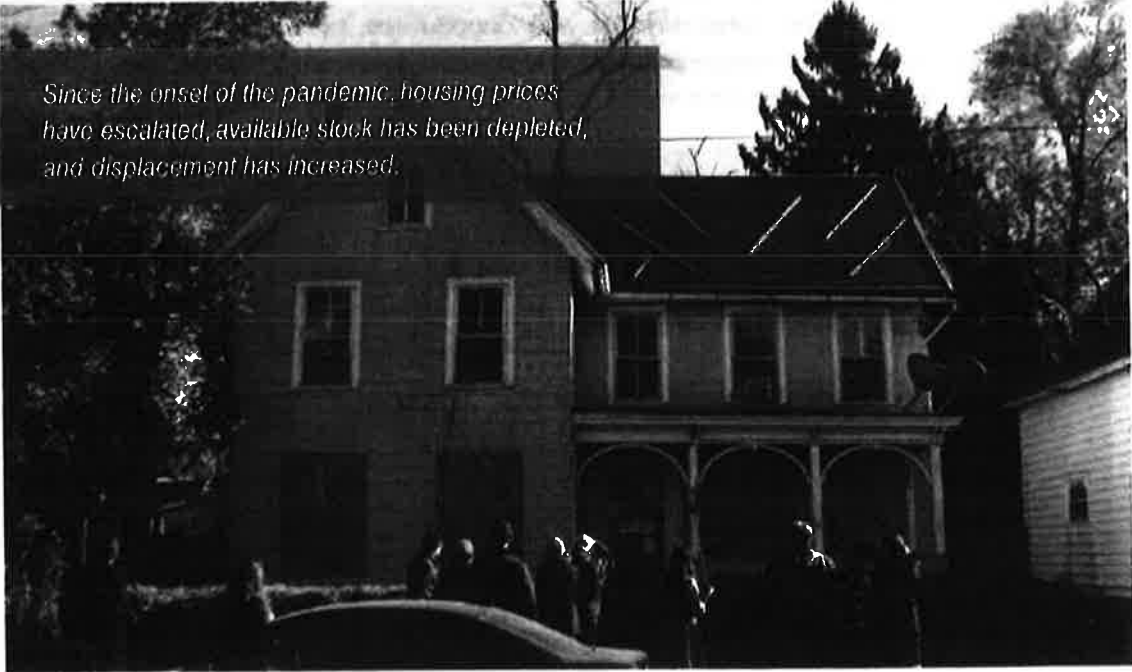


- ▶ **Four individual stakeholder interviews** were conducted.
- ▶ **Eighteen Department Head Interviews** garnered detailed insights and understanding of roles in the City public administration. There was an objective to gain feedback from each department on the ways in which each one was uniquely impacted by COVID and how they suggested structuring investments in response to the pandemic to overcome the economic slowdown.

KEY FINDINGS

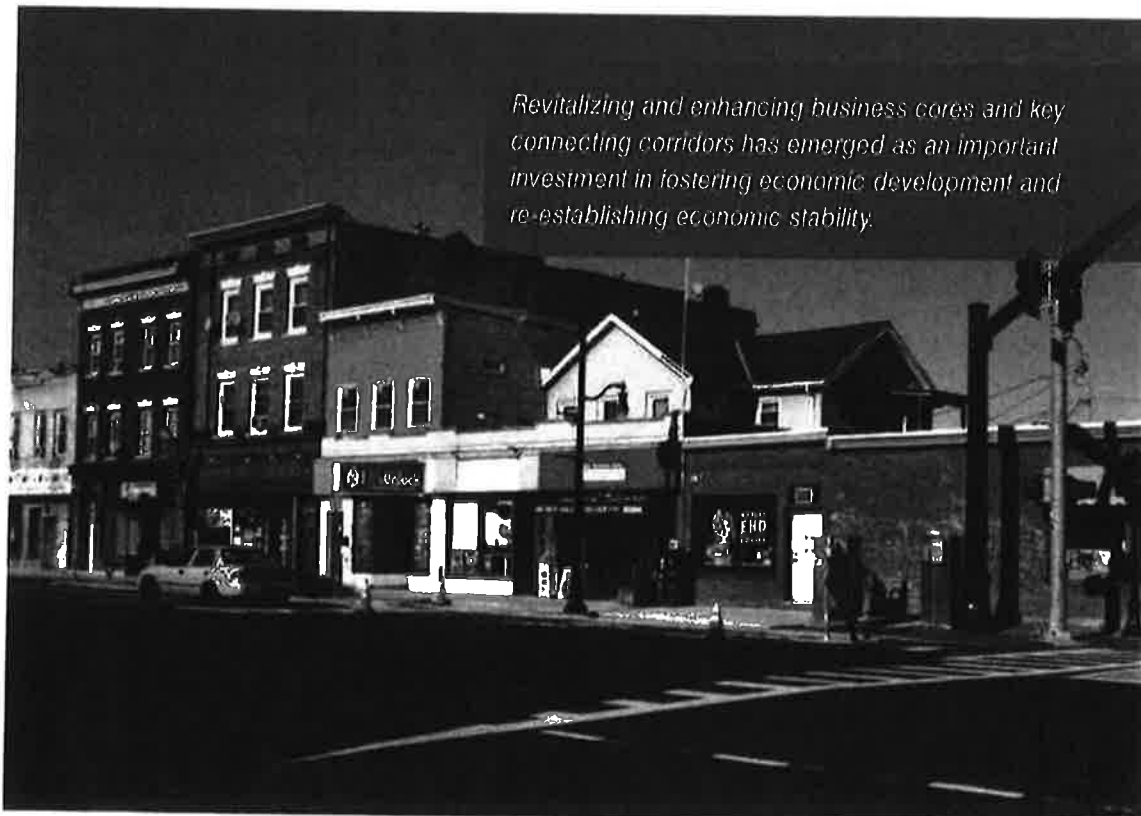
This plan presents a number of findings derived from public outreach. See Appendixes for full details. While varied needs were identified, there was significant overlap in belief as to the roots of issues. There was also strong agreement regarding ways that investments can be structured and applied in order to help rectify problems that have intensified, or newly emerged, during the pandemic. Rationales for action and the design of projects are based on understanding about issues and descriptions of context obtained through public outreach. They also often link with existing plans and planning programs that themselves were formed using high levels of public input. A few key points are important to emphasize based on the feedback received:

- ▶ **The housing environment is highly stressed and requires a multifaceted response. Prices are escalating.** Large numbers of people are experiencing issues of affordability and displacement. Housing supply is limited and the existing supply lacks diversity. Availability of very small or larger, multiple bedroom units is limited, and the quality of building stock that is available is deteriorating. These findings indicate an apparent need to diversify housing and generate a wide range of housing options at different price points. Many comments were received that backed using policy and planning to stabilize and improve the supply of housing. This included a consensus that ARPA investments should be directed to broadly enhancing the housing environment.



Since the onset of the pandemic, housing prices have escalated, available stock has been depleted, and displacement has increased.

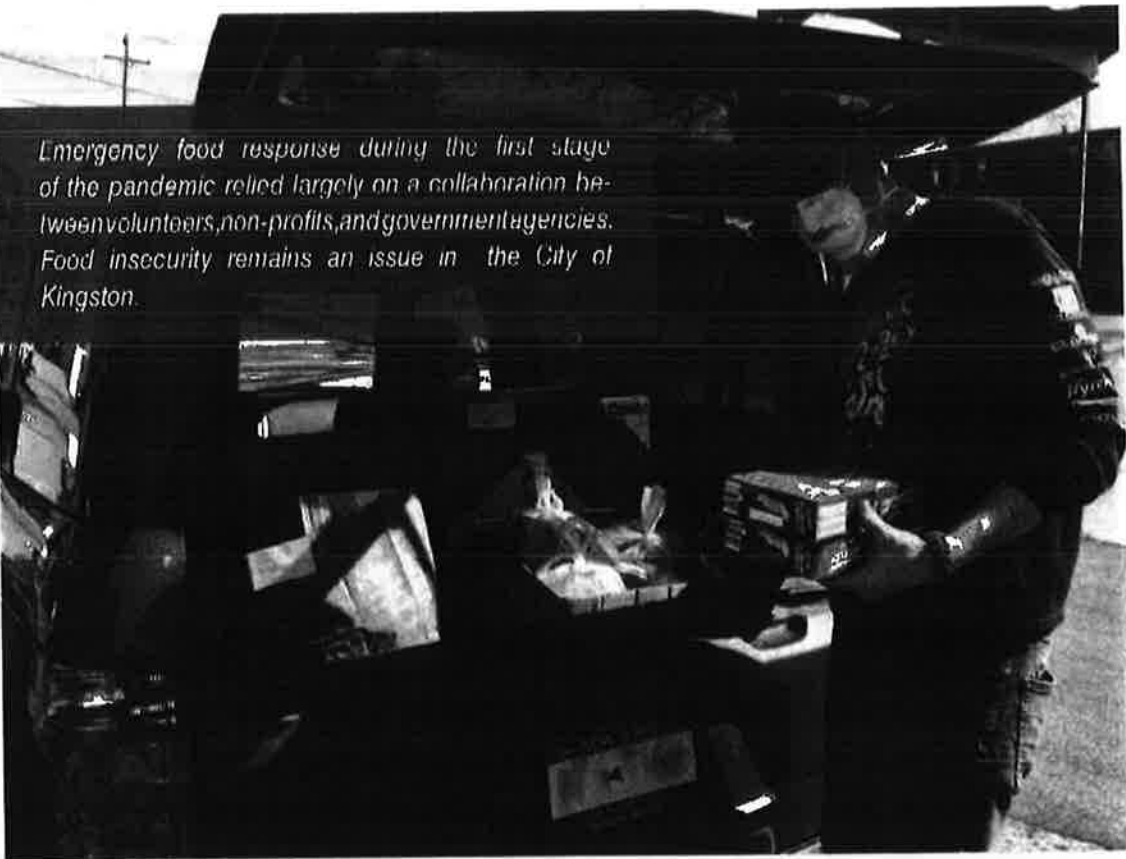
- ▶ **There is a need to assist small business threatened with closing or in immediate need, as well as to aid and incentivize creation of employment opportunities, and stimulate desirable economic development and expansion.** The arts, recreation, tourism, services, and light manufacturing all were noted as being in need of support.
- ▶ **Invest in revitalizing/ enhancing Broadway and the Uptown, Midtown and the Rondout cores, and other key connecting corridors.**
- ▶ **Advance community wellness using the Live Well Kingston framework.**
- ▶ **Promote workforce development/ job training and employee-employer matching.**
- ▶ **Celebrate and support Kingston's diverse cultures, which add to the City's vibrancy.**
- ▶ **Sequentially upgrade aging subsurface infrastructure city-wide through prioritization and preparing readiness.** Providing synchronized investments and preparing for their construction will bolster the City's ability to advance development and avoid deterioration of water, sewer or stormwater systems that could inhibit growth. Establishing readiness to advance capital improvements can enable the successful pursuit of county, state or federal financial support as a means to leverage modernization of these critical assets.
- ▶ **Address the need to modernize City buildings and parks.**
- ▶ **Foster healthy growth and development of the City's youth by implementing programs that inclusively bolster autonomy, build leadership skills, encourage socialization, and support educational enrichment.**



- ▶ **Expand Wi-Fi access; improve speed and reliability; and identify affordable broadband systems.** During the pandemic, many people suffered because they were not able to get online. There is a demonstrated need to access the crucial information conduits that underpin modern living and which are essential to overall community and economic development.
- ▶ **Increase local food production and procurement. Stimulate food system development to address food insecurity.** During the first stage of the pandemic, a successful 'emergency food collaborative' assisted people facing food and hunger during the slowdown. This emergency response benefitted from high levels of volunteerism, as well as resource support and collaboration from non-profits and varied government agencies.
- ▶ **Continue to stimulate active transport and bolster transit service.**
- ▶ **Establish coordination and communication between parties to leverage resources and advance community development.**

Using the results of the *Economic Recovery Plan's* detailed program of public outreach, there was identification of over 150 potential projects which could be advanced as part of this *Economic Recovery Plan*. The Initial Projects Matrix in the appendix identifies each individual potential project identified during public outreach. This matrix identifies the source or sources wherein a notion for a potential project action was brought forth.

Emergency food response during the first stage of the pandemic relied largely on a collaboration between volunteers, non-profits, and government agencies. Food insecurity remains an issue in the City of Kingston.



PROJECT PUBLICITY & PUBLIC MEETINGS

There has been wide project publicity in order to provide community and regional awareness of Kingston's intent to develop an **Economic Recovery Plan**. It aims to help the public recognize the importance of the City's effort to establish a strategic plan for the optimal allocation of ARPA funds, which directly affects the community as a whole.

Specific efforts were made to broadly publicize efforts and opportunities offered through ARPA funding and the development of a strategic plan with intent to inform the interested public and spark public interest. The City's 'Engage Kingston' website was used to provide content around the Economic Recovery planning process, while the City's communications and engagement staff assisted with publicity. This included promotions on social media and in the Mayor's newsletter, as well as live broadcasts by the Mayor on local radio.



The website was used to both collect public feedback, such as using the community survey, and present information as it evolved to assist project educational outreach. Content links displayed on the City's website covered past meetings and publicity updates. Users can review Project documents, ask questions, or provide comments at their convenience.

Two public outreach meetings were specifically designed to inform, listen and engage the general public as well as receive public comments whereby people could identify issues and mention notions they had regarding potential economic recovery actions. The objective was to share the project purpose, the project milestones, timelines, and to accumulate participant perspectives. The recording and PowerPoint presentation from the meetings were posted on the website.

The development of this **Economic Recovery Plan** will involve a third public meeting whereby the public can provide public comment on the draft plan. This meeting will also be publicized.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government created the **American Rescue Plan** to provide direct relief to Americans, contain the virus, and rebuild the economy. Municipalities across the country will receive financial support over two years to assist in recovery efforts. The City of Kingston has been awarded approximately \$17 million from the ARPA program and is currently working to create a comprehensive Economic Recovery Plan to best utilize the funding.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Public meetings were promoted on the "Engage Kingston" website and social media as well as through radio interviews.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

October 19 - 25, 2021

Department Interviews Round 1

- Information Technology
- Human Rights
- Health & Wellness
- Civil Service
- Planning
- Engineering
- Housing
- Grant Management
- Assessment
- Grants Management

October 26 - 31, 2021

Public Meeting #1

Public Meeting #2

November 1 - 5, 2021

Department Interviews Round 2

- Fire
- Parks & Recreation

November 22 - November 23, 2021

Roundtable Sessions Round 1

- Arts, Recreation, Tourism
- Health, Wellness, & Healthcare
- Housing & Community Development
- Business & Business Organizations

November 24, 2021

Community Survey Published

November 29 - 30, 2021

Department Interviews Round 3

- Police
- Communications & Engagement
- Water
- Building Safety
- Department of Public Works
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Community Development
- Town Clerk

December 21 - 22, 2021

Stakeholder Interviews

- Bardavon
- Arts Mid-Hudson
- Reher Center
- RUPCO

KINGSTON ARPA PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

OVERVIEW

A community survey was administered in order to garner public perspectives on the impacts of the pandemic and possible needs to recover from the effects of COVID 19. Sentiment was shared that issues within the housing environment have become major stresses in need of attention. There are also perceptions that COVID-19 is disrupting general wellness in the community, including youth populations. The pandemic is also deeply affecting local business operations, as well as significantly influencing the local labor market. Finally, there is awareness that lower income and traditionally disadvantaged groups are experiencing greater challenges and there is support for addressing disparities.

A full summary of the survey can be found in the Appendix together with a copy of both the English and Spanish surveys.

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

A survey questionnaire was made available to any interested persons in order to gather insights as to ways the pandemic has impacted the community. It was designed to garner feedback on what constitute pressing needs and on possible ways to invest ARPA resources. Strategies within the *Economic Recovery Plan* were crafted from the ideas generated.

SURVEY DESIGN/ ADMINISTRATION

The 'community survey' was available for any interested member of greater Kingston to complete from November 4 through December 3, 2021. Generally, its purpose was to explore issues that have arisen around the pandemic and it gathered information on respondents' perceptions and rankings of needs across a variety of impact areas. The survey addressed subjects including, but not limited to: public health response; infrastructure investment; small business support; assistance related to education, workforce, and human services; and solutions addressing challenges in housing and transportation.

The survey was accessible online within EngageKingston, the City's public project-oriented website. It was also available for completion in written form. Media publicity accompanying the release of the survey promoted the survey. These efforts included distribution of a press release, inclusion in the Mayor's weekly newsletter, an online briefing, local radio appearances, social media posts, and email list-serves.

The format comprised a combination of discrete choice questions, such as checkbox questions, dropdown responses, a Likert scale ranking question, as well as follow-up open-ended response questions. Overall, there were a total of 20 questions. Just over half consisted of the open-ended format that enabled a user to supply up to 100 words describing the rationale for their answer to the preceding question, or by requesting identification of specific projects and programs that they feel can have significant positive impacts.

RESULTS

Altogether, 88 surveys were completed. Many questions are organized to enable multiple responses; thus, the number of answers provided in a particular question often exceeds 88.

People completing the survey very often identified themselves as a City of Kingston resident. Over 1/3 labeled themselves as involved with a Non-Profit Organization/ Agency. The other top three associations were: Business Owner; Parent/Caregiver; and Education Provider.

Participants associated themselves with representing a variety of community sectors. People involved in Housing were the largest set. The top four sectors represented were:

- ▶ Housing;
- ▶ Arts & Entertainment;
- ▶ Education; and
- ▶ Social & Human Services.

Asked to identify important choices in terms of the largest unmet need created by the pandemic (Question #3) indicated:

- ▶ Housing (25.7%);
- ▶ Education/ Learning Equality (14.2%);
- ▶ Workforce/ Labor/ Employment (13.3%);
- ▶ Eviction/ Prevention/ Delinquency Assistance (9.7%); and
- ▶ Healthcare (physical and mental) (8.0%).

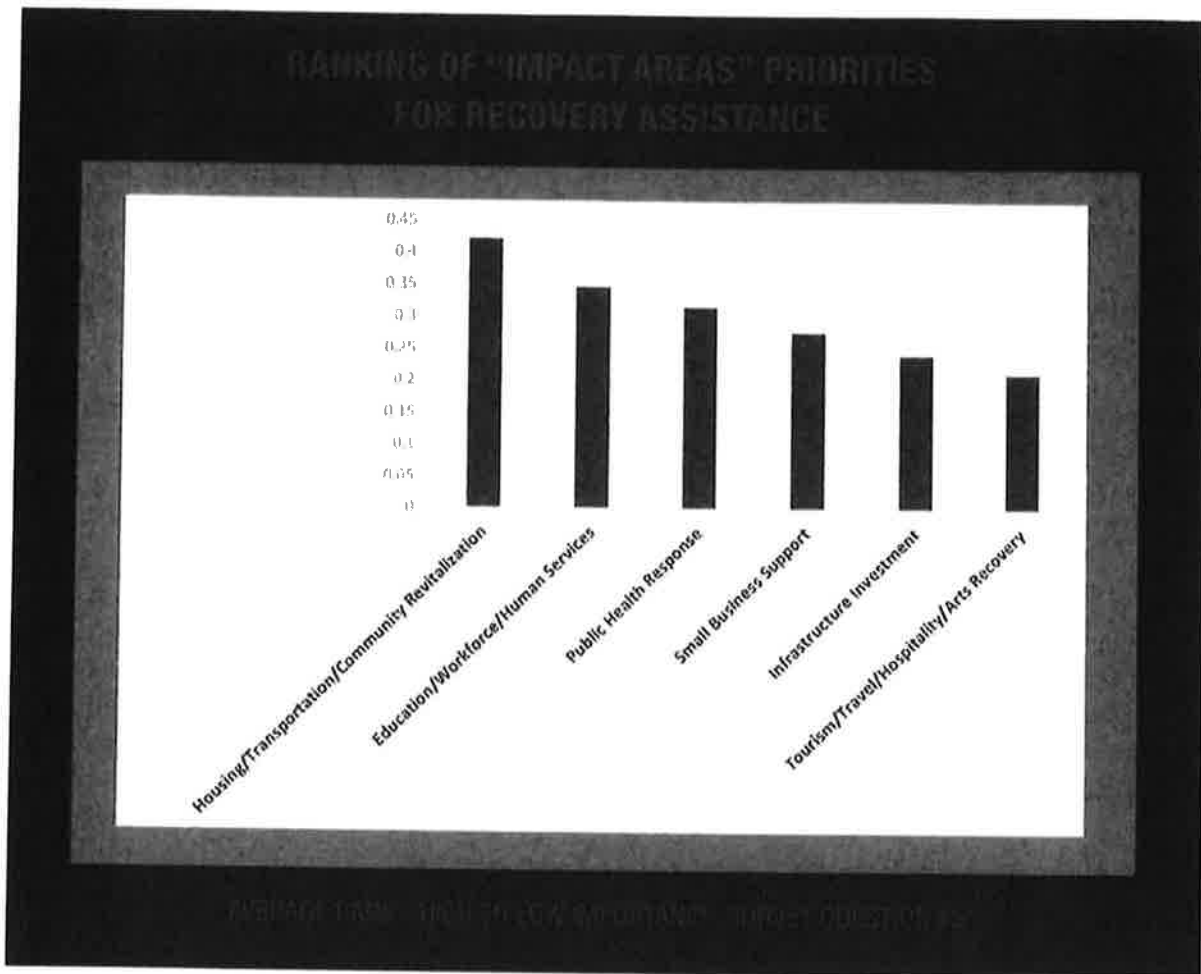
Consistent with Question #3, a ranking of 'Impact Areas,' in order of assigned priority for recovery assistance, likewise, showed a high interest in prioritizing topics like housing (which was also grouped with transportation and community revitalization), as well as education (which was linked with workforce and human services).

As shown in the graphic on the following page, respondents were twice as likely to prioritize "housing/transport/community revitalization needs" than "infrastructure investment." They were also half as likely to rank "tourism/travel/hospitality and arts recovery" as important recovery needs.

RESPONDING TO COVID

In survey Question #8, there were 10 choices available to users when asked to rank ways to support public health response needs as either 'High Need', 'Moderate Need', or 'Low Need'. No topic had greater than 15% of responses assigned as 'Low need'. The six high frequency responses receiving a 'High Need' were (two tied for second and two tied for fifth):

1. Insufficient support for mental health issues;
2. Access to healthcare for people experiencing homelessness;
3. Health disparities in neighborhoods of color and/or low-income;
4. Ability to reach traditionally underserved individuals;
5. Access to bilingual medical and mental health professionals; and
6. Insufficient staffing in healthcare workforce.



COVID-INDUCED STRESS

There was often commentary on how the pandemic-caused shutdown/ slowdown resulted in jobs losses and business closings, plus created stress for persons and households. People identified instability in their housing situations and economic stress to personal or household health, including mental health. They also noted how non-English speaking populations and people of more moderate means have experienced major hardships.

There were those who saw an opportunity to use ARPA funds to counteract "social disintegration". Some noted the positive examples of people coming together, particularly in rapidly forming and successfully enacting the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative/ Project Resilience (meal prep and distribution). Survey participants often point to the value of various projects and policy initiatives already underway, such as youth recreation and enrichment, arts planning and programming, and within the realm of non-motorized transportation.

There was a large body of commentary on how the City's housing environment has been disrupted, impacting people, social systems and the economy. Respondents describe a housing crisis. They identified the pervasive threat of occupants displacement and rapidly escalating costs and uncertainty surrounding the topic of personal and household shelter. There was a theme evident in responses

that housing market instability was causing problems in the community were deep and contributing to the community stresses that were both common and widespread.

Children's health was also certainly a focus. Multiple commentators noted that if child care offerings are too limited, or childcare businesses can't open, are too expensive, or have limited staffing and capacity, this will affect community health and wellness because children are not having opportunities for socialization and enrichment. Moreover, parents are inhibited in their efforts to work and achieve balance, and instead in order to make ends meet, they need to commit greater emphasis on providing childcare at the same time as they work.

Asked to rank choices of potential needs for "Assistance Related to Education/ Workforce Human Services" (Question #9), the top ranked three High Needs were:

1. Increase access to affordable, enriching childcare;
2. Academic and social-emotional support for children; and
3. Access to the internet/broadband (hardware and service).

There has been some work by non-profits to promote easier and more equitable internet access, since a basic requirement of modern life is connectivity to the world wide web. The survey respondents sometimes pointed to the benefits of aiding and pushing access to this technology and providing training resources that help people master what have become basic life skills in terms of using digital resources.

HOUSING / TRANSPORTATION/ COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION NEEDS

Asked to rank 14 "Assistance Related to Housing/Transportation/Community Revitalization" actions as High, or Moderate, or Low Needs (Question #11), the following top five scored as High Need actions with more than half, and usually 60% or more labeling these particular interventions as high need:

1. Increase affordable housing options;
2. Services to address homelessness;
3. Support services for payment of unpaid rent and other financial obligations;
4. Increase resources to address blighted properties and inequities in neighborhood investment; and
5. Awareness/access to existing resources for support and funding.

Housing concerns are paramount. Commentors also point to a need to help connect people with needed resources and there is concern for both aiding economic stability and recovery in Midtown and throughout the City. Thematically, respondents also seem to express awareness of the interdependency of factors and the broad or interdisciplinary nature of needs and structuring action around recovery.