

Brandywine Growth District (DOS Contract #C1002649)

Project Advisory Committee, Meeting #2

Tuesday, June 24th, 2025, 12:00 pm

Online (Teams)

Attendees

Stephanie Brewer	(SBrewer)	Broome County - Chief Planner, Department of Planning & Economic Development
Sarah Glose	(SGlose)	City of Binghamton – Director of Economic Development
Isabella Paullay	(IPaullay)	Broome County – Planner
David P. Pulliam	(DPulliam)	Broome County – Planner
Evan M	(EvanM)	Broome County – Intern
Nate Hotchkiss	(NHotchkiss)	Binghamton City Council
Amy Williamson	(AWilliamson)	The Agency (IDA/LDC)
Beth Lucas	(BLucas)	Southern Tier 8
Holly Granat	(HGranat)	New York State Department of State
Jillian Newby	(JNewby)	NYSDOT – Project Manager
Janet McHenry	(JMcHenry)	Northside Assembly
Christina Pierce	(CPierce)	LCP Group
Becky Timmons	(BTimmons)	Fisher Associates - Project Manager
David Ge	(DGe)	Fisher Associates - Project Manager
		Some Phone call-in, no name

Minutes prepared by David Ge, Project Manager, Fisher Associates

Introductions

SBrewer opened the meeting by thanking all attendees, especially those who helped promote or host Public Meeting #1, including Northside Assembly and the local church. The meeting had a strong turnout and generated productive input, with expectations for growing attendance as the project advances.

Project Components Overview

BTimmons reviewed the agenda (see PowerPoint Slide 2), and gave a recap of the project scope (see PowerPoint Slides 3 & 4):

- Project management and coordination
- Community and stakeholder participation
- Existing conditions assessment (including market feasibility, flood mitigation, stormwater, and connectivity/street conditions)
- Branding and marketing (to be completed later)
- Draft revitalization master plan and SEQR
- Final plan and grant administration

The area has been branded as the Brandywine Growth District (BGD) for purposes of recognition and cohesive communication.

Site Tour and Current Conditions

BTimmons recapped the April 2025 site tour attended by members of Fisher, the City, and County (see PowerPoint Slide 5). She noted that several buildings observed during the tour have since been demolished, and the tour helped the team understand connectivity, flooding, and pedestrian environment challenges. The site spans 158 acres in the city's only I-3 heavy industrial zoning district.

Inventory and Analysis

- Land Use and Ownership (see PowerPoint Slides 8 & 9)
BTimmons presented that the site contains industrial, commercial, and some residential uses, with large areas of vacancy. Ownership is largely private, though significant parcels are held by the City, County, BLDC, and utility companies.
- Infrastructure and Stormwater (see PowerPoint Slide 10)
BTimmons presented that parts of the site lie within 100- and 500-year floodplains. BTimmons noted anecdotal reports from business owners describing flooding and sewer backups.

Connectivity and Streetscape

BTimmons presented existing connectivity challenges (see PowerPoint Slides 11-13):

- I-81/I-86 creates major separation
- No left turn from Brandywine Hwy at Frederick St.
- Students crossing railroad tracks create safety concerns
- Truck restrictions due to low clearance bridges
- Fragmented sidewalk and bike facilities

JNewby (NYSDOT) added that pedestrian and bicycle access is legally prohibited on some segments of NY-363 and this must be documented in project materials.

Proposed improvements included ADA upgrades, sharrows, landscaping, signage, and a feasible multi-use path along the rail corridor. However, the potential to reinstate a southbound left-turn lane at Frederick St. drew extended discussion (see below).

Market Analysis

BTimmons shared findings from Kevin Dwarka's market analysis(see PowerPoint Slides 14-16):

- Population stable (~47,000), but 27% job loss from 2002–2022
- Median household income (\$44,000) is 71% of County average
- 62% of households rent; 50% rise in rent since 2019
- 27% of residents below the poverty line
- Manufacturing jobs dropped 60%, but industrial land remains a key opportunity
- Demand exists for advanced manufacturing, biotech, clean tech, and warehousing

SGlose emphasized the connection between job creation and addressing housing affordability.

Community Survey Insights

BTimmons noted 106 responses received; the survey will remain open until July 7.

Highlights (see PowerPoint Slides 17-22):

- Words like “industrial,” “underused,” and “neglected” were common
- Central location and infrastructure access are assets
- Priorities include cleanup of abandoned sites, better pedestrian infrastructure, lighting, and economic opportunity
- “Local food production” was the most selected preferred use, followed by light manufacturing and tech
- Community desires include jobs, accessible services, and a balanced industrial-commercial environment

Responses to open-ended questions varied from pro-green space to anti-green space stances. One quote captured the stakes: “Go as big as you can. Don’t screw it up.”

Preferred Development Scenario

The previously established vision was reviewed (see PowerPoint Slides 24-25). It includes:

- High-tech industry in the north
- Rail-oriented businesses to the east
- Continued industrial/trucking zones
- Mixed-use along Robinson St.
- Retained recycling functions south of the tracks

SBrewer encouraged integrating multimodal access explicitly into the vision statement, reflecting feedback from Public Meeting #1.

Public Meeting #1 and Visioning Workshop Summary

BTimmons shared that ~3 weeks prior, the public meeting #1 was held with good turnout despite the heat. An interactive mapping and land use activity was well received (see PowerPoint Slides 26-34).

Key themes from the workshop:

- Preserve industrial identity while ensuring innovation and resilience
- Address access, traffic circulation, and pedestrian safety
- Emphasize environmental remediation before new development
- Welcome a diversity of land uses (e.g., creative industries, community-serving businesses)
- Prevent displacement; maintain neighborhood compatibility
- Enhance aesthetics, signage, and streetscape quality

Visual preference surveys showed interest in bold signage, landscaping, modern industrial architecture, and green buffers.

Site Visits and Stakeholder Interviews

BTimmons shared that she and Kevin Dwarka visited four sites (see PowerPoint Slides 35-38):

- Stow site: ~20 acres; currently undergoing consolidation and cleanup. Uses under consideration include recreation and industrial.
- Cook Brothers: Stable; seeks better truck access.
- Perdue Agribusiness: Operating at ~66% capacity; expressed concern about future adjacent land use compatibility.
- Robinson St. Plaza: Some turnover underway; challenges include taxes and permitting.
- All businesses cited labor shortages. Support infrastructure for trucking is needed.

Discussion: Access Feasibility, Connectivity, Infrastructure Investment, and Future Visualizations

Frederick Street Left-Turn Issue

- JNewby (NYSDOT) explained that the left-turn prohibition from Brandywine Hwy onto Frederick Street was implemented due to documented crash patterns and local requests at the time. The restriction significantly reduced accidents. NYSDOT emphasized that any potential reinstatement would require full engineering analysis, likely be costly, and need approvals at both state and federal levels (due to proximity to I-81).
- NHotchkiss and SGlose agreed that resolving this access issue is critical for determining viable land uses and shaping the future of the Brandywine Growth District.
- BLucas added that if access is deemed infeasible, planners must make early decisions on which uses are still appropriate under constrained access conditions.

Broader Feasibility and Investment Considerations

- Several participants, including SGlose, discussed the importance of identifying an order-of-magnitude cost estimate (\$1M vs \$100M) to support investment decisions.
- BLucas suggested that, in the absence of private interest, the City or County may need to act as lead investor in access improvements to make future development viable.
- Consensus emerged that while access improvements may be technically feasible, their financial, permitting, and operational implications must be weighed against projected public benefit and economic development potential.
- The Robinson Street intersection was briefly mentioned as a possible gateway and alternative route, especially for multimodal traffic accessing the northern or eastern portions of the BGD.

Renderings and Future Visualizations

- CPierce (LCP Group) asked whether site-level conceptual renderings could be provided.
- BTimmons explained that the project includes gateway and streetscape visuals but not site-specific site plan renderings. A separate scope could be explored for that.

Next Steps and Project Schedule

BTimmons outlined the following action items:

- Finalize and distribute draft reports on: Connectivity and streetscape assessment; Stormwater and flood mitigation analysis; Fiscal and market feasibility analysis; Overall existing conditions assessment; Continue collecting community survey responses through July 7, 2025.
- Plan for Public Meeting #2, which will present detailed analysis and early recommendations.

- Conduct internal client meeting and offline coordination with NYSDOT to clarify regulatory feasibility, cost implications, and next steps regarding Brandywine Highway access.
- Discuss potential site-specific conceptual renderings (e.g., for the Stow site) separately, as they are outside the current project scope.

Closing Remarks

SGlose complimented Fisher Associates for their professional and effective engagement process.

BTimmons reiterated that meeting notes and presentation materials will be shared with the Committee.

Stakeholders were encouraged to reach out with questions or follow-up ideas. Internal meetings (including with NYSDOT) are scheduled to further clarify the feasibility of access improvements.

The foregoing meeting minutes represent the writer's interpretation and summary of the proceedings of the meeting. Please notify Fisher Associates of any additions or modifications.