



CITY OF ONEIDA
Department of Planning &
Development



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Department of Planning, Development & Codes

Monthly Report – September 2026

Reporting Period: September 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026

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Executive Summary

September was a productive month for the Department of Planning, Development & Codes. The Department continued managing the City's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), reviewing proposed development, supporting the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals (PCZBA), preparing land-use policy updates, and overseeing regular Codes operations. Significant work also continued on State grant programs, departmental improvements and preparations for the 2027 budget.

Several major projects made measurable progress. The AYSO Soccer Fields project reached the 60% design stage; Hotel Oneida remained the subject of active project meetings and follow-up; subdivision applicants advanced plans for October consideration; and the Department continued preparing the storage trailer/container regulations and a proposed temporary solar-energy moratorium. Work with Downtown Business Assistance Fund participants also continued as several projects moved toward completion.

Much of this progress depends on coordinating property owners, engineers, consultants, other City departments and State agencies. The Department remains focused on maintaining momentum, documenting decisions and moving projects through the required steps while continuing to serve residents and businesses on routine planning and code matters.



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Planning Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals

The PCZBA met on September 8. In advance of that meeting, the Department coordinated application reviews, mapping, subdivision documentation and notices, and worked with applicants to identify items needed for subsequent Board action. The meeting focused on two subdivisions and potential improvements to City subdivision procedures.

4410 Kelley Road – Four-Lot Subdivision

The Board conducted an initial review of the proposed four-lot subdivision and related lot consolidation along Kelley and Schoolheimer Roads. Because the proposed configuration involves land in both the City of Oneida and Town of Lenox, staff reviewed the required intermunicipal coordination, notice and environmental-review procedures. The Board raised no major concerns with the general lot layout and scheduled a public hearing and further review for October. No subdivision approval was granted in September.

Oneida Community Mansion House – Cemetery Subdivision

The Board reviewed a proposed major subdivision intended to establish a separate approximately 3.53-acre cemetery parcel, provide permanent legal access along an existing road and resolve an adjoining property-line issue. Board discussion addressed cemetery boundaries, nearby rail-trail use, right-of-way access, emergency access and necessary survey details. The applicant responded with revised September plans, and the Department coordinated additional review with the City Engineer. The project is being prepared for the next stage of consideration in October; no formal subdivision approval was issued in September.

Subdivision Administration and Review Procedures

The Board also discussed improvements to Chapter 155, including allowing clearly legible subdivision drawings at a scale of 1 inch = 100 feet when appropriate and updating provisions for electronic filing. These discussions reflect the Department's ongoing effort to make subdivision review more predictable, reduce avoidable applicant costs and maintain the technical information necessary for sound decisions. Any code amendment would require the normal review and adoption process.



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Downtown Revitalization Initiative

The Department continued coordinating the City's active Downtown Revitalization Initiative projects, which are at different stages of design, construction and grant administration. The following updates focus on September activity and upcoming milestones rather than repeating previously reported project histories.

Downtown Streetscape and Accessibility Improvements

Coordination continued on the downtown streetscape project and its engineering and design requirements. Work involves aligning proposed pedestrian, accessibility, roadway and streetscape improvements with other infrastructure and potential transportation funding. The Department is working with the project team to advance the design in an orderly manner and reduce the risk of duplicate design work as related funding and scope questions are resolved.

Veterans Memorial Park

Following the Common Council's August direction to proceed, Veterans Memorial Park continued advancing through the design process with C&S and City staff. September work focused on carrying the agreed project direction into the next design phase, coordinating remaining technical questions and keeping project documentation organized. The next design reviews will provide further opportunities to evaluate the project's scope and construction readiness before the appropriate approvals are sought.

AYSO Soccer Fields

The City received the 60% design materials for the AYSO Soccer Fields in September, an important step toward a construction-ready project. The Department arranged for an early-October review with the design team to examine the drawings, site requirements, drainage, access and remaining cost questions. The City's \$200,000 NY KICKS application remains pending and, if awarded, would allow consideration of additional improvements, including restroom facilities. The project continues to move forward through design and grant coordination.



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Hotel Oneida

Hotel Oneida remained one of the Department's most active redevelopment coordination efforts. The Department and development team continued regular, approximately biweekly project calls, supplemented by additional phone and email follow-up as particular questions arose. Substantial work was devoted to reviewing construction progress, obtaining updated schedules and pricing information, identifying remaining documentation and coordinating upcoming phases with the developer and State partners.

The proposed replacement-parking arrangement also remained under review. The developer provided a preliminary parking concept in September, and the Department continued working with City leadership and the Madison County Industrial Development Agency to evaluate the property, design and transaction details against existing City requirements. The parking discussion is ongoing; the preliminary concept is not a final approval. A further project-progress review was scheduled for early October.

Downtown Business Assistance Fund

The Department continued working with MRB Group, New York State Homes and Community Renewal and participating property owners to bring existing Downtown Business Assistance Fund projects toward completion. Several approved projects are requesting additional assistance, and the Department is helping navigate the required State process so that eligible improvements can be completed and the DRI-funded program successfully closed out. Requests remain subject to program requirements and applicable approvals.

During September, work progressed at several downtown locations, including exterior improvements at 117 Madison Street and continued work at 169 Main Street. Other participating projects moved through construction completion, inspections, documentation and reimbursement preparation. The program remains focused on existing awards rather than a new round of applications.



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Higinbotham Park and Kallet Theater – DRI Project Funding

New York State has indicated that potential DRI funding reallocation should focus on projects already included in Oneida's Strategic Investment Plan; Higinbotham Park performance pavilion and improvements to the historic Kallet Theater. The Department is working to obtain updated estimates of the improvements needed at these locations so the City can evaluate practical project scopes with the State. Any funding adjustment remains subject to the required State review and approval.

Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Form-Based Code

Work continued with Barton & Loguidice on the City's Comprehensive Plan update and DRI-supported form-based zoning work. September coordination focused on organizing the next stages of community input, including the public survey and advisory-committee process. The combined effort will give the City an updated long-range planning framework and a more consistent approach to future downtown development.

Comprehensive Plan and Long-Range Planning

In addition to its role in the DRI program, the Comprehensive Plan is a significant citywide planning undertaking. The Department continued working with the consultant team to move from initial information-gathering and the advisory committee's SWOT discussion into broader public participation. The work is intended to address housing, neighborhood conditions, development opportunities, infrastructure, transportation and the City's long-term land-use needs.

The Department also continued reviewing zoning-map inconsistencies identified earlier in the year. Reconciling existing map information against the legal zoning record is important to providing reliable guidance to property owners, applicants and the PCZBA. That work will also inform future code and comprehensive-plan recommendations.



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Zoning and Policy Development

Storage Trailer and Container Regulations

The proposed Storage Trailer and Container Local Law advanced through another substantial round of drafting and review. The Department worked with the City Attorney and other City staff to refine definitions, treatment of temporary versus longer-term storage, permit administration and enforceable standards. The revised proposal was being prepared for the necessary referral and advisory review before returning to the Common Council. No new regulations were adopted in September.

Large-Scale Solar and Battery Energy Storage

The Department continued work on a proposed temporary moratorium to provide time for a comprehensive review of the City's large-scale solar and battery energy storage regulations. The City Attorney reviewed the proposal in September and supported using a temporary moratorium as a planning measure while the City considers updated safety, siting, decommissioning and land-use provisions. The matter will proceed through the appropriate legislative process; no moratorium was enacted during the reporting period.

Property Accountability and Other Zoning Work

Work continued on the proposed Property Accountability & Occupancy Compliance Initiative, including the longer-term framework for more consistent rental-property information, vacant-building oversight and inspection coordination. The Department also handled development inquiries and zoning interpretations involving industrial storage, proposed animal-related uses, property access and utilities. This early assistance helps applicants understand requirements before investing in final engineering or formal submissions.

Codes Oversight and Enforcement

The Codes Division maintained its regular building-permit, residential inspection, complaint, property-maintenance and enforcement responsibilities throughout September. Detailed permit and inspection statistics continue to be reported separately by the division. The Department's work focused on supporting staff, resolving complicated interpretation and enforcement questions, and improving coordination with Planning, Fire, Engineering and legal counsel when needed.



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The Department also continued reviewing internal procedures, inspection workload and permit administration. These efforts are intended to improve consistency, support timely applicant service and ensure that difficult cases receive the documentation and follow-through they require.

Grants and Other City Projects

NYSDEC ZEVIN Electric-Vehicle Charging Grants

The Department continued substantial work on the City's two NYSDEC Zero-Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (ZEVIN) grants. The necessary contract extension has been pending with DEC for several months despite repeated City follow-up. DEC has acknowledged the delay, apologized and indicated that workload demands may delay its review for additional months. The Department has continued to provide the requested documentation and maintain contact with the State.

This extended review has become a significant schedule concern. Without the executed extension, the City cannot confidently commit to the next procurement and construction steps. As a result, completing charger construction during 2026 is now increasingly unlikely. The Department remains prepared to move the projects forward promptly once the State completes the required action, while continuing coordination with contractors and utility partners.

Other Grants and Development Support

The Department continued following other City funding and economic-development opportunities, including the Restore NY Madison Street project, potential federal community-development resources to assist with eligible demolition work, and steps associated with Pro-Housing Community Certification. These efforts involve checking eligibility, coordinating outside agencies and preparing the groundwork for later decisions; they do not represent new grant awards or spending authorizations during September.



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Department Operations and 2027 Budget Preparation

September also included continued work on the Department's 2027 budget and staffing plan. The review focused on balancing growing code-enforcement responsibilities, planning and zoning administration, grant reporting and the amount of project coordination required to support downtown redevelopment and other City initiatives.

The Department continued refining staffing and workflow options, including additional Code Enforcement capacity, a Development Specialist function and better day-to-day coordination of complex cases. Related work included reviewing job responsibilities, opportunities for improved permit tracking and ways to provide more consistent service with available resources. Proposals remain subject to the City's budget and personnel approval processes.

Challenges, Risks and Constraints

September continued to demonstrate that the timing of many City projects depends on State agency reviews, private development schedules, consultant deliverables and coordination among multiple stakeholders. The Department can organize the process and pursue answers, but cannot independently complete every outside approval. The delayed DEC contract extensions are the clearest example: they are now affecting the likelihood of construction beginning before year-end.

Maintaining regular Codes and applicant services while administering a substantial number of capital projects and policy initiatives is another ongoing challenge. Continued attention to sequencing, timely documentation and reasonable staffing capacity is important to sustaining the progress already made. The Department is addressing these issues through regular project meetings, careful follow-up, procedural improvements and early identification of unresolved requirements.

Major September Accomplishments

- Received the 60% AYSO Soccer Fields design and scheduled a detailed design-team review for early October.
- Maintained active Hotel Oneida project coordination, including recurring development-team calls and replacement-parking review.



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- Held the September PCZBA meeting and advanced the Kelley Road and Mansion House subdivisions through initial review, revised plans and Engineering coordination.
- Advanced drafting and legal review of storage trailer/container regulations and the proposed solar/BESS moratorium.
- Followed State direction on remaining DRI funding opportunities and initiated cost estimates for Higinbotham Park and the Kallet Theater.
- Supported Downtown Business Assistance Fund participants as active improvement projects move toward completion and closeout.
- Continued work on both ZEVIN grant extensions and documented the schedule impacts of pending State action.
- Maintained Comprehensive Plan, zoning-map, Codes and 2027 departmental planning work alongside regular services.

October 2026 Priorities

- Review the 60% AYSO design and continue work toward the next project milestone.
- Review Hotel Oneida progress, remaining documentation and replacement-parking options.
- Complete required PCZBA review steps for the Kelley Road and Mansion House subdivisions.
- Advance the proposed storage trailer/container law and solar/BESS policy work through the proper review process.
- Obtain estimates for Higinbotham Park and the Kallet Theater and continue active DRI and Downtown Business Assistance Fund coordination.
- Follow up with DEC on outstanding ZEVIN extensions and adjust project scheduling as required.
- Continue Codes operational improvements and 2027 departmental budget preparation.

Looking Ahead

September's progress included design milestones, subdivision review, grant follow-up and continuing Codes services. The Department will maintain that momentum, complete required reviews and keep City projects moving responsibly.