



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 1 ~ March 13, 2012, 9:00 – 11:00 AM**  
**UB Regional Institute, 77 Goodell St., Suite 302, Buffalo, NY**

**In attendance:** Hal Morse (GBNRTC); Seth Piccirillo (NFTA); Robert Shibley (UDP / UBRI); Benjamin Bidell (Niagara County); Tom Dearing (Erie County); Keith Lucas (City of Buffalo); James Bragg (City of Niagara Falls); Anthony Armstrong (LISC Buffalo); Mike Clarke (LISC Buffalo); Jessie Gouck (BNMC); Mike Riegel (Belmont); Amy Weymouth (GBNRTC); Bart Roberts (UDP / UBRI); Darren Kempner (UDP / UBRI)

**I. Consortium Agreement**

- A formal agreement is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that outlines partner organizations' roles and responsibilities in developing a plan, as well as how they will assist in its implementation
- Agreement will be made available by early April for review by partner organizations
  - Final Consortium Agreement must be signed by all parties and set to HUD by **June 15<sup>th</sup>**
  - The language used in the agreement must be approved by HUD

**II. Verification of Public Housing Authorities**

- Public Housing Authorities in Erie and Niagara County need to be made aware of the initiative
- HUD requires a copy of the letter that will go out to all public housing authorities in the two county area
- This will give the Steering Committee a better idea of how the authorities might want to get involved (e.g. stakeholder's council) and how they can follow up for further information

**III. Final Work Plan**

- A document that specifies the scope of the plan, details the actionable items, and highlights coordination between organizations
- The timeline is 3 years and the steering committee should have a deliverable work plan developed by **April 15<sup>th</sup>**
- The narrative of the work plan should refine details and speak specifically to the concepts embodied by the plan
- Developing a logic model to be used as an oversight tool for reporting back to HUD
  - This reporting tool could take the form of a detailed Excel document
  - Will allow the steering committee to pull out best practices from national models
  - This should be completed by **May 1<sup>st</sup>**



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#### **IV. Fiduciary Issues**

- The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) will act as the internal auditor and pass through for funds provided by HUD
- More financial oversight from HUD is required since the Sustainable Communities grant is competitive
- The NFTA will develop a template and circulate to member organizations to allow them to document matching funds
- Blended pay rates (e.g. hourly wage rates applied across the board rather than by individual organization) will be accepted by HUD

#### **V. Benefits associated with a grant designation**

- Substantial HUD involvement within each region in the form of monitoring, policy guidance, and channels to provide capacity and support from peer regions
- Regional fair housing and equity assessment
  - These assessments could be used as a regional analysis of impediments to housing study, which could in turn be endorsed or adopted by individual municipalities and serve as their own impediment studies
    - This would allow municipalities to save money by not having to hire outside consultants to conduct their own impediment study
- The region is granted preferred sustainability status
  - Any entity in the region that applies for a competitive grant through HUD received two extra points on their application
  - A formalized process for responding to requests to use the preferred sustainability status should be created
    - This could potentially feed into the process used by the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to determine funding allotments
  - The UB Regional Institute (UBRI) will send out an email detailing how to utilize the preferred sustainability status
  - Although there might be competition among organizations with similar roles and missions in the region, the status is a resource for everyone and gives the region a competitive advantage
- HUD will provide additional technical assistance



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- Sustainable Communities Learning Network website contains resources on the following:
  - Equity issues through 'Policy Link'
  - Transportation issues through 'Reconnecting America'
  - Scenario modeling
- HUD Sustainable Communities Resource Center website

#### **VI. Governance Structure**

- There is a consensus that additional input from municipalities is needed since they will have a large role in implementing policies
  - Possible venues for engagement include the Erie County Association of Governments and Niagara County Association of Towns
    - A representative from each county group could sit on the steering committee to ensure that policy can be directed by municipalities
- Organizing regional stakeholders through the utilization of a larger "congress" which would be episodic in its meeting, and smaller working groups focusing on specific issues which would have more regular meetings
  - The deliverables of the plan should help determine work groups and their functional role
- The group could utilize the Environmental Alliance model

#### **VII. Public Participation**

- Different options for public engagement will be presented to the steering committee in May
- The launch of the Sustainable Communities (SC) project to the public will take place in **Fall 2012**
- An interactive website will serve a platform for communication with the public
- A citizen planning school will be an integral part of the SC initiative
  - Interested citizen champions will be given an interactive curriculum based on planning and tenants of sustainability
  - There will be technical and web-based support with an emphasis placed on learning by doing
  - Graduates could potentially help setup/facilitate a public meeting to inform their community about the SC initiative



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#### **VIII. Diversity**

- There is a definite need for increased diversity at all levels of participation within the Sustainable Communities initiative to reflect the diversity of the region
- There should be a clause within the Consortium Agreement that speaks to joinability and a process to include additional representative members on the steering committee and various work groups
- Public meetings could be co-hosted with diversity-driven organizations

#### **IX. Organizing Principals for the SC Plan**

- The Sustainable Communities Plan should build off of past and ongoing work while avoiding duplication and overlap
  - Values set forth in Framework for Regional Growth
  - Livability Principles
  - Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council's (GBNRTC) Buffalo Niagara 2050 plan
  - 5 county regional sustainability plan through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
  - Align working groups with REDC
- Creating a framework for nominating and choosing projects that fit the SC criteria
- Implementation councils could be created as soon as possible
  - They will be able to better identify barriers and adjust policy accordingly
  - Their work can be used as an input to inform the planning process

#### **X. Action Items**

- Setup a conference call between data/IT reps from each steering committee member
- Setup an FTP site to share data
- Choose a date for next month's meeting
  - April 10<sup>th</sup> – 9:00am – 11:00am
  - April 11<sup>th</sup> – 1:00pm - end of day
  - April 13<sup>th</sup> – anytime
  - Sitting meeting - First Friday of each month 9:00am – 11:00am
- Flush out the work plan
- Nail down final version of the Consortium Agreement
- Encourage a broader base of constituency within the Steering committee
- Operationalize process by next meeting