



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 16 - September 6, 2013, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority ~ 181 Ellicott Street Buffalo, NY 14203

In attendance: Hal Morse (Greater Buffalo - Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Kelly Dixon (Greater Buffalo - Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Bart Roberts (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Bradshaw Hovey (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Glenn Nellis (Town of Eden), Ryan McPherson (Western New York Environmental Alliance), Laura Smith (Buffalo Niagara Partnership), Dan Leonard (Buffalo Niagara Partnership), Steve Ricca (Jaeckle Fleischmann), Frank Billittier (NYSDOT), Supervisor Ross Annabel (Niagara County Supervisors Association), Deanna Rose (Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority), Bill Parke (City of Buffalo), Jim Bragg (City of Niagara Falls), Lawrence Cook (Oishei Foundation), Willie Dunn (Niagara Falls Housing Authority), John Fell (City of Buffalo).

1. Welcome & Introductions:

- **H. Morse:** Welcomed everyone and extended a special welcome to Dan Leonard who will be working on development issues with Laura Smith at BNP.

2. Implementation of plan

- **H. Morse:** Would like to continue having general discussions about what is going to happen after the planning effort is complete
- Morse put together the following discussion points about the One Region Forward (1RF) implementation strategy:
 - What will 1RF produce?
 - **K. Dixon:** Funding, since the Federal government will prioritize our region for financing after the plan is complete. The plan will also result in a variety of online, educational materials. So far we have the 1RF website, the online Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Smart Growth Scorecard, and on-line GIS tools that are in development. We have also been conducting workshops and providing technical assistance to citizens which we will continue to do after the plan is complete. We will also continue to bring together key partners to move effective sustainability projects in our region forward.
 - **L. Smith:** It might be worth trying to create a government policy influenced by 1RF.
 - Who should/will agree with it?



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- **H. Morse:** Erie and Niagara counties have embraced it in some fashion, but do we have a deeper level of engagement from them? And is agreement from just the two counties enough?
- **R. McPherson:** Two county agreement is not enough. We need the support of a variety of organizations. The support of the NGO sector in particular would be valuable. It would be great to have the support of the WNY Environmental Alliance.
- If the counties embrace the plan, does that mean that the towns within the counties embrace it too?
- **B. Shibley:** Whether all of the 64 municipalities in the two counties fully embrace the plan is unclear.
- **L. Smith:** We need a diverse body of supporters, otherwise 1RF will not succeed. We also need the support of citizens. We might be able to gain this through making sustainability part of the culture and emphasizing that the plan addresses topics that affect everyone. Even though we need broad, public support, we should also persuade some key organizations and individuals to implement projects that align with the plan. Also, maybe we should have a running list on the 1RF website of supporters. This would be an incentive for organizations/people to support 1RF, because it could be good public relations for them. It would also increase the credibility of 1RF.
- **B. Bidell:** Niagara County won't be leading the implementation of the plan but it would still like to continue to support it after it is completed.
- **Supervisor Annabel:** In order to gain the support of local officials, we need the support of their constituencies and civic organizations, which will result in political support.
- **B. Bidell:** We should also try to get support of higher up public officials, since some politicians follow what party leaders do. It would be valuable to have one on one meetings with certain, powerful politicians. In general, One Region Forward is going to involve a lot of politicking.
- **B. Shibley:** In gaining supporters, we should market the plan as things that people can do rather than can't do. We also need to convey a compelling, inspiring story about what we're trying to do that will convince the public to take action. Our story will in turn inform our strategy to implement the plan and the structure to implement this strategy.



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- **L. Smith:** In addition to progress that has already been made and progress we expect to make, we also need to recognize that we have immense challenges.
- **B. Roberts:** If this group drafts our story, our Graphic Designer Brenda Stynes will be able to effectively communicate that story.
- What does “agreement” signify?
 - **R. McPherson:** Should 1RF develop a list of principles/actions that could be adopted by organizations/individuals that they could carry out after 1RF is over? These principles should be broad enough to appeal to a lot of people, but specific enough so that supporting them actually signifies something. On the other hand, we could give organizations options and allow them to support 1RF by either adopting a set of broad principles or by adopting a set of specific principles.
 - **B. Bidell:** Maybe entities can pick exactly what they want to support in the plan and how they will signify their support. Thus, they would not have to adopt a whole set of principles. Maybe they could pick particular principles or components of the plan they approve of.
 - **R. McPherson:** We could also allow entities to state how they are already supporting parts of the plans through their current projects. This could result in a list of 200 projects that are moving our region forward. This would be valuable because it would promote supporters’ projects and also show the public that action is already occurring to improve our region, which is encouraging. There are a lot of existing projects that are making our region more sustainable, but people sometimes don’t think of them as increasing sustainability. We just need to reframe certain projects as sustainability projects.
 - **B. Bidell:** Also, we will convince more entities to implement sustainability projects by showing them that other entities are already doing this, rather than telling them that they should/have to be sustainable.
 - **L. Smith:** Also, letting supporters chose how they are/will increase our region’s sustainability works for various types of supporters. Both organizations and individuals can do this. Also, perhaps we should start forming this list of projects by picking one or two projects from each of our organizations that aligns with the plan. We are all from organizations that are currently conducting sustainability projects in our region.
- How could it become action?



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- **L. Smith:** We need to establish performance metrics so that supporters are accountable and we can show the public that action is taking place.
 - How will it evolve post completion?
 - We did not have time to discuss this point.
- **H. Morse:** We will further discuss what will happen after the plan during our next meeting. Maybe this could be a regular agenda item.

3. Local government council/private sector council fall meetings:

- **B. Shibley:** So far we have conducted 2 Community Congress meetings and have had meetings with the local government and private sector councils. These all went well. We have also attended numerous community events to spread the word about 1RF. Now we're preparing for 5 Community Congress meetings in November. We are thinking that we should ask the councils to convince their constituents to attend the Community Congresses and then hold a meeting for both councils after the Congresses, to get their opinion on how to move our region forward. We might have this meeting of the councils in December or early 2014.
- **L. Smith:** This timeline makes sense since government officials are not going to be available until after the Community Congresses, due to the dates of local elections.
- **B. Shibley:** Plus, these council meetings have never been very well attended during normal periods for potential council members, so we definitely would not want to have a meeting when possible members are busy. We have also not solidified who are the members of each council yet.
- **L. Smith:** I just heard a well-received presentation about how municipalities can create strong towns. We are having the same speaker (Chuck Marohn) deliver the presentation on Thursday, December 12th. Maybe he can also present at the local government council meeting. The night of the 11th there is an opportunity for a small group dinner for those that are interested. This would be a good time to ask him if he wants to present.
- **B. Roberts:** The speaker might be persuaded to present by the fact that the councils' meeting will be a joint session of business and government representatives.
- **B. Bidell:** In general we should hold meetings before 9 am or after 5 pm since many elected officials work from 9 to 5.
- **K. Dixon:** We should get specific people from 1RF to reach out to certain potentially interested people rather than just directing potential council members to our website.

4. Scenario planning update:



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- **B. Shibley:** Figuring out how to conduct scenario planning has been a challenge because every working group has a different opinion on how to go about it. But basically, through this exercise we want people to think about what would happen if we did things differently.
- **B. Roberts:** The Scenario Planning exercise will be a part of our story telling that as mentioned is important to gain public support. In the beginning of the exercise we'll be showing a 5-6 minute video about what will happen if we keep on doing things the same. We will include information about positive things that have been happening in our region as well as negative developments. In the video we want to strike a balance between conveying that progress has been made but there's still more that needs to be done. We also want the video to give people the big picture about what is happening in our region and inspire them to change our future.

A video will also be helpful because we're going to have 5 Community Congress meetings at various locations, rather than one large Community Congress. So creating an introduction video makes sense in terms of staffing. Also, the video can be part of our strategy to market 1RF. We will put it on our website and encourage people to share the video with others. We will also develop 30 second videos to advertise the Community Congresses. We're in the process of determining locations for the Congresses. Our thoughts for locations are as follows:

- Amherst High School for the North Towns
- Starpoint High School for the Lockport area
- Somewhere in Orchard Park for the South Towns
- Still looking for locations in Niagara Falls and Buffalo

If you have suggestions for locations, please let us know. High Schools work well because people are going to break up into groups of 8 to do the map exercise, so we need a lot of room. Also, we need about 35 facilitators for the Congresses, because we expect to have a lot of people. We've been recruiting facilitators with planning backgrounds from colleges and also from the working teams. But we still need more facilitators. If you want to be a facilitator, or you know someone else who does, please let us know.

- **B. Hovey:** In this video we want to include a definition of sustainability that is similar to the classic definition from the Brundtland Report.
- **L. Smith:** Can we include something in the video that says that negative consequences will happen in 5 years if we don't change, rather than just negative effects will occur in 40 years? Making the consequences more immediate will grab people's attention and support.



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- **B. Hovey:** To increase urgency, we will emphasize that what we do now affects the future. Some people will be motivated by this, others will see it as an opportunity to not do anything, but this is unavoidable.
- **H. Morse:** Also, our tax analysis will show some more immediate effects of inaction.
- **L. Smith:** We should also include in the video recent efforts to improve our region.
- **J. Jedlicka:** The video should also include information about positive changes that have occurred as a result of the community engaging in an issue. This will persuade people that their participation matters.
- **R. McPherson:** We should also show people how many people went to other Community Congress meetings, to inspire them that they're part of something bigger than the specific meeting they are at.
- **B. Roberts:** We can do this. Also, we expect a good turnout of people. The outreach team has been getting the impression that people are interested in participating more deeply in 1RF. Also, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary has been invited to the Buffalo meeting, and if he attends, it should attract participants and gain a lot of media attention.

5. Communications and Engagement:

- **B. Roberts:** Steve Ricca and Mike Clark tabled for 1RF at the Elmwood Arts Festival and enjoyed it, so I encourage other Steering Committee members to table at an upcoming farmers market or festival for 1RF. You'll get a free t-shirt and reusable bag.
- **B. Bidell:** North Tonawanda has a great farmer's market. We should look into tabling there.
 - a. **Team Tomorrow:**
 - **B. Roberts:** In light of our last meeting during which we introduced Team Tomorrow, we revised the program so it's scaled down. Thus, we're only going to ask people to do one activity, which is PhotoVoice. To participate in PhotoVoice people take pictures of things that they like and don't like in our region and write brief captions explaining why they took the pictures. We're going to ask a few classrooms and school groups to participate in the project but we're also going to allow anyone to participate in PhotoVoice by putting information about it on our website and allowing them to upload photos to our site. We're working with our web developer to see if photos that people upload can also be uploaded to Instagram and other social media sites (although this integration would cost more money).



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- **B. Shibley:** We did a similar activity for the Building UB Plan and it was successful.
- **B. Roberts:** We want to display the images that the youth groups produce at the community congresses and we want the youths to participate in the congresses. Also we would like the young people to present their photos and what they learned to the Steering Committee. These would be valuable, educational activities for youths. Although youths will complete these activities, we won't require every PhotoVoice participant and member of Team Tomorrow to do these. We're thinking that Team Tomorrow might be something that could be a broad umbrella of allowing people to engage more deeply with 1RF, including the Citizen Planning School.

b. Textizen:

- **B. Roberts:** We've gone live with a Textizen survey (although we haven't publicized this yet). We're going to be asking people the same questions that we've been presenting them at the community events, so we're going to be getting a lot of rich data about people's responses to these questions. People can respond by texting their responses to a specific number. We've been talking to NFTA about putting up advertisements about Textizen with the phone number that people can text their responses too. We will also put posters in popular public places.
- *Everyone in the meeting tested out the Textizen service.*
- **B. Roberts:** We won't be able to capture cell phone numbers through Textizen. We will probably ask people for their zip code though.
- **B. Bidell:** This is a good way to engage people because like photovoice, people will be able to see immediately how they've contributed to 1RF, since we're going to have a dashboard online that shows peoples' responses.
- **J. Jedlicka:** We should talk to the people that are running the Grow716 texting campaign.

6. Good of the order:

- **L. Smith:** There's going to be a Citizens for Regional Transit conference on Sept 14th from 9 am to 2 pm. Also, we're going to be having a workshop on access and we'd like to get feedback on a draft for the workshop from this committee.



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- **R. McPherson:** On November 6th the WNYEA Congress meeting will happen at UB's Educational Opportunity Center. Judith Engel, EPA Coordinator for Region 2 is the Key Note speaker. Maybe 1RF can share some b-roll to cut down on the cost. Also, 1RF can have a table there.
- **B. Roberts:** All of these events will be on the 1RF website.

7. Adjournment:

- **H. Morse:** Thank you all. Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 4th.