



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 3 ~ May 4, 2012, 9:00 – 11:00 AM**  
**UB Regional Institute, 77 Goodell St., Suite 302, Buffalo, NY**

**In attendance:** Hal Morse (GBNRTC); Benjamin Bidell (Niagara County); Jason Knight (Erie County); Bill Parke (City of Buffalo); Mike Clarke (LISC Buffalo); Mike Ball (BNMC); Dan Belgraph (Belmont); Laura St. Pierre-Smith (BNP); Christina Orsi (ESD); Kelly Dixon (GBNRTC); Bart Roberts (UDP / UBRI); Bradshaw Hovey (UDP / UBRI); Anthony Armstrong (LISC Buffalo); Brenda Stynes (UBRI)

### **I. Administrative Update**

- Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) briefed team on the conference call they had with the HUD Grant Technical Representative (GTR).  
Topics included:
  - Deliverables
  - Work plan initiatives
  - Collaboration with other efforts such as New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the New York State Regional Economic Development Council (REDC)
- The final work plan narrative submitted by the group on April 15<sup>th</sup> was approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- There is an opportunity to leverage state and Federal money by building off of the work produced by separate initiatives. (NYSERDA & REDC)
- New York State Health Impacts Study is also mentioned as an opportunity for collaboration. The areas of concern for this study include **prevention of chronic diseases, increasing access to healthy food, transit, and healthy community designs**. This largely parallels the food access work group identified in the Consortium Agreement.
  - The strong connection between the Health Impacts Study and the REDC was mentioned, again emphasizing the importance in aligning multiple efforts.
  - Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) offered to help with health-related initiatives
- Because the Steering Committee is relatively small, in-kind contributions will be calculated at an hourly rate for each individual rather than a blended hourly rate for the entire group.

### **II. Final Consortium Agreement**

- The eight page Consortium Agreement was signed off on by HUD on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, however; HUD had pointed out three areas needing revision:



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- Strengthen the portion of the Agreement dealing with the accountability of the Steering Committee - A paragraph was added on accountability while also highlighting the decision-making process through a quorum requiring 2/3 majority to pass motions. There is a need to show that Steering Committee members are committed to the three year timeline of the grant.
- A need to discuss the benefits associated with the Consortium Agreement and joining the Consortium (ability to inform your respective organization's planning efforts.) - This is reflected on page seven of the Agreement with an additional paragraph talking about benefits.
- Incorporating the idea of equity and marginalized voices into representation on the Steering Committee - Language was added to the joinability clause specifically dealing with reaching out to additional stakeholders involved in equity issues
- Support documentation was added showing the direct agreement that the NFTA and GBNRTC have with HUD
- The timeline to acquire signatures for the Final Consortium Agreement would begin **May 21<sup>st</sup>**. The final HUD deadline for submission is **June 15<sup>th</sup>**. However, the Steering Committee would like to have all the signatures by **June 12<sup>th</sup>**.

**III. Private Sector Stakeholder Technical Assistance Topics**

- Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP) explained that there would be four large meetings over the course of the grant period to convene private sector stakeholders such as real estate professionals and developers, and provide a parallel to the larger public meeting sessions
- The business economics of the grant should be emphasized to persuade businesses to participate. – What does it mean to their bottom line?
- National organizations such as the Urban Land Institute will be utilized as advisors during the process, and parallels to pre-existing efforts, such as Jaeckle Fleischmann's WNY Economic & Land Development Forum, will be identified and built off of in order to avoid duplication.
- Before each of the four meetings, BNP would like to get the Steering Committee's initial thoughts on the topics, speakers, location, etc.
- The quarterly newsletter Strengthening Niagara was identified as a vehicle to increase private stakeholder involvement.
- The importance of having the government and business stakeholder groups work together is stressed. Governmental officials will want to hear from their constituency



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#### IV. NYSERDA Grant Working Group Collaboration

- The NYSERDA group has a very aggressive timeline, with their final plan due in October. Their work groups will be convening in the coming month and will come together at least six times over the course of the planning process.
- Overlap has been identified between the NYSERDA work groups and the work groups proposed by the Steering Committee.
  - The Land Use/Economic Development work group ties in with NYSERDA's Leveraging economic development and land use for livable communities.
  - The Food Access work group ties in with NYSERDA's agriculture and food working group.
- As part of the planning process for NYSERDA, a list of indicators has begun to be developed that can be very strongly correlated to the performance metrics required by HUD. The issue was raised that metrics would need to be adjusted according to different geography of the region (urban, suburban, and rural).
- UB Regional Institute (UBRI)/Urban Design Project (UDP) stated that they would be assisting in the development of indicators for the NYSERDA Economic Development work group. This will ensure that the NYSERDA plan will closely align with REDC and HUD efforts and reduce confusion among the different efforts.
  - "How do we make sure indicators work for us?"
- An observation was made that economic development issues are crosscutting, so indicators should be steered to reinforce this quality.
- It is mentioned that the work groups for the Sustainable Communities effort will not convene until after the NYSERDA deadline, sometime in the first quarter of 2013. Therefore, this is all the more reason to ensure continuity between the two sets of work groups.
- Since they have already undertaken some initial efforts, Committee Members state makes sense to build off the work that the NYSERDA group has completed, to leverage the efficiencies and possibly free up some additional resources. If the group already has access to data that has been compiled, tabulated, and analyzed, then the group can simply review baseline metrics rather than identify new ones.
- A suggestion was given to put together an online resource that would articulate all the different planning initiatives happening concurrently and help the public better understand each initiative.
- Members of the NYSERDA work groups who could potentially become engaged with the HUD work groups should be identified now.



**ONE  
REGION  
FORWARD**  
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- The caveat with using too much of the NYSERDA groundwork is that the initiative's focus is too much on funding opportunities rather than long term comprehensive planning
- Any indicators developed or borrowed over the course of the process need to be informed by a public process.

**V. Project "Brand" and Title Presentation**

- The branding and title of the initiative will provide direction on communications over the summer with an end goal of launching a website by the end of summer in support of a public launch in fall.
- The process used to extract an identity for the initiative was briefly explained. By reviewing previous plans and initiatives, the identity was created, and will embody what the plan hopes to do and the process that will get us there.
- The objectives that went into the branding process included **connecting the dots, being inclusive, and being encompassing**
- After reviewing the preliminary design for the initiative, "One Region Forward Together," UBRI spoke about some of the strengths of the brand.
  - "One Region" being encompassing enough to catch everything
  - Memorable and easy to recognize
  - Shows both the unity and uniqueness of the region
  - Vibrancy
  - "1" mark holds its own weight and can stand without supporting text
  - Not what you expect – different than other plans in the region
- It's important to think of a name/URL that can be used consistently over communication vehicles and social media and is short enough for people to remember.
- A question was brought up as to why geographic identifiers were avoided in the design, and whether the brand was intentionally vague about what constituted the region.
  - Geographic identifiers of the region will be integrated into written materials, but forcing geography into the design can limit the possible brand opportunities
  - Vagueness of region will allow people to individually conceptualize what the region is to them
- Aside from the development of the mark and brand, an "elevator speech" for use across various communication platforms should be developed to further elaborate on the initiative's message.



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- Committee Members commented that it makes sense to keep the action word “forward” in the name of the initiative. “One Region” = status quo while “One Region Forward” = something different
- Consensus was reached on the name “One Region Forward” (dropping Together) by a majority 10-2 vote.
- Next steps will be to secure the URL and start moving on different communication vehicles/social networking resources.

**VI. Expanding the Steering Committee Membership**

- Committee members wanted to keep the question “Who can help us implement – move things forward?” in mind as they think about expanded Steering Committee membership. Recommendations should be brought to the next meeting.
  - New members will be brought onto the Committee by a 2/3 majority vote.
- Committee Members stressed the importance of an expanded membership that would address equity issues and provide connections to disadvantaged communities; however, the group cannot “let the table get too big.”
- The Citizen Planning School and similar efforts should help increase the representation of underserved communities
- It was mentioned that during the state land bank application a representative from the Association of Erie County Governments was a critical resource to have included.
- Once new members join the Steering Committee they will add their signature to the Consortium Agreement AFTER the 15<sup>th</sup> deadline under the purview of the joinability clause.
- A question came up as to whether an invitation should be sent to Niagara County cities such as Lockport and North Tonawanda to have a representative on the committee.
  - This brings up the issue of where do you stop at the municipal level
  - The Association of Governments and the Association of Towns should provide a strong voice for local governance issues on the Steering Committee, in addition to the local government subgroup.