



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 4 Minutes ~ June 29, 2012, 2:00 – 4:00 PM  
UB Regional Institute, 77 Goodell St., Suite 302, Buffalo, NY**

**In attendance:** Tom Dealing (ECDEP), Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Mike Clarke (LISC), Darren Kempner (NFTA), Bill Parke (OSP), Bob Shibley (UB), Jessie Gouck (BNMC), Hal Morse (GBNRTC), Bradshaw Hovey (UDP), Kelly Dixon (GBNRTC), Laura Smith (BNP), Christina Orsi (ESD), Sharon Entress (UBRI), Brenda Stynes (UBRI), Marjorie McAllister (ESD), Bart Roberts (UBRI), Matt Hartrich (BNP)

**I. Welcome**

**II. Administrative Update**

**a) Consortium Agreement**

- Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) stated the consortium agreement was executed on June 12<sup>th</sup>
- Copy of executed agreement is located in binder with 3 attachments

**b) In-kind contribution documentation**

- GBNRTC's in-kind contribution documentation sheet used for Federal transit projects is being used as a template
- Hourly rates and fringe benefits will need to be validated from each member
- Next major deliverable to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the logic model
  - Incorporating performance measurements
  - 2011 EPA grant to Erie County will be pulled in to performance metric formulation
  - Capacity building opportunities in the fall
  - New HUD grant technical officer for the time being
- There is general consensus that to save fanfare for the official launch later in the year, there will be no press event announcing the consortium.
- In kind contribution protocol will most likely require a cover sheet from a member's corresponding organization.

**III. Steering Group Expansion Nomination Process**

**a) Discuss nominated candidates**

- GBNRTC passed out list of nominees for steering committee
- The City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) and Empire State Development (ESD) point out the importance of diversity and minority representation
- UB Regional Institute (UBRI) would like to leave further nominations open for consideration



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- A question raised by the Committee Members was how big do we want the steering committee to get?
- UBRI representatives don't feel comfortable voting on candidates that haven't already agreed to serve on the steering committee

**b) Voting and approval of final candidates**

- Niagara County Economic Development motioned to table the nomination process and vote until next meeting
  - GBNRTC seconded
- Niagara County Economic Development withdrew motion and agreed that Stephanie Cowart and Dennis Powers should be voted on
  - Both members were added to the steering committee by a unanimous vote
- UBRI wants to examine some appointments to determine how they fit in the framework of the steering committee process
- Members will bring additional candidates to vote on for the next steering committee meeting

**IV. Project Communications Update**

**a) One Region Forward brand application**

- UBRI is developing some sort of forum or online drive for sharing documents/images among members
  - A question was put out to the Sustainability Learning Network to see what others have used to share data
- One Region Forward domain name has been secured
- Online social media presence is on hold but will be established soon
- UBRI presented the visual timeline for the project– cliff notes posted online for people to stay engaged
  - Developed based on work plan put together by UBRI staff
  - Broad overview of the entire process
  - One pagers developed for the project to be distributed as the committee sees fits
  - Need for consistent language throughout website and print materials

**b) Presentation of website concept**

- UBRI explained the full website would not be launched until September closer to the community meetings
- In the interim there will be a one page website (homepage)



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- The one page website will serve different objectives:
  - Introduce effort to public and media and provide basic info on the effort
  - Establish an online presence to point stakeholders to
  - Create social community around initiative
  - Create e-newsletter for launch of website to notify followers and people who signed up to learn more
  - One page website should be launched by the end of July

**c) Communications Sub-Committee**

- Subcommittee to help in different communication capacities
  - UBRI stated this would include mapping out the work plan to best organize the website
  - The website should be sensitive to different audiences (e.g. elected officials, public, stakeholders)
- The sub-committee would most likely have two monthly phone conferences to review material and develop strategies on how to reach different audiences
  - It would review language
  - It would also update online content on an almost daily basis
  - 3-5 people on the sub-committee

**d) Media & Press Strategy**

- In regards to the communication aspect of the project they should seek forgiveness instead of asking permission
  - Need to move fast and clear with messaging – need to get press out quickly
  - Understand the pulse of different communities
- A development area for the website will be set up to have steering committee members look at it before it goes live
- Continual editing and revising of messaging instead of waiting for approval was recommended; otherwise the group risks spending too much time editing text
  - Need strong and consistent messaging
  - Crafting tailored messages to each audience was recommended
- GBNRTC motioned for a communications subcommittee chaired by UBRI which would last the duration of the project
  - Seconded by ESD and unanimously voted on by the group
  - GBNRTC will chair



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- Communications/PR people will help with messaging to each steering committee member's constituency
- The subcommittee will consist of GBNRTC, Niagara County Economic Development, and Communications/PR Staff as needed
- The importance of distinguishing the program was stressed, to avoid confusion with other planning initiatives in the region
  - There is a need for a single media contact, which will be the UBRI
  - The broader strategy will have the GBNRTC and UBRI to be first to get quoted on the project
  - A contact person from each organization needs to be available, to explain "How does this relate to \_\_\_\_\_?"

**e) Project video brainstorming**

- The project video should be a collection of stories we want to tell and voices we'd like to hear (from elected officials all the way to grassroots activists)
- It was stated that the group does not intend to start visioning from scratch, but rather build on what's already been envisioned.
  - Focusing on parts of the Framework for Regional Growth that have already been completed was recommended
  - Clips from different public meetings (Green Code, BOA) are suggested as supplements to the video
- Articulation of problems, establishing vision, and identifying what we have to build on were mentioned as elements
- Sensitivity is important in speaking about the challenges the region faces – an upbeat message is important
- The video has a big agenda, and should represent a variety of voices
- It is suggested that the message of the video forward looking
- The group agrees that the video for Green Options Buffalo, which was shown at U.S. Department of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards, was nicely done. The videographer should be located.
- Benchmarks of sustainable practices should be mentioned
  - Business economics of sustainability should be mentioned
- A question of who video would be aimed at and what its call to action would be is brought up – the inclusion of children is also important
- Use examples of current sustainability initiatives to highlight in the video – find practices that are already going on in the region.



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- Define sustainability, highlight sustainability principles Showcase what different aspects of sustainability looks like at different levels (urban, suburban, rural)

**V. Regional Impediments Analysis Update**

- Instead of a fair housing equity assessment the HUD Secretary has encouraged each community to complete a regional Impediment Analysis (IA)
- The scope of regional IA would transform and expand the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA), which had mainly focused on housing equity issues for different ethnicities
- Four additional classes protected from discrimination are:
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Religion
  - Family status
- Waiting on information from HUD to proceed with regional IA
  - HUD will be making data tools available to communities to aid with the regional IA, however, these are still being built out
  - More resources will available as this is a significant expansion of the original HUD plan
  - Not every community needs to sign on
- The UBRI has begun collecting baseline data needed for the regional IA
  - IA final product has yet to be determined
- Erie County's last IA was \$50,000 (excluding Buffalo)
  - The outcome of a IA can provoke strong emotions
- The team will work more and bring this back to the next meeting

**VI. Baseline Analysis Update**

**a) Project Evaluation Scorecard**

- As far as best practices for scoring, an example from Rhode Island was mentioned. This example integrated the six livability principles, and broader ten principles of smart growth, then used them to evaluate state funding for various projects
- The UBRI example was taken to the Regional Economic Development Council's (REDC) Smart Growth working group
  - Next step will be to take the scorecard to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) livable communities working group to get more feedback



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- Would also like feedback from the Steering Committee
- Designated growth areas was discussed – these are identified by Framework and criteria established by smart growth legislation
- The scorecard must be specific, and should build on the generalities of what is found within the Framework

**b) Plan Analysis Methodology**

- The University Design Project (UDP) is currently assembling a library of plans in the region
  - The overall values/policy directions are highlighted for each plan
  - A synthesis is being developed that will show a great level of consistency among plans - “Everyone is working in the same landscapes”
  - This will be similar to the process for the Buffalo waterfront initiative – drawing out the common threads
- Suggestions for plans that may have been missed:
  - Niagara County comprehensive economic development strategy
  - Erie County comprehensive economic development strategy
  - Strategy for prosperity WNY Regional economic strategic plan
  - Revisioning Brownfields – regional strategic approach
- Plans should be able to be sorted by scale and sponsorship

**VII. Good of the Order**

- Timeline for working groups
  - HUD working groups will begin in early 2013
  - NYSERDA working groups are currently underway and will be completed in October – draw from them.
  - Transition working groups from five county initiative to two county

**VIII. Adjournment**