



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 8 ~ November 2, 2012, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, 28 Old Falls St., Niagara Falls, NY

In attendance: Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Bill Parke (OSP), Bob Shibley (UB), Hal Morse (GBNRTC), Bradshaw Hovey (UB), Kelly Dixon (GBNRTC), Brenda Stynes (UB), Michael Ball (ESD), Bart Roberts (UB), Laura Quebral (UB), William Dunn (NFHA), Frank Billittier (NYS DOT), James Bragg (NF), Lawrence Cook (Oishei Foundation), W. Ross Annable (Town of Hartland), Tom Dearing (EC DEP), Denny Powers (Town of Elma), Will Keresztes (BPS), Laura Smith (BNP), Seth Piccirillo (NF)

1. Welcome & Introductions

- Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) welcomes the Steering Committee Members and introduces special guest Will Keresztes, Associate Superintendent from the Buffalo Public Schools

2. Preparations for Local Government Council (LGC)

- The first LGC is scheduled for November 13th from 8-9:30AM at The Hearthstone Manor. Twelve officials are confirmed so far.
- Part of the presentation to the LGC would be a broad analysis of the planning framework in the region. Officials in attendance will then be asked for their opinion - is the analysis on target? There will be a brief introduction made by a representative from each county to reiterate their connection to The Framework for Regional Growth, and also a few words from a representative from Empire State Development (ESD) to stress the connections to the Regional Economic Development Councils' (REDC) plan.
- GBNRTC explained that the planning analysis was looking at how plans in the region have been talking about sustainability and using this when creating the sustainability plan
- Committee Members want to know who can reach out to the rest of the invitees who still need to RSVP. The LGC commitment over the lifetime of the initiative was then brought up.
- UB Regional Institute (UBRI) stated the commitment was over the next two years. There will be 4 meetings: November 2012, Fall 2013, Spring 2013, Fall 2014
- Based on the reactions at some local government meetings, it is believed that there is genuine interest in the initiative
- Various Committee Members offered to assist in reaching out to local government officials in order to spread the word about the LGC and encourage attendance
- GBNRTC offered to meet with any public officials who cannot attend but would like to stay connected



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3. Preparations for Private Sector Council (PSC)

- 12 individuals were added to the initial PSC list putting the total number of people invited to around 60, with 16 people confirmed so far. Most interest so far seems to be from business owners and developers, and the Steering Committee is waiting on local chambers of commerce to respond.
- Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP) will be calling all invitees to encourage them to attend, and The WNY Chamber Alliance will be used to update people from both counties and remind them about meetings. The first meeting will be on November 14th from 8:00-9:30 at the Partnership. There will be a total of four meetings alternating between counties.
- The importance of having unified values and goals moving forward was stressed by the steering committee, as was using the LGC and PSC meetings to extract these values and goals. The LGC and PSC meetings will also be used to explain the initiative, research, deliverables and the direction in which the effort is headed.
- Much of the information presented will not be new, but the steering committee agreed that it is imperative that it makes sense and is agreed upon at the meetings
- Planning is an important agenda and should be considered on an equal plane with other agendas within the initiative. The importance of embracing other agendas is discussed.
- It was requested by the Partnership's development advisory council that more focus should be placed on the tool side of the initiative – there should be more certainty with a process that was clear, predictable, and could be worked into cash flow projections

4. Draft Presentation for November Local Government Council and Private Sector Council meetings

- After focusing mostly on administration efforts, the Steering Committee is now moving on to work on the content for the LGC and PSC.
- One of the major efforts for content generation so far has been an analysis of local plans and how they depict the region's view towards planning
- UDP explained that over 150 plans have been analyzed. This entailed reading them, writing a summary, coding them based on goals, visions and statement of intent, and organizing them by theme. Of all the plans read 21 were regional, 7 were specifically Erie County, 83 were municipal or district plans in Erie County, 10 were specifically Niagara County, and 36 were municipal or district plans in Niagara County
- Urban Design Project members (UDP) then went through a draft of the presentation on the collective regional vision, and goals analyzed through the planning synthesis. These were the comments made by the Steering Committee, based on the draft presentation:



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- Need to clarify all the different themes found within the plans before asking people which they thought was most important
- Some statements mean different things to different people (e.g. economic development, sustainable growth, etc.) and this should be accounted for
- The importance of finding a regional vision within each plan was discussed – find out where we can do things together we can't do by ourselves
- Deciding which goals were “real” by weighing in on the analysis of the plans will be a significant theme of the presentation
- Explanation of One Region Forward (1RF) is a priority, as context will set the stage for analysis of plans and consolidation of values
- Different presentation themes will be included, which included: economic development, infrastructure, transportation, housing/neighborhoods, agriculture, climate change, water and waterfront, natural and cultural resources, parks and rec, collaboration and public engagement. Implementation and government were not brought up often in plans so they were left out of the topics.
- The difference between polling people on “what they want” vs. “this is what you’ve been saying for the past 40 years, are we right in our analysis?” was explained
- It was suggested to rank the interactive questions in the presentation on scale from one to ten
- It was recommended to ask the attendees to rank their top three issues and identify any core issues that may be missing
- There should be a question to let people self-identify their demographics (rural/suburban/urban)
- There should be tools for rural communities to remain rural
- A suggestion was made to separate out themes such as agriculture and access to healthy food
- UBRI stated that a planning library will be available on the 1RF website and would contain many plans not readily available online or as pdfs

5. Discussion on Outreach Approach for January Community Congress

- UBRI explained that the success of the public roll out should not be measured in volume of people at events but rather range of issues that are under discussion and the ability of individuals to bring the discussion back to their constituents



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- The content and feedback of the larger public meetings will be similar to LGC and PSC and based on results at those meetings. The first public meeting will most likely take place the last week of January. If anyone knows a group, the team will make a presentation and encourage them to attend
- Committee members agreed on the importance of having a strong turnout at the public meetings to make sure the message is communicated effectively.
- There are plans for another Community Congress in Fall 2013 and two more in 2014
- Agenda item #6 is postponed for the next meeting. Motion carries

8. Good of the Order

- GBNRTC adjourns the meeting