



**ONE
REGION
FORWARD**



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 15 - August 9, 2013, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
University at Buffalo Regional Institute, 77 Goodell St., Buffalo, NY

In attendance: Hal Morse (Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Kelly Dixon (Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Brenda Stynes (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Emily Gibson (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Bart Roberts (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Anthony Armstrong (Make Communities), Tom Dearing (Erie County Department of Environment and Planning), Bob Shibley (University at Buffalo), Bradshaw Hovey (University at Buffalo), Michael Clarke (Local Initiatives Support Corp), Glenn B. Nellis (Town of Eden), James Bragg (City of Niagara Falls), Jill Jedlicka (Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper), Bill Parke (City of Buffalo), Brian Conley (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Steven Ricca (Jaeckle, Fleischmann & Mugel LLP)

1. Welcome & Introductions

- Special welcome to Jill Jedlicka and Supervisor Glen Nellis. They are joining us for their first Steering Committee meetings.

2. One Region Forward Working Teams

-Updates from Working Team Meeting #4:

- All of the working teams except the Climate Action Change group have held a fourth meeting and were able to provide updates. This group was not able to meet this week, but will meet at the end of August.
- Housing and Neighborhoods Working Team Update:
 - In the process of summarizing suggestions for how to improve the region housing and neighborhoods
 - Working to increase representation and relevance to rural towns and villages
 - Are developing 4 working strategies to meet their goals.
 - Determining how to organize and communicate data, about topics such as demographic shifts in the cities, suburbs, and rural communities of our region.
 - From this data it appears that all areas are seeing demographic shifts with a mismatch between what housing is offered in communities and the demand for it. Thus, the team is looking at case studies and best practices to determine strategies that can meet these changing communities.
 - It had been noted that a voice that could speak about homelessness was not on the working team; as a result, Dale Zuchlewski from Homeless Alliance of WNY was asked to join and attended our August meeting.
- Transportation and Mobility Working Team Update:



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- During its meeting this week almost finalized its goals and strategies. Just have to review and incorporate the feedback from Working Team contributors.
- Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) has emerged as a major strategy that can be employed to strengthen our corridors.
- Determining what TOD could look like in Buffalo Niagara and where they might be.
- In addition to working on the design of TOD, also want to educate the public about its benefits, how to advocate for TOD, and funding opportunities for TOD.
- Team is noting that TOD is not a one size fits all strategy.
- During the next working team meeting the group is going to wrap up its discussion about TOD and talk more about freight and logistics. Jack Ampuja of Supply Chain Optimizers and Mike Leydecker of WENDEL Companies will both give presentations at the next meeting.
- How to accommodate seniors is another concern. Want to establish TOD locations that would benefit more isolated groups such as the elderly and those that live in affordable housing.
- Another consideration is how do we make connections between the city and rural town transportation systems? An individual representing transportation in rural Niagara said in the Transportation and Mobility meeting that the transportation organization could provide a lot more services if they were able to transport people to a bus line rather than their end destinations.
- Working team is also educating people about how much additional roads cost them in taxes.
- Food Access and Justice Working Team Update:
 - 9 strategies are almost concrete, just need to do some word choice editing.
 - Have a working list of actions and actors to complete the actions
 - Have focused individual meetings around thematic areas of the food system. July meeting was about food producers, August meeting was focused on food consumers, and the next meeting will be about how to connect producers and consumers.
 - Actions proposed by working team as it relates to food consumption:
 - Increase the number of people participating in food assistance programs. The participation rate for these programs is currently much lower than the eligibility rate.
 - Determine how to provide transportation to people that qualify for assistance but can't travel to where they need to go to get the food.



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- Figure out how food stamps can be used at farmers markets, and even increase in value at farmers markets (ex: at a farmer's market, food stamps would buy you twice the amount of food that you would be able to get at a supermarket).
- Increase education and marketing efforts about the benefits of eating local, healthy food.
- Enlisting higher education and culinary institutions to help the team get the word out about why it's important to eat local, healthy food.
- Team wants to address all areas of food-its production, how its processed, how its distributed, and how its consumed.
- Land Use and Development Working Team Update:
 - Addressing big questions such as"
 - How are we going to plan?
 - Who is going to do the planning?
 - How can we make public services more efficient?
 - What should be the revenue structure of development?
 - Discussed what it would mean to reignite conversations on a regional planning board. Some members think we should do this, others believe we need to think about coordinated regional planning functions differently
 - Discussed how to increase planning capacity-some municipalities don't have a lot of planners.
 - Talked about how to provide planning education and technical assistance
 - Talked about how disparities in education provision play a big part in the disparities in development patterns.
 - Discussed the possibility of including educational institutions and school boards more in conversations about our effort. Most supported this idea, some were wary about it.
 - Want to develop strategies to broaden the base of public service provision. For example, want to increase basic utility infrastructure.
 - Talked about revenue raising formats and how to strike a balance between revenue and costs.
 - It is going to take a while to work through these issues, but the team is making progress.
- Ben Bidell: Have felt out of the loop in teams of what the working groups are doing, despite updates from working group members at Steering Committee meetings. It is important to know what the working groups are doing so that the Steering Committee can provide feedback on their work.



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- The Regional Institute will make sure that the meeting dates of the working groups are on the website, if they are not already. Will also start announcing when meetings are via email before they occur, so Steering Committee members can attend if they want.
- Meeting materials have been available to Steering Committee members on the One Region Forward website and Teamwork site. Steering Committee members should check the site for more information about the working groups.
- Want the site to be useful to the public as well as the Steering Committee. In other words, all meeting materials and information about the working groups is up on the website.
- Bob Shibley: It would be helpful to determine a better way to convey connections between the work that the different working groups have been doing.
- Bart Roberts: Has there been any discussions about Preferred Development Areas (PDAs) among the Working Groups? PDAs could address some of the goals and represent a tool used by various organizations, including Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).
- Bradshaw Hovey: Not explicitly, but PDAs are implicitly discussed among all working groups.
- Transportation has identified areas that are more ripe for PDAs than others.
- Bob Shibley: have to make sure when we are communicating with the public that we don't throw too many acronyms and planning jargon at them.

3. Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) Update (see handout)

- This is a new development created by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The FHEA is “a comprehensive examination of the current state of racial and ethnic inequality in a region”.
- The Fair Housing act requires that recipients of HUD money advance fair housing initiatives and demonstrate how they are doing that. The FHEA requires the same things, but while the Fair Housing Act is done at the jurisdictional level, the FHEA is done at regional level.
- Also, the FHEA requires that we conduct a broader review of issues that lead to housing issues.
- The FHEA has five broad assessment areas listed in the handout. Examples of assessment areas are “Access to Existing Areas of High Opportunity” (as in, do the people that live in that area have access to the same amenities and opportunities as people in other areas?) and “Major Public Investments” (as in, are investments in areas made equally or are their



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discrepancies? Is one area more invested in than another due to the predominant races or ethnicities in an area?)

- The FHEA can be expanded upon in order to complete a Regional Analysis Impediments, which is required of jurisdictions participating in the community development block grant program.
- Differences between the FHEA and Regional Analysis Impediments:
 - The analysis requires strategies and an action plan. The FHEA doesn't require that.
 - FHEA focuses on disparities that stem from just ethnic and racial differences. Analysis takes into account disparities that stem from all social differences (ex: differences in wealth, age, etc.).
- HUD is still in the process of developing the FHEA and adding more information to the potential baseline approach of determining contributors to segregation, getting decision makers talking about it, and including decisions into a final plan. The current approach is on the back of the handout.
- We are proposing that there be four meetings of equity issue stakeholders. HUD recommends some people to include in these meetings, and the other people are chosen by us.
- These meetings would be about questions such as:
 - What does equity actually mean? Does it mean economic equity? Housing equity? A combination?
 - What are the historical challenges to equity?
- Want public input about equity at the community congresses. Want to have a focus group discuss this issue.
- HUD wants to see how exactly the information gathered for the FHEA is informing the plan. We have to keep this in mind.
- The FHEA is a grant requirement, but HUD is still developing it, so all of the grantees, including ourselves, only found out recently that we are required to produce this deliverable.
- Jill Jedlicka: Where does environmental justice fit into this conversation? Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper could provide data for the FHEA. (This suggestion was well received, especially because Niagara County is lacking in representation in these discussions).
- The City of Lockport has a Housing Authority that could be involved in this process. This would also increase representation of Niagara County.



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4. Communications & Engagement:

- We've going to a lot of festivals and community events to spread the word about 1RF and gain support.
- In the Fall we want to broaden these efforts and also involve youth specifically. This is an important audience because these are the people that are going to inherit decisions made today. Thus, their input is very important.
- Scenario Planning Overview
 - Kelly Dixon gave an overview on scenario planning and how it can be used as an engagement, learning, and visioning tool for the process.
 - Have been talking with the 2010 grantees about how they used scenario planning. We've been working a lot with colleagues from Northeast Ohio on this, since Buffalo is similar to Cleveland.
 - Cleveland has taken scenario planning and tweaked it for communities like ours, which are experiencing slow growth, so we can better model our current and future situations.
 - Scenario planning is an interactive way of asking people what kinds of stories they want for Buffalo 50 years from now.
 - It's a way of asking them specifics regarding our choices and the impacts of these choices. Can visually display our options through scenario planning.
 - The ultimate goal is to develop a Preferred Vision for the future. Many communities end up with visions that are combination of various potential future scenarios.
- Scenario Planning as an engagement tool for Fall events:
 - Showed a video from Northeast Ohio and their scenario-planning process ([link here](#)).
 - For the next round of community congresses, proposing to hold meetings in more than just Buffalo and Niagara Falls; proposing to have 3 additional meetings with some geographic balance in the region. In addition to Buffalo and Naigara Falls, thinking about Lockport, Amherst, and a community in the Southtowns, possibly Orchard Park.
 - Supervisor Nellis said there are some great facilities in Eden to host such a meeting, and he would be happy to invite One Region Forward to Eden.



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- Format of meetings would have people break into tables of 8 or 10 people. They would have a big map to indicate using chips or markers what types of development, future scenarios, and changes they want.
- Want to do our homework on how to make scenario planning work.
- We need to communicate that things need to change, while communicating that there are certain things that are already changing for the better.
- We want all types of people to come to these meetings, but especially those that are active in relevant organizations and young people.
- Supervisor Nellis and Steve Ricca both pointed out that we should acknowledge the positive things
- The plan is to ultimately create a video about scenario planning. The purpose of that video would be different than the one Vibrant NEO produced. Our video, would be primarily to do the story telling of what the business as usual scenario would be, and to set things up for alternative scenario construction by the community. We would probably make our video more succinct though. We also want our video to capture the good work that has been occurring in our region, but also some of the challenges our region has experienced and will likely continue to experience if we continue to do things the way we have in the past.
- Jill Jedlicka: Civic engagement seems like it's at an all-time high, so there's great opportunity to really involve people.
- Already working on getting the word out about these meetings. All Working Team members were asked for organizational communication contacts so we can leverage the broad base of partners in this effort to spread the word about meetings. We also need that type of commitment from the steering committee, so it's important for participants to fill out the "Help us get the word out!" form.
- Exploring holding a test run of the meeting in October and working team members and steering committee will be invited to participate in this.
- Facilitation is very important to the success of the workshops. We will need volunteers from the steering committee to help facilitate.
- Employees from UB Regional Institute have been out attending festivals almost every weekend this summer to spread the word about the project. Since the last steering committee meeting, we've been out at the following community events: BALLE Conference, Juneteenth Festival, the Foundry Community



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Meeting, Buffalo Zoo Party for the Planet, Taste of Diversity, and talked about the project on WBNY's Environmental show.

- In order to maintain this level of engagement, Steering Committee members are needed to volunteer at these events.
- Team Tomorrow:
 - A program proposed to engage students to participate in the process.
 - We've had a few inquiries from local teachers and we would likely work with a few classrooms at first given all the things going on with the project this fall and through 2014.
 - The idea is that we would partners with a few classes and provide them with options for young people to get involved in 1RF.
 - Options include making a video of your friends providing feedback about how our region should be, participating in the Community Congress meetings, writing brief reports about community events, etc.
 - Any ideas or comments about this program are welcome! Also, if anyone knows of a teacher that would be interested, please forward them to Bart.
 - Plan would be to target all different types of classes.
 - Jim Bragg suggested that we might want to contact superintendents, since most are interested in these types of programs and that way you could get more teachers involved.
 - Bart: don't have dedicated resources available to run this program, so we want to scale this thing small at first then grow the program.
 - Jim Bragg stated that the upcoming events are primarily targeted at "middle class Buffalo residents" and we will not meet our diversity goals if these are the only type of events One Region Forward attends. Bart responded that the priority all summer has been to advance diversity engagement through these events, cited examples of Juneteenth, Springville Dairy Festival, Taste of Diversity, and others.
 - Jill Jedlicka: we might want to ask students directly, rather than teachers who are already burdened with trying to finish the required curriculum. Some student groups, such as honors students, need to do community service anyway, which would be an incentive for them to participate.



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- One last item on community engagement - there is going to be a two-day food policy summit hosted by “Healthy kids, Healthy communities” initiative to promote safe and secure food, better access to food, and support for local farmers. Bart requested that One Region Forward support this event fully and explore sponsoring it via in-kind support. Motion passed without any dissent.

5. Implementation Opportunities Update

- Revenue Analysis Project:
 - This initiative, although outside the scope of One Region Forward’s work plan, involves hiring Joe Minicozzi, who spoke at our event in February, to do a revenue analysis of various forms of development.
 - The Buffalo Niagara Partnership has agreed to host the contract. National Grid is a key sponsor for this and so is National Resources Defense Council.
- Partnership Opportunity with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:
 - The Corps have already worked on issues such as impacts of climate change, infrastructure, development patterns, government resources.
 - We want to look into partnering with the Corps. GBNRTC was not awarded the grant we pursued with them, but we want to continue collaborating with this important partner
 - Climate change work has been especially useful. It affects a lot of the different focus areas.
- Alternatives Analysis Update:
 - This has not been highly publicized, but will be in the near future.
 - Study underway about how to improved transportation in Buffalo’s Central Business District and in Amherst.
 - Stakeholder, outreach, and other meetings can and should be coordinated with One Region Forward.

6. Good of the Order

- Check the 1RF website for these materials
- Next Steering Committee meeting is September 6th.

7. Adjournment