Meeting Introduction – Welcomes, Introductions and Ice Breaker
As an “ice breaker” participants were asked to describe in a sentence their definition of a sustainable regional approach to land use and development. Their answers are below:

- Be proactive to identify where we preserve, instead of having growth where there is no infrastructure.
- Ask ourselves where development will take place.
- Promote infill development.
Educate those who make land use decisions on ramifications of good and bad decision-making.
Management of growth.
Build infrastructure in high-density areas.
How do we address regional vacant and abandoned properties?
Ensure quality jobs.
We gear business incentives to drive smart growth in areas that we align with.
Better understand diversity of our communities.
Improve the perception and improve services in high-density areas such as the city.
Reuse and redevelopment, not sprawl.
Educate our residents on what smart growth is, what they will have to do to pursue smart growth.
Localities can stop funding infrastructure where it should not be.
First ring suburbs should help people understand what smart growth concepts are such as transit oriented development.
Modernize and renovate housing stock in city and first ring suburbs to make it available as nice move-in ready housing.
Focus of quality of life in our urban centers.
Brownfield redevelopment.
Better job of defining where development should take place, and where it should not.
Make the most of what we already have.
Educate municipalities on tax revenues versus service costs.

Working Team Contributor Comments:

- Educate the public with regards to the efforts and reasoning behind smart growth land use, including making this information available (Erin Carmina).
- Target incentives and infrastructure improvements to identified smart growth areas for housing and business (John Szalasny).

Review of key issues and data points
The facilitator presented a series of slides on key issues and data points that, in part, describe the current conditions for land use and development in the region including growth of the urbanized area, the extent of areas of high housing vacancy, and more. Participants were asked whether the issues and data points presented accurately and fully “told the story” of land use and development in our region and were invited to help correct, elaborate, or detail the picture presented. Those suggestions are below:

- One of the graphics from the Framework was existing land and areas serviced from other infrastructures: there is more data to pull from the Framework.
- We need to talk more about the cost implications of smart growth. What are the tax implications of density? Cost of services? What is the tax burden – is new housing hurting/helping taxes?
- Look at tax burden per capita of suburbs and city. Housing has sprawled and we’ve lost farmland. Look at budgets of the past and see if cost per person has gone up.
- Let’s see case studies of other regions that have had success with this endeavor.
- Data of vacant commercial space, not just vacant housing. Date buildings that are vacant to understand the age of the vacant buildings.
- For water facilities, the farther you spread out, the more expensive it is to pump to the periphery.
- Describe the need for services, poverty levels and concentrations.
- Where are the jobs located in relation to public transit opportunities?
- Ask the average person what they want and it is likely they will say they like things just the way they are. How do you get them to think about the issues we’re discussing?
- Show where we are, and where we want to be in the future. Make smart growth visible and real.
- Encourage us to be specific as we can in the information.
- Show the affects of needs and population trends.
- Are we ready for what our community is going to look like in 20 years?
- Be more discrete in how the data is portrayed. The housing vacancy map shows the City of Buffalo as a single big blob. Show it in a way that differentiates the range of conditions.
- Are we assuming our population is going to continue to decline, for purposes of infrastructure?
- We are not equipped with the population changes that are happening.
- Add housing to the graphics on population trends.
- If we are looking at a 50-year horizon, Shibley refers to setting the table, and if the conditions change and fresh water supply elsewhere decreases, it will shift population trends upwards.
- Our untapped farmland is something else, in addition to the water that will draw people to WNY. Factor the future value of farmland into our planning.
- We need to work as a region to secure our water supply, not let other parts of the country steal it. .
- Keep in mind that we will be a different and more diverse region – culturally and demographically – than what we are now.
- Technology has changed the way people work. Maybe we don’t always need to draw whole companies here, just some of their employees.
- We have a lot of communities that can attract people. We need to see if that is where we would like them to be.
- We have a lot of great quality of life assets. They can contribute to sustainability and we already have them.
- Follow up with incentives for people to move into places smart growth suggests.
- Instead of agreeing with the goals that are presented to us, we should not be just accepting them, challenging them if we do not agree with them.
- The maps may conflate land lost to redevelopment with agricultural land that is just fallow. In so doing, we may be blaming sprawl for a condition with other causes (the difficulties in farming).
- People have asked for us to think of this more broadly, longer term, but also a discussion on telling the story in ways that are more discrete. West side, east side, south Buffalo are different.
- When you construct a story of what is, and where we are headed, and do it more actively with greater detail, it makes it a lot easier to get support for the planning.
- Let’s project the need to replace aging infrastructure into the future and estimate the cost.
- Private services do not show up in the mapping the same way that public services do.
- Significant changes in inner ring suburbs and population changes need to show on the map.
- 60 percent of college grads pick a city to live in and then find a job, not the other way around. Quality of life is a key to winning the national competition for working age people.
- The story doesn’t take into account a whole range of factors – the coming battle over fresh water (do we leverage it or do they steal it?), long term trends in our ethnic makeup, the trend toward aging, etc.
- Maybe we could show comparisons with other cities that have adopted metro forms of government even if we have to look to Canada.
**Working Team Contributor Comments:**

- I think that the slides give concise information and the visual aids are very helpful as well. Something seem a little vague and would beg for more details (such as the lack of a regional planning council in our area...I would, and do, want to know who has been making the decisions and how this type of council has assisted other areas in NYS) (Erin Carmina).
- The slides do not account for the sprawl in business, both commercial and retail. 50 years ago, we did not have business parks like Crosspoint or Appletree, not to mention the retail boom along Transit Road. Nor does it point out the abandoned facilities in the region (John Szalasny).

**Review of Draft Goals**
The working team was presented a set of draft goals derived from a review of past planning in the region, the research of the 1RF staff, and a review of “vision and values” by the Private Sector Council, Local Government Council, and the two Community Congress events. Participants were asked to consider if the goals are appropriate? Complete? Require adjustment? Their comments are below:

- We need to define the areas that the goals are talking about – unless that’s already implied.
- This was already done to several levels of specificity, starting with the “hot dogs and tater tots” graphic from the Regional Framework.
- Part of what we want to do is be specific as we can; we need to have definition around that.
- On the issue of infrastructure we should be specific as possible. Where do we need to make substantial investments where infrastructure already is?
- We assume that if something is urban, it is fully serviced, but that is not always the case.
- We need to assure the adequacy of the infrastructure, not just the amount of it.
- Health could be placed into the conversation, things like that.
- Protect from toxic damage, not subsidizing polluters in terms of smart growth.
- Some of the goals could be in conflict, protect the waterfront for example, that’s where the industry was in the past, and where the infrastructure is right now.
- Repair toxic damage goal is problematic; it implies that all brownfield areas should be made ready for full redevelopment in the future.
- “Appropriate future development” should be defined.
- Instead of using the word “development,” use the term uses.
- Not just land use and smart growth, but economic development should be part of this group.
- Goals about how to make business more sustainable, attracting people, jobs.
- Should we have economic development here, or is that part of some other group?
- If we are picking goals out of previous plans, we need to make sure we are picking the right ones.
- Make sure of alignment with the pieces that are already established.
- Encourage mixed use development.
- Transportation is not just where we have this infrastructure, but new types of transportation that we have not accounted for.
- Development patterns should respect the natural infrastructure that we have in place. Green infrastructure, the natural infrastructure that we have not destroyed.
- Include natural disaster preparedness. Minimize flood damage, and climate change is going to affect things.
- Protect natural resources, and integrate it into our overall agenda on infrastructure.
- We do a woefully inadequate job of marketing our natural resources.
Coordinate transportation infrastructure. Provide for seamless transitions from each mode of transport to the other.

Job creation, do we put it down as a goal, or is it an overarching theme of this effort?

We haven’t thought enough about where we want to be in 50 years. Our view is too narrow and doesn’t focus on the bigger picture.

The list seems more like objectives than goals.

We need to be able to measure these goals. If we are not measuring it how do we start? If someone is measuring these goals, where is that information?

We need to make sure we are as user-friendly for the old as we are attractive to the young. We’re going to have a lot of old people here for a long time.

At the end of the day, what is going to sell WNY to people is what we already have. Where are we going to end up and not create something that we are not? What is it about WNY that we can attract business and see what they want?

At some point we should rank the objectives and goals that we establish.

Cities that lose their “soul” because they lost their heritage will not be able to compete.

We spent a lot of time on areas for potential development.

Focus development on “Main Streets” not “Village Centers.” User-friendly language moving forward.

We are not going to get anywhere with these goals if we do not get into the municipalities that are making these decisions and have a goal to educate them.

Prioritize projects that encase multiple goals. Projects that cover multiple criteria will help us when we start to get into the indicators.

Who adopts this plan at the end of the day? If they don’t where does it go? What is it going to take to achieve these goals?

There is a different pace that many bodies are going to be moving.

How are we engaging people beyond this technical piece?

Many spoke about the importance of educating municipal leaders. It’s not in the planning that we have failed. It’s in the implementation, the ongoing decision-making about land use.

More coordinated land use as a goal between municipalities.

We need to be involved in little picture implementation as something that grows as a grass roots movement rather than a government initiative.

We need to talk about governance and planning at a regional scale.

Capacity building must be part of One Region Forward.

Land use and development plans have to reach across all economic and demographic strata.

Future meetings we will discuss the citizens planning school.

We need to reinforce the sense of community that sets us apart and the built environment needs to reinforce that sense.

We need something on our built environment, especially our historic architecture.

We should talk about quality construction; the quality of what we build should be sustainable.

Built environment should support a sense of community.

**Working Team Contributor Comments:**

I was able to attend one of the community congress meetings and I believe the goals listed make sense for our region and are current and relevant. The historic aspect of our region was not brought up here but I know it was a key topic at the meeting. Some of these goals seem like they are more easily attainable in a short time, such as promoting adaptive reuse or commercial and industrial sites, but repairing land and waterways from years of toxic dumping/pollution will take more time.
All of these will make our region better and more sustainable for the future generations. I believe that each of these is key to revitalizing our area (Erin Carmina).

- My only change would be to expand goal #4 and remove the word "transportation". Infrastructure is more than the roads - all too often we see a development that tears up new road construction to lay in new water & sewer lines. In the central core, these lines 100+ year old and are increasingly inefficient due to leakage, blockage and failure of the lines. In the information age, we also need to consider the communication lines (cable, phone, DSL, wireless, etc) as much a priority as the transportation infrastructure (John Szalasny).

Next steps

- Can we send everyone contact information of the members of the group?
- How will the working team be involved in the scenario planning efforts?

Additional Working Team Contributor Comments:

- Two comments that should be emphasized under the review of key issues: 1. We should be looking at a 50 year horizon for planning. Short term planning has been problematic for this region with leaders focusing on the Bass Pro Shop type magic bullet fix. Our region’s turnaround is going to be a series of small changes that need to be coordinated for a long period of time. 2. The metro form of government would eliminate many layers of government (and the need for coordination) from the decision making process. In addition, by collecting the population numbers into one larger whole, the external perception of Buffalo by businesses outside the area would change. For example, the city of Indianapolis went from the 26th largest city in 1960 to 11th for the 1970 census after the metro consolidation (adding almost 300000 residents to their totals). This coincided with a growth in business as well as a larger national awareness of the city in an area comparable in population to Erie County. If we just consolidated Buffalo with the 1st ring suburbs (including the villages of Williamsville, Sloan and Kenmore as well as the cities of Lackawanna and Tonawanda), the total 2000 population would have been 719811 which would have made Buffalo the 16th largest city in the US (John Szalasny).