towards a more sustainable Buffalo Niagara

Land Use and Development

Laura Smith, Chair (Buffalo Niagara Partnership)

Jajean Rose-Burney, Facilitator (UB Regional Institute)
Agenda

Introductions and ice breaker

Review of process and the working team’s scope and charge

Review of key issues in land use

Goal setting discussion

Next steps
What can we do to promote smart growth land use in our region using one sentence?
Tasks you will help us with...

- **ESTABLISH GOALS**
  - for pursuing more sustainable land use decisions

- **FRAME STRATEGIES**
  - Align strategies to match our regional goals

- **IDENTIFY ACTIONS**
  - Policies, programs, and projects and the actors to implement them

- **CONSTRUCT INDICATORS**
  - Create metrics and geographic areas to concentrate investment

#oneregionfwd
Deliverables you will help create...

Our Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

Recommended “smart growth” geographic areas that can guide prioritization criteria and scenario-planning

Capacity building tools and educational modules that can empower civic leaders and citizens to advance sustainability.
Who will implement our recommendations?

Local municipalities, county governments, state or regional agencies (i.e. NFTA)

Community Based Organizations and private citizens

Private sector actors or businesses (developers, business decision-makers)

Collaborative partnerships across these groups
Working Team Process and Timeline

6 Meetings/4 Tasks

Spring

1 Establishing Goals

Summer

2 Frame Strategies

3 Identify Actions

2013

Fall

3 Construct Indicators

2014

Winter

+2 Additional Meetings

Regional Vision & Values

Fall 2013
Council and Community Congress Meetings

Final Draft/Feedback
Not starting from Scratch.

- VISION ➔ GOALS
  - Visions, goals, strategies
  - Action Items
  - Metrics

#oneregionfwd
Some key issues to frame our discussion...
We have continued to sprawl even as we shed population – leaving us with more and more infrastructure, and a shrinking tax base to support it.
As population declines, tax burden per capita rises.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000-2010)
Our housing construction far exceeds the demand created by new household formation.
We have **55,000 more households today** than we did in **1970**.
But we’ve built more than 150,000 new homes.
Primarily on land formerly undeveloped, and disconnected to existing infrastructure

50+ new homes per sq. mile since 1990
Our overbuilding has left us with a glut of vacant housing that has spread from our cores and into our inner ring suburbs and beyond.
In 1970 there were 15,214 vacant dwellings
In **2010** there were **45,475 vacant dwellings**

Vacant dwellings more than tripled in 40 years.

50+ vacant units per sq. mile
Just as our population has sprawled out, so have our jobs.
Share of jobs in proximity to central business district

- **Buffalo Metro**: 17%
- **U.S. Metros**: 21%

3 MILES

- **Buffalo Metro**: 54%
- **U.S. Metros**: 34%

3-10 MILES

- **Buffalo Metro**: 29%
- **U.S. Metros**: 45%

10-35 MILES

Data Source: Zip Business Patterns (2009)
And our new development continues to deplete farm land.
since 1970, our region has lost over 1,250 working farms, and nearly 160 square miles of farmland.
We lack the governance structure to make coordinated land use decisions.
Like all of NYS, Home Rule law sets the stage for jurisdictional decision-making.

64 independent municipal governments in the two-county region

6 cities

37 towns

21 villages

Hundreds of public authorities and special districts

Data Source: WNY Sustainability Plan
We are the only urban region in Upstate New York without a regional planning council.

Counties covered by a regional planning council.
And we lack clear cut tools that can help guide smart decisions.
The Framework is a great start, but need to get more specific
Key issues.

Are these data telling the story of our region’s land use conditions?
Goal Setting, a starting point.

Do they align with our region’s vision?
Are they current/relevant?
Are they long term/resilient?
Are they attainable?
What’s missing?
What shouldn’t be there?
Draft Goals: Land Use & Development

• Focus development in areas already served by infrastructure including urban cores, corridors, and village centers.

• Promote the adaptive reuse of commercial, industrial, and ecclesiastical building stock to preserve embedded energy, neighborhood integrity, and heritage.

• Minimize the conversion of rural and agricultural land to residential development.

• Coordinate investments in transportation infrastructure with plans for development and redevelopment.

• Manage land use to restore or protect our water, water rights, and watersheds.

• Repair the toxic damage left by our industrial past and make land ready for appropriate future development.

• Protect or restore our waterfronts, connect them to local communities and make them more accessible to the public.

• Maintain, improve, expand, and connect our parks, recreation areas, trails and open spaces.
Land Use and Development Working Team

Get Started as a Working Team Member at www.oneregionforward.org

Recruit a Working Team Contributor

Provide Online Feedback on Our Regional Vision and Values
TeamWork Site: https://oneregionforward.teamworkpm.net
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us

Teresa Bosch de Celis  
One Region Forward Project Assistant  
tboschde@buffalo.edu

Bart Roberts  
One Region Forward Project Manager  
bjr8@buffalo.edu