A REPORT ON THE
REGIONAL VISION & VALUES

What We’ve Heard through Year One of One Region Forward
Voices Moving One Region Forward
Forming Partnerships and Engaging the Community

Working together to move One Region Forward means finding ways to let various voices and perspectives shape this effort. The governance structure and community engagement structure of the effort is designed to engage broad community leadership, elected officials, business owners, our dense network of community-based organizations, and concerned citizens from city, suburban, village, and rural areas to participate in a conversation that will drive planning and action.

Community Congress
One Region Forward features a series of “Community Congresses” to provide opportunities for all members of the community to express themselves at key points in the planning process. At these events citizens are shaping the vision for the plan, reviewing concepts in development, and helping to craft the final content of the plan. To ensure that the broadest possible array of perspectives are represented through the Community Congresses, One Region Forward has reached out through Buffalo Niagara’s dense network of not-for-profit, community-based, volunteer, fraternal, and interest-group organizations.

Local Government Council
The mayors, supervisors, council members, and legislators from Buffalo Niagara’s 64 cities, villages, and towns will be most responsible for the policies and projects needed to implement our plan. That is why One Region Forward is convening a Local Government Council to help shape a plan they can put into action. The council will also confer with leading implementers about how to develop information resources, analytical tools, management metrics, and precedent material that will help local officials make the plan a reality.

Private Sector Council
A Private Sector Council will enable a two-way conversation between local business leaders and the One Region Forward team to ensure that the plan advances the business and sustainability goals of our region. The private sector council membership includes representatives from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership’s Development Advisory Council and each local Chamber of Commerce. This is intended to ensure a consistent conversation among business community peers throughout the project to create a plan they can all support.

Citizen Voices in the Community
One Region Forward is out in the community on a weekly basis talking to citizens and asking people what a sustainable future Buffalo Niagara looks like. The results of these conversations are posted on our website, along with other information about how citizens can express their opinions through participating in a Community Congress Workshop, joining Team Tomorrow, or becoming a Working Team Contributor.

Steering Committee
Ongoing direction of the planning and action process is overseen by a broad-based consortium chaired by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, our metropolitan planning organization. Over twenty organizations are represented on this group and include municipal governments, business partners, academic centers, organizations devoted to fair housing, community development, and more.

Working Team Members and Contributors
Working Teams of subject matter experts, key stakeholders, citizens and advocates are working to translate public vision and values into goals, action items, and progress metrics — all of which will be submitted to the Community Congresses for review and approval. They are organized by the effort’s five focus areas (Land Use and Development, Transportation and Mobility, Housing and Neighborhoods, Food Access and Justice, and Climate Change Action) and include discussions at in-person meetings and online contributions.
**Community Congress**

A truly citizen-driven planning process involves inviting all community members to share their opinions on a plan periodically. One Region Forward’s five “Community Congresses” provide citizens with the chance to express their vision for a sustainable Buffalo Niagara, evaluate proposed strategies for getting there, suggest revisions, and ultimately approve the final plan.

There has already been a Community Congress during year one of One Region Forward to determine the visions and values of the region. At the next Community Congress citizens will engage in a scenario planning exercise, in which they will indicate on maps of the Erie and Niagara where and how exactly development should occur in our region. Citizens will then assess a first draft of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in the Spring of 2014, a second draft in the Fall of 2014, and the final plan in the Winter of 2015.

One Region Forward has used its extensive network of community-based contacts to get the word out about the community congresses. It has also been attending community events and delivering presentations throughout Buffalo Niagara to spread the word about these unique opportunities for citizens to shape our region.

**Update on the Community Congress through Year One of One Region Forward...**

The Community Congress met for the first time at a series of two meetings in early 2013 – January 29, 2013 in Buffalo and February 2, 2013 in Niagara Falls. At those meetings, the Congress was introduced to One Region Forward and asked to weigh in on the preliminary Vision and Values statements for the Region. These statements were derived from a careful content analysis of more than 160 plans for Buffalo Niagara that showed shared concern for a number of pressing issues. As a result of these meetings citizens were able to agree on which values will guide the efforts of the steering committee, staff, and working teams that are proposing more specific goals and objectives for sustainable development.

Summaries of these initial meetings can be found [here](#).

**Who was engaged in the original Community Congress session?**

Consequently, 293 citizens, across 49 ZIP codes, representing 129 civic, private, public, or community organizations from across the region participated.

The following organizations were represented at the congress:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>21st Century Park</th>
<th>Designing to Live Sustainably</th>
<th>Niagara Orleans Central Labor Council</th>
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<tr>
<td>500 Block Association of Downtown Buffalo</td>
<td>Eco Logic Studio Architecture &amp; Engineering PLLC</td>
<td>Niagara Region State Parks</td>
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<td>AFSCME Local</td>
<td>Empire State Development Corporation</td>
<td>Niagara River Greenway Citizen’s Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albright-Knox Art Gallery</td>
<td>Erie County Department of Environment and Planning</td>
<td>Niagara Tourism &amp; Convention Corporation</td>
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<td>Alt Press</td>
<td>Flynn Battaglia Architects</td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
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<td>American Planning Association</td>
<td>Food &amp; Water Watch</td>
<td>Nickel City Housing Coop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amherst Democratic Committee</td>
<td>Freedom, Rights, Education &amp; Empowerment (FREE)</td>
<td>North Buffalo Business Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amherst Energy Advisory Committee</td>
<td>GObike Buffalo</td>
<td>Nussbaumer &amp; Clarke</td>
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<td>Amherst IDA</td>
<td>GOBuffalo</td>
<td>NYSERDA</td>
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<td>Arts Services Initiative of WNY</td>
<td>Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo</td>
<td>People, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Erie County Governments</td>
<td>Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance</td>
<td>Planning Consultant/Community Concepts</td>
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<td>Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc.</td>
<td>Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council</td>
<td>Preservation Buffalo Niagara</td>
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<td>BHSC</td>
<td>Greg Pro Consulting</td>
<td>Prince of Peace Lutheran Church</td>
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<td>Binational Alliance</td>
<td>Groundwork Buffalo</td>
<td>Prospect Hill Neighborhood Alliance</td>
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<td>Binatural Niagara Greenway Marathon Event</td>
<td>GrowWNY</td>
<td>PUSH Buffalo</td>
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<td>Black Rock Good Neighbors</td>
<td>Highland Community Revitalization Committee, Inc.</td>
<td>Rediscover Riverside</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffalo &amp; Erie County Botanical Gardens</td>
<td>HomeFront, Inc.</td>
<td>ReNU Niagara</td>
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<td>Buffalo CarShare</td>
<td>Hooray for Decay Composting</td>
<td>Ride for Roswell</td>
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<td>Buffalo Harbor Sailing Club</td>
<td>Hudson Street Revitalization Project</td>
<td>Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s Office Sierra Club</td>
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<td>Buffalo Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)</td>
<td>Hyde Park Business &amp; Professional Association</td>
<td>Seneca One Realty</td>
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<td>Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority</td>
<td>International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 97</td>
<td>Springville/Concord Elder Network</td>
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<td>Buffalo Niagara Partnership</td>
<td>Junior League of Buffalo</td>
<td>Street Synergy</td>
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<td>Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper</td>
<td>Keep WNY Beautiful (KWNYB)</td>
<td>SUCB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy</td>
<td>Kleinhans Community Association</td>
<td>The John R. Oishei Foundation</td>
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<td>Buffalo Rising</td>
<td>Leadership Niagara</td>
<td>Town of Lockport</td>
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<td>Buffalo State College</td>
<td>League of Women Voters</td>
<td>Theatre of Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffalo Wind Action Group</td>
<td>Learning Sustainability Campaign</td>
<td>Town of Tonawanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carmina Woods Morris P.C.</td>
<td>LEED Concepts</td>
<td>Trocaire College</td>
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Other Avenues for Engaging the Community...

The One Region Forward initiative has given 23 presentations to local groups or communities and attended 31 local festivals or fairs to talk to people about what they think One Region Forward should be about as well as what sustainable development means to them. To broaden engagement efforts, Team Tomorrow was launched as a program to allow citizens the opportunity to get more involved in the project through volunteering opportunities.

In addition, constant various online tools and forums for community learning and engagement have been developed over the past year including “What the Data Tells Us”, a feature highlighting data pertinent to livability and sustainability in the region, a visioning tool called “PhotoVoices Across the Region” through which citizens can express what they like and would change about the region by posting pictures and captions, as well as other educational resources on the “Sustainability 101” section of the website.

Next Steps for the Community Congress...

Five highly interactive, hands-on Community Congress workshop meetings are scheduled between November 12th and November 16th 2013. Locations and a registration link for the workshops can be found here. At these events citizens will work together on scenario planning, which is a way to show graphically on a map their future approach to land use, development, housing, transportation, and more for our region.

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<th>Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University</th>
<th>Lehigh Valley Depot Committee</th>
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<td>Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Inc.</td>
<td>Lewiston Council on the Arts</td>
<td>University at Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Terminal Restoration Corp.</td>
<td>Massachusetts Avenue Project</td>
<td>Village of Hamburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Gordon Architecture</td>
<td>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People</td>
<td>Village of Springville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens for Regional Transit</td>
<td>Niagara Art and Cultural Center</td>
<td>Village of Williamsville School Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Buffalo</td>
<td>New York Power Authority</td>
<td>VOICE Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Niagara Falls – Office of Planning</td>
<td>Niagara County Department of Economic Development</td>
<td>Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean Cities of WNY</td>
<td>Niagara County IDA</td>
<td>Wendel Duchscherer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalition for Economic Justice</td>
<td>Niagara County Legislature</td>
<td>West Side Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus Park Association</td>
<td>Niagara Falls Block Club Council</td>
<td>West Side Neighborhood Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo</td>
<td>Niagara Arts and Cultural Center</td>
<td>WNY Area Labor FED</td>
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<td>Continental 1</td>
<td>Niagara Community Forum</td>
<td>WNY Environmental Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie County</td>
<td>Niagara Falls Housing Authority</td>
<td>WNY Land Conservancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County</td>
<td>Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center</td>
<td>WNY Sustainability Energy Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Synergies Architecture P.C.</td>
<td>Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority</td>
<td>YWCA of Niagara</td>
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Scenario planning will allow citizens to put those Regional Values into concrete terms and decide where to make investments and what strategies to pursue to get us closer to our shared Regional Vision and Values. These maps will be consolidated into a few alternative scenarios that will each be tested for their effects on our economy, environment, and communities.

At the next set of Community Congress meetings in the spring of 2014 the impacts of these alternative futures will be presented to the public as well as a preliminary plan. Citizens will then be able to reassess their approaches and again raise their voices on how they would like to see Buffalo Niagara move forward.

**Local Government Council**

To capture the input and perspective of our municipal and county government leaders, every town supervisor, city or village mayor and county legislator from both the Erie and Niagara counties were invited to participate in the One Region Forward Local Government Council. This group has been formed to ensure local municipal and county leadership have a seat at the table in guiding the One Region Forward initiative and support the policies and projects needed to implement the community’s plan.

The Local Government Council will also provide an opportunity for front-line sustainability practitioners to inform the council’s work of developing resources, tools, and metrics so that the local political leaders can turn the plan into action.

**Update on the Local Government Council through Year One of One Region Forward:**

The first Local Government Council meeting was held on November 13, 2012, during which they were introduced to the project, presented with the Regional Vision and Value Statements, and asked to gauge whether or not each statement reflects where we want to go as a region.

The majority of the value statements were considered to be mostly on the mark. Government officials did however provide recommendations on how to revise these statements so that they better reflect the goals and values of Buffalo Niagara residents. We received suggestions such as to include economic development goals in sustainability initiatives, improve schools in order to improve neighborhoods, and provide public transportation in the suburban and rural communities. You can read a summary of the elected officials’ recommendations for the value statements [here](#).

**Who participated in the first Local Government Council meeting?**

The following 23 Representatives from 20 local municipalities:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area Represented</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Powers</td>
<td>Town of Elma</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Welch</td>
<td>City of North Tonawanda</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Avenues for Engaging the Region’s Government Leaders...

Engaging municipal leaders in One Region Forward occurs across the project and includes:

- **Steering Committee involvement:** Supervisor Ross Annabel of the Town of Hartland, Supervisor Glen Nellis of Eden and Supervisor Dennis Powers of Elma, as well as staff representatives from the City of Niagara Falls, the City of Buffalo, Erie County, and Niagara County

- **Working Team Participation:** Three elected officials participate on our working teams (Supervisor Jennifer Bieber of Royalton is on our Food Access and Justice Working Team, Mayor Brian Kulpa of Williamsville sits on the Transportation and Mobility Working Team and Mayor William Krebs of Springville participates in the Land Use and Development Working Team). In addition, 34 local, county or state government staff members from Amherst, Cheektowaga, Buffalo, Niagara County, Erie County, and North Tonawanda, among other localities, participate in working teams.

- **Local Community Presentations:** Since the launch of One Region Forward, 19 presentations have been delivered to public sector audiences including presentations to the Erie County Association of Government, Niagara County Supervisors Association, Villages of Erie County Association, the Niagara Erie Coalition, and the towns of Wheatfield, Royalton, and Alden among many others. For a full list of presentations, [follow this link](#).

- **Economics of Sustainability Series:** Four of these forums have been held to date, covering topics of particular interest to public sector employees and elected officials. Special outreach was made to encourage these audiences to attend.

Next Steps for the Local Government Council...

The Local Government Council will reconvene in Winter of 2014 to discuss One Region Forward’s progress and offer suggestions for how it can better serve the residents of the Erie and Niagara Counties.
In the meantime, local officials will be participating in the previously described Community Congress Workshops that are open to all members of the public, to voice the values of their constituents and offer policy recommendations for increasing the success of One Region Forward.

Elected leaders will also be attending our public “Economics of Sustainability” program featuring a presentation by Chuck Marohn, an expert on development economics and public finance, and author of the book *Thoughts on Building Strong Towns*. The event is on Thursday, December 12, 2013 at the Conference Center in Niagara Falls. Registration is at 8:00 a.m. and the program is from 8:30 am to 10:00 am.

**Private Sector Council**

One Region Forward is working to ensure that the plan fulfills both our economic and sustainability goals. To do that, One Region Forward seeks the advice and knowledge of its Private Sector Council, which is composed of representatives from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership Development Advisory Council and each local Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of this is to guarantee consistency between the conversations between business leaders in order to craft a plan that they all support.

**Update on the Private Sector Council through Year One of One Region Forward:**

Like the Local Government Council, the Private Sector Council met to gain an overview of One Region Forward and offer their opinions on whether the ten regional value statements reflect the desires of business owners.

The members of the Private Sector council said that the majority of the value statements were considered to be right or mostly on the mark. They also offered recommendations such as to invest more in our existing cultural, waterfront, and historic assets rather than developing more of these and to provide more economic development opportunities connected to the Olmsted Parks. A summary of the advice from the Private Sector Council can be found on this page.

**Who participated in the first Private Sector Council meeting?**

19 attended from 17 organizations or businesses, including:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Business or Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia Bender</td>
<td>Sharvan Graphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Bishop</td>
<td>Buffalo First!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Braniecki</td>
<td>KeyBank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Ciminelli</td>
<td>Ciminelli Real Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Field</td>
<td>Kaleidoscope Komputer Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Fitzmaurice</td>
<td>Seneca One Realty</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Flynn</td>
<td>Phillips Lytle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Hays</td>
<td>Savarino Companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracey Lukasik</td>
<td>Ken-Ton Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Montante Jr.</td>
<td>Uniland Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Parker</td>
<td>Black Capital Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dennis Penman</td>
<td>Ciminelli Real Estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Perrigo</td>
<td>Turner Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luman Ross</td>
<td>Black Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred K. Heinle</td>
<td>Town of Alden Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aliesa Adelman</td>
<td>Wendel Duchscherer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ronald Krukowski</td>
<td>Turner Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve McGlone</td>
<td>Turner Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darby Fishkin</td>
<td>CBRE Buffalo</td>
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In instances when geographies or key constituencies were not represented by local chambers of commerce or the Buffalo Niagara Partnership’s Development Advisory Committee, the One Region Forward Steering Committee sought out and invited organizations to fill in gaps of representation.

**Other Avenues for Engaging the Region’s Business Leaders...**

Engaging business leaders in One Region Forward occurs across the project and includes:

- **Steering Committee involvement:** Representatives from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership participate. Also, recently Steve Ricca of Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP joined the steering committee representing his role as Chair of the BNP Development Advisory Committee.

- **Working Team Participation:** 31 of our working team members are from the private sector and include developers, farmers, entrepreneurs, and representatives of business organizations, among others. All five teams include members from private businesses.

- **Local Community Presentations:** Since the launching of One Region Forward, seven presentations have been delivered to private sector audiences including presentations to the Amherst Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Business Associates and the local chapter of the International Council of Shopping Centers. For a full list of presentations, follow this link.

- **Economics of Sustainability Series:** Four of these forums have been held to date, covering topics of particular interest to business interests. Special outreach was made to encourage these audiences to attend.

**Next Steps for the Private Sector Council...**

As with the Local Government Council, the Private Sector Council will meet again in Winter of 2014 to review the work of One Region Forward and provide their knowledge and expertise on how this work can be more effective in creating a sustainable Buffalo Niagara.

Members of the Private Sector Council will also be attending our upcoming Community Congress Workshops and special “Economics of Sustainability” series.
Working Team Members & Contributors

The hard work of crafting the details of a draft plan will be led by a set of working teams focused on the plan’s five focus areas: Land Use and Development, Transportation and Mobility, Housing and Neighborhoods, Food Access and Justice, and Climate Change Action.

The Working Teams are composed of subject matter experts, key stakeholders, citizens and advocates in the five focus areas. Both Working Team Members and Working Team Contributors will help chart a course for planning documents that will guide the work of One Region Forward.

Working Teams will translate public vision and values into goals, action items, and progress metrics — all of which will be submitted to the Community Congresses for review and approval.

Update on the Working Teams through Year One of One Region Forward...
In early 2013, the One Region Forward steering committee launched a nomination process for selecting subject matter experts, issue advocates and citizen champions to work toward developing many of the details of the One Region Forward planning products. Members were nominated based on their knowledge, experience and expertise in the subject matters. Additional criteria were included to promote perspectives of equitable forms of development and a diversity of perspectives from the public, private and nonprofit sectors.

The Working Teams met for the first time in March 2013 and have met four additional times between then and September. In addition, interested citizens and additional subject matter experts have supplemented the work developed by the working teams through their role as “Working Team Contributors.” Contributors receive an overview of the major topic areas covered at each working team meeting and are asked to add their comments to the discussion online. Those comments are then included in the official notes of the meetings and help shape the ongoing dialogue created by the process.

Who is participating on the One Region Forward Working Teams as members and contributors?

Land Use and Development:

Working Team Members: Dan Castle, Village of East Aurora/Planning Commission; Brian Dold, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy; Wesley Dust, Erie County Water Authority; Jessie Fisher, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper; Amy Fisk, Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development; Eric Gillert, Town of Amherst Planning Department; Anthony Hahn, Niagara County Sewer District; Dan Howard, Town of Amherst Planning Department; Kellena Kane, Uniland Development Company; Jason Knight, Buffalo State College Department of Geography and Planning; William Krebs, Village of Springville; Keith Lucas, City of Buffalo; Joshua Mumm, WNY Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO; Julie O’Neill, Buffalo Sewer Authority/Office of Strategic Planning; Matthew Pelkey, Anspach Meeks Ellenberger LLP; Robert Pidanick, Nussbaumer and Clarke, Inc.; Steve Ricca, Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP; Laurence Rubin, Kavinoky Cook, LLP; Micaela Shapiro-Shellaby, Coalition for Economic Justice; Laura Smith, Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Nancy Smith, Western New York Land Conservancy; Matthew Pelkey, Anspach Meeks Ellenberger LLP; David Stebbins, Buffalo Urban Development Corporation; Richard Tindell, City of North Tonawanda Community Development Department

Working Team Contributors: Lorrie Abounader, Buffalo Niagara Enterprise; Harvey Albond, Outgoing Niagara Region State Parks Commissioner (2 terms), President Niagara Falls Rotary Club; Jay Bumey, WNYEA Habitat and Natural Resources Chair; Learning Sustainability Campaign; GreenWatch; Friends of Times Beach Chair; Erin Carmina, 500 Block Association of Main Street in Downtown Buffalo; Thomas Frank, 1st Niagara National Transportation Heritage Area; Jerome Nagy; Joseph Garguilo; Justin Imola; Derik Kane; Lari Komiczky, Sweet Home Central School District; Keith Lucas, City of Buffalo; Richard Mrugala; Tom Mussell; Mathew Nagowski, Partnership
for the Public Good, Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo; David Paoletta; Suzie Rivo Solender, Amherst Youth Board, Erie Co. Tobacco Coalition, American Cancer Society, Amherst Chamber of Commerce; Mary St. Mary, Binational Alliance, WNY Public Health Alliance; Christopher Snyder, University at Buffalo; Anne Smith; John Szalasny; Dan Ulatowski, Town of Cheektowaga Planning Department; Tim Van Oss; Steve White

Transportation and Mobility

**Working Team Members:** Jack Ampuja, Supply Chain Optimizers; James Bender, Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action; Justin Booth, Go Bike Buffalo; Duane Digggs, VOICE Buffalo; Douglas J. Funke, Citizens for Regional Transit; Gladys Gifford, Citizens for Regional Transit; Jamie Hamann-Burney, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc.; Dan Leonard, Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Brenda Henderson, Southtowns Rural Transit Corporation Inc.; Darren Kempner, NFTA-METRO; Mayor Brian Kulpa, Village of Williamsville; Jenny Laughlin, NFTA; Mike Leydecker, WENDEL Companies; Jordana Maisel, IDEA Center UB; Creighton Randall, Buffalo CarShare; Eric Schmarder, City of Buffalo; Annie Todd, Oishei Mobile Safety Net Team; Paul Tronolone, USA Niagara

**Working Team Contributors:** Harvey Albond, Outgoing Niagara Region State Parks Commissioner (2 terms), President Niagara Falls Rotary Club; David Bradley, Buffalo Wind Action Group, United Steelworkers, Sierra Club; Erin Carmina, 500 Block Association of Main Street in Downtown Buffalo; Thomas Frank, 1st Niagara National Transportation Heritage Area; Joseph Garguilo; Justin Imiola; Meg Lauerman, Continental 1; Keith Lucas, City of Buffalo; Richard Mrugala; Matthew Nagowski, Partnership for the Public Good, Cornell Club of Greater Niagara; Tom Mussell; David Paoletta; Douglas Scheider; Anne Smith; Christopher Snyder, University at Buffalo; Daniel Ulatowski, Town of Cheektowaga Planning Department; Tim Van Oss

Housing and Neighborhoods

**Working Team Members:** Grace Andriette, Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.; Lori Borowiak, NYSERDA; Catherine Braniecki, KeyBank; Roxanne Button, design synergies; Michael Clarke, Buffalo LISC; Rick Greenberg, Home Buyers Marketing II; Cyndie Huynh, Mobile Safety-Net Team; Jennifer Kaminsky, PUSH Buffalo; Tod Knaiazik, Arts Services Initiative of Western New York; Shannon Koehn, Housing Opportunities Made Equal; Carla Kosmerl, Town of Cheektowaga – Office of Community Development; Robyn Krueger, Community Missions of Niagara Frontier; Tom Lowe, ReNU Niagara; Cara Matteliano, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo; Ellary Mori, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning; Christie Nelson, City of Buffalo Director of Real Estate; Christopher Ollinick, Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP; Seth Piccirillo, Niagara Falls Office of Community Development; Michael Riegel, Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc.; David Rodriguez, BMHA/Hispanics United; Roseann Scibilia, University District Community Development Association; Jill Shuey, ReNU Niagara; Stephanie Simeon, Heart of the City Neighborhoods, Inc.

**Working Team Contributors:** Joseph Garguilo; Keith Lucas, City of Buffalo; Joy McDuffie; Richard Mrugala; Matthew Nagowski, Partnership for the Public Good, Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo; David Paoletta; Tim Van Oss

Food Access and Justice

**Working Team Members:** Susannah Barton, Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo; Jen Bieber, Town of Royalton; Jim Bittner, Singer Farms; Julie Blackman, Blackman Homestead Farm; MaryLou Borowiak, Food Bank of WNY; Natalie Cook, Cornell University Cooperative Extension – Niagara County; Andrea Fadel, City of Buffalo; Phil Haberstro, City of Buffalo Wellness Program; Fred Heinele, Alden Chamber of Commerce; Diane Held, American Farmland Trust; Shelley Hirshberg, Executive Director of P2 Collaborative; Sara Jablonski, Food for All; Kelly Ann Kowalski, Food for All; Cathy Lovejoy Maloney, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County; Sean Mulligan, Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County; Phil Perna, Supermarket Management, Inc.; Diane Picard, The Massachusetts Avenue Project; Mark Rountree, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning; Cheryl Thayer, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Iris Tower, Dan Tower Farm; Lisa Tucker, Field & Fork Network; Michael Van Der Puy, American Chemical Society; Bob Watkins, Community Beer Works; John Whitney, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; David Zittell, Zittell Farms.
Working Team Contributors: Bonnie Benton, Julie Carter, Rusty Nickel Coop, Jeff Goodwin, Heather Helman, Ted Schmidt, Anne Smith, Mary Stottele, Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, and SOLE of Buffalo

Climate Change Action

Working Team Members; Aliesa Aldelman, WENDEL Companies; Nate Drag, Alliance for the Great Lakes; Erin Heaney, Clean Air Coalition of WNY; Frank Hotchkiss, United Steelworkers; Jim Howe, The Nature Conservancy; Padma Kasthurirangan, Niagara Wind & Solar; Michael Licata, TM Montante Solar; Sean Myers, NBT Solutions LLC; Bill Nowak, Consultant to Buffalo Geothermal Heating and Cooling; Kevin O'Neil, Covanta Niagara; Lou Paonessa, Niagara Power Project, New York Power Authority; Jonathan Schultz, Niagara County Emergency Services Office; Jim Simon, UB Office of Sustainability; Bill Smith, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus; Kelly Tyler, NYSERDA; Jack White, Upstate New York Power Producers; Maria Whyte, Erie County; Terry Yonker, Marine Services Diversified, LLC; WNY Sustainable Energy Association Trust; WNY Environmental Alliance

Working Team Contributors: Lorrie Abounader, Buffalo Niagara Enterprise; David Bradley, Buffalo Wind Action Group, United Steelworkers, Sierra Club; Jay Bumey, WNYEA Habitat and Natural Resources Chair; Thomas Frank, 1st Niagara National Transportation Heritage Area; Justin Imiola; Jerry Malczewski; Tom Mussell; Lori Riker, Benchmark Engineering & Science; Suzie Rivo Solender, Amherst Youth Board, Erie Co. Tobacco Coalition, American Cancer Society, Amherst Chamber of Commerce

Next Steps for the Working Teams...
The Working Teams will be reconvening in early 2014 to review the work of the Community Congress meetings and get back to work on developing implementation strategies. These groups will be aiming to wrap up final draft goals, implementation strategies and metrics by late Spring 2014 for presentation to another Community Congress, Local Government Council and Private Sector Council.

Citizen Voices in the Community

Our plan for a sustainable and thriving region will only succeed if it has the input and support from the residents of Buffalo Niagara. So we have been at festivals, farmer’s markets, public meetings, fairs, and other community events throughout the region to spread the word about One Region Forward and ask the public what they want to come out of this effort. We have posted what we have heard and seen from these interactions on our website. This site also contains information about other ways that residents can voice their opinions and actively contribute to a sustainable future for our region. These include participating in a Community Congress Workshop, joining Team Tomorrow, or becoming a Working Team Contributor.

Update on broad-based community engagement through Year One of One Region Forward...
Since April of 2012 we have either attended or delivered presentations at 64 events throughout the Erie and Niagara counties. At 17 of these events, community members wrote responses on post-it notes to questions such as “What would you change about your community to make it more sustainable?”, which we then compiled into documents that are posted on our site. We also took pictures at these events and posted them on our website. All of this information is accessible on this page. Currently the One Region Forward Communication Team is working hard to get as many citizens from as many different localities and social backgrounds to attend the Community Congress Workshops as possible. We have also provided online forums such as PhotoVoice for citizens to express themselves in.

Where did we go and who did we talk to?
A map depicting the locations of events as well as descriptions of events, community feedback from them, and pictures taken during them can be found here.
Next Steps for engaging the community...

The One Region Forward Communication Team will continue to engage Buffalo Niagara residents throughout the process of creating and implementing the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. After the Community Congress Workshops that are occurring from November 12th to November 16th, the One Region Forward “Road Show” will continue and keep the dialogue with citizens throughout the region going. Other upcoming engagement programs will include continued recruitment of Team Tomorrow members, especially youths, and the launch of the “Citizen Planning School” to recruit and train citizen champions to contribute to the solutions that emerge from this planning work.

Community groups that wish to bring One Region Forward to their meeting or event should contact 1RF staff to schedule a visit.

Steering Committee

Ongoing direction of the planning and action process is overseen by a broad-based consortium including our metropolitan planning organization, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Erie and Niagara counties, the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, representatives of other municipal governments, our regional business alliance, and organizations devoted to fair housing, community development, transportation, and more.

This structure will ensure that the work that results has broad-based support from the wide range of agencies and organizations required to put the recommendations of the plan into action.

Update on the Steering Committee through Year One of One Region Forward:

When One Region Forward was launched, the effort was guided by the twelve organizations who initially worked together to submit a funding proposal to the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities program. Since then ten organizations have been added the effort. These partners have been approved because they are regional in scope and offer a new perspective for the committee.

The steering committee continues to meet monthly and has met 16 times since the grant period started in February 2012. Major progress includes shaping the identity of the project, creating its work plan, and making refinements to strengthen the work on a monthly basis.

Who sits on the One Region Forward Steering Committee?

Members with (*) were added to the Consortium Steering Committed during the first year

Local Government

City of Buffalo
Mayor Byron W. Brown, represented by Executive Director Brendan Mehaffy and Community Planner Bill Parke of the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning

City of Niagara Falls
Mayor Paul Dyster, represented by Senior Planner Tom DeSantis, Planner James Bragg and Director of Community Development Seth Piccirillo
Erie County
County Executive Mark Poloncarz, represented by Commissioner Maria Whyte and Deputy Commissioner Tom Dearing of the Department of Environment and Planning

Niagara County
Chairman of the Niagara County Legislature William Ross, represented by Commissioner Sam Ferraro and Senior Planner Benjamin Bidell of the Department of Economic Development

Association of Erie County Governments*
Represented by Supervisor Dennis Powers of the Town of Elma
Represented by Supervisor Glen Nellis of the Town of Eden

Niagara County Supervisors Association*
Represented by Supervisor Ross Annable of the Town of Hartland

Niagara Falls Housing Authority*
Represented by Service Coordinator Willie Dunn

Niagara County Department of Social Services*
Represented by Commissioner Anthony Restaino

State and Regional Agencies
Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)
Executive Director Hal Morse
Also represented by Transportation Analyst Kelly Dixon

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA)
Executive Director Kimberley Minkel, represented by Manager of Grants Darren Kempner

Empire State Development, WNY Region
Regional Director Christina Orsi, represented by Deputy Director Mike Ball

New York State Department of Transportation*
Represented by Engineer Frank Billittier

Non-Profit Organizations

Belmont Housing Resources of WNY
Elizabeth Huckabone, President, represented by Vice President of Housing Development Mike Riegel

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
Matthew Enstice, President & CEO, represented by transportation specialist Bill Smith

Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER*
Represented by Jill Jedlicka

Local Initiative Support Corporation, Buffalo
Executive Director, Mike Clarke

VOICE Buffalo*
President, Duane Diggs
Western New York Environmental Alliance*
Represented by Ryan McPherson

Business Organizations

Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Dottie Gallagher Cohen, President, represented by Vice President Laura St. Pierre Smith and Director of Regional Development Dan Leonard

Buffalo Niagara Partnership Development Advisory Council*
Represented by Steve Ricca, Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP

Academic Institutions

University at Buffalo Regional Institute and the Urban Design Project
Robert Shibley, Dean of the School of Architecture & Planning
Also represented by Research Assistant Professor Bart Roberts and Senior Fellow Bradshaw Hovey

Daemen College Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement*
Represented by Advisory Board member Tyra Johnson of Blue Sky Design

Foundations

The John R. Oishei Foundation*
Represented by Program Officer Larry H. Cook

Other Avenues for Engaging the Steering Committee...
The Steering Committee partners participate in various ways throughout the process. One of the more significant roles, and one that is outlined in the Consortium Agreement governing the group, is that each Working Team must be chaired by a Steering Committee member.

Next Steps for the Steering Committee...
The One Region Forward Steering Committee will continue to meet monthly to guide the direction of the effort. Major topics for the next year will be producing draft and final plans, as well as regular discussions on how to advance implementation of the effort while keeping the collaboration and community learning going.
In 2012, staff for the One Region Forward effort conducted a comprehensive search and review of public planning documents in the Buffalo Niagara region. A content analysis of more than 160 plans for counties, cities and towns, districts, neighborhoods, waterfronts and watersheds, the region as a whole and more produced a series of “word clouds,” which, in turn, were synthesized into brief statements of core values.

We asked for people to read, rate, and comment on the statements – which they did, during the Community Congresses held in January 2013, as well as during meetings of the One Region Forward Local Government Council and Private Sector Council, and Online through July 2013.

Through “clicker” voting during the four in-person sessions and online voting afterwards about 300 participants rated the statements on a five-point scale from “right on the mark” to “totally missing the mark.” The detailed results are shown below, but overall all ten statements were affirmed as “right on the mark” or “mostly on the mark” by strong majorities. Small minorities – generally less than one in ten participants – rated the statements as “mostly missing the mark” or “totally missing the mark.”

During discussions and an online comment period, individuals made a total of 466 specific comments, offering additions, corrections, suggestions, and objections. We have used both the ratings and comments to revise the statements. The revised statements, with deleted words struck through and added words underlined, are included below. A brief explanation of the changes accompanies each one as does a listing of “other things to think about” from the notes on these discussions.

It should be noted that a concerted minority of comments were from apparent opponents of the sustainability planning process, typically arguing that the effort is an intrusion on personal liberties and individual property rights, represents interference with market mechanisms, and borders on socialism. A number of these comments also challenged a key assumption behind the planning process – that human activities, in particular the combustion of fossil fuels, are responsible for global climate change. These comments amounted to about 14 percent of the total comments registered.
Overarching Theme: Competitive, creative, equitable economy

Original Value Statement:
Create a more competitive and prosperous 21st century regional economy.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Build create a more competitive, creative, prosperous, broadly shared, locally rooted, and sustainable 21st century regional economy.

Summary of Feedback:
Participants suggested prominently that the economy itself must be sustainable. Others spoke about “equity” rendered here as “broadly shared.” Still others suggested that local production and consumption is key as is the element of creativity.

Other things to think about:
- The role of education
- Health as a goal
- Safety
- Collaboration and cooperation as values equal to competition
- Our position relative to Canada
- The role of the arts and culture
- Importance of building trades
- Significance of renewable energy...

Comments:

Erie County Community Congress meeting
- I’m stuck on this idea of “competitive.” It’s about quality of life too.
- A concept of “resilience” needs to be part of the discussion.
There are pages and pages in the REDC plan about the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus but there are only about three paragraphs on renewable energy. That’s wrong.

There’s an overemphasis on “development” and under-emphasis on education. Equity is key.

If you want to be competitive go after the best employees, not just Buffalonians.

The phrase “21st century economy” is good. I think the 21st century economy is by definition environmentally sensitive, equitable, and sustainable.

Why “growth”? Growth is a feature of cancer. Make sure it is a kind of growth that can be sustainable.

We’re already competitive – over the scraps of what’s leftover. The phrase is too vague. We need to consider materials, energy, etc.

Health has to be part of it – health for the environment and health for people.

Concerned that environment is not being considered as part of the economy.

Economic growth will not create happiness.

Needs to be more prosperous for all-community wealth, not just a small subset.

Underemphasizes education.

Don’t need “21st century” label.

Statement does not include the word “sustainability.”

We are on the border, an international asset.

We need to think holistically, including true costs and externalities (such as clean air/water).

Include safety - low crime, pedestrian safety, community being more civil to one another = prosperity.

Promote local business ownerships-part of our decline comes from the fall of large entities in the past.

Niagara County Community Congress meeting

What is meant here by the term “sustainability”? Where is the sustainability in the value statement?

How do you define regional economy? Free market people would say it is about individuals choosing how to spend their money rather than regional governments planning our lives for us.

We need more information about the quantity and quality of jobs and the journey to work.

The municipal plan for my town didn’t involve real citizen participation.

In Forsyth County, GA, they had an on-going engagement with citizens, including a web-site, not just a few events.

We need to find the common denominator issues that appear across all of the 160+ plans.

For whom? Add wording to include all, especially working families.

We need markers for success to tell us how we are going to reach our goals.

Are these slides being catalogued? How are they going to be used in the future presentations? These questions are so vague but may be used in the future to promote acceptance of the program.

Private Sector Council

Community development and sustainability are critical to economic development.

The term competitiveness can be overly broad; does that make it open to interpretation?

When we think about economic development, we need to be thinking smart and encourage inclusivity for all including robust minority participation.

Local Government Council
- We need to add and emphasize diversification of the economy.
- Role of agriculture deserves more attention in this theme. It’s that important.
- We should add something about construction trades (like plumbers and electricians) as part of a description of our good workforce and how it isn’t as well-used as it could be.
- Missing a mention of the skills gap and training needs. Especially for trades.
- We’re competing with each other within the region for investment and jobs. How do you round off the rough edges?
- For village centers, economic development means revitalization and connecting people and housing to village centers. These centers play an important role in Erie County.
- Should there be a mention about Canada and our location on an international boundary?

**Online Comments**

- Missing the mark with the term "competitive". This is the old model of success. In today's economy a region needs to be collaborative and cooperative to become sustainable.
- Meaningless.
- Empty "touchy-feely" politically-correct, generic, devoid of building on our assets.
- Regions that are the most successful are emphasizing the term "creative". I don't see that word in the vision. "Fun" and "cooperative" are also important if you are truly trying to attract a creative and educated workforce.
- Comment relative to our wealth of educational facilities. Also, professional and semi-professional sports attractions.
- I think sustainability should be included here...we cannot prosper if our vision is shortsighted or sustainable.
- We have to be very careful that our economic development plans do not increase our carbon footprint. We also need to work on developing renewable energy industries. If we don't get some control over climate change, all of the great economic plans we might come up with will be undermined by climate disasters.
- Perhaps reference that our vision is to have a more distinguished economy in the 21st century where we have an identity and are more than competitive in some areas - we are actually a leader.
- Some reference should be made early on to the funding for the ideas suggested. If we wait for the full-feathered development of 'what' and 'where,' it won't fly without a 'how' and 'when.' The recognition of funding sources is a complex, constantly moving target, and a task-force for it early on would [hopefully] provide courage to all. Frankly, I see too much of the wish list dependent on already committed tax-based sources.
- We're focusing on vague feelings versus real plans and needs, and truly being competitive means highlighting all the underplayed tags in the cloud.
- Provide the tools to create a more competitive 21st century regional economy that leads to prosperity.
- Word cloud additions including sustainable, progressive, proactive, green, sensible, right sized, pride, heritage, architecture.
- Equity should be considered.
- A healthy economy will not be built from the top down in a region-esque model. The best way to build a healthy economy is from the small, local viewpoint. Local people know what works best for them in their homes, and should be given the freedom to make their own choices. Similar to how any healthy organism works, each locality has its own challenges to respond to and does not respond well to a "one size fits all". I also note that "freedom" and "choice" is completely missing from your word cloud. This is troubling, as free choice is what allows a free market to work. If you want an entire region to have a healthy economy, then fewer regulations, allowing for more freedom and personal choice, is a necessity.
- We shouldn't be infringing on personal liberty for such collectivist hogwash.
- The protection of individual freedoms. The protection of private property.
• All government intrusions must be ended immediately and entitlements must be reformed (decreased) so life sustaining private sector jobs can be created more efficiently. High taxes and green thinking initiatives cause higher economic hardships while driving business and people away. Green is good to a point, but not in such a way as to cause energy price robbery. Agenda 21 is not and never will be good for America. Since you are asking the people for input I suppose that you know the answers already and the big answer is stay out of people’s lives.
• Get off our back and get Government out of our life... More Freedom to expand less taxes.... and Oh yeah... Shut UP...!!
• The statement is meaningless. Yes, we all want a nice pony, and want to win the Lottery big time. So what. We all want that, it's the details on how to get there and what portion of us are "allowed" to get to that point/will probably achieve that goal that is important. You may as well as asked if you think oranges should be orange colored....
• Build on the regional natural and built environment's assets, to refine cooperative marketing and development process that is both proactive, and user friendly reactive, to both short-term and long-term residents, business, and visitors, seeking to network globally with partner regions that complement our strengths and goals, adding sustainability.
• Create a more sustainable economy leveraging unique aspects of the region
• Create a more sustainable, competitive and prosperous 21st century regional economy.
• Reduced red tape, politics, taxes, fees, business friendly
• Build on Buffalo's rare sense of camaraderie and mutual interest to develop signature places and industries that WNYers are proud of and immediately understand and support. Additions to the word cloud as is: international and Can-Am. However, the cloud suggests the process is only focused on economic development. What about words like family, faith, agriculture, recreation?
• What does development mean? small biz, entrepreneurship, energy and more are minimized when they should be emphasized along with economy
Overarching Theme: Build where we already have infrastructure

Original Value Statement:
Build on existing infrastructure and invest in developed areas to lower costs, improve efficiency and enhance quality of life.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Manage Build on existing infrastructure strategically and investing in developed existing areas and maintaining, removing, or extending urban systems to lower costs, improve efficiency and enhance quality of place life.

Summary of Feedback:
Many participants pointed out that a simple focus on already developed areas omitted the possibility that some infrastructure might well be removed when it is in the wrong place and other new infrastructure might need to be created where it doesn’t already exist. Substitution of “place” for “life” reflects the idea that infrastructure does so much to define places.

Other things to think about:
- Consider waterfront access;
- Attend to fiscal impacts;
- Emphasize transit oriented development and walkability;
- Prevent as well as clean up brownfields;
- Think about public safety;
- Account for enforcement to actually rein in sprawl.

Comments:

Erie County Community Congress Meeting
- Rebuild the transportation infrastructure that we dismantled – including efficient transit.
- I like the idea of building reuse but that’s something that should be done by the private sector, not government.
Think about infrastructure as a way to improve access to our waterfronts. Remove and/or add infrastructure to improve the quality of life.

There is a lot of infrastructure that we shouldn’t build on. It’s the wrong kind of infrastructure or it’s in the wrong place.

Public infrastructure leads private investment. Youngstown shrunk its way to prosperity. Focusing on improving quality of life also leads to investment.

Climate change and the impacts that it will have must be a key in where and what we choose to develop.

Growth itself is not sustainable. Suburban townships are not aware of the limits to their growth. Meanwhile, triple-A farmland is being eaten up.

We have a sea of white faces here. When we talk about reducing costs; who is that for? When we talk about efficiency or quality of life; who is that for? We need more diversity in the conversation.

Smart growth doesn’t mean giving tax dollars to companies to bring minimum wage jobs to our region. Should be “quality of place” rather than “quality of life.”

Bad planning in the past led to costly decisions to undue mistakes (e.g. in 1970’s, decimated downtown with rail, put equipment where it has to be moved – high cost).

There are many “developed” areas that shouldn’t have been developed in the first place, so we don’t want to invest more – focus on town, village, and urban cores.

Statements are too broad to have impact. Readers are not getting enough good information to make decisions.

“Existing infrastructure” was sometimes a mistake.

Don’t want to lose American freedom of private property/ownership. Shouldn’t deny people the opportunity to live where they choose.

“Lower cost” – there are multiple ways to develop. Cost is not the only factor that should be considered.

Focus on building on resources, especially walkability.

Don’t exclude parts of existing infrastructure. If we disinvest, new roads will just be built to connect.

Portland put a circle around the city and is still prospering. Our future is in concentrating on the urban core.

We don’t have smart politicians/true leaders. We’ve been waiting too long for a Peace Bridge, cars on Main Street. We need more business leaders making decisions.

Niagara County Community Congress Meeting

It should say sustainable smart growth.

We’re going to get an artificial development rather than something natural with smart growth. The answers on the clickers were “channeled.” Does everyone want to go forward with Agenda 21? They want the cars off the road and they want the single family houses gone.

Focus development on already developed areas – but also on others.

In Niagara Falls we have infrastructure we want removed, not built upon. This includes the Robert Moses Parkway and the nuclear waste dump in Lewiston.

We need home rule preservation and not social engineering. Keep our sovereignty.

Add “if voted on by the public at-large” to all statements.

Add communitarianism.

This should only be applied to public property, not private.
What about transit-oriented-development and walkability/walkable communities?
Locally, especially in rural areas, we may have a need to extend infrastructure.
The term “collaborative” could be incorporated into the discussion.
Avoiding duplicative development
We need to think about not just the clean-up of existing brownfields, but also the prevention of creating new brownfields.
While new infrastructure is generally not welcome, we should be open to new infrastructure when it is innovative and cutting edge.
Greenspace – both urban parks and rural open space – are important to our conception of smart growth.
When we work to manage growth, we need to be sure that we aren’t creating too much regulation that chokes growth. We need to be thinking about streamlining the development process.

Local government Council
- Extend infrastructure? We’re trying to redevelop the county home but it’s outside the area served by Village of Alden infrastructure. Redeveloping in rural areas can’t be just about the village centers.
- Infrastructure needs to be maintained, but also replaced. Is that considered to be part of “Maintained?”

Online
- Americans are looking for communities that are safe and good places to raise a family. While "quality of life" might communicate that to some, I believe say a "safe family-oriented" region should be a goal.
- Reduce the cost of living and increase educational opportunities.
- The work on the Framework for Regional Growth showed very clearly that sprawl is costly, but the area continues to sprawl. We need some good method of enforcing these plans, and we need the cooperation of developers.
- I said 'what else' in the previous box.
- Replace the existing, deteriorating infrastructure beginning with developed areas, to correct inefficiencies, reduce maintenance costs, and improve quality of life.
- A more clear definition of smart growth is needed.
- "Brownfields"? "Existing cores"? If you want to reach the common person, and I am not convinced that you do, you can’t be having that kind of stuff going on. Building on top of, or replacing, existing infrastructure seems good to me though.
- The protection of private property. the protection of individual freedoms.
- Create substantial private sector jobs and defy Agenda 21 for America.
- Article 4- Neither the Federal Government nor Congress nor the States are in the business of investing. Loaning of monies and investing of the People’s money is Commerce, Government regulates Commerce and cannot involve it’s self in Commerce. It is neither the duty nor the right of Government to invest the People’s money for any reason. Under the Constitution, it is the duty of Federal Government to preserve the Republics general welfare and to protect us from outside forces. Government cannot create jobs, but is their place, it is their duty to create an atmosphere that is conducive to entrepreneurs, business and citizens, through minimal regulations, just Laws and suitable Taxes that are equitable to creating jobs and the general welfare of all.
- Emphasis should be on FREEDOM
- ...recognizing the non-built environment’s substantial contribution as "infrastructure to a vibrant and vital regional farm economy."
• Emphasize and accentuate the uniqueness of places, whether rural, suburban or urban. This captures how we understand smart growth. Suggest widening the scope to include other things such as: Buy local; Energy efficiency and renewables; Water quality; Public health; Public safety; Education reform
• Why is brownfields so prominent?
• Downtown needs to be emphasized
Overarching Theme: Make it easier for people to **get around** without a car

**Original Value Statement:**
Provide broader transportation options to improve access to jobs and services and promote energy efficiency and safety.

**Revised Value Statement based on Feedback**
Expand **Provide broader transportation options to improve access to jobs, services, and recreation; meet the needs of students, elderly, and the transit dependent; move goods to market; and promote energy efficiency and safety.**

**Summary of Feedback:**
A number of participants pointed out that the use of transportation to move goods was totally omitted from the original statement. Others drew attention to the omission of transit as a mode and a desire to acknowledge people now underserved by the transportation system.

**Other things to think about:**
- Understand the relationship between transit service and population density, between transportation options and urban design;
- Redress the mistakes we have made in past transit planning;
- Make systems more responsive;
- Use transportation to alleviate social and economic isolation;
- Think of links between transportation and health;
- Recognize the demand for choice in modes.

**Comments:**

**Erie County Community Congress Meeting**
- “More” transportation options aren’t necessarily what we need. More *appropriate* options will make things better.
The rail line is above ground where it should be underground, it didn’t go to UB. Now we have studies again about extensions. Don’t just talk about it. Do it.

Reducing Porter Avenue to one lane to put in bike lanes? Are you kidding me? Put the car lanes back, and stop talking about gas shortages. We have a lot of gas. Drill, baby, drill!

We have to call this what it is. This is Agenda 21. Go to the website. You’ll see that it’s true. This will erode our personal freedoms and liberties. Who will pay for all the things being discussed? This is about a wealth transfer from the US to the other 160 countries that are signatories to Agenda 21. We need action in the private sector, not the United Nations.

“If you build it they will come,” doesn’t always work. Don’t try to talk about transportation investments without considering population density. It doesn’t work.

We’ve got multiple IDA’s competing. We’ve got jobs being drawn to North Tonawanda and Amherst. Instead, we need to concentrate the jobs where the transportation capacity already is instead of remaking the transportation capacity.

Misses the point of peak oil. Current transportation systems were built on oil. We have to find other solutions because that will be too expensive.

More equity needed in transportation, especially to rural areas (like Springville) and for the elderly.

Focus on conservation not just efficiency.

Niagara County Community Congress Meeting

If you asked people if they want to get rid of their cars you would get a different result (on the clickers).

Include “under-served populations.” Not everyone has access to a car but still needs transportation options.

We want unencumbered transportation, especially rural roads and on the farms.

It’s important to have efficient transportation but jobs in the city aren’t as important as issues like having a living wage.

This is based on the perception that climate change is real. Let’s reset and address scientists that have come to other conclusions.

Private Sector Council

Transportation is important to tourism

We need to figure out how to maximize our existing infrastructure. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus is an example where there is high access, but relatively low transit ridership.

Regulatory requirements of New York State can be confusing and lack clarity. We need to streamline the transportation process. This should come first

We need to think about cost-effectiveness in how we grow infrastructure.

There needs to be increased communication and collaboration across agencies and stakeholders involved in transportation decisions

Transportation also impacts lifestyle activities, and we should be accounting for those as well.

We need to adapt, innovate, and be on the cutting edge of new transportation modes, especially those that are appropriate for our region.

Time tables for public transportation should not be one size fits all

Our transportation system needs to be more responsive to student users, particularly to tie to urban centers.

We need to be thinking about incorporating existing public transportation access into how we provide incentives to businesses and development.
Local Government Council

- What does energy efficiency mean? (Thinking about the idea that a runner has a bigger carbon footprint than we might realize). Who gets to decide? How much is too much? Grand Island has some places that are walkable and some places where you need a car – and no amount of investment will be able to change that.
- What does efficiency refer to? Carbon reduction and energy efficiency or system efficiency?
- We need a stronger focus on transportation or rural areas. We have vans for the elderly and others who cannot drive but we don’t have any buses.
- The statement is missing any mention of the role of transportation in promoting commerce.
- We don’t have buses but “we’re okay with that.” Senior housing has special transportation. But otherwise we know we will have to drive to get around.
- Transit services are being cut. How do we think about servicing rural and suburban areas?
- Is the GBNRT Niagara Frontier Urban Area Freight Transportation Study included in the plan list?
- Needs to be rewritten to include an emphasis to commerce and transportation of goods.

Online

- "Affordable and safe" transportation is important as well.
- Improve street design to facilitate traffic, bike riders, pedestrians and senior citizens.
- While broader transportation is desirable...it's not possible given the sprawling nature of our region...density should be stressed first...then we can start looking at better transportation networks
- Extend light rail to UB and to the airport and to the waterfront.
- Poor transportation options create isolated communities both in terms of rural communities and urban.
- Some suburban and rural residents have never been to Buffalo and vice versa. We can't become one region with this isolation.
- It's tedious, but please refer to my first box above. Transportation, more than any other factor, is highly tax and fee dependent. No regional public transit system in the USA operates at a profit, to my knowledge. So we have to start with realistic assumptions and not grand visions, e.g. there will never be a significant growth of light rail in the lifetime of current young adults. Nor will the thruway system be rerouted or amended.
- Provide more and varied transportation options that are more efficient and safer, to improve access to jobs and services.
- Word cloud additions including health, transit oriented development.
- The environment and historical resources did not make it into the list of values. These are vital considerations for any 21st Century plan - in particular environmental justice and preservation of historical resources. Future planning for all transportation and infrastructure projects whether existing or new, must include comprehensive environmental studies to determine the impact on air quality, human health and historic resources.
- This statement is so broad and generic that it barely means anything.
- The protection of private property. the protection of individual freedoms.
- Get out of Business... only the industry can challenge those efforts... When was the last time Government did anything right... or anything that worked without corruption?
- Where is the funding to deploy electrically powered mass transit/lots of surface rail lines in Erie and Niagara Counties, especially in urban areas? No investment, no mass transit.
- Link to smart growth to create densities capable of supporting forms of mass transit, yet reduce need for extensive school bus systems.
Focus on walkability, welcome Canadian travelers, move overnight guests downtown, help small businesses tap into efficient shipping channels, foster experimental transit models.
Overarching Theme: Repair, renew and redesign housing for changing populations.

Original Value Statement:
Preserve our housing stock and foster neighborhoods that are great places - safe, well-served and distinctive.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Repair, renew, and redesign
Preserve our housing stock and foster to provide healthy, affordable, and efficient choices to a changing population in neighborhoods that are great places safe, accessible, well-served and distinctive.

Comments:

Erie County Community Congress Meeting
- Add the word “walkable” to a definition of good neighborhoods. Walking supports greater security, local economic activity, energy conservation, and better health.
We do have great buildings with great bones, and we have great neighborhoods, but we also have some that have come back (e.g. West Village, Grant Street). We have other neighborhoods that can be great again.

We have some choices to make about where to invest and how to deal with vacant houses and vacant land.

We need to redesign and retrofit our existing older housing to reflect social change, like changes in household size and composition, or health issues like lead, and energy efficiency.

Meeting the goal of neighborhoods “safe and well-served” needs help from housing court and inspectors. The onus of dealing with problem properties is on the shoulders of the residents. The city says they have too many calls to 311 – but many of the calls are about the same problems. Community policing is another strategy for dealing with this problem.

Change “preserve” to enhance. Add “healthy.”

The word “preserve” is too static, maybe “reinvest” or “improve.”

Include diversity – of all kinds.

In order to preserve, they need to streamline government process for older buildings to bolster efforts. The city has been too quick to demo.

Niagara County Community Congress Meeting

- Preserve but don’t protect housing at all costs. Rehab maybe. Retro-fit. Conserve.
- Do the cost-benefit analysis on housing preservation.
- We need to have strong code-enforcement – it’s crucial for neighborhood quality of life.
- Is this like in China where people live in a high-rise, work for the company downstairs, and when people get stressed out they jump off?
- Add “preserve individual property rights” to the statement.
- Lend only to people that can afford to pay.
- Housing is now driven by developers. We need a strategic plan for housing.
- Look at integration of neighborhoods, jobs and transportation. Think about it all at once.

Private Sector Council

- We need to be offering more housing type choices, especially in our urban centers.
- The statement seems to have more of an urban slant.
- Does not speak to where new development occurs.
- When we talk about housing, we need to think of it in more of a balanced fashion – even in the 2nd and 3rd ring suburbs, there is a need for multi-family housing.
- Preserving green space is critical to both neighborhoods and housing.
- When we deal with demolition, we also need to pair that with revitalization strategies.
- Some housing has a useful life that expires, especially as demographic and family size changes.
- We have to reconcile upgrade costs with operating costs.

Local Government Council

- Keep in mind that people make choices about where to live very much based on their assessment of the quality of schools there.
- How do we differentiate between village, neighborhoods and towns? What are geographic scales and boundaries that we are talking about? Some may consider the whole town a “village.”
- Education deserves its own place on this map. The quality of schools is important to our neighborhoods but also economy, etc.
Consider all the new green opportunities.

We need to preserve the good neighborhoods in the city and in village centers, but we also need to try to convert some of the sprawling developments to good, walkable neighborhoods – a daunting task.

Some housing can't be preserved. A proper replacement plan should be included that limits sprawl.

Maybe add a reference to developing infill housing among the existing housing stock?

We've lived on a reborn and integrated 'West Village' street >25 yrs. The public service of most use, assuming houses are in decent shape, is that which provides for safety. The first response of suburbanites learning where we live is, "Is it safe?" Indeed the City has made it safer. But an active block club, nowhere in your cloud of tax dependent ideas, has been an irreplaceable part of our growth. How do we foster that?

Foster neighborhoods that are safe, well-served and distinctive while preserving only the housing that is deemed historically or architecturally significant.

We need to look beyond just preserving our housing stock. We need to make our housing stock better – whether that means preservation and rehabilitation, new housing strategically located, or greater options for affordable housing.

Housing stock? This makes it sound like you're going to refer to people as livestock next.

The protection of private property, the protection of individual freedoms.

Let people live as they wish without government intrusion.

Get out of our lives and stop designing how we are to live or where we live.... if we don't like what we have, we will walk away. Shut UP.!!!

More "I want a pony, too" sentiment. More "drivel-type" questions.

Assess older housing stock for cost-benefits against known hazardous materials (lead, asbestos, mold, PCB's, radon, rot, light access limits, soil contamination) and fully inventory social/cultural broad patterns and photo inventory neighborhoods before selectively clearing areas as circumstances warrant. Preservation of period housing, and new efforts, should recognize the evolving demographics, and diverse, often multi-generational households which increasingly are influenced by dynamically changing cultural diversity, (and people living longer, but sicker).

Preserve housing worth preserving, and knowing the difference. practical new housing build to resemble previous (expired) housing can preserve a place identity

Some of the housing stock needs to be preserved, and some of it needs to replaced. Additional words: green building, gardening.
Overarching Theme: Protect farmland and support farmers

Original Value Statement:
Protect farmland, support farmers, connect farms to local markets and ensure access to healthy food.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Protect farmland and forests, support farmers, promote sustainable farming, encourage urban agriculture, connect farms to local markets, foster value-added processing, cultivate agri-tourism, and ensure access to healthy, affordable, locally-sourced food.

Summary of Feedback:
Some participants pressed for stronger inclusion of urban agriculture as part of the value statement. Others emphasized that farming practices in general need to be more sustainable. Others asked for reference to food processing as part of the system and agri-tourism as a distinct element of the sector. Still others wanted to see emphasis on affordability and local sourcing.

Other things to think about:
- There are economic development opportunities in farmland and agriculture products (e.g. yogurt);
- Land use practices and tax policies affect farm viability;
- Farm-market connections like food hubs, farmers markets, processing, etc. are important;
- TDRs may not be adequate – we need purchase of development rights;
- Understand the different needs of industry-scale farms, agri-tourism farms, and urban farmers;
- Consider a role for energy crops.

Comments:

Erie County
- We need to promote affordable healthy food.
- Make it sustainable agriculture – in terms of reuse of waste and careful use of water on farms.
• Support urban agriculture – not community gardens – as part of food production. We have the land to do it. We need the policies.
• Include food production. It’s not just about growing food. It’s also value added processing for food.
• Integrate knowledge about food and farming as part of children’s education.
• Eliminate debt tax to support farmers. Next generation in family cannot afford to keep up the farms.
• We should develop closer relationship with Cornell University as a resource.
• Need to leverage local products.
• Need to think systemically/holistically.

Niagara County

• Difference between rural and urban agriculture. We want to do both, but they are not the same.
• Whether someone is trying to sell farmland they can’t afford to keep or someone is trying to buy land to start a farm, the effort to control land use will violate individuals’ private property rights.
• The way the questions are being asked guarantees that the responses will be favorable. You are being indoctrinated. Think for yourself.
• Buy organic but keep government out of agriculture. Defend farmers’ rights but don’t subsidize them.
• We need a ratio analysis for towns and counties....
• We should consider farmland as land zoned for agriculture.
• Subsidies have had a huge impact on the cost of land and grains for farmers. Be cautious.
• Ban genetically modified species of food and plant life.
• Will I be criminalized for having my own garden in my yard?
• Add “support farming at various levels.”

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL

• Methods to support aggregation and logistics support to farmers, such as the “Food Hub” concept need to be acknowledged.
• There’s a difference between the industry of farming – large farms that produce goods to distribute to large businesses - and small farmers who help attract agri-tourism. These two types of farmers have different issues and different needs.
• There’s a strong link to sustainability and economic development to agriculture.
• Use farmland as an economic development tool, such as the food related industries Batavia has attracted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

• We need to talk about food safety, food hubs, logistics, and all the things that support food access.
• Missing plan? Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition. Focus on agri-tourism.
• Agritourism is something that the Southtowns are already working on.
• Transfer of development rights is a concept from years ago. Let’s talk about purchase of development rights – and say that the state should be doing more of it.
• Education is missing. For those who are moving into agriculture districts, consumers and those looking to buy local.

Online
Add forest lands as well. WNY's forests are naturally diverse and rich in natural resources. Forests are typically included with agriculture, but I think the word "forests" need to be emphasized.

Define agriculture lands so as to allow business opportunities to keep the younger folks "on-the-farms."

Also, work to provide local food processing plants for local foods.

Urban farming is a larger and more practical target, completely omitted from your cloud. The urban farm invigorates the tax base, gives desirable character to neighborhoods and eliminates the deadly gap-tooth housing landscape of decay. And it provides a significant system of support for families, indeed encourages it. Resources should be allocated to teaching it and, on a lesser plane, to marketing it.

To ensure access to healthy, fresh food for our population, continue to support efforts to connect local farms to local markets.

Word cloud additions including buy local, organic, fresh, protection, healthy, access.

Farmers don't need your help to do what they need to do. What they need is for people to get out of their way, to let them conduct business as they see fit. If you want to support farmers, you should work to end tax subsidies.

The protection of private property; the protection of individual freedoms.

No Government telling farmers what they can or cannot produce on their private lands.

It’s neither your Right to tell us what is Right nor connect anything. Let the Market do that. They and us will find the best way to operate. STOP making regulations and leave us alone. The People’s Army will seek you Out.

Perishable food can only be own around here for around 3 month of the year. For the other nine, you need greenhouses, and not just amateur efforts, either. Also, where os the "energy crops" (biomass) contracts between growers and users for heat and/or electricity. Or "hybrid" crops that can be used for both food and energy. A horribly wimpy question....

...recognizing that increases in lands protected by means that remove them from tax rolls will increase the cost-of-living burden disproportionately on the poor and middle class in urban areas.

Define and support urban agriculture especially on vacant land. link to community health education

Overarching Theme: Use less energy and promote green energy

Original Value Statement:
Use less energy, generate green energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Use less energy, generate promote green energy through direct incentives, technology development and pricing policy, to and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while we prepare to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Summary of Feedback:
A number of participants insisted that the statement include adaptation as well as mitigation. Others asked for specificity on how we can promote renewable energy.

Other things to think about:
- Renewables include hydro-electric, geothermal, wind, and solar.
- Consider natural gas as cleaner, cheaper fossil fuel.
- Make a full transition away from fossil fuels.
- Green energy is often “distributed” energy.
- Some people question whether energy policy and climate change policy should go together.
- The energy sector is an economic development opportunity.

Comments:
Erie County
- We need to focus more on the hopefully not inevitable impacts of climate change – drought, severe weather, and dislocations – than just on mitigation.
• The slide shows power transmission towers. That’s the old paradigm. We need to support a shift of paradigms to distributed energy production.
• Air quality deserves focused attention.
• Preservation of historic architecture – and thus our own history – is also a key issue.
• Climate change transcends all, not just energy. Where is nature being considered?
• Using geothermal is an opportunity that should not be overlooked.

Niagara County
• Providers of electricity need to improve their management practices. We need to stop profiteering. We’re paying more than we should.
• Fracking will lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions and endanger our water supply. Climate change is happening and we need to do everything we can to slow it down.
• Every community should demand fair pricing. Florida shouldn’t have cheaper electricity than we do.
• If there is to be a conversation from a consumption economy to a conservation economy the public needs to be involved in the process.
• Invest in geothermal energy.
• We have vast reserved of natural gas and could be energy independent. Cars could all run on natural gas and we can eliminate the need for petrol.
• These statements are too abstract. They are targeted to the goals and strategies.
• Redefine greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide is not a greenhouse gas, but an indicator. Water vapor is a greenhouse gas.
• Green energy has to be cost effective. We need a cost benefit analysis.
• Need to reduce smart RF meter readers.

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL
• Leverage our existing infrastructure – hydroelectric energy from NF yet our region has some of the most expensive energy prices in the country
• We need to leverage the opportunities for green energy to drive economic opportunity.
• Infrastructure for green energy still costs money and has a lifespan like other types of energy infrastructure.
• Natural gas is a clean, cheap, local fuel.
• We need to be investing in smart grid technology to make our use of energy more efficient.
• Policy issues need to be considered – options like “Feed-in-Tariff” pricing.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
• It would be more useful to talk about sustainability more broadly.
• Combine with economic development initiatives.
• Don’t forget about wind energy.
• Statement does not reflect our existing “green” energy source of hydropower and the potential for more use here.
• Why energy and climate together? Energy can stand alone. Adding climate to the end of the phrase is unfair to energy.
• Agree with switching focus to energy only, not linked to climate change.

Online
Add "explore creative and sustainable forms of energy production". Researching forms of energy as a job creation mechanism in itself.

Monetary incentives for conservation. Mandate green applications within a specific period of time: otherwise an additional "tax" kicks-in.

That word cloud is pretty small because most of us have been blind to the threat of climate change until fairly recently. But this is the most important part of our vision. It means no more production of fossil fuels in our area (e.g., no tracking), and it means replacing fossil fuel energy sources with renewable energy sources in a very aggressive way.

"Use less energy" - key, and I'm glad you led with it. There is so much focus on alternative energy, which is good, but we should really be focusing first on reducing energy dependence in the first place. Good!

Since the energy of this movement itself is limited, I would not give high priority to active efforts at greening. This is more of a political and governmental task. I say this as a multi-decade Sierra and Greenpeace member. There are well-developed resources to save our planet. We should support them, do our individual best in our own environments, and vote, rather than take on their burden, and do what we do.

Encourage the creation and generation of green energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and current energy usage.

Word cloud additions including, wind, Niagara Falls, educate, investment, measure, promote.

How do we define green energy?

Climate change is so nebulous. Can you even affect climate change? Can you prove that it human-caused? Where I live, just 30,000 years ago, the entire region was covered in mile-thick glaciers.

These are goals reflective of ignoring the scientific method and imposing uninformed political views on those who wish to prosper rather than being relegated to medieval modes of living.

The protection of private property. The protection of individual freedoms.

You must be complete idiots to believe in global warming.

Green Energy ...."DOES NOT WORK" ....TOTAL CORRUPTION.... Pacific Gas and Elec. made the announcement 30 years ago....that we would need Wind Mills and Solar Panels Coast to Coast to produce 20% of our energy we need today.....and would cost 14 to 15 Trillion dollars every 15 years (that's as long as they last) ....THAT'S UNSUSTAINABLE...!!! Go with Gas and seek out the Patent office for newer ideas.

Human activity is NOT causing climate change

So what is to be done with the present "casino pricing system" where renewables prices are set by pollution sourced energy. If you don't get the pricing system right, this is a meaningless wishful thinking sentiment.

...provided that experimental green energy efforts which cannot be sustained, due to technology obsolescence, or market limitations, are reversible, and reversed (removed) when warranted.

Anticipate alternative energy resources and plan for them e.g. electric charging stations

Additional words: wind, energy plans, education
Overarching Theme: Restore and protect water and natural resources

Original Value Statement:
Protect our water and other natural resources to promote a healthy ecology, economy and community.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Restore and protect our water, air, soil, wildlife habitat and other natural resources to promote a healthy ecology, economy and community.

Summary of Feedback:
A number of participants wanted to go beyond the original emphasis on water to include a broader range of natural resources. Others said many resources need more than protection; they require restoration.

Other things to think about:
- The environment is the “Big Economy” and the economy is the “small economy.”
- But consider the wise use of resources to promote economic activity while preserve the resource.
- Great Lakes position is key.
- Political threats to water are also important.
- Consider healthy forests as an important resource. Fracking, drug contamination are other threats to water quality.
Comments:

Erie County

- Our place on the planet isn’t changing. We’re on the Great Lakes. Water is key to everything we do—economically, environmentally, and otherwise.
- Education about natural resources is a key to advancing our protection of natural resources.
- Access to water is also part of it.
- Keep in mind that the environment is the Big Economy and what we usually think of as the economy is the Small Economy.
- Didn’t see the word “air” included. Need to use terms like “protect” and “restore.”
- Sustainable development is an oxymoron. Needs to include social sustainability in the definition.
- Do we have the capacity to protect our natural resources? How are we defining “healthy”?
- Water is an asset. Protecting our water includes preventing piping it elsewhere.

Niagara County

- Our greatest natural resource here is Niagara Falls itself. But how natural is it surrounded by skyscrapers, shopping districts, and concerts. We need to restore the natural beauty of the falls. There are some things missing under “protect, enhance, and restore” natural resources. Fish and wildlife habitat and unique ecologies are some of those things.
- Rainwater, runoff, ponds are not government property.
- Our water resources are endangered by Nestle and other companies bottling local water and selling it to China.
- We’re giving our resources to the world – jobs, military forces. Our prosperity has declined since World War II because of the policies that have come down from on high.
- We want to preserve the falls and the water. But we also want to promote it. Our friends go there for entertainment.
- Repairing the destruction of our resources has a lot of potential for providing new jobs and funding from the federal government.
- Protecting water could lead to restrictions on access to water. Who is “our” in the statement, is it really us?
- Radioactive waste storage needs to be directly addressed in natural resources.
- Worded too vague to pick out the economic versus health issue. How are those issues balanced?
- Every community should decide what its resources are and how to use them, and then we can move on.
- Respect our water and don’t sell to Arizona. Address our environment to protect our water.
- Niagara River generates green energy and promotes economic growth. Protecting our water should harness the benefit of the falls.

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL

- We should be considering not just the protection of natural resources, but using them to our best advantage.
- Leverage what we have responsibly
- Improve/repair what we already have

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

- “Great Lakes” needs way more emphasis. We need to protect our water rights.
- Restoration is as important as preservation.
- And the river and the falls plus the whole watershed.
Consider using the word “sustain.” These are finite resources.

Online

- The emphasis is on water, which is great. However, healthy forests are crucial to protecting our water sheds.
- Expand Bio processing mandates by a particular date, otherwise a "tax" is imposed.
- Protecting our water means no use of water for fracking. It means limiting toxic runoff. And it means somehow learning to purge our water supply of contaminating drugs.
- Encourage stewardship of our natural resources?
- These again are general features of our environment insulated from this group's energy by government.
- We need, by political will, to make it necessary for all waters running into our precious basin be pretreated, to reform the Water Board, and to prevent the theft of our water by "outside agitators" from the Lower States. That's a more specific list than in the cloud.
- All natural resources must be protected to ensure a healthy ecology, economy and community.
- Is there nothing to be said about safely making use of the natural resources that are available to us?
- The protection of private property, the protection of individual freedoms.
- Natural recourses are there for our use in this lifetime and create a lot of jobs with lower utility and fuel rates. Government intrusion must end period.
- Leave nature alone......!!! STOP SELLING OUR WATER IN THE GREAT LAKES TO CHINA...!!!!
- ...healthy natural and human ecology...
- Green infrastructure for sure. control water runoff from buildings, streets, & parking lots
- Could the statement be more specific?
Overarching Theme: Embrace **culture** and heritage

**Original Value Statement:**
Protect and develop culture, heritage, and waterfront resources for economy and quality of life.

**Revised Value Statement based on Feedback**
Protect and develop cultural, heritage, and waterfront architectural resources to preserve community identity, enrich daily life, create great places, attract visitors, and build our economy and quality of life.

**Summary of Feedback:**
*There was significant debate about where reference to “waterfronts” belongs. It has been relocated to the section on parks and recreation. Others asked for reference to architecture as a key element of regional heritage. Still others spoke of a range of purposes and impacts to be had from heritage development.*

**Other things to think about:**
- This includes our Olmsted Parks.
- Niagara Falls is an important asset.
- Agri-tourism is part of this.
- This is something we share with our Canadian neighbors.

**Comments:**

Erie County

- Connect the city to the waterfront with bikeways, greenways, and trails. Connect all of our Olmsted Parks to the network and thus the waterfront – as Frederick Law Olmsted himself intended. An Olmstedian outer harbor park is a key element in that.
- We need to celebrate culture and heritage in diversity that is appropriate to our population.
- “Historic preservation” belongs in this part of the discussion.
• If developing our water resources is only for the economy, I’m against it. What are we talking about? Putting factories on the waterfront? Not good.
• Not just “protect,” but celebrate.
• Add “share” because access is important.
• Culture/heritage is our identity – who we are.
• Looking at past mistakes, we need to draw lines in the sand and create density. That’s what creates progressive culture.

Niagara County

• I live in a wonderful neighborhood. We have a goldmine here in Niagara Falls. Our history – natural, Native American, colonial, and American – is something that can keep tourists here.
• This should be the Orlando of the north. When summer temperatures down south are in the summer here in the 100s, people will want to visit here. We should promote it.
• Add “diversity” to the statement, stress quality of life and creating strong public places.
• Should waterfront be in the section? Probably belongs in the Parks and Recreation section.
• Add protect/develop “personal liberty.”

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL

• While waterfront issues may be different than other cultural assets, it impacts everything going on in our region.
• How can we better leverage the recreation opportunities in our communities for economic development?
• There continues to be a disconnect between saving historic buildings and finding economically viable re-uses of older structures.
• When we talk about our cultural assets, we should focus on enhancing, not just developing. We have many assets that require investment to realize their full potential.
• Culture, heritage, and our waterfront is very much shared with our Canadian partners. Maybe this is an area where we stress that bi-national connection.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

• Let’s include signage.
• Tie in and connect culture and heritage with agritourism.
• Don’t make all arts and culture victim to issues of waterfronts. They’re important for quality of life as much as economy. Elevate arts and culture in the discussion.
• Add protect/develop and promote.
• Scenic byways are also important.

Online

• I think we should add something that emphasizes conserving the waterfront for future generations. I fear that the statement opens the door for developers looking to make immediate profit and not preserving waterfront for future generations that may have more creative and better use of these resources.
• Conserve green space, e.g., joint use of parking lots, impose access requirements.
This includes protecting the incredible theatre scene that has developed in Buffalo. And it includes protecting our waterfront from commercial development. Citizens should have access to the entire waterfront.

I would like to export Frank Parlato to a culture-free environment. Realistically, our cultural community is doing fairly well, considering the regional economic base. But the encouragement of "village" type city environments needs as much attention as the waterfront, to maintain culture. I’d like to see a more coordinated effort by our museum and 'historic' entities for bringing audience in to town.

Cultural, heritage, and waterfront resources must be protected and wisely developed to enhance quality of life and grow the local economy.

Word cloud additions including authentic, real, connected.

The environment and historical resources did not make it into the list of values. These are vital considerations for any 21st Century plan - in particular environmental justice and preservation of historical resources. Future planning for all transportation and infrastructure projects whether existing or new, must include comprehensive environmental studies to determine the impact on air quality, human health and historic resources.

What is a "heritage" or "culture" waterfront resource? Why don't you allow the local inhabitants do what they please with their own land?

Looks to me like you're trying to eradicate our current culture and heritage and substitute redistribution of wealth.

The protection of private property, the protection of individual freedoms.

Preserve the Founding Constitution and values that has worked well for over 230-years under God. Stop the Socialism movement.

What a bunch of bull shit and double talk....

If you don't have wealth creation (and this DOES NOT mean UB and the "Eds and Meds" complex, which consume wealth, with possible dent social benefits), all we have is a steadily impoverishing museum of a region, dependent on the "kindness" of Strangers on Wall Street. And in general, those leading the Wall St. effort tend to be or are psychopathic, with a zero empathy quotient. Dependence on them is not a wise idea...

("protect" means different things, based on an individual's value system ...protect to return as much heavy industry as possible, contrarian to many economies?... protect all vestiges of heritage as different sentinels of various points in time?... or inventory, and decide to preserve, renovate, adapt, or demolish.

And promote as tourist destinations

Shouldn't "culture" be "cultural"?
Overarching Theme: Invest in and connect our parks

Original Value Statement:
Maintain, improve, and connect our parks, recreation, and open space.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Maintain, improve, expand and connect our parks, trails and greenways, waterfronts, recreation areas, and open spaces for a wide range of users, to protect the environment, attract visitors, and grow the economy.

Summary of Feedback:
As noted above, reference to waterfront has been added here, as has specific emphasis on trails and greenways. Broader language on the purpose and intent for our parks and open spaces is also included.

Other things to think about:
- Accessibility and multi-use are important characteristics.
- Connecting parks to cities as well as each other is important.
- The Niagara Greenway needs support.
- Recreational and transportation routes should be coordinated.

Comments:

Erie County

- Expand our parks. Not just protect or maintain. We don’t have enough.
- We could learn something from New York City – make our parks smaller. Smaller parks are safer and better distributed around the city.
- Trails and roads to connect to parks – like in Anchorage, AK.
- Trails should be accessible and multi-use. They should accommodate horse, seniors, the disabled – everybody.
- Support the Niagara Greenway.
- Add the word “restore.”
- Connect urban interior to state parks.
- Needs trails.
- Integrate park-like qualities in urban areas.
- Need to think about health connection with parks.
- Include vacant lot and brownfield opportunities.

Niagara County
- What does it mean to connect parks?
- Maybe we should be talking about how to “right-size” parks rather than expand them.
- Maybe eliminate the reference to connecting parks. It scares people.
- If we’re going after money from HUD it needs to be with no strings attached. There are usually a lot of strings attached.
- Put in the justification under the U.S. Constitution for whatever you do and exempt us from the application of international law.
- Think of new ways to generate revenue and prevent parkland from being sold off.
- Maybe we can define “connect” better and stay away from eminent domain. But it’s important that people can ride their bike or walk from lake to lake and from one place to another.
- The park at the falls is a reserve and the second largest in NYS after central park. We go there to get away, not to hear rock concerts.
- Add “reclaim” to the statement
- Better integrate parks into our communities.
- Use parks to their full potential, but in the right way.
- “Integrate” instead of “connect.”

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL
- Olmsted Parks should be imagined as more of an economic development opportunity than they already are.
- Niagara Falls is perhaps our greatest regional asset, yet it is notably missing.
- Consideration of new green space
- Rails-to-trails, particularly for connecting rural areas with other parts of our region, are a strategy we need to continue to pursue.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
- Promote healthy living through parks and recreation.
- What about waterfront development?
- The waterfront goes here as a theme, too.
- What about private recreation uses? (ex. Ski slopes)
- Let’s say we should “enhance” rather than “improve” our parks, etc. It’s a stronger term.
- Prefer the use of “provide for” parks language instead of maintain. Maintain sounds like we are keeping the status quo.
- Say we should “develop” parks and recreational assets mean we want to add more – like the Niagara Greenway.
- Differentiate between regional and local opportunities. Regional = connect.
Online

- Emphasize parks and recreation as an economic driver.
- Without exception, the regions that are attracting the most creative educated workforce are those that have world-class park and recreation resources. "Maintain" creates an image of contentment with what we already have. Consider using something bold and exciting like "A region focused on exploring and developing its parks and recreation resources into world-class destinations that exceeds the visitor's expectations".
- Municipalities should look for opportunities to co-sponsor parks, recreation, dog parks, etc.
- This should include planting of trees in empty city lots to help reduce our carbon footprint.
- Integrate recreation networks with daily live/transportation routes.
- At the cost of under-managing some of its major parks, maybe more attention should be paid the establishment AND monitoring of micro-parks throughout the region. These provide character as well as tangible neighborhood benefits, and make the urban environment more attractive for living and investment.
- The improvement and connection of our parks, recreation areas, and open spaces must be maintained in order to be sustainable.
- Word cloud additions including restore, engage, invest, promote, connected, place making, diverse, year round.
- Well god damn, finally a mission statement that isn't loaded with buzzwords. Still, WHY do you want to preserve these things? For the enjoyment of the local populace? To protect wildlife? To use as an excuse to raise taxes?
- the protection of private property. the protection of individual freedoms.
- Just maintain at low cost.
- "Connect sounds like greenway linear systems but access could be by stream dock options, bike, transit, car, etc. Access doesn't have to be by a green connection which reduces the viability of smaller neighborhoods and hamlets, and the unique character experiences within them... Some areas are too unique, passive, and meant to be respites from a constant influx of short term pass through users targeting another green space.
- Use available railroad right-of-ways to create a new emerald greenway web and connect parks and recreation areas.
Overarching Theme: Planning Together

Original Value Statement:
Foster collaboration, coordination, and strong implementation, and plan with an engaged public.

Revised Value Statement based on Feedback
Foster collaboration, coordination, and strong implementation, and share information widely, educate broadly, and plan with a diverse and engaged public including not-for-profit and community-based organizations, public bodies, and citizens in general.

Summary of Feedback:
Many people talked about the importance of promoting diversity in all of the processes that help shape our region. Specific reference was made to those that should be included. Emphasis on education and information sharing was also added.

Other things to think about:
- Electronic and social media are an important element.
- Extend the discussion to include Canada.
- Accentuate the positive – make “Lake Belt” not “Rust Belt.”
- Important to reach minorities, underserved populations.
- Use technology to illustrate alternative future scenarios and enhance public discussion.
Comments:

Erie County

- Public education is a key part of the public planning process.
- Plan with the general public, yes, but also work with public bodies – planning boards, town councils, etc. – the people who have much of the power to implement plans.
- Extend the discussion to Canada.
- Non-profits don’t have a seat at the table. They represent social capital to be tapped and voices to be heard.
- Engage CBO’s. They are a link to the grassroots. They are the conduit to share expert knowledge with the grassroots and for grassroots knowledge to reach the experts.
- Communication – There needs to be a better cross section, broader population reached.
- Add “diversity.”
- Add “transparency.”
- Engage the public AND politicians.

Niagara County

- Thanks for doing this. I liked hearing different views and I learned a lot.
- Strong implementation sounds like government coercion. We need to protect private property rights.
- I don’t think 60 people here is planning with an engaged public. We need a much broader process. We need to have referenda so that everyone gets to vote on what gets proposed.
- Voters don’t want to delegate their powers. Sessions like these don’t balance out the influence that the Business Council has.
- Where does education fall into this process? It’s so important to the future of our region.
- Plan with an “engaged and diverse public.”
- Minority opinions create tension and the atmosphere is unfortunate at a meeting like this.
- Michael Silver from APA (American Planning Association) said “planners, show your value.” Planners need to educate the public. It’s important to have collaboration and the government needs to help. APA needs to get the word out.
- City council members aren’t educated about issues when they take their seat. They just come in and act on their own agendas.

PRIVATE SECTOR COUNCIL

- While it is important to move forward with community support and inclusivity in decision-making, we can’t let small groups have veto power over the progress of our region
- We need to do more, and talk about things less.
- Planning like One Region Forward needs to have more teeth than it currently does.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

- We are the ambassadors of the work we do collaboratively. Let’s be careful of the language we use (e.g. “population loss” draws attention away from the positive story we want to tell”.
- Let’s talk about “Lake Belt” instead of “Rust Belt.” It’s a matter of how we choose to identify ourselves.
- What does strong implementation mean? Either we do it or we don’t.
And explore better ways to engage the general public, especially the underserved.

Offer incentives for municipality joint efforts both to the local governments and the entrepreneurs.

I think educating the public should be included here...we can engage all we want, but if the public does not grasp important issues and why they are important, then feedback will be uninformed and just noise.

Home rule makes this difficult, but we must figure out a way to do it.

Opportunities to stick my spade in the dirt, like this one, are key. I think the use of electronic communication is a key to keeping the group informed, active, and useful.

Needs to be more specific with regards to the means by which public input is considered and the degree of direct involvement opportunities.

Collaboration, coordination, and implementation of any plan must include an engaged public that has been kept informed and had its opinions acknowledged.

This totally misses the mark because, in the current day, organizations and politicians at a non-local level don't care about what the people think. If you want to be helpful, encourage planning and power at the level of local government.

Stress liberty, property rights and individual initiative instead of utopian strategies aimed at mass misery.

The protection of private property, the protection of individual freedoms.

It will only work if the public is properly and honestly informed by disallowing biased media input.

We the People, will make the decisions, you just do what we tell you to do and no more.

Given current political, social and economic power disparities in the region, extremely improbable at best.

More meaningless drivel designed to soothe when outrage is more appropriate...

Recognizing the value of accommodating building for some who just want to be left alone, and not be a social cog.

Engage with interactive video simulation of development impacts potentially resulting from alternative scenarios (cause-effect on tax base, land usage, infrastructure maintenance, energy consumption, etc.)

Need for visionary leadership.
CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK
FROM EVENTS ACROSS OUR REGION TO-DATE

CITIZENS ENGAGED IN THE COMMUNITY

WHERE WE’VE BEEN AND WHAT WE’VE HEARD

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK FROM EVENTS ACROSS OUR REGION TO-DATE
Over the past few months, One Region Forward has reached out to citizens in Buffalo Niagara to talk about how we can work together toward a more sustainable region. We’ve visited art festivals, food festivals, conferences, farmers markets and other events from Springville to Lewiston. At each event we asked people to tell us what they think sustainability means. Reports from each event are linked here. What follows is a brief summary of what people had to say. It’s not a scientific survey, but it is an indication about what some people in our community are thinking about.

What’s most important?

At many of the outreach events, we asked people to say what they think is the most important thing we should be doing to make our region more sustainable over the years to come and we gave them four main choices. More than 700 responded. This is how they answered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinvest in Communities (226)</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand Transportation Options (225)</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow More Food (135)</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit Fossil Fuels (107)</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments (19)</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses (712)</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things to change

We also gave people an open-ended opportunity to say what they would change about their community to make it more sustainable. We’ve sorted those responses by topic with the frequency of comment for the big headings in brackets [99] and the sub-headings in parentheses (11).

- **Expanding transportation options** [72] including expanded bike lanes and paths (14), improved public transit service (11), extensions of Metro Rail (8) including to UB North Campus (2) and Walden Galleria (2) and bus rapid transit (2), redesigning or removing highway infrastructure like the
Skyway, I-190 and Kensington Expressway (5), promoting “green transportation” (3) and inter-city high speed rail (3).

- **Improving housing and neighborhoods [45]** including promoting walkable communities (11), promoting housing rehab (6), reusing buildings (6), ensuring housing affordability (5), building new housing (3), stopping housing demolition (3), and revitalizing neighborhoods in general (3).

- **Better access to food [34]** including community gardens (10), better access to grocery stores (5), urban farming (4), composting (4), and farmers markets (2).

- **Improving education [34]** in general (9) and through the expansion of places for youth to go and activities for them to do (11). Also mentioned was the need to promote attendance (2), education for sustainability (2), job training (2), and better funding (2).

- **More effective government [25]** especially broader participation in planning and decision-making (6), a more regional perspective (5), and including government consolidation (2), reform of the economic development process (2), greater “transparency” (1), responsiveness (1), and leadership (1).

- **Renewable energy and conservation [19]** including solar (6), wind (2), other renewables (3), conservation (3), and with a ban on hydraulic fracturing (2).

- **Economic development and jobs [18]** in general (5) and through investment in local firms and “buy local” efforts (4).

- **Better parks [14]** in general (8) and identifying the need for dog parks (4).

- **Protecting our water [14]** in general (8) and protecting water sources from contamination (4) as well as promoting storm water management through the use of rain barrels (2).

- **Expanding recycling [14]** in general (9) and by eliminating disposable products (3) and fighting litter (2).

- **Combatting sprawl [8]** by limiting development on the periphery (4) and promoting development of the city (3).

Other comments referred to the value of arts and culture in the community (5), development for downtown Buffalo (4), a call for lower taxes (3) and concern over access to health care (2).

**Things to keep**

We also asked people to say what they think are the most important things to save or preserve toward making a more sustainable region in the 21st century. There were a total of 99 responses.

- **Parks [21]** in general (15) as well as nature preserves (3), trees (2), and green grass.

- **Architecture [12]** including historic buildings (5) and especially grain elevators (5), historic housing, and Central Terminal.
- **Gardens [10]** including community gardens (2), the garden walk (2), composting, farmers markets, urban farms, farmland, and farm shares.
- **Neighborhoods [9]** especially walkable neighborhoods (4) on the East Side and on Lafayette Avenue.
- **Waterfronts [7].**
- **The Arts [6]** in general (2), arts funding (2), and art festivals (2).
- **People [6]**, the community, its diversity, and innovation.
- **Bike lanes [5].**
- **Institutions [5]** like museums, the zoo, and schools.
- **Water [4].**

Other things mentioned were “fun things”, transit, wind turbines, computerized traffic signals, Darien Lake, downtown living, “Made in USA,” old windows, and the “livable planet.”
One Region Forward

Working Teams Update
November 2013

More than a hundred local subject matter experts and key stakeholders have been working since April to develop the substance of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

They were organized to focus on topics of land use and development, housing and neighborhoods, transportation and mobility, climate change action, and food access and justice.

They have taken the community vision and values reviewed at our last Community Congresses and turned them into goals for each of their subject areas.

Now they are working to develop specific strategies and action items to put those goals – and hence the vision and values – into action.

Much work remains to be done to specify the “who” and the “how” of implementation as well as the “what.” But we can say now a little bit about where they are headed.

The Land Use and Development working team is looking for ways to:

- **Create a regional body** that can lead the implementation of a sustainability plan and other measures through currently available powers and authorities, and through education and provision of technical assistance, while respecting the home rule traditions of New York State and the autonomy of each county and the municipalities within.

- **Build support for planning** through public engagement, reaching more diverse stakeholders, and through the educational and technical assistance functions noted above, as well as by making the case for the economic, environmental, and social benefits of regional planning.

- **Manage the cost of public services** such as water, sewer, transportation infrastructure and services, as well as police, fire, and education service through improved finance, management and planning of those functions, typically on a broader basis than now occurs.

- **Redesign the tax structure** to promote land use goals by removing perverse incentives to develop rural land, extend public infrastructure, and subsidize the production of new built space, while maintaining healthy incentives to redevelop brownfields, adaptively reuse existing buildings, and promote preservation of historic buildings.

- **Establish mechanisms to manage devalued properties**, neighborhoods and districts, building on the new land bank law, finding funding for its operations, expanding its purview to other jurisdictions, and completing the baseline inventory needed for strategic planning.

- **Protect and restore natural places**, conducting an inventory of farmland, wetlands, forest lands and others worthy of protection, quantifying the environmental services they provide, and providing incentives to ensure their continued survival.
Plan at the watershed scale considering both land and water use and the impacts of development on wildlife habitat and corridors, farmland, water quality, and other forms of “natural capital” while understanding that doing this work requires regulatory authority.

The Housing and Neighborhoods working team is looking for ways to:

- **Provide resources for informed decision-making** including:
  - Assessing and addressing supply against demand by housing type and neighborhood,
  - Developing a Regional Property Information System including open source data on neighborhoods and municipalities, and
  - Developing a tool box for municipalities, developers, non-profits and residents to effectively design and produce sustainable housing types and neighborhoods.

- **Anticipate, accommodate and embrace demographic shifts** by:
  - Diversifying housing types (townhouses, lofts, and “mingles”) and forms of tenure (condos, co-ops, co-housing, rentals) in mixed use neighborhoods at a variety of price points.
  - Developing and deploying housing models to accommodate people with special needs by coordinating design, neighborhood context, supportive services, and other programming.
  - Identifying and recruiting demographic groups that might provide impetus for focused neighborhood revitalization.

- **Target neighborhoods based on their strategic assets** by:
  - Emphasizing community based planning with residents and stakeholders to maximize participation, leverage diffuse resources, and focus on quality of life improvements;
  - Focusing public investments in neighborhoods with existing infrastructure, community anchors, viable fabric, and active capacity to spur private investment;
  - Designing “better not bigger” strategies for neighborhoods where strategic assets are missing and normal property markets have ceased to function, and;
  - Connecting public policy and investment priorities to community goals to create “complete communities” with a range of accessible services and amenities.

- **Improve the housing support and delivery system** by:
  - Creating flexible and accessible assistance to remove stigma and reluctance to participate in housing programs;
  - Developing better opportunities/ supports/ protection for renters and home buyers, particularly from traditionally vulnerable groups;
  - Reconsidering the scope and scale of the housing support and delivery system to increase region-wide capacity while remaining responsive to community context;
  - Enhancing the code enforcement system and connecting it to existing educational and support programs.

The Transportation and Mobility working team is looking for ways to:
- Develop a regional “hub and corridor” transportation system in which land uses and investments in transportation infrastructure are coordinated to provide multi-modal options for mobility and energy efficiency and to promote transit oriented development schemes.

- Create innovative financing mechanisms to free needed capital for investments in strategic infrastructure and establish programs for service sharing across departments/ non-profits/private sector to maximize efficiency in the provision of transportation services.

- Connect to national and bi-national freight and passenger rail systems, taking advantage of Buffalo’s geographic location at the US-Canada border, leveraging strategic strengths in logistics and transportation documentation, providing market advantage to regionally-based firms, and creating an international trade gateway that connects road, rail, air and water-borne modes of transportation.

- Establish transportation management associations as a means for multi-party collaboration (firms, institutions, governments) to promote transportation alternatives, manage transport demand, foster transit oriented development, coordinate provision of parking, and finance investments in facilities in services to reduce single-occupancy commuting.

The Climate Change Action working team is looking for ways to:

- Retrofit existing buildings for energy efficiency, especially government buildings and school facilities, but also private homes, by continuing and strengthening tax incentives, finance mechanisms (e.g. Property Assessed Clean Energy and on-bill financing), and subsidies to advance insulation, window replacement, smart controls, and other building energy saving measures.

- Streamline permitting for alternative energy production and alternative fuel vehicles to speed the propagation of distributed wind and solar power for homes and businesses and the use of plug-in electric vehicles for fleets and individuals. Public education to explain the benefits and overcome opposition is crucial.

- Establish market rules to promote distributed alternative energy production, setting protocols and prices for the sale of “green” energy back to the grid – like the Feed-In Tariff that has pushed alternative production in Canada.

- Strengthen the New York renewable portfolio standard to push adoption of wind, solar, geo-thermal and other renewable forms of energy by requiring state and local governments an increasing share of energy from those sources.

- Find a way to price carbon emissions either through a direct tax on carbon or market mechanisms that charge users for carbon emissions or through carbon offsets linked to real investments in alternative energy production (Renewable Energy Credits) or carbon sequestration (e.g. reforestation).

- Phase out coal-fired electric generation in a timely, orderly way, considering the need to compensate for loss of employment and loss of local revenue and the relative costs and benefits of other fossil fuels or green alternatives.
- **Encourage climate action planning** by local governments, major institutions, and others as a means to measure and reduce carbon emissions by identifying the sources of emissions, potential conservation and efficiency measures, green energy replacement options, and other measures.

- **Improve electricity transmission and storage** to promote the propagation of distributed renewable energy production and make the transmission process more efficient.

- **Conduct community risk assessment and preparedness planning** to anticipate responses to threats of extreme weather events, changes in lake levels, migration of plant species, impacts to agriculture, and other negative effects of climate change.

The **Food Access and Justice** working team is looking for ways to:

- **Protect** our current and potential **farmland** from development pressures, economic decline, and environmental misuse and keep our farms farming.

- Adopt agricultural practices that **reduce the consumption** of water, energy, and chemical inputs in the growing process.

- Support all forms and scales of **food production in urban areas**.

- Connect local growers to the full range of local opportunities to **market and distribute** their products.

- Strengthen the **economic viability of the local food system** so that local producers, processors, and distributors are competitive within the global market.

- Attract and support a **new generation of workers** to careers in food production, processing, and distribution to ensure a robust and consistent food system workforce.

- **Heighten public awareness** of local food production, processing, and distribution.

- Create a regional **culture that values healthy eating** and a strong local food economy.

- Enhance opportunity for all individuals in all communities to **obtain healthy foods**.