Goals and Strategies

Revisions to Goals:
“Corridors” added to goal number 2.
“Funding” added to goal 5 and bolding corrected. Not just “financing.”

Revisions to Strategies:
Add create regional Transportation Management Association... to let employers and commuters know about the various transportation choices that are available and programs that can help make the journey to work and other trips more affordable.

- Perhaps #4 should ender the responsibility of GBNRTC. (Justin Imiola)

Getting to a hub and corridor system:
1. Focus on the design piece.
2. TOD as a crucial element
3. Education and advocacy for TOD -- Save those for later
4. Focus on design today
5. Best practices
TOD doesn’t look the same everywhere. Suburban applications, too. Not just Metro Rail.

Wendel working on TOD projects in Virginia/DC suburbs. Replacing big parking lots with structured parking, multi-family housing, and retail and integrating bus transfer points. (Leydecker)

Central Park Plaza is a potential TOD project site. Also LaSalle. (Hovey)

Housing development opportunities. (Gifford)

People worried that BRT wouldn’t attract development – that it wouldn’t be permanent enough. That hasn’t turned out to be true. TOD transit doesn’t need to be fixed rail. (Leydecker)

Discussion:

I’ll start with Williamsville. NFTA park and ride. Paladino paid $3million to clear Stereo Advantage to build hotel condo. Lancaster, Hamburg, etc. have similar nuclei around which to build TOD. Lancaster is just waiting for something to add density. Hamburg, Orchard Park, are prime spots, too. (Kulpa)

They’re already there. They have TOD. Just build on it. Park and ride behind the airport on an airport Metro Rail line. Build on existing development. TOD would be a natural. (Gifford)

I would worry about trying to build new communities... if we haven’t already integrated existing communities into TOD schemes. (Kulpa)

The sustainability thrust of this effort calls for building in existing communities... we shouldn’t build out first. (Leydecker)

If you look at Amherst between the two campuses – declining retail plazas – available parking is ready to convert to new uses – build density – build TOD in those corridors. In DC they looked to do infill around existing stations but also in the bigger vacant areas to avoid displacing the existing single family stock. Key issue is to connect to bus transfer points. (Leydecker)

FTA changed a rule to allow investments in pedestrian and bike facilities within one mile of transit stations. (Booth)

Niagara Falls is working to create density around its rail station and the Custom House. It’s an important part of this process. They have potential... (Leydecker)

If all we did was create BRT in major radials we would hit a lot of these population centers. The corridors were long-established. It shouldn’t be rocket science. If you go out Broadway you connect Downtown, East Side, Depew and Lancaster. (Kulpa)

It’s only eight miles from DT to Lancaster. But Broadway for bikes is very difficult. How do we use paint to reallocate the space? How about center turning lane and bike lane. The Seattle allocation of roadway space is different – buses stop in the travel lane, leaving bikes to curb lane. (Booth)
- TOD was supposed to happen with LRT. But the business community and others didn’t take advantage, just decided to live with it. We need a commitment to a plan. What’s been done well was kind of accidental. (Gifford)

- Identifying corridors... using stations. Sometimes it’s harder to do than you would think. (Leydecker)

- We have low cost options and high cost options. High cost options include Allen Hospital and Erie Canal Harbor. NFTA staff has been working very hard on TOD plans for those sites. But we can “tier” them. Williamsville the real estate market is hot. Lancaster isn’t ready. Incentives are needed – not just tax structure but a little pot of money. Focus on the hot spots. (Kempner)

- Amherst station and Central Park Plaza is crucial opportunity. Don’t foreclose future opportunities by doing the wrong thing now. (Hovey)

- Parkside Community Association is asking for a station area study for Amherst Street Station. But there’s a limit of public sector resources for TOD in every spot. (Kempner)

- What about rural and small town? Some of those areas are well set up for TOD. (Dixon)

- Access to day care is a big issue. East Side residents going to West Side for child care. Then up to school. It’s very difficult. We could centralize transportation around community centers. (Todd)

- John Norquist (head of the Congress for the New Urbanism and former Mayor of Milwaukee) tells us TOD began to “just happen” after the highway infrastructure obstructions were removed. Multiplier effect followed. If the infrastructure is right the opportunities will be there and developers will come along. You have to find a way to meet needs of other than upper income constituencies. Before Main Place was built there were lots of little businesses there. Offer a niche for small businesses. (Gifford)

- On Long Island they have found a way to do TOD and infill around village centers but without changing the overall character of the area. (Leydecker)

- Prioritize implementation for TOD to build the most ridership. Leverage the biggest catchment areas. (Booth)

- In NF they are continuing to repurpose the north end. Rte. 31, Niagara, NCC, are being repurposed for manufacturing. (Leydecker)

- Downtown NT and City of Tonawanda have managed to hold on through bad times. There’s been some reinvestment along the canal. They don’t get mentioned enough. (Kulpa)

- I keep telling the Mayor of NF that he’s going to get a lot of this accomplished and Buffalo will have to catch up because they are jealous. (Gifford)

- New housing structures in Lockport. They get left out of the discussion. (Todd)
- I-990 is an important connection. Lockport is a population center. (Leydecker)

- Rural Niagara Transit... work with them to serve more riders. (Todd)

- Lockport does have the Transit North Master Plan looking at how to do the conversion of big box to community center. (Leydecker)

- Lockport opens up the “can of worms” that is Transit Road. It is the longest north south connector. Do you try to do something with transit out there and incentivize sprawl? Or do you build transit toward the center and hope to draw development away from Transit Road. (Kulpa)

- I think you let it die. (Gifford)

- But the way it is constructed it doesn’t die. If you don’t fix it... it will continue on. (Kulpa)

- Preserve long term options. Something else might happen in 50 years. (Gifford)

- We need to think about who really needs help. We can help more people based in rural areas if we can drive them to a bus line rather than drive them to where they need to go. (O’Neill)

- People don’t know what kind of services are available for transit. Some people think the Metro Rail was shut down. Some people don’t think transit is important. (Kempner)

- The senior population is going to increase. More and more won’t be able to drive. People don’t know what to do anymore. They don’t know where a bus line is. They don’t know rural transit exists. (O’Neill)

- We need to address timing issues. The biggest problem is that intermodal connections increase travel time. Need to densify options or improve connections – need to set some time goals. Focus on getting people there quick. (Kulpa)

- We need to be able to sell this. Need data on travel time, return on investment, health outcomes, etc. Need to counteract the local talking point that “you can get anywhere in twenty minutes.” (Booth)

- We won’t be able to provide high quality transit service to everyone. TOD developments are the key to matching ridership to service. (Leydecker)

- We need to find the breaking point between “I can’t afford a car” and “I have a car but I’d rather not.” We need to be known for “you can get there in 20 minutes by transit” or whatever that number is. (Schmarder)

- We should learn something from school bus systems. They deliver door to door every day. What does that system have? Meeting the peak demand times. Maybe not door to door but every couple of blocks. (Kulpa)
- My child’s bus time was 7:05 and school starts at 8:05. It’s easier for all to drop her off. People who use the school buses do so because they have to. (Schmarder)

- BPS contracts with NFTA for older grades. (Kempner)

- Schools are financed differently from transit (one has a dedicated source of funding). (Gifford)

- We need research on financing of highway vs. transit. Need local government to support more robust transit system. Need to see the financial advantages. Local governments pay a fraction of cost of new roads. Need data to decide if it is worth it in the long run. We need people to understand public transit needs local dollars to operate. (Gifford)

- Facts and figures are good, but you need community buy-in to get political buy-in. (Schmarder)

- DOT is the missing player, the 800 pound gorilla. They won’t let us do what we need to do because it will affect level of service. Need to change the way they evaluate LOS. Current goal is to maintain or improve automobile LOS. (Booth).

- Any federal level funded needs to consider multi-modal LOS. (Leydecker)

- I have an announcement. Sat. Sept. 14 at Montante. Conference by Citizens for Rapid Transit. Zemsky, Whelan, Morse, Croce. (Gifford)

- One of our projects is to connect national/bi-national freight – plan for international gateway for trade and commerce: rail and highway and warehouse and handling. Logistics is an economic development driver. (Leydecker)

- Two role models for international trade gateway – Smart Port in KC and Center Port in Winnipeg. Combined air, road, and rail. We’ve had plans before. Nothing new in this. But time to act. (Ampuja)

- Bethlehem Steel site, NF air base, things happening. Time to take advantage. (Leydecker)

- COD – cargo oriented development – also referred to freight villages could be a significant tool for economic development. We will provide more information and data on this at the next meeting. (Dixon)

- goDCgo is a Transportation Management Association (TMA) http://www.godcgo.com/
  A lot of micro campuses – Boston, etc. – Transportation Management Association – leads to cooperation. BNMC has one with DOT, GBNRTC, NYSERDA, others. (Hamann Burney)

- Discussion of BNMC TMA would be helpful to the group. Kempner.

Where do you consider our current hubs in the region to be located?

- 1. Niagara Square for access to downtown Buffalo, Elmwood, and the waterfront.
- 2. Casino/Falls in Niagara Falls.
- 3. Main Street Williamsville (Justin Imiola)
Commercial hubs bring economic development - BNIA, NFIA, rail, Port of Buffalo, Peace Bridge, and their road connection to local logistics centers in the region. This presentation ignores the needs of Cattaraugus County - safe and fuel efficient highway connection for improved public transportation. 

(Meg Lauerman)

What structures and/or activities take place there which makes it a transportation hub?

- 1. Government, Shopping & Food, Jobs, Recreation
- 2. Parks, Casino, Dining
- 3. Shopping, Dining, Parks, Access to Transit, University at Buffalo, Connects Amherst, Cheektowaga, and Buffalo (Justin Imiola)

While I admire the plans for urban workers, the movement of goods brings jobs. We need connection to the south- an efficient interstate connection to Pittsburgh's rail hub will connect Buffalo to the entire nation. (Meg Lauerman)

What else should be located there to strengthen this hub?

- More retail and attractions +Shopping +Museums +Art Galleries +Public Events +Mini Parks to Walk Through (Justin Imiola)

To strengthen the hubs, complete Route 219 to Salamanca, complete the Peace Bridge project, and strengthen the Port of Buffalo and air connections. Canada is moving forward on the NGTA project to improve access within the Golden Horseshoe, we need to build to the south- WNY is the only region of New York which lacks southern access. (Meg Lauerman)

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Tell us if you think there is anything missing. Are there any pieces of research we are missing?

- This plan, ignores Goal #4- Invest in infrastructure to facilitate efficient connections to national, bi-national and global freight and passenger rail service that will provide both economic and environmental benefits to the region. Focus on commercial infrastructure to bring jobs, then follow with efficient and sustainable access to those jobs. (Meg Lauerman)

How could we best educate people about HUB & Corridor Systems?

- Hold public meetings, Information tables at events , Target universities and their students and Marketing on Buses and Trains (Justin Imiola)