



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 18
November 1, 2013, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Thomas R. Beecher, Jr. Innovation Center
640 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY

In attendance: Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Bill Parke (OSP), Hal Morse (GBNRTC), Bradshaw Hovey (UDP), Kelly Dixon (GBNRTC), Laura Smith (BNP), Brenda Stynes (UBRI), Bart Roberts (UBRI), Anthony Armstrong (LISC), Jennifer Gregory (ESD), Tyra Johnson (Daemen / Blue Sky Design Supply), Jill Spisiak Jedlicka (BNR), Steven J. Ricca (Jaekle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP), Glenn B. Nellis (Town of Eden), Ryan McPherson (Western New York Environmental Alliance), Emily Gibson (UBRI), Dan Leonard (BNP), Deanna Rose (NFTA), Mike Riegel (Belmont Housing Resources), Lawrence Cook (The John R. Oishei Foundation), Tom Dearing (Erie County Department of Environment and Planning), Frank Billittier (NYS Department of Transportation), Bill Smith (Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus).

1.) Welcome & Introductions

- Hal Morse welcomed the steering committee members and thanked BNMC for hosting.

2.) 2013 Community Congresses

- a. Revised presentation for group feedback (see PPT):
 - **Roberts:** Shared updated presentation to be shown participants at the Community Congresses and included descriptions on how feedback from the steering committee members shaped revisions to the activity. Major changes include:
 - We're now allowing people to circle the communities they want to see preserved with the orange marker
 - Based on feedback from the Steering Committee, trying to be more specific and clear about what it means exactly to put a chip down
 - Trying to make slides more basic and contain more bulleted information
 - Providing participants with a series of handouts that describe the game in more detail
 - Emphasizing the map isn't supposed to look pretty-can be messy if that's necessary to convey the group's vision. Also emphasizing that it's a self-guided activity, facilitators are just there to explain the rules. In addition, set some ground rules (e.g. be courteous, be open to compromising).

Additional comments and questions:

- **Stynes:** The handouts about the game that you all have are draft documents. We're in the process of finalizing them.
- **Dixon:** This timeline is very helpful for the facilitators to keep people on track towards finishing the game.
- **Jedlicka:** Have there been training sessions for facilitators?



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- **Roberts:** We have had 3 training sessions. Major focus has been on explaining the rules of the game to them, because their primary role is to help participants express their vision effectively through the game. There are still people that need to be trained though. A few of the steering committee members are coming to 1RF after this meeting for a training. If you know of anyone that would be interested in being a facilitator, please let us know. I am going to meet with some people next week.
- **Ricca:** I think the team has done a great job of addressing the issues with the game that came up during the last scenario planning trial run.
- **Roberts:** It's a lot to ask people to do for this game but we became hopeful that the public is willing and able to do this exercise after the trial run we had with non-planners. Most of the participants were engaged and had fun.
- **McPherson:** I think that this scenario planning is a phenomenal way to engage people and I'm optimistic about its impact
- **Parke:** It's important to emphasize during the game that this is a visioning rather than a planning or zoning exercise. It makes participants realize that they don't have to mark up the map in a precise way. They just have to convey the broad image that they want for the region.
- **Roberts:** It's also important to emphasize this because it conveys to planning and zoning board members that 1RF is not attempting to override their policies, it's just trying to determine the public's vision for our region.
- **Bidell:** Planning agencies could find it useful to know the public's vision for Buffalo Niagara.
- **Bidell:** How will we conclude the meeting? Will there be a report-out from the groups or a discussion of next steps?
- **Roberts:** Figuring that out. Report-out is important to do but it might take too long if we have a lot of people at the events.
- **Bidell:** Maybe we just want to display the maps at the end of the meeting but not discuss them.
- **Bidell:** How does each of these metrics play out if we follow our ideal scenario?
- **Roberts:** At the next round of community congress meetings we will consolidate maps into 3/4 types and analyze them for their performance on these metrics and additional ones. So we will have that information after the scenario planning exercise.
- **McPherson:** Metrics are great because they communicate that there's a cost to continuing to develop the way that we have been
- **Parke:** How you close this discussion is a key issue that we should spend time on. We want people to feel good, even if they don't get what they want. If they don't feel good, this will encourage them to follow up in a less organized fashion.



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- **Smith:** How does all of this work blend with the work of the working groups? What if the scenarios produced don't align with the ideas of the working groups that have already been developed?
- **Leonard:** If we're giving people stats about what happens when we continue to develop the way that we have been then they will probably produce scenarios that align with the ideas of the working groups
- **McPherson:** Might want to conclude with the idea that people have engaged in an important process (e.g. you had differences but you came together and determined an agreement)
- **Hovey:** We could try to capture what people wanted to say but couldn't at the end of the meeting. So just people feel like they were able to express themselves
- **Roberts:** Right after the meeting we'll put up pictures of the map and have a summary of the meeting. We'll also send out follow up emails. We've been thinking about how to conclude, but we haven't finalized anything because there are still many uncertainties. For example, if we still only have 20 people at East Aurora, we can have a full report out. But if we have much more than we won't be able to. We'll figure out how to conclude as we get closer to the event.
- **McPherson:** What's the press strategy? There's a great story here and a great opportunity for filming
- **Roberts:** We'll send out a press advisory the Monday before the first congress. We'll be making phone calls as well. We hope for TV to be there. If you have any connections though, please let us know. We agree that it's a visually exciting, unique subject that the media would want to film.
- **McPherson:** Should also encourage participants to post things on social media while they are at the meeting.
- **Gregory:** This would also make people feel like they have more ownership at the event
- **Smith:** BNP has a good relationship with the press. If you need help with that let me know.
- **Roberts:** Darren from UBRI will follow up with you that.
- **Jedlicka:** Should reach out to NPR
- **Roberts:** Any help that anyone can offer is really appreciated. We're working around the clock on getting the word out.
- **Jedlicka:** Who is the media contact?
- **McPherson:** Hal Morse
- **Hovey:** Bill, did you get TV coverage for the Green Code meetings?
- **Parke:** Yes but it was limited. There seem to be some media stations that frequently cover community events like the Buffalo Green Code workshops (e.g. YNN) and



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others that seem to do so less. You can't control it. You just have to be ready and responsive.

- **Stynes:** Channels 4 and 2 had coverage on some of the Green Code meetings
- **Roberts:** If you're organizations could repost our social media posts that would be great.
- **Jedlicka:** Willing to have a 30 minute phone call about media strategies that we've used if you're interested Bart

b. Status update on outreach efforts:

- **Roberts: As of 8:00 PM on October 31st, we can report on the following:**
 - 160 people have registered for the congresses. (Buffalo-75, Amherst-50, East Aurora-20, Lewiston-14, Lockport-8)
 - 53 different zip codes
 - 90+ orgs
 - 19 planning/zoning board members
 - 20 of our working team members
 - Only 5 steering committee members have signed up! We need you to come!
 - 37 volunteers, several steering committee members or staff members of their organizations
- We have over 60 partners we've been reaching out to spread the word to their contacts. Call this the "Hub and Spoke Model". Encouraging everyone to use the media toolkit on our website that contains a sample Press Release, flyers, and other outreach documents. We encourage you to forward this link to your media person. Also, feel free to share it with your personal contacts.
- We've taken out ads in all 9 Bee publications
- Next week focusing more on daily papers
- GRowWNY and Buffalo rising will have articles
- Working with Dan, Laura and Steve to get the word out to the private sector contingency
- **Parke:** How are comments being recorded during the scenario planning exercise and how do we know who made them?
- **Roberts:** People will visually display and write their comments on the map. We won't be able to tell who made the comments-just that they were made at a certain table.
- **Roberts:** Larry and the Mobile Safety net team have also helped get the word out on the street
- **Ricca:** Is there a promotional video?



- **Roberts:** We have one that was finished last night that we're going to put on the website.
- (Roberts then showed the video on youtube)
- **Dixon:** Will this video be placed in the toolkit?
- **Roberts:** Yes, we'll do that right after the meeting.
- **Stynes:** We'll have the video in multiple locations on the website
- **Ricca:** It would be easiest if we were sent the link, that we could just forward to our colleagues.
- **Roberts:** We'll do that. Also, the video is an abbreviated version of the video we'll be showing at the congresses that will have more data and storytelling.
- **Bidell:** Will that video be available to us before the congresses, so that we are all clear on the messaging?
- **Roberts:** Yes.

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

- **Armstrong:** The FHEA is one of the requirements of the HUD grant.
- We've formed an advisory committee that's met twice and is going to meet two more times. There was 18 people at the 1st meeting and a little less than that at the second meeting.
- One of FHEA tasks is "shared deposition"
- The committee has formed a working definition of equity based on other previous plans. We're trying to make the language accessible and readable to the average citizen.
- If you have any feedback for us, please let us know
- Want to work on this over the next few months. Want to wrap this up in February.
- We have been analyzing the numerous historic, current, and potentially future barriers to equity
- We have an outline of what the FHEA report will contain
- There is a possibility for converting this report to an "Analysis of Impediments" report but not at this time
- In regards to "racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty", have mapped out these areas. The darker the area on the map the higher the access opportunity. This isn't finalized but we're basically seeing a donut whole effect-concentrated areas around the cities and in the rural areas but nothing in the suburbs
- We still have to determine more of the causes of these areas of concentrated poverty.
- HUD has its own definitions for these indicators that we follow



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- In regards to “access to existing areas of opportunity”, has also has indicators to measure this.
- **Hovey:** What’s the difference between “job access” and “labor market engagement”?
- **Armstrong:** Accessibility refers to the ability of workers to travel to job centers and labor market engagement refers to things like unemployment. HUD requires that we use these metrics but we can develop other indicators to help tell the story of our region
- Opportunity indices-the higher the score, the better you're doing on that indicator.
- The FHEA is basically an effort to ensure smart and equitable growth simultaneously
- **Smith:** A lot of attention should be paid towards section 8 of the report (recommendations, next steps, and 1RF integration)
- **Armstrong:** I agree. We would like to get feedback from working groups about how the FHEA can align with their work. We’re going to bring this topic up again in mid-January. We will have a draft report by then. Trying to get public input as well through web polling. We’re also trying to leverage work that's already been done in this area (e.g. finegrained data from the mobile safety net team)
- **Smith:** Is there any community that is a good role model and displays the economic advantages of this type of work?
- **Armstrong:** Yes, we’re looking at them.

4.) Economics of Sustainability Event Update:

a. Chuck Marohn, Strong Towns Curbside Chat(December 12, 2013 at the Niagara Falls Conference Center)

- **Leonard:** Marohn is coming in on the 11th. Have the opportunity to go to dinner with him. On the 12th registration will begin at 8 am and the event starts at 8:30 am. He’s going to be talking about his thoughts on strong towns. He has a blog about this, how communities’ decisions have impacted their situations today, and how they can change this. He’s going to speak specifically about Buffalo Niagara. We’re going to publicize this event through BNP's outlets. Hopefully this will be a follow up event for those that got excited about yjr Community Congresses, since it will go into more detail about solutions.
- We haven’t had any registrations yet but the seating capacity is 200 so spread the word. We especially want public officials there.
- **Bidell:** We’ve sent memos to several public officials along with their clerks

b. Minicozzi ROI Study for Buffalo Niagara



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- **Leonard:** We are finalizing details for the ROI study with Joe Minicozzi that focuses on fiscal and economic metrics of development. Studies economic impacts of different development decisions (e.g. the impact of developing a Wal-Mart as opposed to a mixed use complex). He's going to give case studies in the Buffalo Niagara region. Ultimately we would like to provide an analysis toolkit to planning and zoning board officials that will allow them to make more informed decisions.

c. Spring 2014 1RF Access Event:

- We're going to have a transportation summit in complement with a 1RF access event that focuses on sustainability. The federal transportation bill is going to expire so we'll be talking about funding for transportation.
- **Smith:** CNU is coming this summer so we're trying to get the business community to go to CNU. Working with our marketing colleagues on that to develop a message that emphasizes the importance of sustainable development and how it helps business.
- **Ricca:** Laura, Dan, and I should set up a call about how we can help with this
- **Bidell:** Is there going to be a session about 1RF at CNU?
- **Smith:** No but maybe we can have a financing session.
- **Roberts:** Dean Shibley put together a proposal for a presentation about a broader story of planning in this region, rather than just 1RF, which might be more appealing to CNU
- **Smith:** Marohn and Minicozzi are presenting at CNU so maybe we can convince them to mention 1RF
- **Jedlicka:** What other kinds of metrics besides taxes are being used?
- **Smith:** Land used.
- **Jedlicka:** I would like to have a conversation offline about this.
- **Leonard:** Minicozzi is funded by the NRDC and NYSERDA, not 1RF. We're not sure if Marohn and Minicozzi will speak together, we just know that they'll both be there
- **Roberts:** The Smart Growth scorecard has a lot of metrics for environmental stewardship

5.) Implementation Discussion

Sitting Agenda Item

- **Ricca:** I agree that this mapping exercise should be about visioning. It also might be useful to figure out which municipal comprehensive plans haven't been reviewed after 5 years. Maybe we could send the results of 1RF to municipalities and gently suggest that they update their plans accordingly.
- **Smith:** I agree but I think that the push for municipalities should be stronger. After all, we don't want to make this plan and then have municipalities not follow it.



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- **Ricca:** We also have to recognize though that the municipalities don't have to follow this plan—we've got a home rule state and regional planning is an issue that gets politicized, so while I agree that we need to have a stick, it needs to be much smaller than the carrot. Also, maybe we could publish online which municipalities haven't updated their plans.
- **Bidell:** We did something similar for creating the Regional Framework. It's online.
- **Roberts:** Maybe we can put something online that's more user friendly and that's geared specifically towards this initiative. Also, we've done a thorough geocoding of every zoning law in the counties. Some counties have said that maybe that's not a good idea because the data we used could have human error or it might be outdated. But as long as we put a disclaimer on the data it could be useful to the public.
- **Dearing:** We have to be careful about shaming municipalities that haven't updated their plans because it's mostly a result of a lack of funding. In order to encourage localities to adopt the plan, we need to determine a financial incentive for the, to do this (e.g. a regional fund)
- **Nellis:** The theme of the current political process is “don't spend money unless you have to”, making updates to comprehensive plans difficult. Taxpayers don't want tax raises in property taxes.
- **Smith:** It could be useful to show case studies with specific numbers of localities that have adopted regional plans and the benefits they experienced as a result.
- **Bidell:** The Cleaner and Greener Communities Program provides state money for planning initiatives other than those tied to a LWRP. We should look into it.
- **Ricca:** The carrot should be funding. Canada has used federal funding to implement similar systems. We should convey the message that updating plans is a cost but it will result in a greater ROI and less burden on the taxpayer. Maybe we should provide information about how this is true, in addition to providing funding.
- **Roberts:** Another grantee in Chicago ensured that local planning agencies were implementing their plan by using HUD implementation dollars to support municipal plan updates in line with their regional vision.
- **Bidell:** Maybe we could get HUD dollars during the next funding round for implementation.
- **Roberts:** Not sure what Federal dollars will be available, but more and more, the message from various Federal agencies is that they support regional priority setting and want to support initiatives that are coordinated at the local level and aligned with regional planning.

6.) Good of the Order



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- **McPherson:** This Wednesday the WNYEA is bringing in Judith Enck, the EPA Region 2 Administrator for briefings about major environmental initiatives. Good opportunity to brief people about 1RF.
- **Bidell:** We need to make sure that we are tracking this ongoing discussion of implementation. Need a running list of major discussion themes.
- **Roberts:** We have some materials that you can take to give to other people. We have general flyers and bigger posters that are specific to certain Community Congress locations. We also have palm cards to pass out.
- **Stynes:** All of the flyers are also online in case you want to print them.
- **Jedlicka:** BNR just got a fund from the Oishei Foundation to do a study about the economic impact of a blue economy.
- **Dixon:** We are going to reschedule our next steering so that it is on Friday, December 13th from 9 am to 11 am. It is tentatively going to be at Riverkeeper.

7.) Adjournment