



**In attendance:** Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Bill Parke (OSP), Hal Morse (GBNRTC), Kelly Dixon (GBNRTC), Brenda Stynes (UBRI), Bart Roberts (UBRI), Bob Shibley (UBRI), Brian Conley (UBRI), Anthony Armstrong (Make Communities), Jennifer Gregory (ESD), Jill Spisiak Jedlicka (BNR), Glenn B. Nellis (Town of Eden), Ryan McPherson (Western New York Environmental Alliance), Emily Gibson (UBRI), Dan Leonard (BNP), Deanna Rose (NFTA), Darren Kempner (NFTA), Willie Dunn (Niagara Falls Housing Authority)

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- **H. Morse:** We are in the process of wrapping up our 2013 work and looking forward to starting our 2014 initiatives. To start off the meeting Bart Roberts will provide a recap of the scenario planning workshops.

**2. Community Congress Scenario Planning Workshops Recap and Initial results**

- **B. Roberts:**
  - Thank you to all of the Steering Committee members who participated.
  - The event was a success in terms of community participation. You'll see in the pamphlet that was passed out that we had the following turnout:
    - 98 participants at Amherst
    - 127 participants at Buffalo
    - 73 participants at East Aurora
    - 10 participants at Lockport
    - 42 participants at Niagara Falls
    - **Total:** 350 participants
    - 44 volunteers made these events possible.
  - Overall we are pleased with the amount of participation however we will not host another Friday night meeting in the future, due to the low turnout at Lockport
  - I received about a dozen emails from participants who said that the event was fun and educational
  - Some professional planners were able to count their participation towards continuing education credits.
  - Brian Conley of the UBRI will summarize the data results of the workshops
- **B. Conley:**
  - We haven't created scenarios from the 57 maps yet however we've begun to recognize some data trends that are included in the pamphlet, such as:
    - *Increase investment in urban areas:* 76% of the chips were placed in urban areas (this represents 95% of jobs and 87% of houses)



- *Limit sprawl:* Approximately a third of the maps contained what could be interpreted as an Urban Growth Boundary around the urbanized area
- *Increase village centers and traditional neighborhoods:* These were the most popular chips. Participants almost doubled the amounts of these chips by trading other chips in such as exurban chips. These were unpopular.
- *Green trails along the lake front*
  - The comments that were written on the maps are not included in this booklet however they have been recorded and can be viewed on our website, along with the maps. The content of that is being summarized.
  - We're going to communicate these results and have other groups play the scenario planning game in the future.
- **B. Roberts:**
  - We're going to encourage more workshops due to their popularity and also to reach more underrepresented groups that for various reasons did not attend the meetings. Thus, if Steering Committee members or citizens are interested in hosting their own planning exercise, they can. There are some criteria to do this though.
  - The first of these planning exercises is scheduled for Monday at Cole's, hosted by a citizen who participated at City Honors. Supervisor Hartzell of Clarence is also interested in hosting an event like this. The only caveat is that if we get bombarded with requests to organize these meetings then we will prioritize which groups we will accommodate based on whether they are a traditionally underrepresented group.
- **R. McPherson:** It is a testament of the workshops' success that the public actually wants to participate in these workshops again. That is very impressive, especially since participating in these workshops required a higher level of engagement than a lecture. Also, I think that we should take advantage of those people that have expressed high interest in the initiative, through coming to these workshops and hosting their own. These citizens could be tremendous resources for promoting and providing feedback on the initiative.
- **K. Dixon:** The Niagara Falls Housing Authority is also interested in hosting a scenario planning session at a Niagara Falls community center.
- **R. McPherson:** Did we get geographical diversity at these events? And how does the geographical diversity compare to past events?
- **B. Roberts:** I can only compare these events with the last Community Congress. To be honest, the geographical diversity is basically the same. The only substantial difference



in diversity came from the event in East Aurora that was well attended. We also gained greater participation from the East Side of Buffalo (which is difficult to see from this map but clear when you zoom into the map). Organizing these additional scenario planning sessions will increase geographical representation though.

- **B. Shibley:** How to increase the geographical diversity of participants has been an ongoing question throughout this initiative that we've been paying increasing attention to as we've been winding down the project. However, it is important to realize that the participants that attended these meetings are not the only participants that have contributed to the initiative. We have been gaining input from thousands of citizens throughout the two county region through attending fairs and festivals, and asking people for their feedback.
- **H. Morse:** The scenario planning workshops are an activity that we can do after the HUD grant has expired, in order to get community feedback, and teach them about urban planning and how decisions are made.
- **B. Parke:** The City of Buffalo is interested in seeing increased involvement from minority communities. Perhaps this is something I can help with.
- **G. Nellis:** I have volunteered to host a session in the South Towns because the rural population is another underrepresented group. There are various groups and individuals in the South Towns that are potentially interested. We could also get feedback from people that did not show up to the workshops at events like the Erie County Fair and Eden Corn Fest (expecting 100,000 people over 4 days). I can look into getting a booth for One Region Forward at the corn festival.
- **B. Shibley:** It would be hard to have people participate in scenario planning at these events but we could present the results of the workshops at them.
- **B. Roberts:** We are already thinking about how the results of these workshops can be communicated and how to get the public's input on them at community events.
- **R. McPherson:** Maybe we could target specific groups and ask if they would like to do the game for an hour of their regular meeting.
- **J. Jedlicka:** Did any Native Americans participate in the workshops?
- **B. Roberts:** 3 people identified themselves as Native American, one of which sent an enthusiastic email after one of the congresses about how he enjoyed it and thought that One Region Forward was a tremendous effort.
- **J. Jedlicka:** Riverkeeper works closely with a Native American group. I can ask if they would be interested in participating in scenario planning.
- **R. McPherson:** We should start emailing our contacts that are affiliated with groups that would potentially be interested in engaging in scenario planning.
- **B. Bidell:** My concern is that the great number of exurban chips that we gave people made them feel like they had to trade them in for different types of chips, just to get rid



of the exurban chips. I think that if we didn't give people so many exurban chips the results would've been different and less biased. On the other hand, I recognize that the number of chips is based on the Regional Framework plan and that the number does not reflect our own biases for compact development.

- **K. Dixon:** I don't agree because we clearly explained in the presentation how we determined the chip distribution, that people did not have to trade in any chips if they did not want to, and what each chip represented in terms of jobs, people, and types of development. I feel that people were well equipped to indicate their development preferences even if those are unsustainable, like more exurban development. I also think that the most powerful result of the workshops is that the amount of exurban chips showed people what sprawl looks like on a map.
- **B. Shibley:** I also think that we were far more neutral than a sustainability planning initiative needs to be
- **B. Bidell:** I just find it hard to believe that 85% of participants truly do not want any more exurban development. That percentage is so high that it makes me think that perhaps we lead people to trade in their exurban chips by giving them so many in the first place.
- **B. Shibley:** Another thing to consider though is that the people that show up at these meetings generally support sustainable development. We do not get many detractors at these types of meetings that would advocate for more exurban development.
- **B. Roberts:** When you look at the amount of land that participants said that they wanted to protect, it aligns with the lack of exurban development on the maps.
- **B. Bidell:** Basically my concern is that people are going to look at the results of these workshops and say "well of course those are the results, because the event was hosted by urban planners". We want to be sure that we are not leading people to place their chips down in a certain way, because that will decrease our credibility.
- **B. Parke:** As a facilitator I observed various types of maps, thus I think that there is a diversity of opinion.
- **B. Shibley:** Also, we have not produced scenarios from the results. After we do this, we might come up with multiple scenarios, which would indicate that the game was not biased.
- **B. Bidell:** Has there been a request by any of the Working Teams to have the game presented to them at one of their meetings?
- **B. Roberts:** We're still trying to figure out how to communicate the results to the working teams and the Private and Government councils.

### **3. Economics of Sustainability and related events:**

- Chuck Marohn, Strong Towns Curbside Chat Recap:



- **D. Leonard:**
  - We had great attendance-110 people. The crowd was reasonably diverse. There were 34 no-shows, 35 walkups, 12 local planning board officials, and a few public officials. We got great feedback after the event. Will email the results of the evaluation form shortly.
  - We asked people what types of programming they would like for the upcoming year. The top result (95% of participants) was an event about the Minicozzi study.
  - We had dinner with Marohn the night before the workshop, and he seems interested in what we're doing. So he is a resource for us. He's going to be back at the CNU conference in June. We will keep in touch with him.
- **R. McPherson:** I think it was a phenomenal event. Also, Marohn focused on a very local level (e.g. neighborhood level) so he'll have some critiques about our regional approach. One of the things he said was "Organized but dumb, top down, chaotic but smart, bottom up."
- **W. Dunn:** That statement really resonated with me. Also, I wish there were more neighborhood block group people at the event, because that is something that they feel strongly about and they also feel that people aren't taking them seriously
- **D. Leonard:**
  - There's a lot of side action around the CNU conference, so there are opportunities for 1RF programming then.
  - Other events that people are interested in, in order of popularity, are a meeting about the benefits of a regional planning entity, access summit, transportation infrastructure summit and CNU
  - Also, Marohn attacked developers for encouraging sprawl, but many of them feel as if zoning prevents them from building more compactly and sustainably.
- **G. Nellis:** That is true in some instances but not always. Sometimes you have to demand that a developer constructs sustainably.
- **R. McPherson:** Another message from Marohn is that leaders are needed. It will be interesting to see if the private sector has any sustainability leaders.
- **Minicozzi ROI study for Buffalo Niagara**
  - **D. Leonard:** The contract is finalized and national grid has signed off on it. We hope to have the study done by March, so that the results can be presented at CNU.
  - **B. Roberts:** It would be good to know the assumptions that were made to complete the study, so that One Region Forward can use the same assumptions, for the sake of consistency.



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 19**  
**December 13, 2013, 9:00 – 11:00 AM**  
**Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper**  
**640 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY**

#### **4. Local government and private sector councils- winter 2014 meetings**

- **B. Roberts:** We need to reengage these two groups. We've had preliminary discussions at the Regional Institute about how to do this but we have not discussed it at any steering committee meetings. So what do you think the best format and message of these meetings should be?
- **D. Leonard:** In terms of the private sector, it probably is not that interested in doing the game but it would be very interested in hearing and commenting on the feasibility of implementing the results of the workshops. It would be valuable to hear from them what the barriers are to creating the types of development that people want.
- **J. Jedlicka:** It's also important to hear about the influence of powerful large companies on local development.
- **G. Nellis:** It would be more valuable to have a joint meeting.
- **B. Bidell:** I agree with that. It also might be good to have a brief networking session at the meeting.
- **B. Shibley:** We should have a joint meeting, email the results of the workshops to participants beforehand, present current work to them, and then allow them to provide feedback on how to implement the workshop results (everyone at the meeting agreed with this).
- **B. Roberts:** it should be in the evening if we want to allow people to network (everyone at the meeting agreed with this). We'll send out a proposed date shortly following this meeting.
- Bad dates:
  - Feb 17<sup>th</sup>= President's Day
  - President's week
  - Feb 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>
- Potential meeting venues:
  - **J. Jedlicka:** 1 Canalside?
  - **B. Roberts:** Good idea to have it at a venue that people wanted to check out anyway.

#### **5. Implementation discussion**

*Sitting agenda item*

- **H. Morse:** Maybe instead of trying to figure out the perfect final document, which is nearly impossible, we should craft a product that is capable of evolving
- **K. Dixon:** At the HUD meeting that Bart and I attended in Washington D.C., we saw that there's a wide range in how different grantees have wrapped up their initiatives. There's a lot of flexibility to create a document that is tailored to your community.



- **B. Roberts:** There are a lot of places that have the same issues that we do, and thus a lot of examples we can look at. The toolkit idea (which is putting the plan on a website) is something that we've been talking a lot about as a team.
- **B. Bidell:** Maybe we should have a meeting of key decision makers about what their feelings are on regional governance
- **D. Kempner:** We need to be careful about the discussion because there's a lot of conflict surrounding it.
- **G. Nellis:** The conflict partly stems from a lack of conversation occurring throughout our region. Furthermore, if we have a two county planning board what conversation exists will stop. There will be much resistance to a regional planning board for this reason.
- **B. Bidell:** Maybe we should advocate for a regional board that acts as an advisory resource rather than a governing structure.
- **B. Shibley:** We will prepare various regional government options to discuss at the next meeting.
- *Everyone agrees to push the next meeting back to January 17<sup>th</sup>, location TBD.*

#### **6. Good of the order**

- **K. Dixon:** There will be a NADO Sponsored Small Business Disaster preparedness and recovery workshop on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Workshop will be geared towards small business owners and local officials, and will include topics such as where to locate a business, how to prepare for flooding, and what resources are available for constituents. It will be somewhere in Niagara County, but we're not sure exactly where yet. It will probably be an evening event. We will probably have about 40/50 attendees.
- **G. Nellis:** Isle View Park in the City of Tonawanda is a good venue with good parking.
- **B. Bidell:** If you need a co-sponsor, the Niagara County business group might be interested.
- **D. Kempner:** We have had 7 requests for preferred sustainability status (PSS) grants. Only 1 award appears to have been received. One is still pending and the others have not been received. One criteria of these grants is that you have to stay involved in 1RF. We need to come up with ideas for how they can do that.
- **B. Roberts:** HUD Secretary Donovan let everyone know that PSS would carry on for an additional 3 years.
- **D. Kempner:** Next Tuesday from 5 to 7 pm there will be a Niagara Street corridor informational and feedback meeting.
- **B. Roberts:** We can help promote this.
- **D. Kempner:** Santa will be riding metro rail next Thursday
- **J. Jedlicka:** Riverkeeper recently got a CFA award notice for Healthy Niagara. It promotes a regional approach to water management. Also, we're launching into our



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 19**  
**December 13, 2013, 9:00 – 11:00 AM**  
**Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper**  
**640 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY**

economic impact assessment of a blue economy and using the Buffalo River corridor as a case study.

**7. Adjournment**