



**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 17 - October 4, 2013,
9:00 – 11:00 AM
Niagara County Center for Economic Development
6311 Inducon Corporate Dr, Sanborn, NY 14132**

In attendance: Hal Morse (Greater Buffalo - Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Kelly Dixon (Greater Buffalo - Niagara Regional Transportation Council), Ben Bidell (Niagara County Economic Development), Bart Roberts (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Bradshaw Hovey (University at Buffalo Regional Institute), Glenn Nellis (Town of Eden), Ryan McPherson (Western New York Environmental Alliance), Laura Smith (Buffalo Niagara Partnership), Dan Leonard (Buffalo Niagara Partnership), Steve Ricca (Jaeckle Fleischmann), Frank Billittier (NYSDOT), Supervisor Ross Annabel (Niagara County Supervisors Association), Deanna Rose (Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority), Bill Parke (City of Buffalo), Jim Bragg (City of Niagara Falls), Lawrence Cook (Oishei Foundation), Willie Dunn (Niagara Falls Housing Authority), John Fell (City of Buffalo).

1. Welcome & Introductions

H. Morse: Welcome and thanks everyone for attending this morning.

2. One Region Forward November Community Congress Overview

B. Roberts: Gave a brief overview on the logistical status of the Congress meetings. Series of 5 meetings over a week.

- Congresses start out at Amherst High School on 11/12, then at City Honors High School on 11/13 (tentatively). East Aurora Elementary School on 11/14, Starpoint High School on 11/15 and the Power Vista in Lewiston on 11/16.
- Much of the work out in the community has given the effort a great base to build on in terms of recruitment for attendance. A full court press on outreach and recruitment for the meetings specifically will start around mid-October. Efforts will include “flyering” at coffee shops, libraries, community centers, etc., a press campaign, and the “Hub and Spoke” communications model relying on partner organizations to get the word out,
- Launch of the Textizen campaign will be postponed until after the community congress meetings so that communication and outreach is clear and focused solely on the congress meetings.
- Team Tomorrow continued to be refined. Originally envisioned as activities for youth, it now represents the participation avenue for citizens young and old to have a deeper level of participation, and as of now includes “PhotoVoices Across Our Region” – What people want to keep/change in their communities via picture and videos; a formalized volunteer program to aid in getting the word out about the effort and the Citizen Planning School to launch in the spring.



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H. Morse: Before we get started on the next agenda item, welcome John Fell who would like to give a detailed update on the Green Code process

J. Fell: Buffalo Green Code – Buffalo development framework, ties in well with regional sustainability effort. It involves a comprehensive update of zoning code for Buffalo that embraces smart growth and sustainability.

- City of Buffalo and its partners have been working on it for 3 years, engaged +4000 people.
- Products include a draft land use plan, working on draft Uniform Development Ordinance – that extends beyond private zoning, but also includes stipulations for streets and parks
- Zoning Code is a form based code and embraces smart growth characteristics of development.
- Coordinating the planning of the new zoning code with processes of LWRP and BOAs and reviewing urban renewal plans. Coordination will result in one generic environmental impact statement process.
- Current schedule involves bringing the package to the Common Council by the end of the year, followed by several months of public comment and review. Revisions based on comments will be made and brought back to the Common Council during the first half of next year.

Questions or Comments:

S. Ricca: How will Type 1 and type 2 designation for environmental review be dealt with?

J. Fell responded that this is being taken under consideration

B. Parke: The City of Buffalo is looking closely at scenario planning exercise in relation to green code and want to make sure it does not negatively impact the work and progress made of the Green Code.

3. Pilot Run of Participatory Scenario Planning Exercise

B. Hovey from UBRI gave a 15-minute presentation explaining the Scenario Planning exercise that will be featured at the November Community Congress meetings. He explained the rationale behind the activity, how the “game” works, and a set of principles that have been extracted from the vision and values statements and are intended to inform playing of the game to consider.

Following the presentation, the steering committee broke up into three groups and participated in the game for approximately one hour.

4. Feedback on Exercise in preparation for Congresses



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S. Ricca: Would like the metrics by which the different scenarios will be evaluated.

B. Bidell: Chips represent the same amount of land, correct? Bradshaw responded, Yes – approximately one square mile.

B. Parke: Concerned about confusion with this activity and the Green Code. That process had an extensive education aspect and its important for participants to have educational information about sustainability in this process. Reiterates the point that investing in the city is sustainable and that should be emphasized.

R. McPherson: Game provides good, fun engagement with citizens. Some messaging suggestions:

- Thinking about the question “what can we be?”
- This is what you think could happen – what do you think as a small team as a table
- What is the greater vision we’re going for – more sustainable Buffalo-Niagara

K. Dixon: Video being produced will include some of this and in the overall messaging it is important to note we don’t want to tell you what to think but this is what the future could like if we don’t start thinking differently

B. Hovey: Business as usual scenario construction involves generating 2 scenarios – population growth/population decline, **being developed** based on current patterns, policies and trends. Reinforce what happens with synthesized scenarios – unsustainable scenarios can be analyzed for their impact – energy, transportation, land consumption, etc. This should show the value of adopting policies like the Green Code.

B. Bidell: What is the ultimate goal that comes out of this exercise?

K. Dixon: Ultimate goal is to have a regional land use vision that represents what people want the region to look like for future generations. In addition to the Business as usual scenario, – two to three alternatives will be produced, which people will be able to review and consider for a preferred vision. At the end when we present the scenarios – people may pick and choose items for each and create a hybrid vision for the region. This helps with prioritizing areas of invest as well as having educational value.

B. Hovey: Reiterates that the land use concept being produced out of this is something the Land Use and Development Working Team has been calling for. It will help guide identification of model Municipal ordinances, development best practices.

B. Parke: Concerned that in the Consortium agreement, we didn’t go into as much detail on scenario planning and the City needs further explanation about how this exercise will impact resource allocation.



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B. Bidell: How does this thing move forward? Does the vision get shopped around to municipalities?

L. Smith: Benefit of this exercise is to connect scenario planning with implementation. It can reinforce the visions and values we already have in place. The strength of steering committee, working teams, LGC, PSC, and Community Congress can propel it forward.

B. Roberts: An open question to everyone who participated, where are the snags in the process?

B. Bidell: Need to be careful about our internal project or planning lingo (i.e., What's a working team?, What does DU stand for? What do we do in Lockport, Tonawanda, can VC go in a city?)

- Instruction needs to be better on markers
- Touch on atlases – purpose
- No mention of map legend – underutilized urban areas is really important, but not clear.

R. McPherson: Very complex game – may require one individual facilitator per each team, someone to answer and guide – not create the substance

B. Hovey: As an observation, conversation during the game is great, but not a lot of it was captured. Would be good to capture that information.

L. Smith: Talking about projections in more laymen's term would be helpful. Also, consider using something like an orange sticker for redevelopment vs. new

B. Hovey: We will continue to work on this.

R. Annabell: What about villages we don't want to change, just preserve the way they are? They don't need a new village chip, but how do we present that?

J. Bragg: Suggest we soften map up and include more landmarks – airport – Erie Canal and more subtle colors

B. Bidell: How do you respond to criticism about projecting population growth?

H. Morse: We are prepared to defend and explain the projections. Based on a lot of demographic factors – cohort survival rate, a u-shaped curve we're starting to see up-tick over the past few years. Part of it is that the loss of steel industry from 1980-2000 has already happened and there's not a comparable economic disruption that could occur like that again based on today's economic composition.

B. Roberts: We don't know what the future will hold in terms of population growth or decline. I don't think we want people to dwell on the population numbers, because this is more about the visioning process and



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getting people to think about how the region grows. We do need a number to play into the calculus of the game though, and this projection is a good one to use.

B. Bidell: There may be a psychological bias favoring urban places. There's so many XR chips, makes everyone want to trade in XR and SS OI. Does the game predispose people to densify? Could we have the chips also show that the more urban chips are more dense (i.e. by making them taller)?

B. Stynes: Good suggestion; we thought about that, but the logistics are too difficult.

R. McPherson: Don't think it's a bad idea to show the adverse impact of "XR" development

5. Implementation Discussion:

H. Morse: Not much time left to go into this sitting agenda item, but will pass it on to Laura to give an update on the December event.

L. Smith: update on the next Economics of Sustainability event, scheduled for December 12th with Chuck Marohn from Strong towns speaking. Held at NF Conference Center, 8:00am registration 8:30 start. A great opportunity to invite elected officials. Would be great to have a conversation on strategy for that.

B. Roberts: Also a need to communicate the Community Congress to LGC, we should consider having a conference call with steering committee members who represent elected officials and figure out a package invitation

H. Morse closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.

7. Adjournment