One Region Forward  
Fair Housing Equity Assessment Advisory Committee  
Anthony Armstrong, Facilitator  
September 27, 2013

A. Armstrong opens with introduction

Agenda
- Welcome and Introductions
- Intro to the Fair Housing Equity Assessment
- Timeline
- A Shared Definition of Equity
- Barriers to Equity and Opportunity

Intro to the Fair Housing Equity Assessment
- Explanation of what HUD expects out of the Assessment.

- Explanation of the work One Region Forward has started with.

- Three main Components
  - Understand the historical, current and future context...
  - Engage regional leaders and stakeholders on findings and implications of analysis.
  - Integrate knowledge developed into the plan...

- Essential elements of the FHEA
  - Segregated areas and areas of increasing diversity and/or racial/ethnic integration
  - Racially/Ethnically concentrated areas of poverty
  - Access to existing areas of high opportunity
  - Major Public Investments
  - Fair Housing Issues, Services, and Activities

- FHEA is not an Analysis of Impediments
  - Does not necessarily consider all protected classes
  - Does not necessarily examine existing programs or challenges by municipality
  - Although it identifies Fair Housing Issues, Services, and Activities; it does not require strategies or an action plan.
  - A. Armstrong goes over that this assessment does not replace the Analysis of Impediments but works along with, and could turn into an Analysis of Impediments at a later date if chosen.
  - The FHEA builds on former work that has been done by municipalities with the Analysis of Impediments.

- FHEA Process and Timeline
  - Late September: Advisory Committee Meeting 1
- Late October: Advisory Committee Meeting 2
- Early November: Gather Input at Community Congress
- Early December: Steering Committee Update
- Early January: Steering Committee Update/Presentations to Working Groups Share Narrative draft of FHEA
- Early January: Advisory Committee Meeting 3
- Mid January: Public draft of FHEA; commence on 30 day comment period
- Late February: Advisory Committee Meeting 4
- March: Completed FHEA approved by Steering Committee, sent to HUD for approval

- A. Armstrong clarifies the role of the Steering Committee for One Region Forward in relation to the assessment, to review and approve the document before the document is sent to HUD.

- Shared Definition of Equity
  - What does Equity mean to the region?
  - HUD’s definition of Social Equity
  - Other grantees’ have defined social equity differently
    - Rhode Island was given as an example
    - Boston was given as an example
  - Examples of local plans that share visions and values
    - REDC/Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan
    - Framework for Regional Growth
    - City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan
    - One Region Forward Draft Regional Vision & Values
  - Draft for One Region Forward
    - Buffalo Niagara will be an equitable community when: all people—regardless of how they look, who they know and who they love, what language they speak, when or where they were born, where they live, where they go to school or why they call this place home—have the ability, opportunity and the tools needed to fulfill their potential, lead healthy and fulfilling lives with rewarding work and experience all our region has to offer while ensuring future generations may do the same.

- Discussion
  - Addition of socio-economic means.
  - Add ability/mobility to the draft.
    - How people access – geography
    - It’s not only how you get around in the region, but how you get around in your own home.
  - Religions and beliefs should be added to characteristics
    - Worship is a good word
  - How long a person has lived in the region – residency/tenure
  - Instead of “where they go to school or why they call this place home”, we say “where they go to school or how long they call this place home”
  - I like how this is not “HUD speak”
  - Curious about the choice of saying “may do the same”
- I think we go further and say “will do the same”
- I like that we distinctly say that we will give you the tools and giving you the opportunity to participate, but not force – prefer “can” to “will”
  - We need to show that the public has inclusion and the ability to participate. Something that reflects people making decisions that impacts their lives.
  - What do we mean by “who they know”
    - It sticks out to me as a sore thumb in the rest of this
    - A little cynical
    - It seems like these statements are made for protective classes.
    - Not sure about “where they go to school” either
    - The FHEA is more about the “place that you live” over the actual “house you live in”.
    - There is a geographical component to this.
    - I think “who they know” works, but it might be better off not in the first line, because that statement is more descriptive.
    - What if we replaced with “past, privilege, or status”
    - We are trying to say something about “class”.
    - I think we need to get past the academic terms and literature.
    - I like “who they know” because it means different things to different people. I like the idea that people have different interpretations.
  - Enforceable vs. Aspirational
    - The FHEA is aspirational where the Analysis of Impediments can be enforceable.

- Barriers to Equity and Opportunity
  - Past, Present, and Future Challenges:
    - What are the historical factors and current policies and practices creating the segregation and inequities in the region?
  - Discussion
    - From an administrative standpoint, it seems like we would never be able to get out of the cycle because of the HUD limits. It almost rewards you for being poor. We penalize people for having two incomes, different ways of living together. We are not adapting to the way people live or their current needs. The application process is tough on applicants before they can get a dollar of state money. A constant cycle of a need for poor people.
    - We have had situations that if they are over the dollar limit we have to say sorry. That is the nature of a budget that we need to limit.
    - The margin is the issue, the next step. The transitioning from poverty, to working poor to the next. One issue is that the
programming stops, and the second is the continued process and that you are no longer on our roles, go somewhere else.

- We talk about sprawl in terms of housing, but when we talk about it in terms of development of jobs, there is a gap.
- Scarcity mentality, our government funding has always forced us to do more with less. There is no room to take chances and to innovate.
- Economic integration, how does your neighborhood become integrated. The HUD policies do not fit into the needs of the people moving up the ladder.
- Economic integration without gentrification.
- The condition of our mental health services is horrible in the region, and our criminal justice system has become a de facto mental health system.
- I would like to address the “gap”, how are agencies, public and nonprofit, which are addressing these populations. Language access and how agencies respond to that issue will be a challenge.
- A problem of segregation between agencies is another key issue, not just segregation of population.
- Lack of representation, and issues of segregation and economic policies onto the legislative floor.
- Poverty is not just a poor issue, it’s also an economic development issue.
- Comfort level of communities or community buy-in, getting communities to understand what the value is for other cultures or backgrounds come into their communities.
- Getting education to people in existing communities and how diversity can benefit them in a long run.
- Part of that comfort level is knowing that their current traditions and culture will be protected even though diversity is beneficial.
- Educating communities, government offices, and agencies of what programs are out there, but as we have indicated that once you are done with a program you are out of here. We need to bring to light the resources that are available.
- Regional Lack of Awareness / Understanding
- Discomfort in confronting the issues

- Historic Factors
- Red lining – The new deal era policies of the homeowner loan corp.; FHA & VA programs recipients were 98% white
- Public Housing – intentional & legal discrimination, later illegal discrimination
- Urban Renewal – Destroying existing communities & relocation to segregated facilities
- School Desegregation
- Institutionalization
- Blockbusting and Speculation
  - White flight and slum lords
- Doubles converted in Quadruples
  - Residency Requirements to gain section 8 or employment
  - Source of Income Discrimination (only Buffalo, West Seneca, and Hamburg have policies against)
  - Zoning – restricted use permit used to discriminate against people and agencies serving disabilities and poor.
  - Public Building Accessibility enforcement
  - Environmental Health from poor historical conditions on or near housing sites.
  - Identify what level of government is responsible for these different factors we are bringing up (local, state, federal)
  - Political choices in terms of who was in office and who had a voice at the time, who didn’t have a seat at the table.
- Capital investment, service delivery & Municipal jobs
  - Neal Krauss – Race, class, and politics
  - Private Sector Elitism
  - Institutional Disinvestment
  - Rise of the Automobile
  - Transportation Investment
  - Racism
  - Cycle of Oppressed/Oppressor

- Preparation for October Meeting
  - Will review working definition of equity
  - Will review FHEA narrative outline
  - Will review regional data