Scenario Planning Workshops

How would you create a more sustainable future for Buffalo Niagara?

Community Congress Fall 2013 Meeting #1
November 12, 2013, 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Amherst Central High School, Amherst, NY

This Meeting

This summary provides an overview of Meeting #1 of the second set of One Region Forward Community Congress sessions, where citizens worked in groups to map their future vision for Buffalo Niagara.

Who Participated?

98 in attendance
Representatives from 33 different ZIP Codes and 48 different community or civic organizations

Attendees were asked to identify themselves with a local community organization if they choose. The following organizations were represented:

- Amherst Traffic Safety Board
- Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals
- Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc.
- Buffalo Audubon Society
- Buffalo Niagara Enterprise
- Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper
- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy
- Campaign for Greater Buffalo History, Architecture, and Culture
- Cheektowaga Taxpayers Association Inc.

The Community Congress

Because no plan for sustainable development can succeed without the creative contribution and informed support of our region’s citizens, the Community Congress has been created as a regular forum for all citizens in our region to guide and shape the One Region Forward process.

One Region Forward

One Region Forward is supported by a broad-based collaborative effort of local elected officials, businesses, community groups, and citizens at-large – all working together to move our region towards a more prosperous and sustainable future.
What Did They Say?

Mapping a Future Approach to Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Food Access, and Climate Change Action for Our Region.

Participants at this meeting had a hands-on opportunity to show precisely where and how they think Buffalo Niagara should grow between now and the mid-21st century in order to fulfill the region’s shared vision and values. Residents first viewed a brief introductory video about the challenges and opportunities that our region faces, and a presentation about how to engage in scenario planning. They were then asked to indicate on a map of the Erie and Niagara counties what they wanted to keep and change in their neighborhoods, towns, cities, villages, and region.

Working in small groups with large scale maps of Buffalo Niagara, citizens showed graphically where and how they think housing, jobs, transportation infrastructure, food resources, and climate change measures should be established.

Participants were asked to give their map a title and write down the principles and ideas that guided their mapping decisions. Below are the pictures, titles, principles, and comments of the 17 maps that residents created at this Community Congress.
Amherst #1
TITLE: Innovative Revitalization
DESIGN PRINCIPLES:
1. Control building sprawl.
2. Revitalize the existing urban areas.
3. City-continue to clean up the rundown and abandoned properties.
NOTES:
- Transit line expansion.
- Broadway Market area.
- Move the tools.
- Need for more N/S traffic corridors.
- Thruway entrance, Gunville Road.
- Truck oriented route from RT5/93 to Canadian bridge.
Amherst #2

TITLE: Healthy Communities

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Healthy Communities with (1) homes, (2) jobs and (3) retail, surrounded by green space, nature and farms.

NOTES:

- Village Center for Niagara Falls State Park area.
- Urban Center for Summit Park Mall.
- Waterfront – keep public access for recreation, scenic value.
- Start with infrastructure first.
- Lack of exits on the thruways
- Widen two-lane road in Village of Depew.
- Spit off 90 in Love or Newstead.
- Spit off 400 in Elma.
- Downtown – introduce schools
Amherst #3
TITLE: The Urban Revival
DECISION PRINCIPLES:
1. The Urban Revival!
2. Renewal and Revitalization
3. Reprogram, reuse Brownfields.
4. Do not encroach into the existing land uses - do not expand further.
5. Preserve the architectural and natural beauty of the region.

NOTES:
- Set the boundary for the city and don’t expand beyond it.
- Downtown – introduce schools.
- Younger people in downtown!
- Change the UB Law School to live courts proximity, racial issues, mixed housing, good political leadership.
- Niagara Falls Boulevard can be updated for more dense development.
- Downtown: Housing.
- Downtown: revival, restaurants, walkability, shops, football stadium.
- Niagara Falls: do not make it look like the Canadian side (flashy) – No!
- Revitalize Fruit Belt neighborhoods. Revitalize single-family homes in existing suburbs.
- I’d like to see Ralph Wilson Stadium be moved downtown.
- Transport: Develop along the existing corridors. Bike trails along the way to Niagara.
Amherst #4

TITLE: New and Improved WNY: Buffalo 2.0

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Sensible public transportation:
   - Efficient, balanced system
   - Connect airport to downtown
   - Connect universities
2. Keep centers dense
   - Build where infrastructure exists
   - Reverse urban deterioration and sprawl
   - Keep towers downtown
3. Strategic planning choices to correct economic disparities.
4. Preserve farmland and enhance village/hamlet centers. Concentrate density (homes and jobs) in centers.
5. More greenway connections that connect to interior places and resources (parks, centers).

NOTES:
- Reinvest in existing urban areas where infrastructure exists.
- Move Williamsville tolls.
- Reasonable growth – not 6 stories.
- Support agriculture (2).
- Focus denser development around UB in Amherst.
- Expand greenways/“Rails-to-trails” throughout the region.
- More parks and open areas in urban areas.
- Disparities throughout the city should be corrected.
- Reclaim land. Renovate vacant homes.
- Public transit from airport to downtown and airport to Amtrak station.
- Improve water quality.
- Connect colleges and universities.
- Improve/calm Rt. 198 - make it better, contextually sensitive design.
- Waterfront for the people.
- Don’t forget parking for transit stops and stations.
- Need for public transit connection to Southtowns.
- Protect farms and farm soils. Support agriculture.
- Support cultural organizations to enhance desirability of city.
- Preserve farmland/rural areas - develop around village center.
- Don’t build anything new. Repurpose older stock and vacant houses.
Amherst #5
TITLE: Niagara Frontier National Transportation Heritage Area

DECISION PRINCIPLES:
1. Reinvest in urban centers.
2. Protect agricultural areas. Develop agri-business.
3. Build up village centers around college campuses.
4. Build suburban areas on waterfront.
5. Sensible public transportation:
   - Efficient, balanced system
   - Connect airport to downtown
   - Connect universities

NOTES:
- Develop areas on waterfront and along Niagara River.
- Develop agri-business (e.g. Batavia) - Food hubs.
- Build up village centers around college campuses.
- Use existing mass transit.
- Utilize the lakefront and Niagara River for homes.
- Relocate Williamsville toll barrier east. Convert Clarence travel plaza to a Visitor Info Center.
- Build Niagara Falls into a more urban area.
- Build up and revamp subway system with routes starting in suburbs and going up to Niagara Falls.
- Run commuter trains in contract between downtown, central, and Lancaster.
- Bikeways along the waterfront.
- Multi-modal commuter rail.
Amherst #6

TITLE: Strengthen Your Core

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Bring sprawl to a crawl.
2. Generating principle – environmental justice/access for all.
3. Mad rush to the finish.

NOTES:

- New 90 exit to Lancaster
- People’s view of Buffalo is always the 90- “crap”
Amherst #7

TITLE: Revitalize, Preserve, Protect

DECISION PRINCIPLES:
1. Reinvest in urban neighborhoods.
2. Using existing infrastructure.
3. Take advantage of entire waterfront.
4. Create connectivity – alternative transportation and bike trails.
5. Preserve open space.

NOTES:
- Preserve farmland.
Amherst #8
TITLE: Re-Buff/Re-Nu/Re-Connect
DECISION PRINCIPLES:
1. Encourage density in the urban/village areas
2. Reinforce connection between Buffalo and Niagara
3. Increase options and affordability of the transportation that connect those places
4. Protect all farmland from sprawl to protect food and environment
5. Repurpose and revitalize homes and vacant spaces; no new development.

NOTES:
- Affordable transportation and more options and connections between working populations and services and jobs. Shorter and more direct connections.
- Alternative choices in dense urban areas. Make these bikeable and walkable.
- Urban Farms in underutilized/vacant areas. Urban farming academies.
- Don’t build anything new. Repurpose older stock and vacant houses.
- Repurposing old industrial/housing
- Leverage more sustainable infrastructure improvements for jobs
- Density, walkable neighborhoods. Protect farmland from sprawl to protect food.
- Food hub in South East Concord
- Turn the Oxbow Wetland into a new park.
- Protect the waterway for recreation, tourism, and sightseeing.
- Increase development in the outer harbor.
- Preserve Elmwood and West Side
- Traditional Neighborhoods between urban center
- Preserve all parks
- Create a corridor of urban centers near Niagara Falls
- Build up or enhance assets for tourism and leisure along the waterfront near Lewiston
- Food hub in North East Clarence
- Encourage food hubs along Lake Ontario
Amherst #9

TITLE: Rebuild Urban Core

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

1. Reduce Sprawl-concentrate people, housing and jobs within developed areas-keeping a balance of uses.
2. Public transportation-increase public transportation routes, cross county routes, deterrent times during DOT= less attractive to drive single cars. Incentivize ridership.
3. Defragment existing infrastructure, authorities and government agencies.
4. Conserve remaining farmland-moratorium on land zoned agricultural-establish right to farm within suburban and urban communities
5. Revitalize, rehabilitate, reimagine, rebuild urban core.

NOTES:

- Connected multiuse trail along Lake Erie and Niagara River to Lake Ontario.
- Establish multiuse trails along existing rail, pipeline, and electrical transmission corridors to connect neighborhoods to a regional trail system.
Amherst #10

TITLE: Western New York 2050

DECISION PRINCIPLES:
1. Public transit linking urban centers, increasing bike paths.
2. Re-imagining strip malls – parking in the back, walkable, attractive.
3. Saving green space to maintain quality of life and save farmland.
4. Stopping urban sprawl.
5. Follow “Complete Streets” policies.

NOTES:
- Protect all existing parks and conservation areas.
- Protect all forested areas.
- Protect all farmland except where chips are placed.
- Remove Williamsville tolls.
- Waterfront access (downtown Buffalo).
- Improve waterfront access (along Niagara River near Grand Island, Tonawanda and Niagara Falls).
Amherst #11
TITLE: A Modest Proposal
DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Protect farmland, but revitalize opportunities for manufacturing.
2. Additional transportation connecting UB North to UB South, to Elmwood/Allentown; safer Bailey Ave; extend transit down to Southtowns.
3. Encourage development of new neighborhoods in existing and proposed transit corridors.
4. Strengthened existing urban cores.
5. Embrace the green space along the water.
NOTES: <none>
Amherst #12

TITLE: Choice of Living

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Every town + village keeps some parks.
2. Small farmer can’t compete- lots of land for farming.
3. Stop paying farmers not to grow.
4. No new villages- more government.
5. XR= a town area not 1 square mile.

NOTES:

- We’ll see how things go, save for later (this note was pointed to 1 exurban and 3 suburban strip chips placed in Lake Ontario).
- Protect all forested areas.
- Protect all farmland except where chips are placed.
Amherst #13

TITLE: The Queen City’s Urban Boundary

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Centralized and redesigned existing infrastructure.
2. Do not modify farmland, create urban farms.
3. Reconnecting neighborhoods destroyed by 33 and 198 - in the future reconstructing the parkway system.
4. Urban center in the city surrounded by traditional neighborhoods – preserving city’s beauty.
5. Focus on a way to connect Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

NOTES:

- How do we connect to the waterfront in the north parts of Buffalo?
- Public transport vehicles should accommodate bike transportation.
- Don’t like so many XR communities.
- Not enough UC chips.
- What about urban farms.
- Re-imagine south campus but keep traditional feel.
TITLE: Core Strength

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Beef up urban core of people and businesses.
2. Improve transportation from urban core to the suburbs including, trail like paths, bus lines, light rails.
3. Protect the character and ambiance of existing villages. Meaning put big buildings in the urban centers.
4. Do not build on farms, no more strip malls, no more fracking.
5. Public access to waterfront- waterfront belongs to the people.

NOTES:

- Transportation improvements from Niagara Falls to Buffalo.
- Hotels and anything above two-stories should go downtown.
- Bike path from Hamburg to waterfront.
- VC at Maple with a mixed use of activity, a more walkable maple, and more commerce for UB residents.
- Build exurban residential in old quarries, around farms etc., instead of single family.
- Village center services as a buffer between UC and TN.
- Bike path commuting, UB and Clarence.
- Mass transportation connecting downtown with the towns of Clarence, Orchard Park, Williamsville, North Tonawanda.
- In existing villages, keep character, charm and low traffic volume.
- Local waterfront revitalization plan, coastal enforcement.
- Amherst—stay the same
- Elmwood—keep same
- Brant St. — Village center
- East side—Village center
- Cheektowaga—Village center
- UB north—Village center
- Maple—village center
- Niagara Falls—urban center, village center
- Region can only be as strong as its core
Amherst #15

TITLE: Local isn’t Loco!

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

1. Keep neighborhoods: Elmwood, Central Park, Hertel, Pine Avenue, Lockport, North Tonawanda, Williamsville, and the Skyway
2. Integrate community living with workplace
3. Expand: Rails to Trails-Connect, Park Systems-Connect, City Garden Space, metro rail to villages
4. Improve: better schools in the city! Combine school systems (i.e. Cheektowaga), access to local foods, streamlining of government.
5. Remove: NIA section of 190-Greenspace, 198 at Delaware Park-Tunnel. Recover Humboldt Parkway.
6. Stop IDA’s, which are giving money to relocate office space, and fracking.

NOTES:

- Improve schools and combine school systems
- Keep neighborhoods: Elmwood, Central Park, Hertel, Pine Avenue, Lockport, North Tonawanda Village, and Williamsville
- Expand: rails to trails, park systems, city garden space, metro rail to village.
- Remove: 190 on water, expand the greenway
- Niagara Falls: more greenway
- Keep industry along waterway in Niagara Falls
- Make rural areas more accessible so that farmers own direct sell to consumers.
- Connect bike paths to allow people to access rural areas/farms
- Townhouses/utilize area under skyway
- Incentives for small business owners to be downtown, mentoring.
- Centers for redevelopment
- Remove 190 from the waterfront to open it up
TITLE: The Genesis Experiment

DECISION PRINCIPLES:

1. Return population to cities + villages, reduce urban sprawl and preserve rural integrity/ have more housing options.
2. Better transportation options: light rail to airport, Canada connections.
3. Neighborhoods, walkable, services (urban villages + TN)
4. Preserve agricultural areas and develop and manage urban forms.
5. Jobs

NOTES:

- TOD (¼ -1/4 mile development).
- Towns competing with the city.
- Reinvesting in VC +UC.
- More village centers, 1 in Kenmore, 1 in East Aurora and 1 in OP.
- 52% of downtown is parking.
- Link to Canada, increase airport traffic, tourism and Canadian investment.
- Light rail to Canada.
- Belt line LR.
- Light rail to airport.
- More housing choices in city (smaller etc.)
- Grow + expand our ability to grow our own food- urban farming.
- Stop sprawl- return people to cities. Reinvest in UC and VC.
- How will we grow revenue?
- Villages duplicate services, need more shared services-retain identity.
- Empty space: mix in agrarian concepts in the city= pride of ownership and stable neighborhoods.
Amherst #17
TITLE: The Winner!
DESIGN PRINCIPLES: <blank>
NOTES:
- Ignore the orange around villages-we got it wrong.
- Preserve stream and canal corridors as natural areas
- Water taxi from downtown CBD to Riverbend.