Scenario Planning Workshops

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

Community Congress Fall 2013 Meeting #5
November 16, 2013, Noon – 2:00pm
Niagara Power Project Visitors Center, Niagara Falls, NY

This Meeting

This summary provides an overview of Meeting #5 of the second set of One Region Forward Community Congress sessions, where citizens worked in groups to map their future vision for Buffalo Niagara.

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.

Who Participated?

41 in attendance

Representatives from 22 different ZIP Codes and 25 different community or civic organizations

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

Niagara County Planning Board
Assemblyman Gabryszak
Niagara Military Affairs Council
Center for the Study of Art, Architecture, History and Nature
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County
Empire State Development
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 7 maps that residents created at this Community Congress.
Niagara Falls #1
TITLE: A Brighter Buffalo
DESIGN PRINCIPLES:
1. Give communities character
2. Protect farmland, soils
3. Focus on waterfront development
4. Revitalize great places.
5. Protect important assets.
NOTES:
- Protect and develop wine trails in Cambria
- Protect rich soils escarpment
- Purchase development rights
- Ari approach to airport
- Importance of waterfront development
- Military and civilian air transportation which affects economic and commercial development. Airway approaches should minimize home construction.
Niagara Falls #2

TITLE: **Health and Happiness**

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES:**

1. More transit/better access, more options.
2. Plan for climate change within and outside of region.
3. Revitalize what we have developed already, dense areas, historic areas.
4. Preserve farmland, better access to fresh, local and healthy food.

**NOTES:**

- Land bank/transform to large lots, greenbelt.
- Fill in empty areas, but do it carefully.
- Mixed income housing.
- Transit line or light rail should be developed, and make it more accessible.
- Rail along waterfront to connect those great places.
- Use rails and transit to capitalize on NF tourism.
- Strengthen neighborhoods that are on the edge.
- Climate change impacts on food, elsewhere that would come here, what we can grow here for us and for elsewhere.
- Getting people to hubs (airport)
- Hustle and bustle on space.
- Different definitions about quality of life.
- Take advantage of natural beauty; capitalize on the city near natural assets.
- Sell ourselves.
- Better value our historic places.
- Transportation, light rail, way to connect everything; connections here and elsewhere, gateway to Canada.
TITLE: Lean Forward Move Ahead Towards Sustainability

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

1. Do more with less by working together as/with communities and using readily available resources.
2. Live with respect and responsibility towards each other and towards our environment/natural resources.
3. Affordable + sustainable housing within complete communities, with convenient green transportation.
4. Locally sourced food: preserving farmland + producing food in urban areas.
5. Keep in mind future generations: what kind of world are we building for them.

NOTES:
- Transportation; bikes, waterways, courier planes.
- Maintain and build more maps.
- Preservation of local areas with just a growth boundary because Buffalo-Niagara has enough used property resources. Rural areas could be added to it later if people wanted it.
- Office Industrial: green healthy buildings.
- Minority/women’s training center.
- Medical center: integrated, holistic health centers.
- Sustain what we have with respect to communities: diversity/ethnicity.
- HUB central transportation; bike paths.
- All new buildings, eco-friendly, while pre-existing ones should be weathered and self-sufficient.
- XR eat up all the farms meant to produce food for people.
- SF should be small eco-houses, affordable for anyone.
- Green skills training and green jobs.
- Increase use of waterways to move goods from place to place.
- Develop % of food hubs.
- Human powered network.
- Buses to connect five point hubs + bedroom communities.
- More jobs for minorities/women in large companies, trades, education.
- Jobs for senior citizens.
- More affordable housing projects.
- Better housing.
- Community based governance.
- Use less + produce more, more community cooperation, better choices.
- Education, jobs, housing.
- City of Buffalo.
- Life of respect for one another + the effect we have on each other.
- People to live a more self-sufficient lifestyle.
- Reduce urban sprawl to help transportation.
- Bring back jobs.
**Niagara Falls #4**

**TITLE:** The Future Re-Birth

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES:**

1. Centralize sewer system
   - Expand airport
   - Limited commercial strips
   - Job creation/growth

2. Centralized development
   - High-speed rail
   - Commuter corridors
   - Preserve agriculture
   - New forms of agriculture

3. Tourism: Niagara Falls Wine trail
   - Rebuilding Niagara Falls
   - Upscale homes along lake
   - Protect and develop greenway assets
   - UB 2020 Expansion

**NOTES:**

- Commuter rail
- Cluster head start through 12th Grade on west side of Main Street
- Protect wine trail
- Farmland
- Robert Moses Parkway
Niagara Falls #5

TITLE: Quality Of Life through Traditional Neighborhoods

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

1. Stop suburban sprawl so as to protect green space
2. Support mixed-use development
3. Focus on hub and spoke design. (e.g. BN Medical complex and connect with pedestrian, bicycle, bus, light rail, and auto (minimize)).
4. Create economic incentives to live within walking distance to existing light rail, transit. Maximize use of existing transportation system. Rapid transit from Toronto to New York City.

NOTES:

- Preserve current green public space
- Prevent suburban sprawl from “eating up” more green space
- Keep Elmwood Village and Allentown
- Tonawanda turnout- aboveground rail trolley
- Make the Buffalo Niagara medical complex the hub for a 10 mile radius around downtown
- More walkable Village of Williamsville with more off-street parking
- Business districts for each town or city off of throughways and highways
- Preserve downtown Clarence
- Encourage traditional neighborhoods. In the city of Niagara Falls: Highland, Park Place, and downtown. In the city of Buffalo: Black Rock and Riverside.
- Communities we like include East Aurora, Elmwood Village, Allentown, North Tonawanda, Snyder and Kenmore
- More pedestrian corridors at Main Street in Lockport, 3rd Street in Niagara Falls, Amherst Street in Buffalo and Main Street in Williamsville
- Preserve Lewiston Village
- Preserve Olcott Village
- Increase retail in downtown Lockport and preserve the rest of downtown Lockport
Niagara Falls #6
TITLE: <UNTITLED>
DESIGN PRINCIPLES:
1. Preserve rural farmland with respect to fruit belt, vineyards
2. Grow urban areas.
3. Reestablish traditional neighborhoods, "smart growth". Avoid any more strip development
4. Preserve and build up greenway along waterways.
5. Rebuild infrastructure

NOTES:
- Greenway funds:
  o Concerns about qualifying projects
  o Keep funds on waterways
  o Lakes, rivers, tributaries
- Eliminate chemical waste
- No lagoon
- Tourist or capital
Niagara Falls #7
TITLE: Western New York 2050
DESIGN PRINCIPLES:
1. Public Transportation. Expand it to include all communities with at least 10,000 residents.
3. Revitalize Buffalo's industry.
4. Niagara Falls is the bedroom community for urban Buffalo.

NOTES:
- Does NF want to be a big city?
- How to get around w/o cars?
- Job hubs on transportation
- Niagara Falls needs to follow their COMP plan!
- No more "CD" Community Demolitions!
- Tourist and walkable neighborhoods.
- Revitalize downtown core neighborhoods
- Seaway trail preservation