Understanding our Situation
What the Data Tells Us

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Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
You don't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been.
Since 1970, our region has “sprawled without growth,” with implications to our built environment, tax burden, economy, and infrastructure.

We’ve seen a modest increase in the number of households over the past forty years.

Housing construction has far outpaced household growth. For every new household formed since 1970, we’ve built three new homes.

Source: US Census, 2010
As we’ve built new homes, we’ve abandoned others in our central cities and inner ring suburbs.

The number of vacant housing units has more than tripled over the past 40 years.

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

Vacant Housing Units, 1970 vs. 2010

Single-family homes remain the dominant form of residential development.

From 2001 to 2011, 75% of building permits were for single family homes.

Source: HUD, 2001 - 2010
In 2010, 28% of our households were households with children.

Yet, less than a third of households today are families with children.

Source: US Census, 2010
Yet our homes are larger and larger – meaning more energy expended to heat and cool those bigger spaces.

Source: Erie and Niagara County GIS Tax Parcel Data
Since 1990, we’ve added

525+ miles

of new roads
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Lane Miles added Since 1990</th>
<th>Maintenance Cost Per Lane Mile</th>
<th>Total Cost of New Lane Miles of Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>$25,328</td>
<td>$25,667,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$16,166</td>
<td>$491,470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$26,000,000+ added annual tax burden

Roads built to accommodate new development over just the past 20 years cost us significantly.

Source: US Census, 1990, 2010; NYS Comptroller’s Office
On average, each person travels 10 miles further each day in 2010 than they did in 1970.

Source: GBNRTC, 2010
Because we've spread out, our transit system cannot cost-effectively connect workers to jobs and residents to destinations.

We spend more of our time and money driving and less time with our families, enjoying the great things this region has to offer.

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2013
More folks are turning to bicycles for transportation.

Workers commuting by bicycle has **DOUBLED** in the past decade.

Yet we have a larger highway, bridge and road infrastructure to maintain and care for.

**More than 525 new roads built since 1990**

Today, the region only grows about 38% of the fruits and vegetables we’d need to eat to follow the USDA healthy eating guidelines.

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2007
And there is less and less land on which to grow food, vegetables and other produce.

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2007
Since 1969 over 1250 working farms have closed.

On average, we’ve lost 33 farms every year over the past four decades.

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2007
Our factory-based economy has contracted, but activity in other sectors, such as healthcare, education and financial and professional services has grown.

Source: US Census and NYS Department of Labor, 1970 - 2010
Nearly a third of our region’s population is at least 55 years of age.

Source: US Census, 1930 - 2010
Jobs, schools, shopping, and housing are more spread out in a sprawling region.

Source: US Census, 1930 - 2010
While population change was stagnant over the past decade, immigrants and racial/ethnic minorities represent growing groups.

Source: US Census, 2000 - 2012
Despite the significant amount of hydropower we produce at Niagara Falls, our carbon footprint continues to grow.

60% of our electricity comes from fossil fuel sources

Our dependence on fossil fuels means our region’s carbon footprint continues to grow.

PUTTING YOUR CITIZEN PLANNER SKILLS INTO ACTION

“\textquote{I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts, and beer.}”

- Abraham Lincoln

\texttt{www.oneregionforward.org/sustainability-101}

One Region Forward GIS Mapping Toolkit \textit{Coming Soon}

US Census American FactFinder
Wrap Up

Materials available online
oneregionforward.org

Looking ahead to the next session

May 3rd: Coping with a Turbulent Age