Scenario Planning gives citizens an opportunity to ask “What if?” about how their community might change. During the previous Community Congress, One Region Forward asked residents from across Erie and Niagara counties to map what they want Buffalo Niagara to look like in 40 years.

**27 Workshops**

715 Maps

770 Participants

Participants at Workshops on the Road

**WHAT WE HEARD:**

1. Grow where we’ve already grown.
2. Build and protect walkable, livable communities.
3. Connect our region by expanding transportation options.
4. Protect farmland, parks, and natural areas.

**WHAT WE ASKED:**

1. What would you put new homes?
2. What would you protect?
3. Where would you put new jobs?
4. Where would you put new homes?

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How do these Alternative Scenarios impact our region?

**Grow Where We’ve Already Grown**

- Percent of New Homes in Developed Area: 37% (86%), 66% (88%)
- Percent of New Jobs in Developed Area: 64% (96%), 79% (92%)
- Homes Left Abandoned: 60,668 (12,548)
- New Jobs Brought Back to Former Industrial Sites: 1,551 (17,087), 15,996 (21,700)
- New Paved Surfaces (Acres): 15,785 (8,482), 6,578 (3,356)

**Build and Protect Walkable, Livable Communities**

- Percent of New Homes in Walkable Communities: 23% (81%), 69% (82%)
- Walkability (0-100): 22 (77), 67 (74)

**Connect Our Region by Expanding Transportation Options**

- Transit Proximity to New Homes: 1% (50%)
- Transit Proximity to New Jobs: 4% (72%)
- Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Per Capita: 22.7 (16.8)
- Lane Miles of New Road: 1,553 (261)

**Protect Farmland, Parks, and Natural Areas**

- Percent of Open Space Conserved from Development: 33% (84%), 79% (84%)
- Current and Potential Prime Farmland Lost to Development (Acres): 58,093 (4,591), 12,548 (5,311)
- Energy Savings Per Household (Compared to Existing Conditions): -2.4% (+3.2%), +1.2% (+2.7%)

**Maintain fiscally sound local governments**

- Total Tax Revenue of New Development: $11.9 Billion ($12.2 Billion), $11.0 Billion ($10.3 Billion)
- Total Cost to Build and Maintain Infrastructure of New Development: $18.8 Billion ($10.0 Billion), $11.9 Billion ($7.0 Billion)
- Cost to Revenue Ratio: -36.9% (+22.5%), -7.6% (+48.3%)

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**Why are these indicators important to moving One Region Forward?**

- When we build new homes and locate new jobs in already developed areas we preserve open space and farmland and avoid the cost of building new infrastructure.
- When we reinvest in existing communities – including housing rehabilitation – we avoid the high cost of demolition, preserve our tax base, and conserve embedded energy.
- Locating jobs on former “brownfields” preserves open space and farmland while we re-use land and buildings, save on infrastructure and build the tax base.
- Building more “impervious” surfaces – especially roads and parking lots – means more polluted runoff in our streams, more infrastructure to build and maintain, and more of the “urban heat island” effect.
- Building new homes in walkable communities helps us conserve land and makes neighborhoods safer, healthier and more accessible to work, school, shopping and recreation. It also helps transit work better.
- When high quality transit service is close to both homes and jobs the less we have to depend on cars to travel, the more energy we conserve and the less carbon we emit that is harmful to our climate. It’s easier for individuals to find and keep a job, too.
- Reducing how much we drive saves valuable time in our daily commutes, saves households money, conserves energy and reduces the size of our “carbon footprint.”
- The more roads we build to serve sprawling development the higher the cost to maintain them and the greater our tax burden.
- Protecting open space, prime farmland and environmentally-sensitive lands has multiple benefits: preserving scenic values, making our food system more secure, making fresh, healthy local food more readily available, and maintaining the “environmental services” and habitat that wetlands, stream corridors, woodlands and other open spaces provide.
- The more energy efficient our homes become and the more we conserve, the less harmful carbon emissions we produce and the more affordable it becomes to heat and cool our homes.