



Work Group Meeting Notes

Work Group Name: Smart Growth
Work Group Chair: Aaron Bartley
Meeting Date: August 31, 2011

Work Group Members Present: Aaron Bartley (PUSH, Work Group Chair, Council Member), Jeff Belt (SolEpoxy, Council Member), Sam Teresi (City of Jamestown Mayor, Council Member), Brendan Mehaffy (City of Buffalo – representing Council Member City of Buffalo Mayor Brown), George Grasser (Partners for a Livable WNY), Darren Kempner (Erie County DEP), Michael Clarke (Buffalo Local Initiatives Support Corporation), Peter Cammarata (Buffalo Urban Development Corp.), Paul McDonnell (Director of Facilities Buffalo Public Schools), Mary George (City of Olean Director of Community Development), Ben Bidell (Niagara County DED), Kristin Savard, P.E. (Advanced Design Group, Niagara County Builders Assn.), Keith Belanger (M&T Bank), Catherine Schweitzer (Baird Foundation), Allison Duwe (Coalition for Economic Justice), Lee Harkness (Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation), Mike Hoffert (Buffalo AFL-CIO Central Labor Council), Amy Weymouth (Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council – representing Kelly Dixon), Laura Smith (Buffalo Niagara Partnership), Carl Montante, Jr. (Uniland), John Cappellino (Erie County IDA), Greg Rabb (City of Jamestown Council President), Christina Orsi (ESD), Amy DeGaetano (DOS), Chris Grant (DOS – representing Kyle Wilbur), Lenny Skrill (NYS Housing & Community Renewal), Frank Billittier (DOT), Jim Strickland (DEC), J.C. Smith (EFC), Wendy Sanfilippo (Chautauqua County CCE)

Summary of Meeting:

The Smart Growth Work Group Chair, Aaron Bartley, opened the meeting by welcoming members and noting the WNY Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) has identified fostering Smart Growth as a key economic development priority. He stated that throughout the Council proceedings thus far, there has been broad consensus on the need for a more rational regional land-use framework, a strengthened public transportation system, and improvements to infrastructure that promote sustainable communities and vital business districts. The work group's charge is two-fold: to come up with criteria for analyzing project applications and to help draft the portion of the 5-year strategic plan that pertains to urban development, community development and infrastructure.

Introductions of work group members followed. The work group currently consists of 36 members – 4 Council Members, 23 community stakeholders, and 9 NYS agency resource staff. Members represent the entire WNY region and were chosen based on their expertise and diverse perspectives on smart growth issues.



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Next the Empire State Development Regional Director, Christina Orsi, gave a brief presentation on work group purpose, tasks and timelines. The work group will help the WNY REDC develop the strategies, priority projects, measurements and implementation plan related to smart growth. Work group input will be brought to the WNY REDC meetings by the Work Group Chair and Council Member, Aaron Bartley, as well as other council members participating on the work group. It is expected the work group will meet at least four more times by the end of October.

Through a facilitated discussion the work group identified the following regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to smart growth.

Strengths

- Affordable
- Infrastructure
- Downtowns Underdeveloped
- Waterfront
- Schools & Education

Weaknesses

- Sprawl
- Lack of Regional Plans
- Politically Driven Decision Making
- Poverty

Opportunities

- Cross Border Locations
- Water
- Growing Immigrant Population
- Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods

Threats

- Too Many Layers of Government
- Lack of Regional Thinking
- Expanding Infrastructure & Stagnant Growth
- Desperate for any development

This analysis will be used to form the basis for the regional strategies to be developed by the work group during the next meeting. Aaron Bartley will present these findings at the September 6th REDC meeting.

Several regional studies related to smart growth have been posted on the WNY REDC website: <http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/western-new-york> under Regional Strategies & Studies – Smart Growth heading. If work group members would like to share additional research, reports, or case studies, they may email documents to Kyle.Wilber@dos.state.ny.us for posting on the website.

The second Smart Growth Work Group meeting was set for Tuesday, September 13th – location and time to be determined.