

**Regional Council Meeting – September 10, 2012 3:00-6:00pm
Center for Tomorrow, University at Buffalo, Amherst Campus**

Date: September 10, 2012

Attendees: Howard Zemsky, Satish Tripathi, Christina Orsi, Robert Gioia, Robert Brady, Connie Vari, Dr. Rosa Gonzalez, Dr. Raul Vazquez, Jennifer Parker, Pamela Henderson, Paul Brown, Jeff Belt, Brenda McDuffie, Aaron Bartley, Dr. Charles Edmondson, Paul Pfeiffer on behalf of Thomas Kucharski, Andrew Rudnick, Duncan Ross, Colleen DiPirro, Rich Tobe on behalf of Mark Poloncarz, William Ross, Greg Edwards, Brendan Mehaffy on behalf of Mayor Byron Brown, Mayor Paul Dyster

Absent: David Porter, John Koelmel, Deanna Alterio Brennen, Crystal Abers, Curtis Crandall, Sam Teresi

- Co-Chair Howard Zemsky opened the meeting by reviewing WNY Regional Council progress over the past year and where the REDC is going. Howard recapped how the WNY REDC won \$100.3 million in state funding in 2011 and then an additional Buffalo Billion award, and now is advancing 2011 CFA projects, recommending projects for 2012 CFA funding and finalizing the planning stages of the Buffalo Billion.
- Christina Orsi reviewed how the REDC is creating a Buffalo Investment Development Plan. She discussed the emerging strategies and criteria that were used to select signature initiatives and reviewed the project timeline. [Reference the *Buffalo Investment Development Plan* Power Point]
- Christina Orsi then reviewed the specific strategies and initiatives that are being developed in the Buffalo Billion plan. These strategies have been narrowed down from a long list of opportunities based on a deep analysis of Buffalo’s assets and include: Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Science, Tourism, Workforce, Innovation & Infrastructure.
- In response to the Buffalo Billion strategy presentation:
 - Andrew Rudnick suggested that one of the Billion investment criteria stating, “Initiatives should react to resolve market failures that are barriers to growth” [reference slide 16 of *Buffalo Investment Development Plan* Power Point] seems misleading. The Buffalo Billion Plan needs to be clear about the importance of paying attention and responding to market trends, and how the market must dictate how the REDC will allocate resources.
 - Co-Chair Zemsky responded to these comments stating that the REDC has great respect for the free market and will be sure to clearly translate this into the Buffalo Billion Plan. Howard added that the REDC could induce funds or use available funds to accelerate

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progress and change/accelerate the trajectory of projects to more effectively enhance our regions strengths.

- Council members also mentioned that the REDC needs to be open-minded and use the Buffalo Billion Plan to build a vision of how we would like our region to enhance itself; we should also build on our renewable energy assets and be strategic in growing established districts.
- Jennifer Parker mentioned the opportunity WNY has to become a leader in establishing entrepreneurial opportunities for minorities. She emphasized how this opportunity must be further recognized and built into the framework of the Buffalo Billion plan.
- Co-Chair Zemsky responded to Jennifer stating that the plan is very inclusive and agreed there are opportunities for WNY to become a leader in establishing opportunities for minorities.
- Dr. Raul Vazquez stated the need to have more emphasis on inclusion in the initiatives in the Buffalo Billion plan.
- Christina Orsi reiterated that the purpose of the Buffalo Billion is to have a transformational impact, and initiatives like the Consolidated Funding Agreements may be a better avenue for some more specific projects.
- Christina Orsi stated that specific initiatives are in the process of being developed for the Buffalo Billion plan. These initiatives be discussed at the next open REDC meeting in November.
 - Assemblyman Robert Schimminger encouraged the Council to recognize the increase of wealth that could result to the regional economy by increasing the areas exports of manufactured goods. He questioned: Where our exports are going? Does our region fall short compared to cities of similar size in the amount of exports we have? What are our regions weaknesses and opportunities in exporting goods? And should we consider a specific initiative like “Buffalo Goes Global” to encourage the exporting of goods?
 - Robert Brady responded that exports depend on what you’re making, and how attractive what you are making is in the global market. Assemblyman Schimminger stated some local companies may not yet be thinking globally.

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- Mayor Dyster stated we should not take for granted the REDC's decision to stick to and build off of our regions strengths
- Co-Chair Zemsky stated there may be a cause for concern in the lack of skilled workers manufacturing companies have to choose from and how the REDC should help manufacturers find the skilled laborers they are looking for as manufacturing continues to evolve.
- Jeff Belt responded to previous comments stating that Buffalo has strong industry exports and 50% of our growth recently has occurred overseas. However, the ability to sell goods overseas takes a significant amount of initial investment capital and how this is a large barrier to local companies.
- A council member stated the REDC should look into how to help start-ups and how to connect the Buffalo Billion to problems around skilled manufacturers/laborers and the ability to export goods.
- Christina Orsi recapped the progress of 1st Round CFA Awardees and presented the slate of 2012 REDC Recommended Priority Projects. She emphasized how the priority projects are limited to those applicants who applied to ESD Grant Funds, which include only capital expenditures not working capital expenses.
- Laura Quebral from the University at Buffalo Regional Institute gave an update on the 2012 Draft Progress Report which is due to the Governor on Friday, September 14th. She stated the report emphasizes WNY's core strategies and industry sectors, and is built on community collaboration. The report then gives an update on each of the CFA projects that were funded in 2011 and recommends 21 projects to be funded with REDC Grant Funds and 3 projects to be funded with the Excelsior Job Program in 2012. She informed council members she will accept critique/updates to the progress report until 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 12th.
- Megan Daly updated the Council on statewide Regional Council news. She stated that right now that State Agencies are working to advance/expedite all 2011 CFA projects and how the success of these projects is being recorded on a public tracking site:
<http://www.nyscfaprojectdata.ny.gov/map/tracker>
- Ms. Daly also reminded council members that the Governor launched a new \$25 million program for broadband projects, the *Connect NY Broadband Fund*. Applications for this stream of funding are due by October 5th. Applicants who applied for broadband funding

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through the CFA process will automatically be transferred to the Broadband program application submission. More information on the broadband program can be found at: <http://nysbroadband.ny.gov/>

- Ms. Daly stated that this October/November the Governor's officials will be visiting every region in New York State, where each region will, in a public meeting, present their priority project recommendations and progress.
- The next step in the 2012 CFA Award process is review of all applications by a CFA Interagency Review Task Force. This panel of experts from across the state will coordinate funding to projects eligible for multiple funding streams. The panel will consider Council priorities and the competitive assessments of the Councils' Progress Reports when making funding recommendations. Panel members have yet to be determined however will likely be made up of last year's reviewers for consistency.
- The 2012 CFA Awardees should be announced by the Governor's officials Fall 2012.

Meeting was adjourned by Howard Zemsky at 5:15 p.m.