



Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan

Stakeholder Communities Plan Steering Committee Meeting #5 Detailed Agenda June 25, 2008

Topic – Educational Institutions

I. Introduction of Topic, Maps & Instructions (5 minutes)

The break out session will involve dividing the municipalities within the County into five (5) planning sub-region discussion groups. CHA will provide the list of municipalities in each group. Each group will include about 3 or 4 stakeholder community representatives and varying numbers (ideally about 4-6) of other stakeholder groups invited to participate in the discussions. Representatives of the ten public school districts, Niagara County Community College and Niagara University have been invited to this meeting. Ideally, each of the discussion groups will include at least one school district representative.

Each group will assign a leader, a note taker, and a spokesperson as has been done in previous meetings. Leaders will be responsible for making sure that the discussion stays on topic and schedule. CHA will facilitate each group's discussions as needed. Note takers need to accurately reflect what is discussed in the group and will be responsible for the lists described below. A spokesperson will be asked at the conclusion of the breakout session to summarize what was discussed and concluded in each group. **NOTE: Refer to the map provided that identifies school districts, libraries, and higher education institutions in the County.**

II. Break-out Session (total for this session 25 minutes)

Discussion Question #1 (20 minutes)

*Based on your experiences and knowledge of your community what do you consider to be the most pressing **issue or challenge** facing your community today **relative to educational institutions**? Do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and refer to some consideration points below to help with the discussion.*

Each group should provide the following:

- Create an overall list of the issues and challenges identified by your group.
- Identify the top three issues and challenges as voted on by your group that represent shared issues or challenges with other communities in your planning sub-region.

Some Points to Consider

1. How well do current educational facilities accommodate the school-aged population in terms of capacity? How well suited are they for changes in the school-aged population over the next 20 years? [Recent projections from Cornell University anticipate an overall decrease in the school-aged population in Niagara County by 2035 and school enrollment surveys compiled over the past 10 years indicate significant decreases in some of the cities, but gains in other school districts in the County.]
2. How familiar are you with Niagara County school districts' performance relative to English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science achievement standards? Do any achievements or shortcomings stand out? Does the school district in your community provide any special or enhanced educational programming that may not be provided in other school districts? If so, what types of programs are offered?
3. School district consolidation has been mentioned repeatedly throughout this process as being needed to reduce the tax burden. Is this an issue in your community? Points to consider include:
 - Consolidation may mean greater distance from school facilities for some students, if consolidation results in school closures.
 - Per student expenditures do not appear to be above statewide averages in any of the Niagara County school districts.
 - Merging districts may mean that the consolidated district is able to provide more programs / activities than either could alone.
4. Are any capital improvements needed, planned, or being made in your community relative to educational facilities, including school districts and community-wide facilities? If so, what types of improvements?
5. Does your community need better access to:
 - Educational facilities (e.g. libraries, computer centers, etc.)?
 - Higher education (colleges/universities)?
 - Workforce development programs (e.g., Orleans/Niagara BOCES, Niagara County Employment and Training, etc.)?
 - Other facilities or programs?

Discussion Question #2 (5 minutes)

*What is the most significant **asset or opportunity** that currently exists in your community **relative to educational institutions**? Again, do not consider your sub-region at this time, only your community and consider the same points above.*

Each group should provide the following:

- Create an overall list of the assets and opportunities identified by your group.
- Identify the top three assets and opportunities as voted on by your group that represent shared assets and opportunities with the other communities in your planning sub-region.

III. Reconvene as a Group to Summarize Discussions (45 minutes)

The Plan Steering Committee members and invited stakeholders will reconvene at the end of the breakout session. Each of the five groups will be asked to provide a summary of their discussions, conclusions reached, and the lists of issues and opportunities that each group created. After each group has summarized their discussions, the Steering Committee members and stakeholders will discuss the common issues and opportunities among the communities and the five planning sub-regions.