



Public Information Meeting #2 Meeting Notes

DATE: April 23, 2008
PLACE: Niagara County Community College, Faculty Dining Room, G212
TIME: 7:00 – 9:00PM

ATTENDEES: Clough Harbour & Associates planners, Peter Young from Community Oriented Geography, community representatives, and members of the general public.

PURPOSE: To provide an update on the planning process and to introduce the computer software (*CommunityViz*) that will be used to model land use changes, population growth, changing infrastructure and service demands, and other trends. The first portion of the meeting consisted of presentations by Walt Kalina, Project Manager, and Peter Young of Community Oriented Geography. The second portion of the meeting was an “open house” in the Niagara County Community College cafeteria, where maps summarizing existing conditions in the county were on display.

MINUTES:

- 1. Project Status Update:** Project Manager Walt Kalina provided an update on the status of the Comprehensive Plan. This included a brief review of the Plan’s five focus elements, the location of plan-related materials online through Niagara County’s website at www.niagaracounty.com/comprehensiveplan.asp, an overview of the information collected as part of Phase I (Existing Conditions – Chapter III) and a description of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping that has been compiled to date. The mapping was available for public review during the second half of the meeting. The results of the work done in Phase I relative to Existing Conditions - Chapter III, including the text intended to accompany the GIS maps, will be made available later in May.
- 2.** The project has now advanced into Phase II, analyzing the data and trends related to the five focus areas of the plan. The analysis portion of the project will include development of goals and objectives, followed by recommendations and strategies for achieving those goals and objectives, for each of the five focus elements in the plan.
- 3. CommunityViz Presentation:** Peter Young of Community Oriented Geography introduced the GIS-based analysis software (*CommunityViz*) that will provide decision-making support to the planning process. Examples presented included farmland growth and loss (conversion) trends, an analysis of development patterns along stream corridors, a summary of where commercial and industrial land uses were gained and lost between 2002 and 2007, and a summary of how the County’s projected 2030 population might

affect the cost of providing services to elderly residents. The preliminary farmland conversion analysis, for example, indicates that land being converted from farmland into other uses is being offset to a large degree by conversion of other land into farmland – most likely lands being converted into vineyards or cropland (to “feed” ethanol plants) due to rising demand for these commodities, as pointed out by a member of the public attending the meeting.

- 4.
5. **Open House Session:** After the formal presentations, the meeting adjourned to the cafeteria, where visual stations were available for public review. Visual stations consisted of nearly two dozen maps showing land use, environmental features, and general information about Niagara County communities such as major employers, public infrastructure, population and housing characteristics, etc. Members of the Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan project team were on hand to answer questions and take comments about progress to date. In general, comments received on the mapping effort were very favorable and several individuals asked if and when these maps would be placed on the project website for public access. All project GIS mapping presented will be placed on the website within the next few weeks.
6. A brief two-page comment sheet / questionnaire was available for meeting attendees to fill out, as a means of providing feedback on the planning process. Approximately 20 questionnaires were returned to the consultants at the end of the public meeting and from an earlier Plan Steering Committee meeting the same day. The results of the questionnaire will be used to gain a better understanding of planning related issues and opportunities in Niagara County communities as well as to gauge the level of information people have received on the planning process.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:00PM.