

Monroe County Sub-Regional Forum
Thursday, March 12, 2015
Ebenezer Watts Conference Center, 2pm - 5pm

Moderator: Greg Albert, Senior Planner, G/FLRPC
Notetaker: Tom Kicior, Senior Planner, G/FLRPC

Attendees:

Rochelle Bell, Monroe County Planning
Diana Rapp, Visit Rochester
Peter Pecor, Rochester Works, Inc.
Paul Gee, Village of Scottsville
Andy Harlan, RIT-CIMS
Matt Chatfield, Webster Economic Development
Mark Assini, Town of Gates
David Zorn, G/FLRPC

General thoughts:

- IMCP has a plan, we need to include that and some of the priorities that are within that plan
- Need to think regionally and prioritize what goals/objectives are common between all Counties.
- Review of the LWRP completed plans should be high priority as they have goals and projects included. LWRP's also include an overlap of a number of categories/priorities listed.
- Being able to utilize matching funds from different sources is a priority, such as utilizing state funding to meet federal match requirements.

Brownfields

- Xerox Wilson campus brownfields are important, Xerox has a handle on it, but there is a good amount of land that can be utilized
- Scottsville sites – one was just oil spilled
- Cooper Vision one was a chemical spill underneath the parking lot that they are watching
- Both Scottsville sites are just being monitored
- Should review BOA projects thoroughly as they can provide information on additional projects rather than trail studies, which are focused on one project.
- Vacuum Oil is a high priority for the city/neighborhood development/waterfront development
- BOA projects are important, but much needed funding has been cut

Economic development

- Economic development, employment and workforce development are extremely important and top priorities
- We need to focus on business retention – we do a good job with startup and attraction but not retention

- GRE serves as entity for attraction, need an organization focused on retention
- Example: Cooper Vision – manufacturing in Scottsville, but they also moved some/expanded to Henrietta.
- Example: Ameritherm – up-and-coming heat company – has almost left a few times (because of power consumption) (also because of water treatment). They needed to get power from Niagara Mohawk etc. Now they also have to pay for the amount of water they are using and are recycling it.
- Potential connection with P2i to create strategy for energy savings
- Economic development – if public funds are spent on grants/programs they should have a positive effect on economic development
- Think regionally – make sure we keep major businesses in the region. Meet with these companies and find out what they need in order to stay
- Need a regional approach for economic development
- Need businesses to support tax base
- Need to utilize all of the Higher Education schools
- There is a lack of incentive to attract/retain some companies
- High cost of energy can be an issue
- Farming – need improved infrastructure (utility lines/telecommunications) in the rural areas for expansion
- Food processing industry is very important, could see some expansion, opportunities with availability of water
- Build economic development opportunities around the food system.
- Xerox in Webster – retention, could some of the buildings be reused, etc. Would be good to have funding to put a strategy together
- Small local business development is a priority for villages and neighborhoods

Downtowns

- Center City Master Plan is being finalized
- Scottsville is doing some zoning work now, implementation is difficult because they are lacking resources, and a lot of progress is done by volunteers. They need assistance with implementation

Tourism

- Visit Rochester - Goal in tourism – Hotels – heads in beds – how can these strategies attract visitors? Projects that will increase tourism are priorities, determining how they will affect visitor numbers
- Webster – travel sports are a major economic development option, not only in Webster but throughout the Region.
- Visit Rochester has staff at the Bill greys ice plex for events to give people recommendations on other places that they could visit
- Can partner with the sports commission to identify additional events with out of Town visitors at them
- Supply welcome bags for new visitors like parents
- Can we define the impact of these visits? Need a study that tells us what the impacts are. Colleges could play a role in conducting a study.

- Trail system is increasing throughout the state – “the greenway” need to find out how to capitalize on that. They have the assets, how do they take advantage of that.
- Highland Park is an important asset to both visitors and local residents

Natural Resources and Energy

- Cold water project in Webster a priority
- Scottsville is working on a solar project, but are having an issue with national grid and the rate of pay for returning electricity back to the system.
- Scottsville wants to do LED lights on Main Street and need funding for energy efficiency funding (LEDs on main street, solar power, etc)
- NYSERDA grant programs are an option for energy projects
- Agriculture Environmental Management is important – excellent road map for what to do to improve farms to use better practices and BMPs, but never enough funding, can use more to use the program more

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure is aging in many towns and needs repair/upgrades
- Webster – east side water treatment plan needs improvements to capacity
- There is a lack of funding for projects that look into infrastructure
- What is the capacity of the infrastructure in specific locations? (electric, water, sewer, etc).
- There might be places that are being held back by lack of infrastructure
- Scottsville sewage treatment plant closed – weren’t able to do upgrades to keep it open; they send sewage to Monroe county now
- Opportunities for matching funds for infrastructure and transportation projects to reduce burden on local communities.
- Sewage systems are a priority, and stormwater

Buildings and housing

- One of the issues is that the seniors have trouble taking care of their house, and sometimes they are forced to leave the community to go to a centralized senior housing place
- Senior housing perhaps should not be all in one spot but rather scattered
- Funding for maintenance is important – some matching funds for repairs, helps the economy, preservation, can prevent vacancy, demo, etc.
- Green building policy hasn’t been as successful as anticipated
- We should include info on the Rstore NY program related to the restoration of old buildings
- Maintenance and rehab of the existing houses and buildings is important for municipal/neighborhood development. There used to be more programs focused on rehab/renovations. NYS Main Street program is very important but funding has been cut in recent years.
- Crerand Commons is critical project for the Town of Gates and the City of Rochester.

Other

- Monroe County All Hazard Mitigation Plan -The County Hazard plan will identify projects, some may be eligible for State/Federal Funding
- Health and life expectancy is important