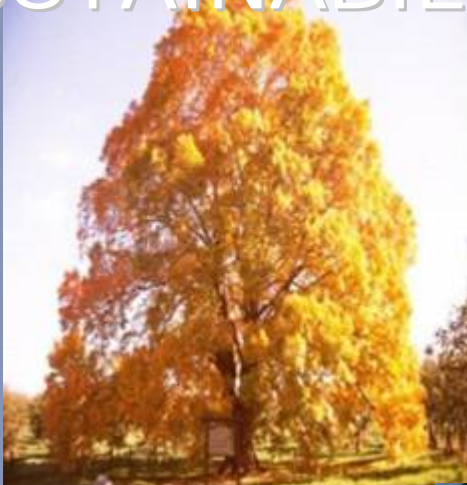


NIAGARA'S INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING JOURNEY



Patrick Robson

Objectives

Smarter Niagara as the catalyst for the journey

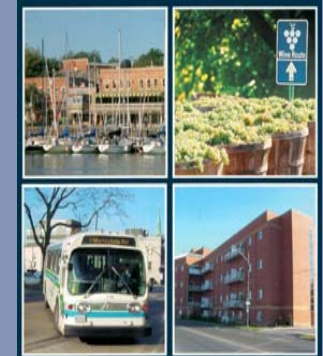
Assessing the Region of Niagara against the Melbourne Principles

Outline how the Region is working towards community sustainability via Niagara 2031

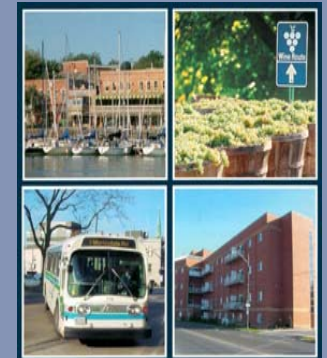
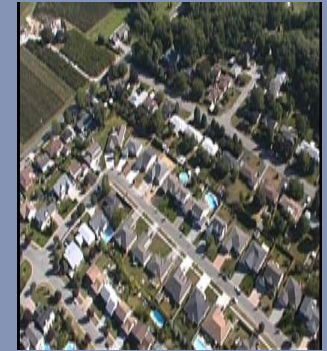


Background

- As Council's Business Plan has evolved, there have been many important accomplishments
 - Efforts relative to Smart Growth, transportation planning, early years development and many more examples
 - *Smarter Niagara* – Summits and evolution towards overall sustainability



Background, cont'd...



- *Smarter Niagara* – very successful Brownfields and urban revitalization incentives; agricultural viability via Task Force (Greenbelt Plan, Ag. Action Plan and Vineland Research); forum for ‘thought leadership’
- This evolution lead to Niagara getting the attention of Environment Canada, an agency taking a lead on promoting sustainability in Canada’s communities

Melbourne Principles



Principle 1: Provide a long-term vision for cities based on sustainability; intergenerational, social, economic and political equity; and their individuality.

Principle 2: Achieve long-term economic and social security.

Principle 3: Recognize the intrinsic value of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and protect and restore them.

Principle 4: Enable communities to minimize their ecological footprint.

Principle 5: Build on the characteristics of ecosystems in the development and nurturing of healthy and sustainable cities.

Principle 6: Recognize and build on the distinctive characteristics of cities, including their human and cultural values, history and natural systems.

Principle 7: Empower people and foster participation.

Principle 8: Expand and enable co-operative networks to work towards a common sustainable future.

Principle 9: Promote sustainable production and consumption, through the appropriate use of environmentally sound technologies and effective demand management.

Principle 10: Enable continual improvement, based on accountability, transparency and good governance.

Process Followed

- Inventory of Accomplishments
- Affinity Diagrams for Council Goals
- Smarter Niagara Summits
- Community Engagement





“It isn’t in the Plan, it’s in the Planning.”
-Sir Winston Churchill

Inventory of ‘Good Stuff’ – ‘04

- **15 Comprehensive initiatives / projects / activities**
- **Regional Policy Plan**
- **Federal Affordable Housing Initiative**
- **Opportunities Niagara**
- **Water Quality Protection Strategy**

Inventory of ‘Good Stuff’ – Post’04

- **Economic Growth Strategy**
- **Arts, Culture & Heritage**
- **Obesity Prevention Strategy**
- **Endorse ‘Resilient Places’ report**
- **‘Triple Majority’ for specialized transit, Region - wide**

Inventory – Post'04 cont'd

- **Historic Places in Niagara Summit**
- **Bi-national Summit '06 – One Region, Two Niagaras, Our Shared Future**
- *Smarter Niagara* investments - \$1M
- **LEED Designation, Headquarters**
- **1st Place, International Awards for Livable Communities – Glenridge Naturalization Site**

Inventory of Performance Measurement Initiatives

- Effective planning tools
- Mix of qualitative and quantitative
- Feed integrated Business Planning Cycle
- Measurement is key to New Deal \$ - results have to be measurable

Inventory of Performance Measurement Initiatives cont...

- OMBI and MPMP
- FCM - Quality of Life Survey
- Quality of Work Life Survey
- Community Consultation
- Ecological Footprints



Identifying Challenges

“She wondered why everything had to be so damn hard, so damn mysterious...except it was the human condition, wasn’t it? The answers that mattered never came easily” -Stephen King

➤ Local Service Realignment

➤ Financial wherewithal 8% taxes collected supplies 60% services

➤ Connecting to Federal Programs

➤ International Border

➤ NAFTA and the EU

Identifying Challenges

- **Definition** – What does ‘Sustainability’ actually mean? Ask your spouse or partner!
- **‘Integration’** – easy concept to embrace, much harder to do – curious, since it’s a verb
- **‘Community Engagement’** – how do we generate common language and the opportunities for regular, meaningful input?
- **Telling, Asking and Listening** are all very different skills

Identifying Challenges

- **Constitution – needs to be understood in terms of today’s intergovernmental realities – an enabler, not inhibitor**
- **Institutional and discipline-based slowest common denominators: “But they were missing plenty now...Because bureaucracy trumps creativity...” (Jonathan Kellerman)**
- **Internal integration often harder than external (e.g. Eco-program)**
- **“Good news is no news” – we don’t celebrate well**

Lessons Learned

Recognizes Municipal Government as an order of Government

Long term planning means being able to vision long term – amidst very immediate priorities

Use sustainability framework to build relationship with senior government

Take advantage of opportunities to build connected and supportive strategies with other communities

Lessons Learned cont..

- Strengthen it's Bi-National connection
- Areas of readiness
- Large Sustainability Policy Direction
- Systematic Community Engagement
- Collaboration not competition



Actions Underway and Pending

- **Defined the Balanced Scorecard approach to track sustainability progress**
- **Created Community Relations Framework Commit to the institution of an ongoing community consultation plan**
- **Continue Council Business Plan-based efforts – Culture Plan, climate change, Bi-national planning and cooperation, value-added activities on farm and local food**

Actions...cont'd...

- Share what we've learned and continue to learn from others – PLUS Network, FCM
- Engage health and education sectors *systematically* in community planning efforts – e.g. Vancouver Urban Observatory – SFU
- Review of the Planning Function – strategic vs. administrative – beyond land use
- Niagara 2031 – using MetroQuest, surveys and Places to Grow as inputs – double as Sustainability Plan

Actions...cont'd...

- **Growth Management – using MetroQuest, surveys and Places to Grow as inputs – double as Sustainability Plan**
- **Bi-national Planning – Environmental alignment project and 200 Years of Peace**
- **Niagara Observatory**

Actions...cont'd...

- **Summit 2007 – ‘Four Pillars of a Complete Niagara: Building from a *Blueprint for an Even Better, Smarter Niagara***
- **Topics included: following up on bi-national planning progress; growth management (incl. MetroQuest roll-out and Niagara’s place in the broader Great Lakes renewal); evolving efforts on social equity and culture; and, transportation**

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA



Growth Management Process includes:

- Determining how the Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement best fits in Niagara
- Defining and understanding implications of Economic Gateway Zone & Centre and build on applications of smart growth (e.g. directing growth to urban areas, Brownfields)
- Securing community buy-in of concepts like intensification and what trade-offs must be made between growth and viable agriculture
- Determining how peninsula-wide transit fits in

The Journey continues...

- Niagara 2031 website, including NiagaraQuest on-line – 3000+ hits
- Anticipating Niagara
- Selecting a sustainable growth option through several lenses in concert – environmental (incl. agric. Protection), social equity, economic transformation, cultural amenities and values, urban form, etc - Summer '08...Stay tuned...

www.regional.niagara.on.ca/Niagara-2031

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UP FRONT

- What to do if you missed garbage collection on January 30
- artsVest Niagara Public Art Program
- Driven to Quit Challenge
- Lead in Drinking Water
- The Poverty Report
- Niagara 2031**
- Wainfleet Boil Water and Infrastructure Servicing Information

QUICK LINKS

Go to...

Mark Hopley of Fort Erie took this photo of the bike path at the Buffalo Road crossing in Fort Erie after a freezing rain.

