

**Comments Received
City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan
March 22, 2007**

1. Are there additional strategies that you would like to see included with the goals and if so, what are they?

The single most critical issue, affordable housing for our year-round workforce, is clearly laid out in the planning document. What is needed now is recognition by city and county government that they must play a role in making housing feasible (declare revitalization zones, support inclusion of affordable units in developments).

We need to find a way to encourage people to bring more retail downtown. As they say variety is the spice of life. Continue work with Main St. Assoc. Maybe retail education?

I would like to see the county planning & city planning working closer together.

Catch basins in Hilly Dev.

Water – require developers to plan a water supply sufficient for household needs as well as fire fighting. Open spaces – require a percentage of the development (i.e. 30%) to be saved for open spaces, parks, trails, greenbelts.

I am concerned that the Trails map was not ready to be included in the presented “boards” w/o support of Jeremy Grimm, my fear is that the Buffalo Trails Committee [map will] “not be ready” to be included and will not be acted upon as part of the plan.

As a result of Jeremy Grimm leaving, I hope the proposed expansion to the Buffalo area trails system is not dropped.

a. As noted, water is a concern in the area. At present it appears that the city is accepting future responsibility for provision of water to a growing population and passing on the cost to current residents. This subsidization of developers needs to be addressed.

Having met with developers of one of the proposed subdivisions, I am certain that the primary reason development is happening so rapidly in Buffalo is that much of the cost for development is being borne by local citizens. The developer made no apologies for the fact that Buffalo with its current rules and regulations makes it an ideal spot to make money. The developer referred to the fact that he was here to make money and would be leaving the area once the subdivision infrastructure was complete. He had no concern for the community beyond the time it took to complete the development. He also was very open about his expectations for the community to provide new service mains to his proposed development.

The addition of water storage capacity does not deal with the issue of water availability. City water rights were mentioned in the report and therein lies the real concern. Without water, existing properties will have no value-nor will new developments. Developers should have to meet one of two criteria: 1) Be responsible for providing water in their respective developments, be it wells or purchase of water rights and the necessary provisions for water treatment, or 2) purchase water rights on behalf of the city in an amount that would cover the projected use of the development. The city would, in turn, provide the treatment and maintenance of the water system once the development is completed.

b. The city should have a comprehensive fee schedule that developers know about prior to the planning stage. Developers should have to pay a percentage of the aggregate fees prior to any site work being done. The remainder of the fees should be due as the development progresses (e.g. 10% prior to commencement of the development, additional 15% on completion of the earthwork, etc.)

c. Developers should have to submit a plan based on the planning commission's guidelines rather than having the developer create the plan as desired and then go before the planning commission and tell the commission what the developer is going to do. Since the city has permitted development planning to go ahead prior to annexation or notice to the public; there has been little or no community input into new development.

2. Do you have comments regarding the future land use and transportation map for the Buffalo area?

Downtown parking and ease of passage of very large trucks needs to be addressed. In modification of heavy truck routes is also useful for large motor home and travel trailer traffic.

We need to address the traffic at the corners of Hart & By-Pass Road and So. Main & By-Pass. (Safety)

Need stoplights at the corner of _____ & Old Hwy 87 as well as Hart & By-Pass Road.

I think the need for an additional traffic light at the intersection of By-Pass & Hart (@
crossroads) should be researched (before students create some tragedy)

I am concerned about allowing narrower street width.

Through st to connect vacant area for expansion.

Find ways to route traffic to main roads, leaving neighborhoods safe, quiet & appealing
to live in. Developers should be responsible for routing their traffic directly to main roads
rather than into/through settled neighborhoods. The financial interests of developers
should not take precedence over the concerns of Buffalo's current residents.

a. There was a failure to include trails, parks, and greenbelts in the plan displayed March
22. Hopefully, this is an oversight that will be quickly remedied. My fear is that we will
see another example of "out of sight, out of mind." Unless the trails, parks, and
greenbelts are specifically located, development can claim lack of knowledge of the
need for such resources and not include them as part of the plan for development. One
of the comments was about how to maintain environment. A major characteristic of small
towns is the interaction of people and the easy access to all areas of the community.
Easy access to all parts of the community and friendly neighborhood environments do
not happen without planning. I would also suggest that sidewalks and trails are two very
different fabrications; the sidewalk being an avenue of business while a trail is an
avenue of neighborliness and getting to know others.

b. It appears that the report supports increasing the housing density dramatically in
Buffalo. Mixed-use development, multi-family units in residential neighborhoods,
caretaker units available for rent, and granting density bonuses to developers are all
designed to increase the density of housing. Having seen what the results are of
increased housing density permits, I am certain the quality of life and the quality of the
neighborhoods would be adversely affected. This flies in the face of the stated objective
of keeping the small-town character of Buffalo intact.

c. Not knowing what is meant by the suggestion for mixed-use development, I can only
caution that this can have negative impact on an existing neighborhood, especially if the
type of business is not controlled. For example, a body shop in the midst of a residential
neighborhood definitely impacts the quality of life in that neighborhood.

3. Other comments about the draft plan?

It is a good start. As with all plans and studies, the proof is in the doing. I encourage forward thinking as outlined plan.

Excellent/well presented.

Businesses would stay open longer as would Movie Theater if the traffic could bear it - _____ now downtown shuts down w/exception of Deerfield, Occidental & Century Club & Steakhouse. STOP SMOKING at pool & play areas in park!!!!

The plan is very well done.

The Map showing future plans for trails, greenways and open spaces needs to be included in the master/comprehensive plan before it is distributed publicly. I fear it will be left out & overlooked.

Water supply in/to subdivisions is a concern. How about including that subdivisions have to provide their own water via a well for the subdivision (ala _____, WY.)?

Concerned that city not providing water to subdivisions for fire fighting.

What I saw at the exhibit did not appear to be a plan for community development. As far as I could see there was no plan being put forth but rather a re-statement of issues identified through the community survey. Identifying issues and then stating that they need to be addressed in no way constitutes a comprehensive plan. I saw no creation of a task force, no prioritization of issues, no strategic plans, no action plans, etc. It is easy to identify problems and at this point that is all I see; yet, we see the term "comprehensive Plan" attached to the exhibit. Let's hold off on saying there is a plan until there is really such an item.

[] = assumed language
_____ = not legible

Additional comments received after Open House

I am an absentee homeowner (I rent the house to others) from Buffalo who intends to (semi-)retire to Buffalo in about 10 years. I currently reside in the Denver metro area.

I am glad to see a planning process taking place in & around Buffalo, WY.

I think that consideration should be given to a “development envelope” around Buffalo to limit the development of ranches, winter range, and rural properties. This concept has seen success in Nevada and Arizona, where “stepped-down” development zones keep most building & development “in-town” with a core, downtown area, surrounding residential areas, defined “industrial” and “commercial” development areas surrounded by ranches, public lands, and open space.

One approach to accomplishing this has been land acquisition by government(s). Another has been purchasing development “rights”. A third has been purchasing conservation easements.

Communities that have adopted this “envelope” approach have (to some degree) been able to avoid the sprawl that is taking place along the front range in Colorado. These communities have also managed to maintain the character, vitality, and market value of their downtown areas.

Another very important element for Buffalo to consider as a high priority is green space & alternative transportation. Buffalo should continue to develop walking & biking corridors that radiate from their downtown and public (schools, parks, government buildings if they move) amenities out into neighborhoods. Developments should be required to include bike paths & walking paths along roads & through subdivisions as “open space corridors” to better connect these neighborhoods with the core of Buffalo. The current infrastructure of parks & trails should be enhanced by closing selected alley ways and keeping paved bike/hike trails through the resulting greenspace. One example of such a closure would be alleyways along Clear Creek connecting the ball fields & Washington Park to Mainstreet (across the river from the occidental). This alley should be abandoned & turned into city-owned greenspace with the trail through it. Additional trails should be built to link the new HS to downtown. Expand the linkages & trails on National Forest in the immediate vicinity of Buffalo to connect with this “core” trail system in town.

In addition to being known for the trees in town, begin to plan for Buffalo as being known for the “walking & biking” opportunities for both daily transport as well as recreation & exercise.

Good luck with the continued planning effort. I hope that I want to “retire” to Buffalo in 10 years, and don’t return only to want to sell my house!

I enjoyed talking with you at the Open House. One other thought came to me that I would like to address.

It is mentioned in the plan to allow more multi-unit housings in residential areas. Obviously, the proponents of this concept do not live adjacent to, or across from, an apartment house! I have yet to see an apartment house that has adequate parking spaces allocated for its tenants, let alone their visitors—who sometimes seem to “visit” for months!

In the Buffalo of today, many apartments are rented to construction workers that bring company vehicles home at night. Many tenants have two primary vehicles and trailers for all their “toys”, such as boats, snowmobiles, 4-wheelers, etc. One or two spaces allocated for each apartment is not adequate for its tenants, let alone their visitors.

If multi-family residences are permitted in a residential area, tenants should be restricted to parking only within the development, and not on the public streets—including in front of the single-family residences. Many apartment tenants park in front of other residences, even when there are available spaces within the apartment complex. The apartment developer should be required to provide adequate off-site parking for the excess vehicles and trailers that their project created. Anything short of that will be a major problem for many years to come.

Road Maintenance and Construction

Narrow streets that are permitted now will not accommodate future expansion beyond that subdivision, when that happens—and it will. It’s a case of save now, but pay dearly later. Please don’t fall into that trap!

Two (legal) eight feet wide vehicles, parked within one foot of the curb will take up 16-18 feet of the street. An eight feet wide emergency vehicle should have at least ten feet of width to pass safely through. A 22 feet wide street would hardly be wide enough even for a motorcycle to pass through! Please stay with a minimum of 34 feet in width for all new streets.

Future Transportation Plan

The proposal to connect Klondike Road to Old Highway 87 south of Buffalo is a great idea—but not worth much if it is restricted to “horse & buggy” speeds. It should be constructed and maintained as a 30 mph by-pass road. Buffalo needs more “thoroughfare” streets, not less.

Transportation Recommendations

The Comprehensive Plan seems to change parking restrictions to allow more on-street parking. I disagree. In high density housing areas, and elsewhere, residents are already parking in front of other resident’s properties, either because they have too many vehicles and “toys”, or just because they are just too lazy to park in their own parking areas. On my street, within a one block area, there are sometimes up to nine vehicles parked on the street. More than one half of them are parked as long term storage, and

more than one half of them are stored in front of other resident's properties. The City of Buffalo's present ordinance restricting on-street parking to 48 hours is seldom enforced. The change in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan would make the situation much worse, not better.

In winter, these "abandoned" vehicles cause snow drifting that creates snowdrifts and ice dams, causing runoff water to flow out into the street, rather than down the gutters. On steeper slopes, the whole street can become a sheet of ice—which would have never happened if the gutters were able to do their job. In the summer, the street sweeper cannot properly keep the streets free of dirt and dust.

Low rent or "affordable" housing may sound good, but is not going to happen unless the housing project is subsidized by the taxpayers. A builder has to be able to make a profit from his investment. "Trailer Parks and Trailer Houses" may have a bad connotation, but they are a viable option for first time homeowners and those with lower incomes.

"Manufactured" homes are still trailer houses by another name, and they will lower the value of adjacent "stick-built" or modular houses. They should be placed in areas that are developed for that purpose. Buffalo needs a few more well-developed trailer parks.

The following letter to the editor was sent as an addition to the above comments: (Appearing in the Sheridan Press, Opinions section)

What happened to 'starting small' and working way up in housing?

Editor:

Being afflicted with "fogey-itis" seems to put me out of touch with current values.

Friday I responded to some comments on "Public Pulse" about "affordable" housing by pointing out that people were happy at one time to have a 12-by-24 frame house to call home.

A gentleman called to say, "Yes, but the houses were furnished by the coal company for little or no rent". And that is true, but he totally missed my point.

Many of those houses were moved to Sheridan, and with little or no modification, people are still living in them today!

Those houses are no crystal palace by any imaginary stretch, but they are a place to start. We know a young couple who both work and pay \$900 per month to rent a trailer house, and they pay utilities!

If a person could stand to live in less palatial surroundings, say \$350 to \$450 per month, eat put less, and forgo expensive toys, perhaps he could save enough for a down payment on something better.

Few people nowadays seem to want to operate that way, and so they are a slave to an endless cycle of encumbering themselves with more "stuff" than they can afford.

“Poverty” in this country at this time means living with only one TV set with all of the attendant accessories instead of one in each room plus several stereo systems, one-car more than 10 years-old, instead of two cars either new or less than two years old, cooking at home six days a week instead of eating out six days a week buying clothes at Wal-Mart instead of a fashion store, still getting by with a corded phone instead of a cell phone for every member of the house, and using the computer at the library instead of a laptop or PC with high-speed connections at home.

Except for a short time in California during World War II, we lived in frame houses similar-to the 12-by- 24 cottages I mentioned until 1955.

We packed water in buckets and made use of the good old outhouse. Mom and Dad talked about scrimping and saving so that one day we could live the American dream.

As far as I am concerned, I was already living it. We had a freedom and happiness that all our town-dwelling cousins envied.

And you know the amazing thing? I never once considered us as “poor.” I thought we were the luckiest people on earth!

Whatever happened to starting small and working your way up?
