

GBNRTC

Newsletter for the GREATER *BUFFALO-NIAGARA* REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Metropolitan Planning Organization For Erie and Niagara Counties



GBNRTC to manage ride-sharing program

“Good Going,” an advanced computer program, is being launched by the GBNRTC this fall to allow commuters and others to find thrifty transportation alternatives.

The federally funded program is designed not only to address congestion and air-pollution issues but to offer relief from the high cost of fuel. It will be managed by the GBNRTC under contract to Ecology and Environment, Inc., an international firm with its national headquarters in Lancaster.

Executive Director Hal Morse of GBNRTC noted that 81.7 percent of 520,350 people who commute to work in the Buffalo-Niagara region drive alone.

Good Going’s GIS (Geographic Information System) technology provides a map for each user’s locality that can be used not only to find other potential ride sharers in the neighborhood but also highlights public transit in the locality. In addition, it will provide information on walking and bicycling accommodations, such as Blue Bicycle rental facilities.

And it will give the GBNRTC detailed statistics on usage, savings and environmental improvement.

It’s designed as a tool toward reducing the region’s summer ozone pollution. Emissions from motor vehicles have also been cited as a major source of carbon dioxide, regarded as the major reason for “climate change,” an emerging focal point in the state’s energy plan.

The high cost of fuel adds a timely incentive for commuters and their employers to take advantage of the award-winning computer program that E & E has developed in about a dozen other areas across the nation.

One of the users, the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) in Colorado, reported a 400 percent increase over four months in registered users of the E & E program, known there as SmartTrips, as a result of surging fuel prices.

Catherine Fallin, a spokesman for NFRMPO, added that demographic projections for the region, north of

Denver, indicate that if current trends continue the problem of “congestion will become overwhelming on the major corridors.”

The program uses GIS technology to pinpoint a potential carpooler’s start and destination locations. A sophisticated algorithm combines location with user preferences to produce potential carpooling partners for the user to contact. It allows for matches on the basis of the day of the week or gender or smoking habits, for example. At the same time, the system is designed to provide maximum privacy for its users.

Major employment entities in the region are being contacted by the GBNRTC as a first step toward spreading the word. Morse noted that the system has the potential for improving ability to recruit and retain employees, reducing parking needs as well other potential economic advantages.

The GBNRTC is the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) that coordinates transportation planning and projects in Erie and Niagara Counties.

Fourth Quarter 2006

- GBNRTC to manage ride-sharing program
- A search for gateway to opportunity
- CSX prepares for ‘Feeder Port’ in Seneca Yard
- Human Services Plan targets growing elderly population
- Steps toward a regional framework
- Regional census estimates for 2005

This newsletter was prepared with the financial assistance of the U.S. Department of Transportation. However, the contents represent only the view of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the review or approval of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

A search for gateway to opportunity

The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is launching an in-depth evaluation into how the region can use its growing potential as a gateway for freight transportation to take advantage of a changing global economy.

Executive Director Hal Morse noted that “the strategic position of the region, adjacent to the economic heart of Canada, and as connector between East and Midwest economic hubs, offers both challenges and opportunities reminiscent in a way of the promise realized in the heydays of the Erie Canal.”

The study is being coordinated by Senior Transportation Analyst Rich Guarino, working with a Steering Committee that includes Ken Swanekamp, director of business assistance for Erie County; Sam Ferraro, executive director of the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, and Steve Slavick, director of policy and strategic planning for of the New York State Department of Transportation.

John Cappelino, director of business development and marketing for Erie County Industrial Development Agency, is also on the committee. He is a coordinator in the CSX Corp. railroad project to upgrade the Seneca Yard to serve as a “feeder port” for container traffic from the Port of New York and New Jersey. Opportunities for warehousing and light industry are associated with the “feeder port” role.

A Canadian transportation planner, Frank Williams, with the Ministry of Transportation Ontario’s Provincial and Environmental Planning Office in St. Catharines, is also on the committee.

Guarino noted that bi-national cooperation would be essential to the study. “The Canadians are very interested in this type of study and are looking to do a lot of it themselves. We can’t look at Erie and Niagara Counties in a vacuum, so we’re going to be looking at the Canadian side, at least up to Southern Ontario, possibly up to Toronto, to understand the transportation issues there, as well as those on this side of the border.”

One concern, he said, was to keep Buffalo-Niagara trade prospects competitive with those in the Detroit/Port Huron regions.

He also observed that freight traffic, primarily by trucks, is expected to double by the year 2020 and that foreign trade moving through U.S. ports would increase by 200 percent and containerized cargo by 350 percent.

“Without a doubt dealing with the truck traffic is the biggest challenge,” Guarino said. “We are looking at ways to reduce its impact, by improving the routes system, so trucks interfere less with other traffic, or by shipping more freight with rail, especially if it’s containerized, for example.”

Up to \$600,000 in funding is available for the regional project through the Federal Highway Administration’s State Planning and Research Program, which is designed “to address transportation concerns before they become critical problems.”

Regional concerns that will be addressed include:

- The region’s opportunities to increase population and jobs through transportation investment.
- Growing congestion at Buffalo-Niagara border crossings.



-- Building stronger regional consensus and on agenda on transportation priorities.

-- New economic development opportunities.

A project description, issued by the GBNRTC, notes that “the Niagara Frontier continues to be a critical transportation hub well served by an extensive highway, rail, port and aviation network.” It has four “key international border highway crossings” that link “principal Canadian highways” with key state trade routes as Interstate 90 (The Thruway), Interstate 190 and 290 and U.S. 219, which is “being upgraded into a north/south trade corridor to Pennsylvania and other states.”

A “comprehensive freight rail system” includes not only CSX and Norfolk but the Buffalo and Pittsburgh regional route, such short lines as the South Buffalo and Buffalo Southern routes, as well as Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways which have access to the region via two international crossings and market their services here through arrangements with other railroads.

“Several inter-modal terminals exist or are under development and some inactive yards have untapped

potential, such as the Lehigh Valley Yard in Niagara County.”

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara International Airport is the primary air terminal and the length of its main runway is being extended. Niagara Falls International Airport “is one of the best situated, easiest to use airports in North America” with the fourth longest runway in the state, “which enables it to accommodate all commercial aircraft.”

Under a 20-year contract with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) the Niagara Cargo Park LLC, a Canadian firm, with connections to the air-cargo facility at Toronto’s Pearson

International Airport, will build 70,000 square feet of storage space at the Niagara Falls facility to expand the air-cargo activity there.

The Port of Buffalo also has a strategic position at “the eastern end of Lake Erie,” with access to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway via the Welland Canal. Both the seaway and the canal may undergo expansion.

The study will analyze strengths and weaknesses of the existing system against future needs and opportunities. It will “identify potential economic development opportunities” and link transpor-

tation decisions with land-use strategies.

A similar study is being undertaken by the Binghamton region, another strategically situated hub for trade corridors, according to Slavick, who proposed the two studies as complements to NYSDOT’s examination of freight transportation.



CSX prepares for ‘Feeder Port’ in Seneca Yard

Environmental and design work has been finished and CSX Corporation is completing transfer of residual operations in the Seneca Yard to its Syracuse facility to prepare the way for a “Feeder Port” at the Lackawanna site.

“We hope to begin spadework before the snow falls,” said Maurice O’Connell, a resident vice-president at the CSX state office in Selkirk. The state is providing two grants, totaling \$4.5 million, with matching funds from the railroad, for the project, which is expected to be completed in the spring.

The “Feeder Port” would handle overseas container cargo shipped by rail from the overwhelmed Port of New York and New Jersey. The containers would be transferred by crane to trucks in the Seneca Yard for dispersal to the Midwest, Ontario, and other markets.

The project includes modifying the tracks pattern in the yard to make room for the cranes to remove containers from the rail cars, as well as creating a staging area for trucks and containers awaiting shipment. Also, an improved roadway will be necessary for routing of trucks from Lake Avenue in Blasdell.

“The next step, after we get this Feeder Port for containers, is to work with the companies that are actually receiving the goods, mainly from Asia, anything from clothes to toys, and saying, ‘Hey, why don’t you build a warehouse, a distribution center, or an assembly plant here?’” said John Cappellino of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency.

Cappellino says that such outlets as Wal-Mart or Target in the flourishing Toronto region, within a day’s drive of Buffalo,



could, for example, benefit from warehousing or assembly plants associated with the Feeder Port.

“And if this is successful, we may get others interested in a Feeder Port here, for example, the Canadian National railroad with overseas shipments from the Port of Halifax.”

He added, “One thing that I hope comes out of the GBNRTC freight study is some data on what types of business we should be looking to go after in connection with this Feeder Port.”

Cappellino noted also that there has been recent interest by “the big grain guys from the Midwest” in using the grain elevators here for bringing in grain or soybeans by rail or water to convert into ethanol or bio-fuel for shipment to the East Coast.

“It has kind of an interesting historical parallel,” he noted. “One of the reasons that Buffalo originally became so successful was that they brought in all the grain in the Midwest to the port here and milled it and shipped it as flour to the East Coast. It’ll be interesting to see what happens.”

Human Services Plan targets growing elderly population

The GBNRTC is taking the lead in developing a collaborative plan for improving transportation services in Erie and Niagara Counties for older adults, as well as people with disabilities and those with low incomes.

The GBNRTC is “one of the first MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations)” in the state to develop a draft Human Services Plan as set forth in the latest national transportation act, known as SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users).

Executive Director Hal Morse outlined the plan, which is being coordinated by GBNRTC staffers Douglas Struckle and Barbara Courtney, at the “first annual meeting” of the Center for Transportation Excellence (CTE) at the Hyatt/Regency in downtown Buffalo.

A major theme during presentations at the day-long session to some 250 representatives of public and private transportation and human-service providers in Western New York was the financial challenge of meeting the transportation needs of a growing elderly population.

Commissioner Pamela Krawzyck of the Erie County Department of Senior Services, noted that the county’s population of those aged 85 and over had increased by 35 percent between 1990 and 2000 and was projected to increase an additional 28 percent by 2015.

Morse emphasized that the Human Services Plan must be “locally developed with emphasis on public outreach” to ensure that “communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs.”

The plan, carried out in partnership with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), will involve close collaboration with the Erie and Niagara Counties Departments of Social Services as well as the CTE and numerous providers of transportation for housing and institutional facilities.



Hal Morse outlines plan at CTE meeting.

Morse noted that one of the challenges is improving the access to employment and “related activities” of low-income individuals in urban centers where job opportunities are increasingly in outlying suburbs. The federal legislation supports improvement of “reverse commute services” by public transit, which has traditionally been focused upon service into urban areas.

Daniel Hess, Ph.D., of the University at Buffalo’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning, presented 2000 Census figures showing that 31 percent of households in the City of Buffalo lacked motor vehicles, compared with 14 percent for the metropolitan area and 10 percent for the nation.

Several participants in the conference noted that the transportation challenge was compounded

not only by the multiplicity of programs and service providers but by a growing trend toward establishing elderly housing and other institutional developments in outlying areas that lacked convenient access to public transit.

Aimee Brace, of Catholic Health Services, said that her agency had successfully pursued in Lackawanna a strategy of concentrating institutional accommodations, including apartments for the elderly, in an area of mixed development that included upgraded transit accommodations and convenient access to medical care and shopping. She added that such a strategy is “not easy” and must be associated with attractions that draw the elderly and others to an area.

A keynote speaker, James McLary of Washington D.C.’s United We Ride program, said that the “long-term goal” was coordination of land use and transportation planning. “It will take a long time to get there,” he said, “but that is the goal.”

“We have got to be entrepreneurial, we have to be resourceful and we have got to take risks,” he said. “We have got to consider the unconsidered, and get away from the fear of failure and that’s not easy, especially when you are in the public sector.”

Steps toward a regional framework

For every additional household reported in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area in the 1990s, almost four units of housing were built, a ratio that is tops for the nation, according to the Brookings Institute.

The “imbalance” points up a weakness that’s symbolized by a relatively high percentage of abandoned houses, according to the institute’s study. It’s in the context of Buffalo-Niagara being one of only two metropolitan areas that lost population, with a lower rate of sprawl than areas that gained population.

The household-to-houses statistic was highlighted at public reviews in Cheektowaga and Lockport last summer of a proposed Framework for Regional Growth in Erie and Niagara Counties. The framework was recommended by a Steering Committee that included top political and planning officials from both counties.

The Framework, put together by the internationally known HOK Planning Group, concludes that the region could save some \$800 million in infrastructure capital costs through the year 2025 with “prudent decisions” on the location of new households, which often influence “shifts in a region’s pattern of commercial development.”

The goal is to get the region’s “64 independent municipal governments – the 3 cities, 25 towns and 16 villages in Erie County and the 3 cities, 12 towns and 5 villages in Niagara County” on more or less the same path to progress.

An initial step would be creation of an Erie County Planning Board that would meet jointly with an existing Niagara County Planning Board for reports, assessments, strategies, etc., on regional development and for “review and discussion of findings from a Working Group regarding the establishment of a regional planning entity.”

Since 1980, the region’s urbanized area increased 38 percent, while households increased by 5.5 percent and population declined by 5.8 percent, according to the HOK report.

Households have increased as part of a nationwide trend toward smaller households, with an increase in elderly persons living apart from families and in single-parent families. In the Buffalo-Niagara region, the household increase reflects an outward movement of population to new homes, often leaving vacant homes behind.

“The Buffalo metropolitan area presents a clear example of the new construction exceeding household growth by a wide margin,” according to the Brookings report.



“New housing and growth were greatly imbalanced. For every additional household living in the area, four new homes were built. A housing surplus was the inescapable result. Somewhere in the Buffalo area housing that was occupied in 1990 was vacant in 2000.”

Framework advocates argue that these are ratios that contribute to a weaker economy, with fewer citizens diffused over a wider area, supporting an expanding regional infrastructure, in a pattern that helps to generate higher taxes overall, along with the lower property values and tax revenues in areas that bear the brunt of the “density decline and disinvestment.”

HOK’s Framework research takes note of an “infrastructure burden associated with the need to build more roads, water and sewer systems, schools, recreational facilities, parks, libraries, etc.” because of “scattered development patterns” for a stagnant population.

Other costs were listed as:

- “Operations and maintenance expenses accruing to public service providers, utilities, homeowners associations, etc.”
- “Personal costs ranging from quantifiable (commuting time) to temporal (quality of life).”
- “Resource impacts associated with the loss of habitat, prime farmland, ridgelines, etc.”

The 2003 Brookings Institute report notes, “Where the economy is weakest and land costs are lowest (the Buffalo area in the 1990s representing that extreme) may be where high (building) permits to growth ratios are most likely to occur.

“With more new housing than growth, abandonment is unavoidable – and the more that construction exceeds growth, the greater the abandonment. During the 1990s, the city of Buffalo’s vacancy rate increased 5.5 percentage points to 15.7 percent and the city lost 10 percent of its households.

“...When metropolitan building permits outpace household growth it generally comes at the expense of the central city and possibly older, inner-ring suburbs.”

In the case of the Buffalo area, the overall household growth in the suburbs was 6.3 percent, but the area was also among the metropolitan areas “with the largest number of suburbs that declined.” Others were Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit and St. Louis.

The Framework report by HOK notes: “Neighborhoods in the region’s early

suburban communities, those developed during the decades following World War II, are starting to experience challenges similar to those faced by older communities -- declining population, aging housing, vacated and under utilized commercial buildings and sites, and deteriorating infrastructure.”

The urban areas “experiencing decline” include not only neighborhoods in the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, but also in “Lockport, Tonawanda, and North Tonawanda, along with others in the towns of Niagara in Niagara County and Amherst, Cheektowaga and West Seneca in Erie County.”

Rural communities “experiencing losses include the northernmost towns in Niagara County and the southern tiers of towns in Erie County.”

The consequences of these “shifts in population and households for the region’s older neighborhoods are obvious and serious,” including deterioration in ability to attract investment, weakening of investment and tax revenues, a weakening of retail markets, and a greater demand for public services by “the people left behind.”

Supervisor Dennis H. Gabryszak of Cheektowaga was recently quoted in the Buffalo News as saying that the growing number of vacant properties in the town was “definitely a concern.” The supervisor of building inspectors for the town, Thomas J. Adamczak, was quoted as saying, “Right now we’re closing in on 500 vacant properties,” compared with 367 such properties reported last year.

Adamczak said the cost to the town of cleaning up vacant properties is attached to tax bills but “very few people have paid it.” If not paid by the owner, Erie County pays the town and takes over collections,” according to the News account.

According to the Brookings report, “Homes in the first suburbs tend to be occupied by lower-income households, negatively affecting the local tax base. This phenomenon can be exacerbated by a large and continuous metropolitan ‘oversupply,’ leading to an excess of housing stock in first suburbs that eventually is abandoned.

“Those negatives will not occur in metropolitan areas in which the amount of new housing equates closely with household growth...”

The housing surplus, according to the Brookings report, provides the “driving force” behind the movement from the inner to outward areas, especially in areas that lack growth. “Most of the new housing is located at the outer edges of the area; the purchase (or rental) of new construction by people moving up enables households with lesser income to move in

their wake, which in turn enables others to move and so on down the levels of income.”

“... Homebuilders construct what they can sell; they do not consult demographers and then equate their projected household growth. They build even when household growth is nearly zero... Builders may give some attention to growth figures, but they do not equate production volume to them...”

“... The relationship between housing construction and household growth may seem like an arcane academic consideration but it is a fundamental and potent factor in the dynamics of urban change.”

(For some cities, such as Chicago, immigration has “provided a degree of salvation” to offset the economic erosion caused by “the constant movement of population through an ever-expanding metropolitan supply of housing.” In Chicago, Hispanic immigrants “occupied housing that otherwise would have been empty.” If Buffalo or Detroit “had had the same rate of immigration as Chicago in the 1990s, they too might have had population growth.”)

The Framework, backed by the regional Steering Committee, recommends a “significant shift in the region’s development trends.” Rather than have most new households “locate outside existing developed areas, as has been the case during the past 30 years,” Framework policies and strategies call for 70 percent of new housing to occur in the developed area with 15 percent of “controlled growth”

in “developing” areas and another 15 percent in “rural” areas.

The estimated \$800 million in savings through 2025 is based upon making optimal use of existing infrastructure, such as sewer and water lines, roadways, school systems, etc.

At public meetings in Lockport and Cheektowaga, Mark Vogl of HOK and Andrew Reilly of Wendel Duchscherer Architects and Engineers emphasized that the Framework was not intended as a replacement for local planning and zoning authority but a strategy for providing direction and coordination in regional development.

Thomas Dearing, a planning strategist with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, said that the Framework would provide a “guiding tool” for the many county decisions that effect physical development.

The HOK study suggests that “local municipal decision-making can often be influenced through “capital investments, grant-making and the provisions of financial and technical assistance” to localities. “... The plan will help local officials coordinate their decisions so they can anticipate how one decision may affect another.”



At the Lockport hearing, Kenneth M. Franasiak, president of Calamar Enterprises, a developer in Niagara County, objected that the Framework would “create another layer of bureaucratic review for businesses we’re trying to attract to the area.”

Vogl, and Ellen Parker of Wendel Duchscherer, replied that the objective was not to complicate the process but to “streamline” it through improved collaboration and uniformity.

At the Cheektowaga hearing, Reilly emphasized, “No one is really tracking development and we need to do that.”

He acknowledged the need to find ways to facilitate and “reduce the red tape” involved in using sites, such as brownfields, in the developed areas.

Representatives of the League of Women Voters expressed support for a regional plan but at the Cheektowaga meeting, attended by about 40 people, the League representative, Lynda Stephens, complained about a lack of “public impact.”

“If I was building a Wal-Mart, I’d have 600 people in this room,” replied Reilly. “Unfortunately, plans are not that sexy.”

The report by the Brookings Institute concedes that “redevelopment ... typically costs more than ‘greenfield’ suburban development because of expenses associated with creating ‘new’ construction sites (e.g. demolition, site assembly, brownfield cleanup). ... However, while redevelopment may be expensive, what is becoming increasingly clear in these places is that the cost of doing nothing is even greater.”

The institute’s report makes the point that “the primary responsibility for coping with the development issue lies with the community as a whole, the metropolitan area,” but adds that “that responsibility invariably is denied by means of jurisdictional boundaries and perceptions of home rule, which cultivate the attitude that each unit of government is independent and each alone is responsible for its condition.

“... A prominent exception is the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, where over 25 years of tax-base sharing has been practiced. ... Jurisdictions with problems are not left to cope on their

own, and the buck is not passed to federal or state governments.

“However, tax sharing is contentious; communities that give up revenues do not necessarily like it. But as some of them eventually age to where troubled real estate and deteriorated infrastructure begin to weight on them, resistance to the system could fade.”

The report observes that “a number of states are following the example of Maryland” in using a “smart-growth” program” to “serve the objective of increasing urban redevelopment by using state resources and policies to “strengthen older communities and reduce urban sprawl.” Its key provision for land-use planning and regulation – “almost all of which is carried out at the county level” – provides that local governments will “designate ‘priority funding areas’ in which new growth is slated to occur and that the state will invest in major infrastructure only in those areas.”

Government policies to boost housing production are typically “taken for granted,” the Brookings report cautions, but policies to control production are often characterized as violations of free enterprise.

Under the Erie-Niagara Framework plan, a Working Group, appointed by Erie County Executive Joel Giambra and Niagara County Legislature Chairman William Ross, to determine “the appropriate structure” for bi-county planning and present its recommendations to a joint meeting of the two county planning boards.

A Charter Review Commission has recommended creation of an Erie County Planning Board, which reportedly will materialize early next year, to work with an existing Niagara County Planning Board.

At the public hearings, it was noted that the area is among the few in the nation that lacks an agency for overall regional planning.

The HOK report notes that “since the early 1990s, when the Erie-Niagara Counties Regional Planning Board (ENCRB) was dismantled, the region has not had a single, bi-county authorized platform to address regional planning, development and conservation issues.”

It has been conceded that the ENCRB lacked the power and political support to implement regional planning. That’s why the Steering Committee has emphasized the need for government support at all levels as part of a step-by-step strategy to realize the Framework goals.

“Over the past 30 years,” according to the HOK report, “the region’s economic vitality, community livability and environmental quality have been seriously challenged. In addition to the effects of national and international-level influences – global competition and free trade, unfunded mandates from state and federal governments and the rise of the Sun Belt – decisions about the pace, pattern and form of development have affected the region’s ability to attract investment and retain talent.”

A more recent Brookings Institute, published in August, noted that the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area is “one of only two metro areas among the 50 largest (along with Pittsburgh) that lost population during the 1990s,” and that its density dropped from 6.2 to 5.3 persons per urbanized acre from 1982 to 1997.

The report also observed that the increase in developed land for the Buffalo-Niagara area was “only about 24,000 acre between 1982 and 1997, the smallest amount among the large metropolitan areas.”

“...Metropolitan Buffalo’s challenge is not managing growth, but rather dealing with population decline and economic stagnation,” according to the 2006 report.

Another recent report, this one in the Buffalo News, observed that the City of Buffalo’s Master Plan calls for spending \$10 million a year over the next 10 years on demolition of vacant buildings, which are vulnerable to fires, including frequent arson.

And a story in the Niagara Gazette noted that more than 13 percent of the houses in Niagara Falls are vacant and in some sections of the city the percentage is as high as 25 percent.

Regional census estimates for 2005

The latest U.S. Census estimates show a decline in the regional household population between 2000 and 2005 of 23,548, with a drop of 20,493, or 2.07 percent in Erie County, from 919,474 to 898,981, and 3,055, or 1.4 percent in Niagara County, from 215,628 to 212,573.

The figures exclude population living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters, sectors that had accounted for an additional 35,009 people in the 2000 Census, 30,791 in Erie and 4,218 in Niagara, but were not included in the 2005 estimates.

During the same period, the number of households in the two-county region increased by 2,113 from 468,719 in 2000 to 470,832 estimated in 2005. An increase of 3,114 in Erie County, from 380,873 to an estimated 383,987, offset a Niagara County decline of 1,001 households, from 87,846 to an estimated 86,845 in 2005.

Both counties registered a decrease in family households, from 243,359 down to 236,460 in Erie, and 58,582 to 56,808 in Niagara. The overall households increase was represented by non-family households, up in Erie from 137,514 in 2000 to 147,527 in 2005 and in Niagara from 29,264 in 2000 to 30,037 in 2005.

The number of housing units for the region was 511,583 in 2000, with 415,868 in Erie County and 95,715 in Niagara. Vacant housing units were 34,995, or 8.4 percent in Erie and 7,869, or 8.2 percent in Niagara. No estimates for these categories were available, as of this writing, for 2005.

The average household and family sizes of 2.41 and 3.04, respectively, in Erie County in 2000 declined to estimates of 2.34 and 2.99 in 2005. Comparable figures for Niagara County showed no change from the 2.45 household size in 2000 but a slight drop in family size, from 3.03 in 2000 to a 3.02 estimate in 2005.

Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council

Phone: 716-856-2026
Fax: 716-856-3203
www.gbntc.org



GREATER BUFFALO-NIAGARA
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

438 Main Street, Suite 503
Buffalo, New York 14202-3207

Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council

POLICY COMMITTEE

Joel A. Giambra - County of Erie

William Ross - Niagara County Legislature

Hon. Byron W. Brown - City of Buffalo

Hon. Vincenzo V. Anello - City of Niagara Falls

Thomas J. Madison Jr. - New York State Department of Transportation

Gregory Stamm - Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

William G. Leslie - New York State Thruway Authority

PLANNING and COORDINATING COMMITTEE

John Loffredo - Erie County Department of Public Works

Kevin P. O'Brien - Niagara County Department of Public Works

Daniel E. Kreuz - City of Buffalo Department of Public Works

Robert Curtis - City of Niagara Falls

Gary V. Gottlieb - New York State Department of Transportation

Walter D. Zmuda - Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

Thomas A. Pericak - New York State Thruway Authority

Meeting Calendar

Planning and Coordinating Committee (PCC)

meetings begin at 9:30 A.M.

November 1 Erie County

95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York

December 6 New York State Department of Transportation

100 Seneca Street
Buffalo, New York

January 3 Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

181 Ellicott Street
Buffalo, New York

Policy Committee

*Meeting dates and times are subject to change:
please call (716) 856-2026 for confirmation.*

PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
BUFFALO, NY
PERMIT NO. 3803