



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan Joins Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Community Stakeholders To Provide Update On Scajaquada Corridor Planning

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SENATOR SEAN RYAN JOINS GREATER BUFFALO-NIAGARA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL, COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON SCAJAQUADA CORRIDOR PLANNING

Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council Is In The Midst Of The Community Engagement Phase Of The Planning Process For Their 'Region Central' Project - Plans To Have Final Recommendations In Early 2022

BUFFALO - Today, July 21, 2021, New York State Senator Sean Ryan joined representatives from the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and GObike Buffalo to provide an update on GBNRTC's Region Central initiative. With the federal government poised to pass significant infrastructure investment in the months ahead, planning is already well underway for this project to reshape the Scajaquada Corridor, which includes the current 198 Expressway and connection to the 33 (Kensington) Expressway.

The Region Central initiative is an effort to create a better future for Buffalo's residents and visitors by reimagining the Scajaquada Corridor. The greater region being considered as part of the study is home to roughly one-third of Buffalo's residents and comprises the Black Rock, Delavan Grider, Elmwood Bidwell, Fillmore-Leroy, Grant-Amherst, Hamlin Park, Masten Park, Parkside, and Upper West Side neighborhoods.

GBNRTC is currently in the midst of its four-phase community input plan for the Region Central project. The aim is to conduct an inclusive engagement process and gather feedback from a wide range of stakeholders in the Western New York community. Their goal is to engage as many stakeholders as possible, including residents of the neighborhoods that will be affected, local advocacy groups, and local cultural institutions.

The process began with the recently completed “Build the Vision” phase, during which many of the major community stakeholders provided input, and GBNRTC held an initial public meeting. The ongoing second phase in the process, which will focus on “Refining the Vision,” will continue until October. It includes outreach events and workshops in various neighborhoods within the study area to educate the public about the project and get feedback on the shared vision. Future community engagement plans include a public webinar, an online survey, and the creation of a stakeholder advisory group that would meet several times to advise on the project.

Public meetings and focus groups will continue to be held through the scenario-building stage of the initiative, which is scheduled to begin in September. GBNRTC expects to have a draft of findings and recommendations by December 2021, and plans to share final recommendations for the corridor early in 2022.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “With Region Central, GBNRTC is completing the most comprehensive study of the Scajaquada Corridor that we have ever seen. We know that whatever plan is ultimately recommended will affect a wide-sweeping range of people throughout Western New York, and that is why we are encouraging everyone to get involved with the process. By combining the results of traffic studies with robust community input, we will soon have a well-reasoned plan for reshaping the Scajaquada Corridor in a way that will reconnect our neighborhoods, correct historic injustices, and improve life for the people of Buffalo for generations to come.”

Hal Morse, Executive Director of Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, said, “The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council is firmly committed to completion of a different approach to the planning process for Region Central that is impartial, methodical, and fact-based, with next-generation technical analyses. Through this extensive community involvement process, we will work to build consensus on what we collectively want our region to be like in the coming generations, and also what mobility improvements in this area will drive that change. We have seen a willingness to

collaborate and a sense of shared future, and will build upon this to advance community goals and priorities as we plan excellent mobility investments for Region Central.”

Stephanie Crockatt, Executive Director of Buffalo Olmsted Parks

Conservancy, said, “Thanks to the GBNRTC and staunch advocates like Senator Ryan, engaging the public and building consensus on design alternatives is exactly the task at hand, and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy encourages everyone’s involvement and voice. Let’s learn from past disappointments and use this vital opportunity to come together to develop a solution that is worthy of inspiring other cities across the country – one that embraces quality of life for all residents and makes the next generation proud of our community’s accomplishment.”

Jill Jedlicka, Executive Director of Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, said, “Before us stands the last, best chance in a generation to reclaim our creek and community. The decisions we make now as we reimagine the Scajaquada Corridor are directly linked to our ability to heal and restore one of our region's historically significant waterways and the communities connected to it. It is rare that planning processes like these actively seek and engage robust community input, so let's make sure our collective voices and priorities are heard, and ultimately implemented.”

Justin Booth, Executive Director of GObike Buffalo, said, “Through our work in the community, we see firsthand the intersectionality of transportation-related decisions on our travel modes, health, environment, community connectedness, and quality of life. Thus, we're hopeful the holistic and scientific approach taken by the GBNRTC centering the needs of people in the planning process for Region Central will result in a corridor plan that supports community wellness, local businesses, and active transportation.”

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