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Thanks for agreeing to meet with representatives of the University at Albany's Strategic Planning Initiative subcommittee focused on identifying social and political issues that will drive educational and research needs, for the foreseeable future, perhaps by presenting problems to be solved or opportunities to be taken, or that in some way affect how we, as an institution, should be thinking about and doing our work.

Following are the questions we plan to ask. We hope you will feel free to answer frankly. We assure you that none of your comments will be for attribution, although your name will be included on a list of respondents.

1. What immediate or future trends and issues do you see in the region, state or nation in your field or area of interest? In what ways might the University at Albany respond to these?

Neighborhood organizations are important to gather information about public needs and wants, gather political and public funding support for these needs and wants, and transmitting information from political and other public leaders to individuals and the obverse. By offering ideas, support and critical judgments, neighborhood organizations enhance the quality of public life and change it, for the better.

The University as the largest educational organization in the region with its more than 15,000 students and 3,000 employees should encourage community participation by its students and employees as well as encourage the president of the university and other political and community leaders to recognize the vital role of neighborhood organizations. Each community issue—K-12 education, police protection, fire protection, the arts, adult learning, job development, traffic and traffic safety and so forth---should be supported by the University insofar as it is able.

The University could operate a “capital district round table” to articulate region wide concerns, for example. Its monthly meetings would give a neighborhood concerns like “safe neighborhoods—Mt Pleasant—a report by the Mayor of Schenectady” the opportunity to create and gather support for improving life in a significant neighborhood of the capital district. It could do this not only through public meetings but electronically, by offering “blogs” for Capital District issues.

2. How do you currently perceive the University at Albany's relationship with your group/area of interest?

The McKownville Improvement Association has been able to communicate its concerns to the University with great ease. Its communication with the Nano College, we would welcome monthly meetings with it once again—they were halted several years ago...

3. How might UAlbany improve the way it works with your group/area of interest? Are there particular aspects of your experience with the University you would like to see changed, preserved or enhanced? How and why?

As a neighbor, we have multiple overlapping interests—but it is not obvious at times who should be the contact person on some issue—like storm water. This may be due to my lack of

knowledge of the University as much as it is the lack of the University to make the "community relations" seem like more than a person who will answer an email but not solve a problem.

4. What hopes and expectations do you have for the University at Albany?

I think the University at Albany is one of the best things to happen to Albany since the construction of the Erie Canal.

Its mission of education and its practical impact on employment and income and the arts and State and local government and quality of life in New York State has been enormous and too little recognized by the University, the community and the State---its mistakes have been given more publicity than its successes.

5. What concerns or fears do you have with respect to the University at Albany?

The major fear is its physical growth—as its neighbor, we see a giant that may step on us---take our property or in other ways reduce the quality of our neighborhood.

6. How might the University at Albany be helpful to your group or area of interest?

Continue to meet with us—expand those meetings---provide the names and email addresses of persons who can take our mutual problems seriously.

7. In what ways do you think your group or others in your area of interest might be helpful to UAlbany?

McKownville has provided volunteer fire positions to about a half dozen students annually—these students give their service to the neighborhood and that has been wonderful beyond words—and the neighborhood, I think, has enhanced the learning of these students as well. The University must be doing something right if it is encouraging its students to become active and helpful neighborhood participants.