

Food System Planning in Buffalo Niagara

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*University at Buffalo Regional Institute
UB School of Architecture and Planning*

***Growing the Local / Regional Food Systems Workshop
February 2015***

Research from S. Raja, J. Hall, T. Norton, P. Gooch, S. Raj, T. Hawes, and J. Whittaker, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

64 *independent
municipal
governments in the
two-county region*

6 *cities*

37 *towns*

21 *villages*

Hundreds *of public authorities,
school districts and
special districts*





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National Geographic ranks Buffalo as top 10 food city in the world



As the birthplace of the chicken wing, Buffalo ranks among best food cities in the world. (Derek Gee/Buffalo News file photo)

THE BUFFALO RUSE

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Buffalonians Rank #1 in the Nation in Caring About Their Ranking on Arbitrary Internet Lists

by RUSE STAFF on Feb 5, 2015 • 9:05 pm

No Comments

By Gil Phultanks, *Correspondent for Unfounded and Ill-Defined Pride*



As outside temperatures dropped throughout the day, social media feeds all around Western New York were ablaze with posts, comments, likes, and shared links regarding an online publication's placement of Buffalo atop a list ranking cities nationwide on their overall level of enthusiasm for being highly placed on random lists that rate cities nationwide for strangely specific and intangible characteristics.

"Move over New York and Chicago," reads the opening line



City Planning is for Kids



Family Sessions
at Buffalo Green
Code Meetings
June 4th - 9th

AUGUST 16th, 2013
6:00 PM

University at Buffalo South Campus
146 Diefendorf Hall

Accessible via NFTA rail - University Station stop
Free parking available in Diefendorf Lot
Bike parking available in Crosby Loop

Come learn how you can be part of the new

Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County

Applications available at <http://food.b-ap.net/hkhcbuffalo/>
Applications due on 9/1/2013

Then join us for light refreshments and a free
screening of the documentary "A Place at the Table"



Participating organizations

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, CCE-Erie County, CCE-Niagara County, Environmental Justice ACTION Group, Erie County Department of Health, Food Bank of WNY, Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo, Massachusetts Avenue Project, University at Buffalo Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab, and University at Buffalo, School of Architecture and Planning

Sponsors:



University at Buffalo's **Food Systems Planning & Healthy Communities Lab**, under the leadership of **Dr. Samina Raja**, was engaged to oversee planning and research on food system issues.

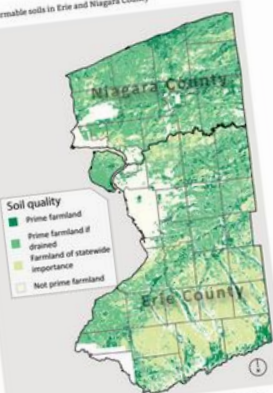


Growing Together

Ensuring healthy food, viable farms, and a prosperous Buffalo Niagara

Growing Together was prepared by the University at Buffalo Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab

DECEMBER 2014



Nearly all Buffalo Niagara water withdrawals¹ exceed top 1.9 billion gallons (1.9 Bgal) (equal to the water in 10 Olympic-sized swimming pools). 1,529 Olympic-sized swimming pools are sourced from the Lakes (Table 4).

¹ Major withdrawals in the water withdrawn from the source or discharge of water for use for: "use 2" (see Table 1). "Estimated use of water in the United States in 1995." U.S. Geological Survey, 1995, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/1995/a/01a/01a.html>.
² USGS, 1995, U.S. Geological Survey, 1995, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/1995/a/01a/01a.html>.
³ USGS, 1995, U.S. Geological Survey, 1995, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/1995/a/01a/01a.html>.

Table 8. Labor force participation by sex in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

	In labor force	% of total labor force	% of total population*
Men	294,684	51	68% of men
Women	281,841	49	59% of women
Total	576,525	100	63%

Source: American Community Survey – Social economic, United States Census, 2010
 * Female population 18 and over

Table 9. Family structure in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

Household type	N	% of Family households
Family households with children under 18	131,324	46
Family households with children living with non-parent relative	9,337	3
Single-mother households with minor children	35,886	13

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000
 U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Table 10. Household composition in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

	N	% of households
Average household size (people)	2.3	—
Households	473,720	100
Family households	286,822	60.35

Source: SP, United States Census, 2000

	Number	% non-poor
Male	1,000	10.0
Female	1,000	10.0
Total	2,000	10.0

	Number	% population
Men	69,599	13% of men
Women	87,808	15% of women
Total	157,407	14%

Source: American Community Survey – Census estimates, US Census Bureau, 2012.

	Single-mother households	% of households
Buffalo	10.1	10.1
Niagara	10.1	10.1

30,871
35,886

U.S. United States Canada, 2008

[illegible]

money to spend
try also face job co
or irregular work
limit their availa
now, or prepare

FOOD ECONOMY

4. THE

FO

GDP from food businesses is \$4.16 annually and 10.6%

The Food Supply

The Buffalo Niagara metropolitan area is a major food-producing region in the United States. The area's gross regional product in 2000 was \$39.2 billion, with food and kindred products accounting for 10.5 percent, or \$4.1 billion, of the total GPR (Table 1). The food and kindred products sector grew by 20 percent between 2000 and 2004, while the total GPR grew by 12 percent. The food and kindred products sector's growth outpaced the total GPR's growth, which grew by 2 percent.

THE FOOD ECONOMY

IN BRIEF

PG 35 GDP from food businesses is \$4.36 billion annually and accounts for 10.6 percent of the region's total GDP.

32 GDP from crop and animal production is growing, but employment in those sectors is declining.

Compared to the nation and state, the region specializes in food processing, dairy farming, and fruit and vegetable preserving. It also has a concentration of food stores, restaurants, and other food-related businesses in the nation.

A. The Buffalo

The Buffalo Buffalo grows downstate. It's \$1.5 billion in sales. Food-related businesses in the Buffalo region, combined, are \$1.5 billion in sales.

The region's food economy is a multi-faceted system with links to other economies as well as the region's own. The region's food economy is large, and it is substantial because such is the climate, the land, and the people. The region's food economy is large, and it is substantial because such is the climate, the land, and the people. The region's food economy is large, and it is substantial because such is the climate, the land, and the people.

services, which grew by 15 percent.⁶ Conversely, GDP of food processing fell by 9 percent, GDP of wholesalers dropped by 2 percent, and GDP of wholesale trade (which includes food and beverage) declined by 2 percent (Table 1).

Food-related GDP grew overall, but, as shown in Figure 10, food-related investment declined in the region from 2005 to 2010. Some of the region's declines in employment at food processing and wholesale sectors in GDP also fell. The opposing increases in efficiency due to automation in GDP and employment may increase in efficiency due to automation, when increases output during the demand for labor.

Food System Assessment Overview

Regional context: location, people, climate

State of the region's food system: production, processing and distribution

Functionality of food system: food access, capacity to grow, economic impacts

Barriers and opportunities perspectives: Farmers and residents

Ideas for Action: Key policy levers/strategies/best practices



The food industry is an important part of our economy.

About
1 out of **5**
every
JOB
in the region
is food-related

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2010.ⁱⁱⁱ

Farmers are
aging at an
alarming rate.

More **1/2** of
than
FARMERS
are
age **55+**

Source: Agricultural Census, 2007

Large institutions
feed the equivalent
of a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the
region's population.

89,000

public school students

163,000

university students

6,000

inmates in corrections

Our poor diets have real impacts on our health.

Of Adults in Buffalo Niagara...

...less than **3 out of 10** consume five servings
of fruits and vegetables a day



...about **6 out of 10** are overweight or obese



...and **1 out of 10** live with diabetes.

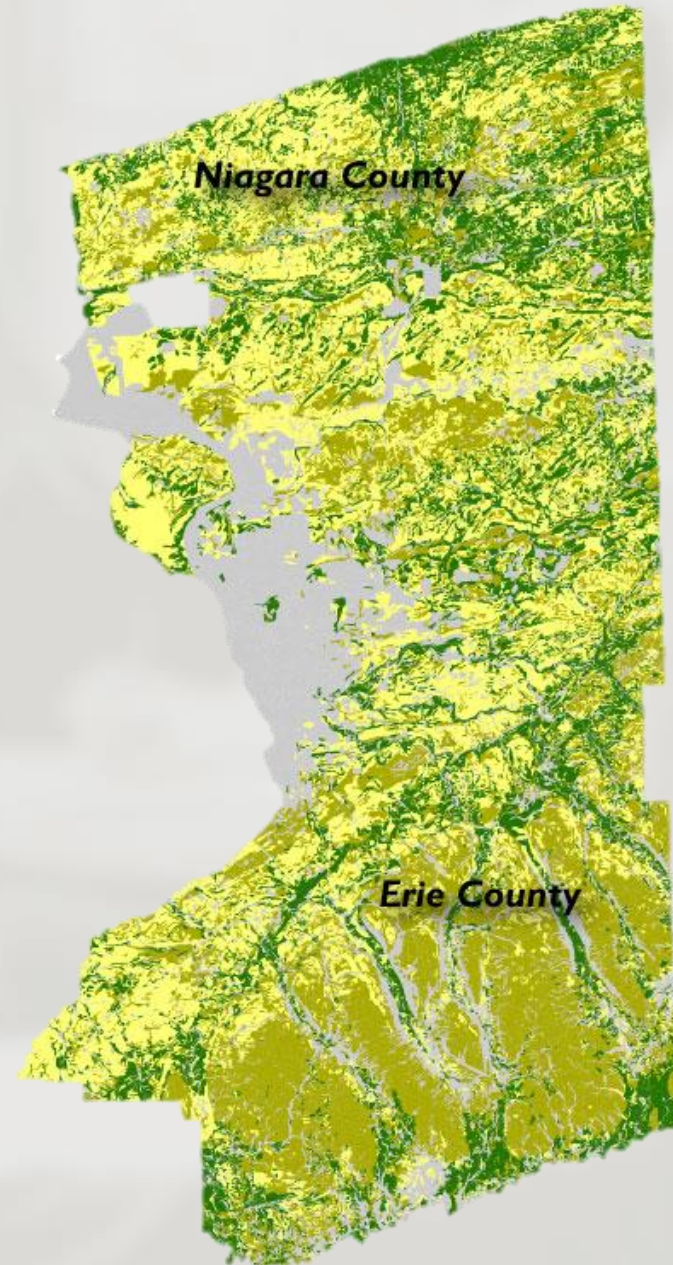


Source: Erie County Department of Health, 2010-2013 Community Health Assessment, 2009; Niagara County Department of Health, 2010-2013 Community Health Assessment, 2009.

~200 acres of
prime farmland,
with the potential
for much more.



1 million acres Total land



We don't grow enough healthy food for ourselves.



38%

we'd need to eat in order to follow
USDA healthy-eating guidelines.

Source: Calculations by the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab. Data Sources: United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Service and Economic Research Service; Department of Commerce: United States Census.

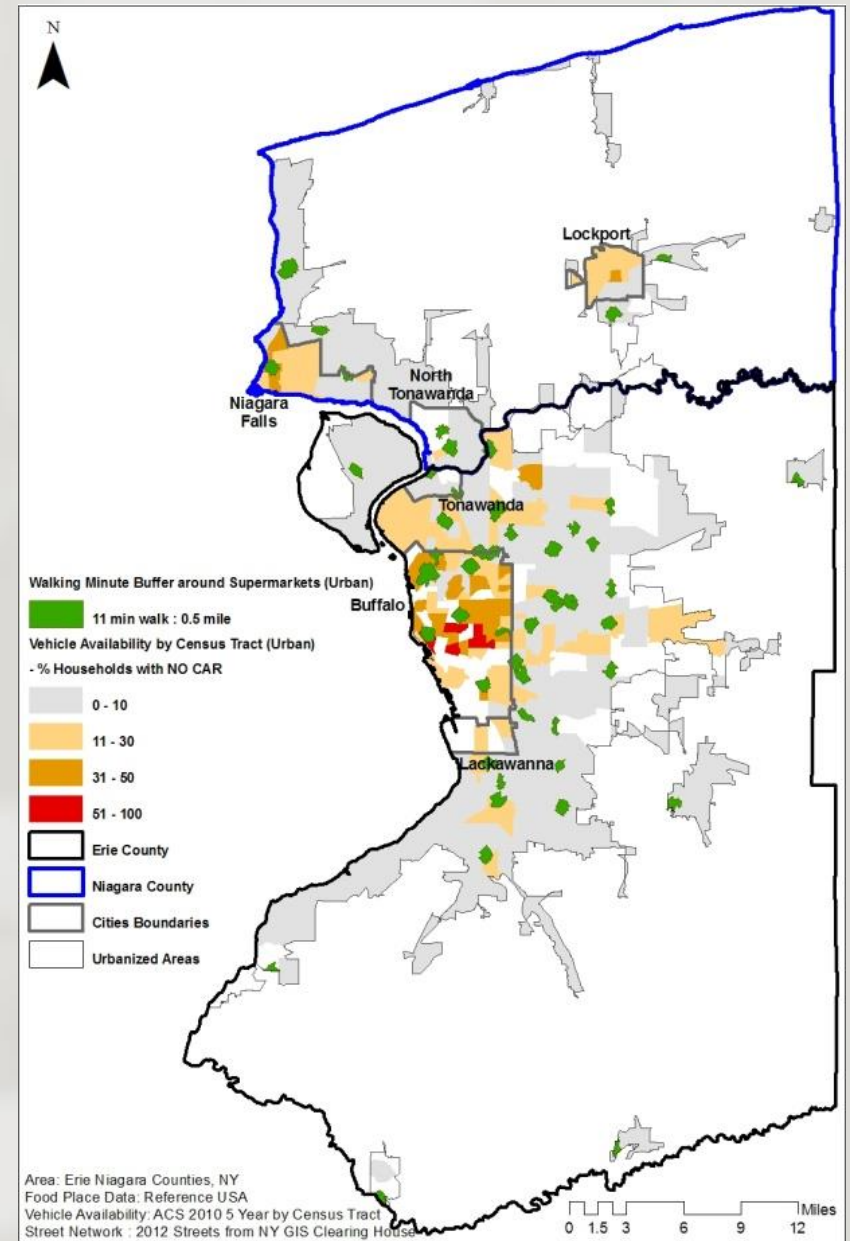
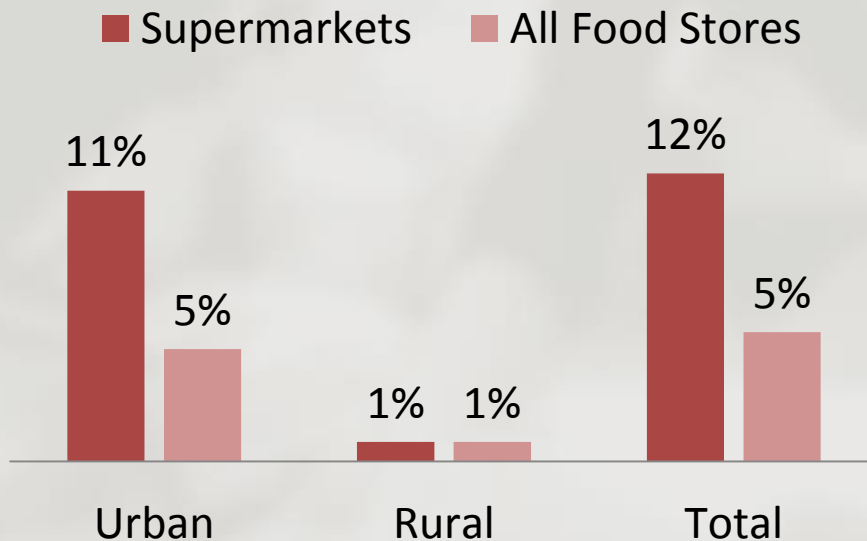
Residents in many areas find it hard to find fresh, healthy food.

55,954 households lack access to a car and live beyond walking distance to a grocery store.



Source: Calculations by the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab. Data Sources: Reference USA, 2012; US Census, ACS 2011 5-year estimates; Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011.

Uneven access



We are losing farms at an alarming rate.

 **33 Farms** out of business every year.

 **1,254 Farms** lost since 1969

1969
                                                                                                                                                    **3,334**

2007
                                                                              **2,080**

1,254 operating farms
out of business since 1969,
including 789 in
Niagara County
alone.

Source: USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 1976, 2009.

We continue
to lose
cropland
every year.

Since 1992, our two
counties have seen
nearly 21 square
miles of cropland
go out of production*
– an area roughly
double the size of
North Tonawanda.

Cropland converted to homes since 1992

The map shows residential
construction over the past twenty
years within areas that were
previously identified as cropland
(by satellite imagery).



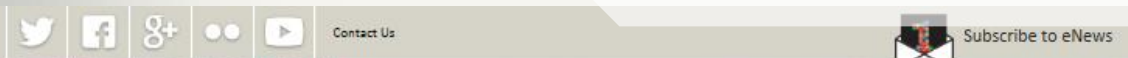
*Source: USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 1994, 2009.

Map Source: U.S. Geological Survey. (1997). 1992 New York Land Cover Dataset; U.S.D.A., National Agricultural Statistics Service, Research and Development Division, Geospatial Information Branch, Spatial Analysis Research Section. (2012). Cropland Data Layer; Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. (2012). Parcel Data; Niagara County Department of Economic Development. (2011). Parcel Data.



Engaging people around issues of food at farmer's markets

Engaging people around issues of food on the web



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About Sustainability 101 The

towards a more sustainable Buff

Sustainability 101

Fruit and Vegetable Farming in Buffalo Niagara



FOOD ACCESS & JUSTICE

Fruit and Vegetable Farming
in Buffalo Niagara

In recent years, the farming of fruits and vegetables in the region has been on a steady decline. What affect has this had on our fruit and vegetable consumption?

Eating fruits and vegetables is vital to a healthy diet. Across the United States, however, there is a discrepancy between the types of food available to us and the kind of food we consume to have a healthy diet. Through the 20th century, farming in the region shifted dramatically away from growing fruits and vegetables and towards producing commodity crops, which are primarily used in processed foods and for animal feed. Currently, the Buffalo Niagara region grows only 38 percent of the fruits and vegetables we would need to consume to have a healthy diet.



Sub

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towards a more sustainable Buffalo Niagara

Sustainability 101

News & Press

How much agricultural land have we been losing?

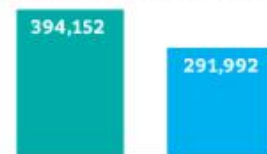
Since 1970, the Buffalo Niagara region has lost over 1,250 working farms, and nearly 160 square miles of farmland – an area four times the size of the City of Buffalo and down by roughly a third from what the region had 40 years ago.

What the data says

Nearly 30 percent of Buffalo Niagara (that's 456 square miles) is devoted to agriculture. If that seems like a lot, imagine forty years ago when 40 percent of land within our two counties (that's 616 square miles) was used for farming.

The region has lost 1,254 operating farms since 1969, 789 in Niagara County alone.

Acres of Farmland in Buffalo Niagara



Sustainability 101

Citizen Planning School

Citizen Planning School
Class

2014 Citizen Planning

Champions for Change

2014 Champions

Idea Summit

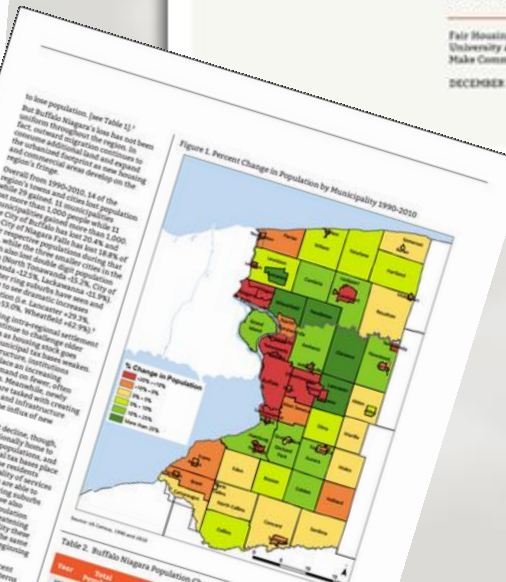
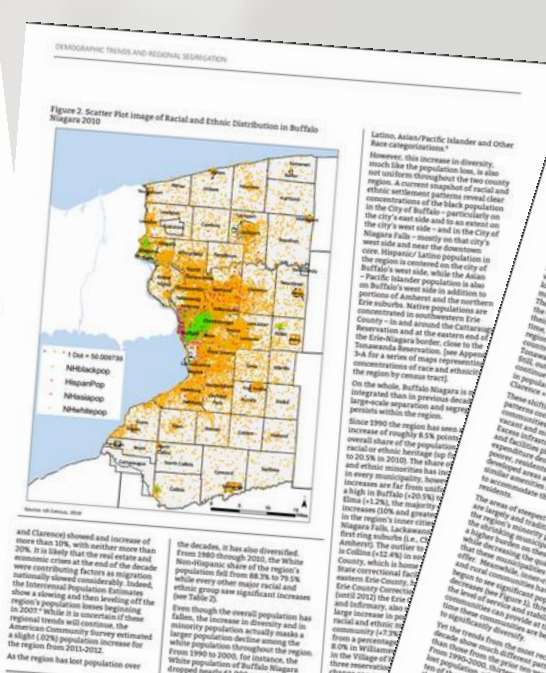
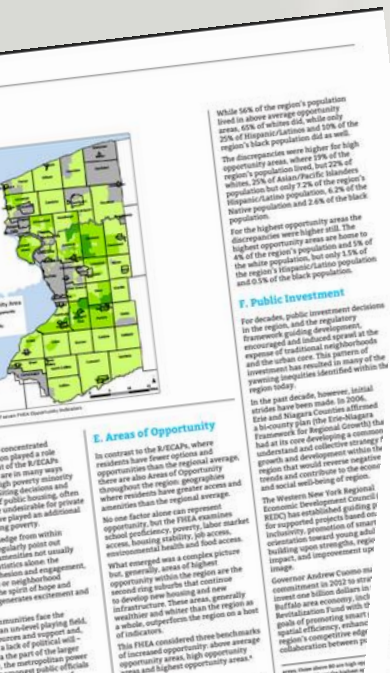
What the Data Tells Us

Sustainability in Action

Test Your Sustainability

PhotoVoices Across Our

Food access is integrated as a variable in our FHEA opportunity index.



A chapter in our regional plan is devoted to strategies to support the region's food system.



...n's food system a Buffalo priority.

...ut saying that food is one of the building sustainability. But in an era of looming disruptions and a challenging energy s sense for each region to take stock of its produce and process food and for residents faithful foods.

...ture for developing and advancing food and Policy Council was recently created. We should County counterpart with broad-based participation, s would include an update to the Niagara County on Plan to increase farmer buy-in and promote a other plans in the region.

...ional food policy board to coordinate planning ...Y.

...with members of food policy councils and other local ...With an online food system database resource for the region that would serve to: (1) Identify organizations that can help get healthy food to households in need; (2) on food banks, block clubs and other groups to inform the foods that are culturally-appropriate in our region; (3) ers to local retailers to get local foods into local markets; a resource whereby consumers can shop from a local Farm Community Supported Agriculture arrangement or Farmers'

...eline of food system projects that align with ...ing opportunities.

...jects that seek support from resources such as the New ...ansitiated Funding Application and work with funders ...jects which seek to improve food justice, food access, a viability, and a sustainable food system.

What if more local farmers were able to sell directly to consumers?

What if we cleaned our waters so that our local fish were safer to eat?

What if all school cafeterias had salad bars?

Make CSAs more affordable and accessible.
Create and fund a revolving loan fund to help low-income people obtain shares in Community Supported Agriculture arrangements. Encourage volunteer support where members could buy shares through sweat equity. Establish refrigeration and freezer shares at CSA drop-off sites.

Create a brand for specialty products from each County.
Brand and market Niagara County fruit as a County specialty. Determine a brand for Erie County agricultural specialties and use this to promote our products in the broader marketplace.

Promote links between local farmers and ethnic food markets.
Develop partnerships between refugee and immigrant organizations and farm groups to ensure farms to grow food that meets the needs of Buffalo-Niagara's diverse cultures.

Create a regional "food hub."
A food hub is both a facility and an organization that can help farmers share resources and aggregate products for more efficient sale to the market. Support the "Ready to Grow Food Hub Planning Project" by providing input on challenges and opportunities in the food system. More generally, support the development of programs and policies that increase the marketability of locally-grown food, including food hubs and farmer cooperatives.

Preserve agricultural land.
Some of the region's best farmland is vulnerable to conversion to new housing. Some of the best farmland has already been lost. Sustaining local agriculture in Buffalo Niagara will require preserving land for crops and livestock. Some of the means for achieving this goal will come to ground in the urban areas of the region. These are addressed in the section on Land Use and Development. But other direct means of preserving farmland need to be implemented.

Identify farmable soils.
Identify parcels not currently used for farming that could be made ready for agriculture. Determine parcel owners' interest in having the land farmed and find farmers looking to rent land. Connect interested parcel owners with farmers interested in farming more land. Identify farmable soils currently used for farming.

Encourage the use of mobile food trucks.
Mobile entrepreneurs can be a good vehicle for delivering healthy, locally-produced foods to neighborhoods and local schools lacking healthy food options nearby. Reduce licensing requirements or vary rates based on serving healthy foods.

Improve transportation access.
Review and modify transit routing and schedules to improve access to food providers, especially in areas where vehicle ownership is low. Or provide free rider home from healthy-food retailers to customers living in neighborhoods with low-vehicle ownership. Provide free rides to customers who spend more than a baseline amount of money at the store. Fund vouchers for free transit or taxi rides to and from healthy food stores.

Support and enhance public food assistance.
Promote, create new, and increase participation in existing "double-up" fresh market retail options to increase value of public assistance dollars at healthy-grown products like farmers' markets, and for purchases of more. Work with public officials to advocate and facilitate commensurate public assistance programs at public institutions (libraries, schools, colleges) and food retail destinations, from corner stores to supermarkets.

Promote urban farming and community gardens.
While it is important to differentiate urban farming from community gardening, both practices can help improve access to healthy food for residents, improve city economies, and strengthen neighborhoods. A range of supports should be provided for these activities.

Provide security of tenure to farmers and gardeners.
Urban farmers and community gardeners both invest significant time and resources in building soil and creating gardens for long-term investments. Therefore, institute long-term, secure leases for gardeners on publicly-owned lands.

Facilitate access...

Indicators on food access and food systems are key parts of the plan.

Are we increasing access to healthy food for those most in need?

HOW IT ALIGNS WITH OUR VALUES

The more people have access to healthful food, the healthier our communities become.



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

55,954

households without a vehicle and beyond walking distance to a supermarket.

WHERE WE WANT TO GO



We'll be making progress if we **decrease** the number of households that can't easily access a supermarket.

Are we preserving our farmland?

HOW IT ALIGNS WITH OUR VALUES

The more farmland we keep, the more resilient our food systems become.



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

397.1

square miles of land dedicated to farming.

WHERE WE WANT TO GO



We'll be making progress if we **increase** the amount of land dedicated to farming.

YouTube



Samina Raja, PhD - Securing Our Food System



oneregionforward



Subscribe

12

102 views



A commercial kitchen geared towards educating new business owners and reducing barriers to entry would help level the playing field for people who just need that small break to get going.

Della Miller

Small Food Business
Incubation for East Side
Residents

Visit OneRegionForward.org/Champs to view a video of Della's project



Our neighborhood needs a place where residents can have access to nutritious, affordable food to increase health and quality of life. Any market that comes into the neighborhood should reflect the needs and desires of the neighborhood.

Daria Pratcher

Bringing Food Retail
into the Central Park
Plaza Redevelopment

Visit OneRegionForward.org/Champs to view a video of Daria's project



I want to provide fresh, nutritious, and affordable food to the residents of Buffalo's East Side in a manner that is convenient, predictable, and takes into account that many of these community members do not have access to cars.

Kara Oliver

Fresh2Go
East Side
Mobile Market

Visit OneRegionForward.org/Champs to view a video of Kara's project



RESEARCH

Knowledge to Build Connections



Farmers



Local Gov't



Consumers

Generating Knowledge to Build Connections

Researching innovative food system plans and policies and understanding barriers to food systems policy change.

Research, Education and Planning & Policy



These three major activities will work hand-in-hand to address the concerns of struggling farmers and vulnerable consumers by building capacity of local governments and their partners to create, implement and sustain food system policies and plans that both promote food security and foster a healthy agricultural sector.

FEATURED



January 8, 2015

Food Systems Planning Highlighted at American Farmland Trust Conference



December 17, 2014

New Website for APA Food Systems Planning Interest Group

RESEARCH



EXPLORING
STORIES
of
INNOVATION

Baltimore, MD

The City of Baltimore is making a name for itself in the realm of food systems planning. The hallmark of its success is the work [...more]

Policy Database

The Growing Food Connections Policy Database is a searchable collection of local public policies that explicitly support community food systems. This database provides policymakers, government staff, and others interested in food policy with



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