



2013 Community Agenda

1. Improve Conditions at the Erie County Holding Center

- a. Erie County should create an Ombudsman and a telephone hotline for jail management complaints, using funds from the inmate telephone revenues; and
- b. Erie County and the U.S. Department of Justice should make public the findings of the DOJ compliance officers enforcing the settlement of the federal case against the County for civil rights violations at the Holding Center.

2. Use Smart, Strategic Growth for the Region's Economic Development

- a. Erie County should establish a county planning board; and
- b. New York State, the WNY Regional Economic Development Council, Erie and Niagara Counties, and all state and local economic development entities should adopt a set of smart growth principles to intelligently guide development and redevelopment in the region.

3. Preserve Community and Promote a Regional River Crossing System Through Public Participation

New York State and the bridge authorities should take a big-picture approach and craft a regional plan for our river crossings, including the optimal routing of truck traffic. Given the strategic location of the Peace Bridge, the authorities and governments should focus on the community, passenger cars, bikes, and pedestrians and:

- a. Avoid any further encroachment into surrounding neighborhood, and begin restoration of the surrounding neighborhoods and Front Park;
- b. Require a full environmental impact statement and air monitoring, including monitoring of ultrafine particulates, before any changes are made to the Peace Bridge, its operations, plaza, buildings, ramps and/or structures;
- c. Undertake governance reform to align and eventually merge the bridge authorities; and
- d. Require full and meaningful public participation in any proposed plan and prior to any actions taken regarding the bridge, any expansion, any on-plaza changes and/or preclearance or similar freight processing procedures.

4. Ensure the Health and Safety of Buffalo Students by Implementing the District Wellness Policy and Placing Community Health Workers in Schools

- a. The Buffalo Public Schools should implement, operationalize, and allocate resources to support the District Wellness Policy, which was approved by the Board of Education in April 2012; and
- b. Community Health Workers should be deployed in schools to coordinate school health and empower students and parents to be active participants in their health, well-being, and learning.

5. Fund Public Art as Required by Law

The City of Buffalo should implement, monitor, and enforce its law that, for any capital project of over \$1 million paid for in whole or in part by the City, 1% of the budget must be devoted to public art.

6. Raise the Minimum Wage

To improve the state's economy and bring raises to one million low paid workers, New York State should pass Assembly Bill 9148 to raise the state's minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.50 per hour and index it to inflation.

7. Reform New York State Housing Policy to Better Serve Buffalo-Niagara

New York State should improve its housing policies so that they better serve upstate regions such as Buffalo-Niagara by doing the following:

- a. Support holistic neighborhood revitalization, using Buffalo's award-winning Green Development Zone as a model, and fund at least 300 units of affordable housing in five targeted Buffalo communities that are well-positioned for stability;
- b. Restore and enhance a separate funding stream for small projects;
- c. Revise the state's Housing Design Handbook to facilitate rehabilitation projects; and
- d. Adjust New York's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan and HOME funding criteria to give more points and funds to proposals that address high rates of vacancy and abandonment, re-use and repair existing buildings, respect neighborhood fabric, use green and healthy design, keep seniors in their homes, and spring from holistic, community-generated plans.

8. Improve Language Access

In order to improve services to residents, ensure equal access to government services, and comply with civil rights laws,

- a. The City of Buffalo and the County of Erie should create and implement Limited English Proficiency Plans;
- b. The State of New York should create and implement a Limited English Proficiency Plan for its new health care exchanges; and
- c. The Buffalo Public Schools should promptly implement the recommendations made by the Council of Great City Schools to improve education for English language learners.

9. Get Our Money's Worth from Public Subsidies

The New York State Legislature should:

- a. Pass Assemblymember Ryan's bill (currently A10560), which would permit the Amherst, Clarence, Concord, Hamburg, and Lancaster IDAs to provide only municipal-level subsidies and not state or county tax breaks that affect other cities and towns; and
- b. Introduce and pass the Just and Open Subsidy (JOBS) bill, which would:
 - i. Prioritize performance with a more streamlined process, improved public access, provisions for good local jobs with prevailing wage and local hiring standards, and adherence to smart growth principle that limit the damaging effects of sprawl;
 - ii. Provide mechanisms for transparency via a centralized website for all corporate subsidy programs so that New Yorkers can easily monitor and assess performance outcomes; and
 - iii. Establish enforceable accountability measures through which New York State can recapture public money when companies fail to live up to their performance agreements.

10. Expand the New York State Earned Income Tax Credit

New York State should increase its Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 30% to 35% of the federal EITC in order to support work, reduce poverty, and spur economic development.