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More Ideas for a Better Buffalo Niagara 2018

1. Buffalo Public Schools should adopt a Good Food Purchasing policy
2. Protecting and enhancing Buffalo's Lake Erie Shoreline
3. The Buffalo Water Board should develop equitable policies and fair rates for residents who document financial need
4. City of Buffalo tax foreclosure reform
5. Pass and implement NY Renewables legislation
6. Make waterfront access equitable and environmentally sustainable
7. Historic preservation and the just city
8. Better environmental stewardship at the Buffalo Public Schools
9. Reinvigorate the City's commitment to arts and culture
10. Protecting homeowners from displacement
11. Regenerative infrastructure for the City of Buffalo

1. Buffalo Public Schools should adopt a Good Food Purchasing policy

The Buffalo Public Schools should adopt a Good Food Purchasing Policy that promotes local economies, health, a valued workforce, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.

2. Protecting and enhancing Buffalo's Lake Erie Shoreline

The City of Buffalo should pass its draft *Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan* (LWRP) and seek Climate Assessment funds from New York State. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) and the State of New York should designate ECHDC-owned Outer Harbor land as parkland, begin a master planning process for it, including a full examination of contamination and soil stability, and, as an immediate first step, stake out the entire public space with attractive fencing or other framing designs to mark and preserve it as an environmental and recreational park.

3. The Buffalo Water Board should develop equitable policies and fair rates for residents who document financial need

After collaborating with community organizations serving low-income individuals and holding public meetings, the Buffalo Water Board should enact reform policies whereby residents who document certain levels of financial need will be charged reduced water rates or provided some form of financial assistance.

4. City of Buffalo tax foreclosure reform

The City of Buffalo should improve its tax foreclosure practices by accepting partial payments on unpaid bills, making installment agreements with residents who fall behind, allowing uninterrupted access to the City's online payment portal, and creating a Hardship Assistance Program to provide aid, counseling, and the tolling of interest.

5. Pass and Implement NY Renews Legislation

Governor Cuomo and the NYS Legislature should take bold action on climate, jobs, and equity by passing the Climate and Community Protection Act to:

- a) Make greenhouse gas reductions mandatory and legally enforceable;
- b) Promote renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- c) Direct 40% of clean energy spending to disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- d) Make sure that the green jobs created are high quality jobs; and
- e) Provide a just transition for workers and communities that have depended on fossil fuel jobs and tax revenue.

New York should also pass legislation to establish a corporate polluter penalty that would put a price on greenhouse gas emissions and air contaminants, ensuring that large oil and gas corporations pay for the damage they're doing to our health and climate. This money would be used for:

- a) Developing climate jobs that reduce emissions and improve infrastructure;
- b) Targeted investments for disadvantaged communities;
- c) Supporting workers (e.g. unemployment benefits, relocation funds);
- d) Rebates for low to moderate income New Yorkers and small businesses.

6. Make Waterfront Access Equitable and Environmentally Sustainable

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, and the City of Buffalo should join with partnering agencies to identify and develop automobile-free alternatives for accessing Buffalo's waterfront and to make the Inner and Outer Harbors an integral part of the Niagara River Greenway. In particular they should:

- a) Plan a feasibility study for a sky gondola to connect Buffalo's Inner and Outer Harbors.
- b) Increase the frequency and capacity of the current ferry service for bicycles and pedestrians to the Outer Harbor.
- c) Establish an emission-free shuttle service (electric bus or people mover) to transport people between attractions on the Outer Harbor.
- d) Extend the Discover Niagara Shuttle currently serving destinations between Niagara Falls and Fort Niagara to Canalside, thus providing the public transportation connectivity needed for making Buffalo-Niagara a regional tourist destination. Facilitate cooperation between Visit Buffalo-Niagara and the Niagara Falls USA tourism agency in accomplishing this goal.

7. Historic Preservation and the Just City

Preserving the physical fabric of our neighborhoods is important to our City's social, cultural, economic, and environmental health. To ensure that these benefits are available to all members of our community, the City of Buffalo should:

- a) Update its demolition ordinance to give the Preservation Board binding authority over demolition of National Register or National Register Eligible buildings and sites;
- b) Create and implement a Preservation Plan for the entire City of Buffalo;
- c) Replace the City's outdated Preservation Ordinance with an updated ordinance that reflects national best practices and the New York State model code;
- d) Re-direct demolition funds into home repair funds.

8. Better Environmental Stewardship at the Buffalo Public Schools

The Buffalo Public Schools should take the following steps to come into compliance with the law and improve its recycling program:

- a) instruct each school promptly to come into compliance with City of Buffalo law by recycling all recyclable materials and to report to the Superintendent and Board within 30 days of this resolution on the steps it has taken to come into compliance; and
- b) instruct each school to involve students in its recycling efforts and teach them the benefits and ease of recycling and to report back to the Superintendent and Board on its efforts; and
- c) instruct staff that future waste contracts must include a district-wide recycling policy and program that includes uniform collection of all required recyclables for each school.

9. Reinvigorate the City's Commitment to Arts and Culture

The City of Buffalo should reinvigorate its support of arts and culture by creating a Department of Cultural Development, fully staffed and led by a cabinet-level commissioner, and by dramatically increasing its support for arts and culture groups and instituting a fair process to allocate the funds, with a particular emphasis on small and mid-sized groups.

10. Protecting Homeowners from Displacement

In 2018, New York State should pass an enabling act that allows the City of Buffalo to create a property tax exemption policy for homeowners facing gentrification pressures. The City of Buffalo should then enact an exemption as follows:

- a) The policy would apply to residents whose owner-occupied homes see an increased equalized assessment rate increase of 30% or greater within a single year or 50% or greater over three years.
- b) For the duration of the exemption, the homeowner shall pay, at minimum, the tax levy imposed prior to the increase.
- c) When the resident sells their home or the home otherwise changes title (other than to a descendant inheritor who would then live in the home), the exemption will end.

11. Regenerative Infrastructure for the City of Buffalo

The City of Buffalo should plan and prepare for climate change impacts and improve its regenerative infrastructure by:

- a) Preserving more green space through community land trusts, vacant lot management, and other tools;
- b) Facilitating higher density/mixed use development;
- c) Planting more trees and coordinating with the Sewer Authority to optimize the prevention of storm water surges.
- d) Working with neighborhoods and block clubs to address food deserts/food security.