



2012 Community Agenda

- 1. Reinstate Erie County Cultural Funding and City of Buffalo Arts Funding.** Erie County and the City of Buffalo should reinstate arts funding to cultural organizations in 2012. Erie County and the City of Buffalo in partnership with cultural organizations should establish an ongoing citizen-led and equitable review process for the distribution of the public's annual arts, cultural and library funding. Finding a dedicated source of funding for the arts should be prioritized.
- 2. Regionalize Economic Development and Reduce the Number of Public Authorities.** New York State should ensure that economic development programs such as Industrial Development Agencies provide a substantial return on investment in the form of quality jobs and improved quality of life and act in concert with newly created regional economic development strategic plans. To ensure maximum return on investment, the 115 Industrial Development Agencies operating in the state should be consolidated to no more than one authority per county.
- 3. Reduce Resident Exposure to Carcinogens and Other Toxic Chemicals.**
 - a. New York State should provide adequate funding for Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) air resources staff;
 - b. The DEC should continue to monitor air quality at Grand Island Boulevard and Brookside Terrace in Tonawanda NY, and should mandate the best available control technology at Title V facilities in Tonawanda; and
 - c. The City of Buffalo should fill the now vacant emergency management position with meaningful input from impacted communities and prepare an emergency management system that prioritizes public health in impacted communities.
- 4. Use Publicly Owned Vacant Land to Improve Quality of Life.** Some of the over 6,000 City-owned vacant parcels should be cleaned up and freed up for productive use:
 - a. The City of Buffalo should sign a new master lease with Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo that includes longer terms and more security for community gardeners;
 - b. The City of Buffalo should provide a clear process for residents and organizations to access land that does not fit within the Community Garden framework; and
 - c. The City of Buffalo and State of New York should provide funding for a program to hire disadvantaged workers through community-based groups to clean and green vacant lots.

5. Assure Implementation of Community Benefits Provisions in Erie Canal Harbor Redevelopment.

The State of New York, Empire State Development Corporation, and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) should use the public investments in Canal Side to create true community benefits by:

- a. Diversifying the leadership of ECHDC;
- b. Fostering more inclusive community involvement;
- c. Practicing genuine open bidding and eliminating conflicts of interest and favoritism;
- d. Investing in historic preservation, arts and culture, green design and operation, and multi-modal transit;
- e. Creating quality jobs for local workers, including minority workers; and
- f. Providing business opportunities for locally-owned independent businesses and minority and women-owned businesses in the construction phase and in the ultimate development.

6. Ensure Health Care for All. The City of Buffalo, Erie County, and New York State should join to:

- a. Work towards comprehensive health coverage for all under New York Health (A.7860/S.5425): a universal health care bill that would promote a single payer plan and assure that opportunity for health is no longer a business proposition, but a basic human right; and
- b. Provide funding for community-based care through community health workers and community clinics, such as county clinics and federally qualified health centers, to advance health care system reform and eliminate health disparities.

7. Save Buffalo-Niagara Transit. To maintain the current Level of Service and fare structure for the NFTA transit operations:

- a. New York State should increase Transit Operating Assistance to insure sustainable operations now and in the future; and
- b. New York Power Authority should increase the supply of low-cost electric energy to NFTA restricted for transit operations.

8. Build a More Rational and Effective Bi-National River Crossing System. To address pressing environmental justice issues while planning for accommodation of freight and passenger traffic from a regional perspective, our governments should:

- a. Form a singular vision for the Niagara Crossings:
 - i. Establish a cooperative agreement between the competing bridge authorities, moving toward merger; and
 - ii. Devise a joint plan for facilitating trade and travel across the Niagara River.
- b. Take immediate action to monitor and reduce of harmful health impacts of Peace Bridge truck traffic:
 - i. The Public Bridge Authority (PBA) should implement on-site mitigation measures;
 - ii. The Department of Environment and Conservation should establish air monitoring for volatile organic compounds and particulates in the impacted area; and
 - iii. The City of Buffalo and PBA should charter an independent health impact assessment.

- c. Devise a workable interim solution for the Peace Bridge corridor including:
 - i. Meaningful public participation in any proposed plan; and
 - ii. A Health Environmental Impact Statement with Independent oversight to determine the impacts of proposed changes, including commercial pre-clearance.

9. Confront the Harmful Effects of Gambling.

- a. New York State should reject all efforts to expand legalized gambling, including the proposed constitutional amendment to legalize commercial casino gambling and the addition of table games to race tracks;
- b. The Empire State Development Corporation should end the conflict of interest created by having the chair of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation serve as a member of the board of Seneca Holdings by requiring him to resign from one of these two positions;
- c. Erie County should re-join the lawsuit against the illegal casino in the city of Buffalo and should produce detailed estimates of the costs to state and local government from gambling in Erie County; and
- d. The City of Buffalo should monitor and enforce its contracts with the Seneca Nation and/or Seneca Gaming Corporation, and, in the event of non-compliance, should rescind the contracts.

10. Raise the City of Buffalo's Recycling Rate. The City of Buffalo should amend its recycling law and policies so that they clearly require and incentivize recycling. The City should collaborate with community groups on a public awareness campaign to promote recycling.

