

Food System Planning in Buffalo Niagara

Bart Roberts, AICP

*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*





Our Values

5 Big Ideas

and dozens of potential strategies and actions to get us there

Create Great Places and a
Thriving Economy
through Efficient
Land Use

Connect Our Places by
Expanding and
Diversifying Our
Transportation
Options

Provide
Housing Choices
in Neighborhoods
that are Great
Places to Live

Conserve Our
Energy
Promote Renewables
and Prepare for the
Impacts of
Climate
Change

Strengthen
Our **Food**
Systems
for a Healthier
Population and
Economy

Home » Mobile » Featured

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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SPORTS

NATIONAL

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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

Healthy Kids
Healthy Communities



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, OCE-Erie County, OCE-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.



UB's Food Lab authored a detailed food system strategy document, rich in research, best practices, and potential actions to take.



ONE REGION FORWARD
Food Access and Justice Strategy Document

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

Figure 2. Farmable soils in Erie and Niagara County

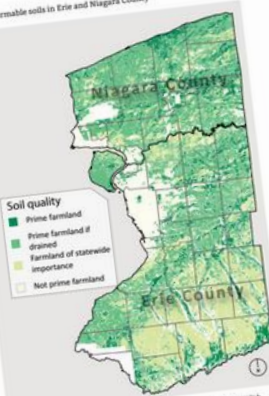


Table 8. Labor force participation by sex in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

	In labor force	% of total labor force	% of total population*
Men	294,684	51	68% of men
Women	281,841	46	59% of women
Total	576,525	100	63%

Table 9. Family structure in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

Household type	N	% of family households
Family households with children under 18	151,924	46
Family households with children living with non-parent relative	9,337	3
Single-mother households with own children	35,886	11

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	60.55

Table 11. Poverty by sex in Buffalo Niagara, 2010

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

Table 12. Single-mother household in Buffalo Niagara

Year	Number	% of single-mother households
2000	36,871	—
2010	35,886	—

both counties is 2.3 people. The majority household are composed of families, with a slightly higher percentage of family households (63 percent) in Niagara County than in Erie County (60 percent). Family households in the region are home to children under eighteen years, and 7 percent of family households with children under 18 live with their parents.

Households can comprise either unrelated people or families, of which there are many kinds. Family households tend to share financial resources more than those living in non-family households. As a result, many experience more difficulties affording food. This is not always the case, however, as extended family households, single-parent, multi-generational, or extended family households, which may make food difficult to afford.

Family households run by a single mother with her own children comprise 2.5 percent (35,886) of the region's total family households (Table 9). In 2000, there were 36,871 single-mother households in the region.

Unemployment, poverty, and income
People's financial status impacts their food security. People with low incomes have less money to spend on food. Many also face job or wage issues that impact their ability to afford food. In 2010, the average of men and women in Erie and Niagara County was 63 percent of the national average, or 15 percent below the national average. The labor force in the region is 576,525 people (Table 8). In 2010, the average of men and women in Erie and Niagara County was 63 percent of the national average, or 15 percent below the national average.

THE FOOD ECONOMY

PE 1: GDP from food businesses is \$4.16 billion annually and comprises 10.4 percent of the region's total GDP.

PE 2: GDP from crop and animal production is growing, but employment in those sectors is declining.

PE 3: Compared to the nation and state, the region specializes in specialty food manufacturing, dairy and vegetable preserving, and higher concentration of convenience stores, communities in the nation and state.

The region's food economy is a multi-faceted system with links to other components within the region and beyond the globe. Buffalo Niagara's economy is large, and it is subject to local forces such as the national and regional economic systems. Additionally, it is shaped by forces such as federal subsidies, national food security trends, and the price of food. This chapter gives a general overview of the Buffalo Niagara food system economy, while the chapter that follows gives more detail about economic trends in GDP and employment in the food system, promoting and enhancing, and food distribution.

A. The food system's market
The Buffalo Niagara metro area's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$39.2 billion in 2010, a 2 percent, or \$1.6 billion, increase from 2009. The region, comprising 10.4 percent (4.16 billion) of total GDP (Table 10). The region's GDP grew by 1.5 percent between 2009 and 2010, but the larger city growth occurred in two food industries: crop and animal products, which grew by 16 percent.

B. The food system's economy
Compared to New York State, Buffalo Niagara's food economy is strong. The region's food industry is strong. Its specialization can be seen in the food industry's contribution to the region's GDP, which grew by 15 percent. Currently, GDP of food producers fell by 9 percent. GDP of wholesalers and retailers trade (which includes food stores) declined by 2 percent (Table 10).

Food-related GDP grew overall, but as shown in Figure 10, food-related GDP declined in the region in the 1990s and 2000s. Some of the region's trends in GDP and employment in the food system, which includes output while lowering 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

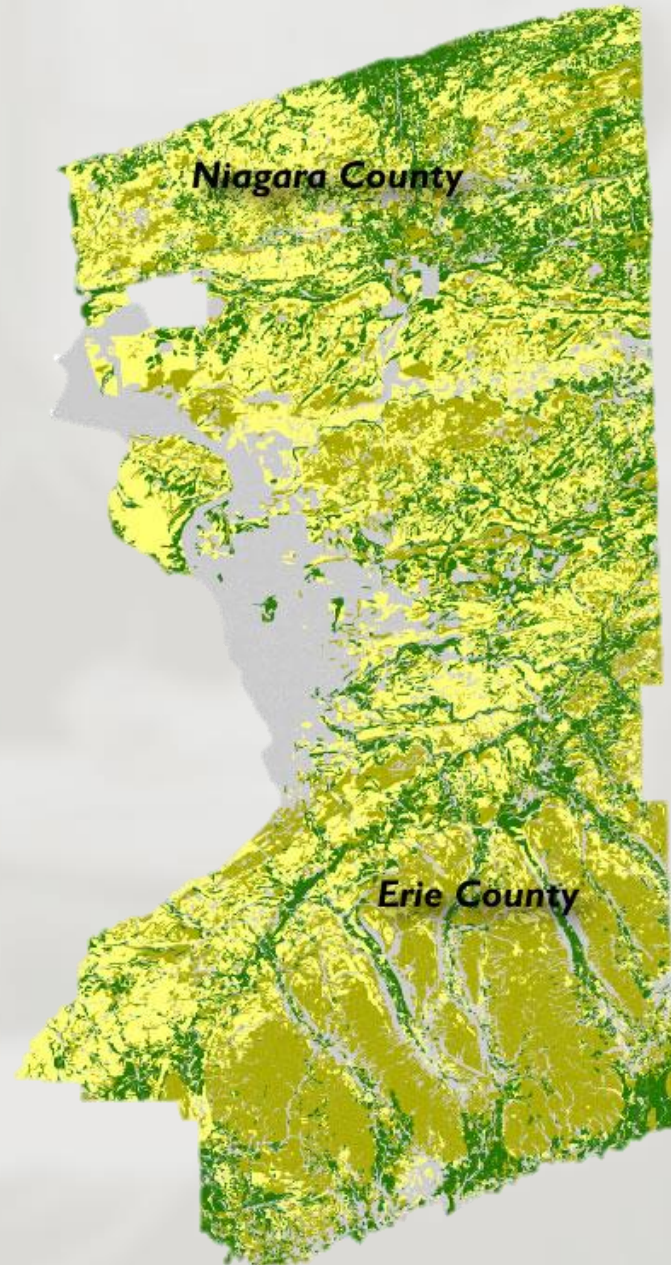
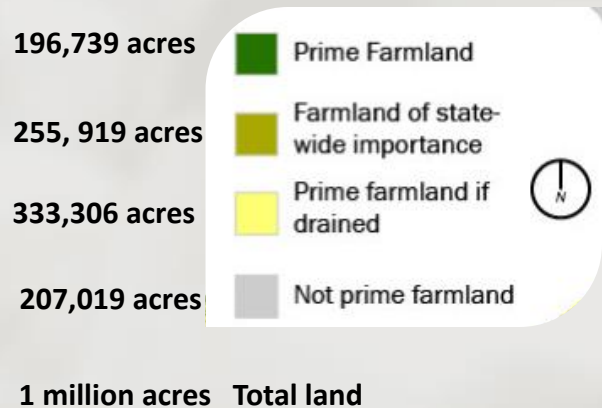


...and **1 out of 10** live with diabetes.



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.



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.

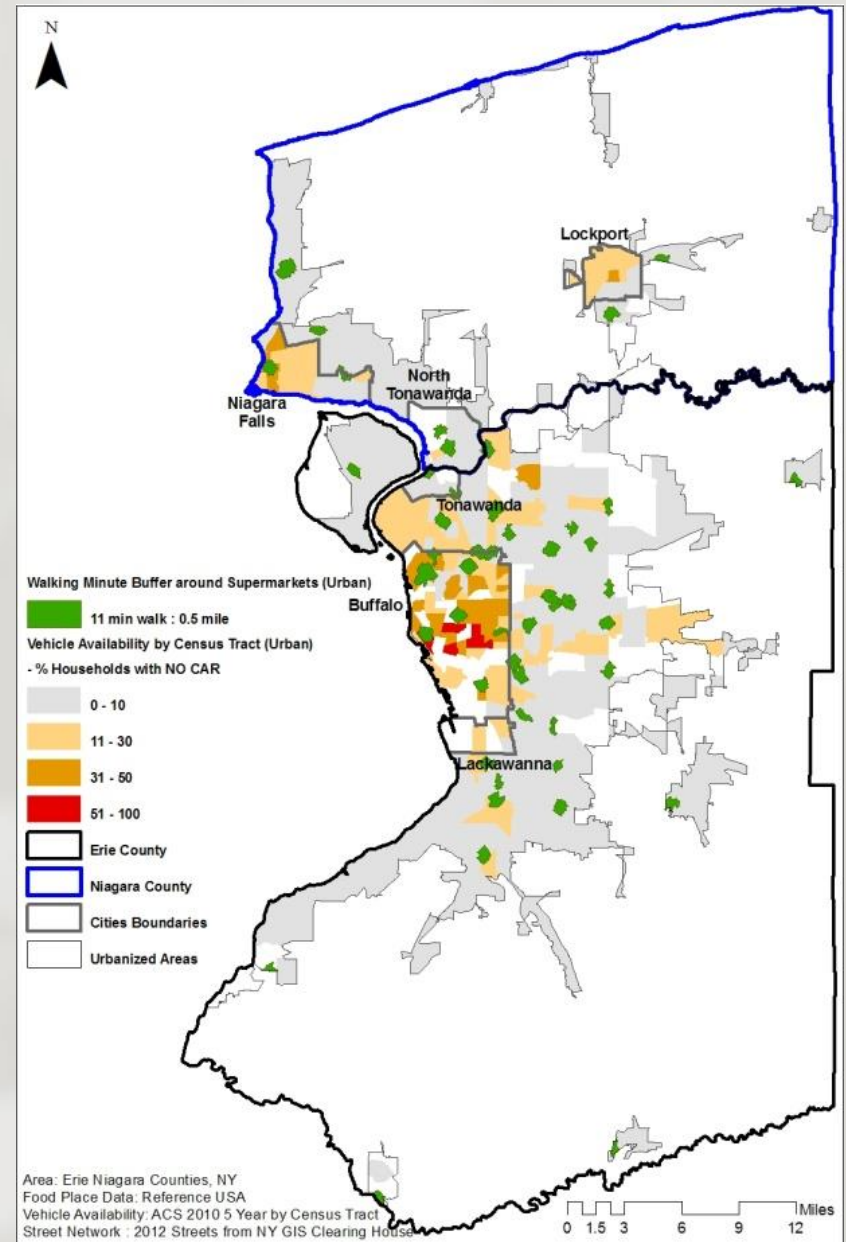
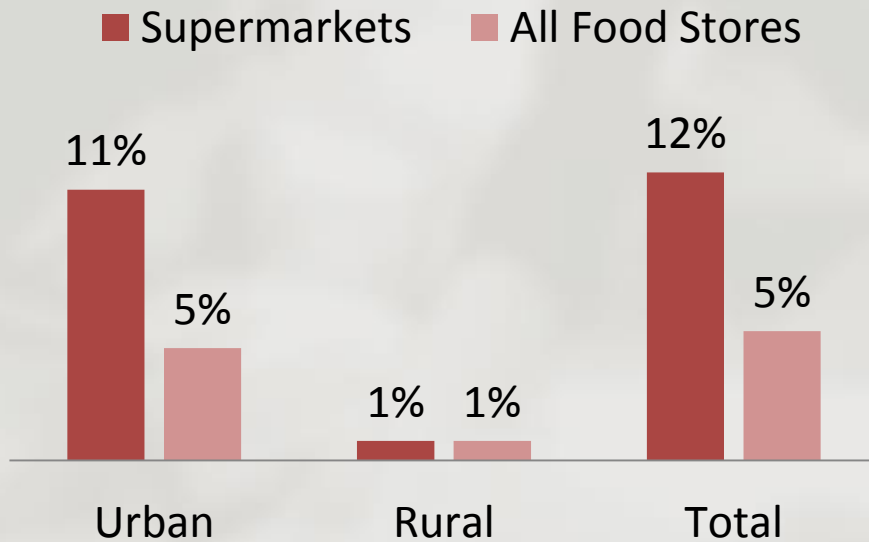
Residents in many areas find it hard to find fresh, healthy food.

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



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.

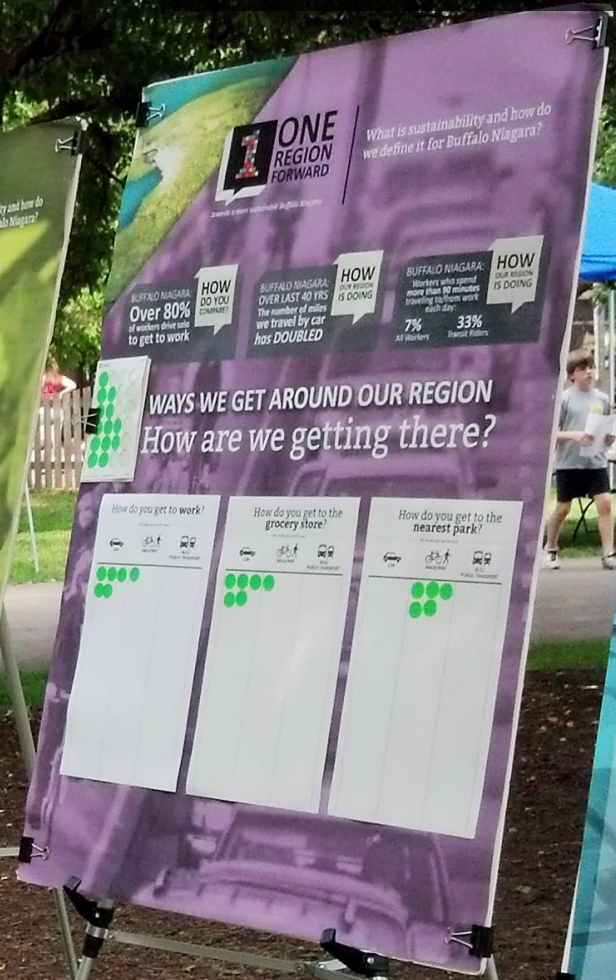
Since 1992, our two counties have seen nearly 21 square miles of cropland go out of production* – an area roughly double the size of North Tonawanda.

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



Sustainability 101

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 corn 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 like to consume.



Sustainability 101

Sustainability 101

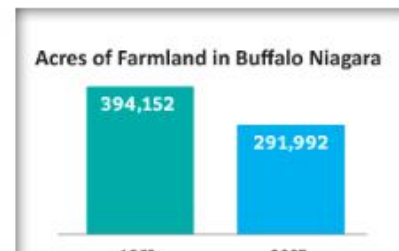
How much agricultural land have we been losing?

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.



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.

ONE REGION
Equity and Opportunity Strategy Document

Fair Housing Equity Assessment

Expanding Opportunity in Buffalo Niagara

Fair Housing Equity Assessment was prepared by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute in partnership with Make Communities, LLC

DECEMBER 2014

E. Areas of Opportunity

In contrast to the B/ECPAs, where residents have fewer options and opportunities than the regional average, there are also Areas of Opportunity throughout the region, generally where public housing, often underfunded for private and affordable housing, often played a role. In many ways, high poverty minority and public housing, often underfunded for private and affordable housing, often played a role. In many ways, high poverty minority and public housing, often underfunded for private and affordable housing, often played a role.

F. Public Investment

For decades, public investment decisions in the region, and the regulatory framework guiding development, encouraged and induced sprawl at the expense of traditional neighborhoods and the urban core. This pattern of investment has resulted in many of the existing inequities identified within the region today.

Figure 2. Scatter Plot of Racial and Ethnic Distribution in Buffalo Niagara 2010

Latin, Asian/Pacific Islander and other race categories.*

However, this increase in diversity, not uniform throughout the two county region. A current snapshot of racial and ethnic concentrations reveals clear concentrations of the Black population in the city's west side and in an extent on Buffalo's west side, while the Asian and Pacific Islander population is also concentrated in southwestern Erie County - in and around the Cattaraugus, the Erie-Niagara border, close to the Tonawanda Reservation. (See Appendix for a series of maps representing concentrations of race and ethnicity.)

On the whole, Buffalo Niagara is interpreted that in previous decades, it has large-scale segregation and segregation patterns within the region.

Since 1990 the region has seen an overall share of the population increase to 20.1% in 2010. The share of every major racial and ethnic group are far from uniform. A high in Buffalo (20.1%) is in the region's inner city (i.e., the Buffalo Falls, Tonawanda, and Tonawanda Reservation (i.e., the Tonawanda Reservation). The Erie County, which is home to the Erie County Correctional Institute (ECCI) and the Erie County Correctional Institute (ECCI) has seen a large increase in population (17.3% from 1990 to 2010). For instance, the dropped near to the Buffalo Falls, Tonawanda, and Tonawanda Reservation (i.e., the Tonawanda Reservation).

Figure 1. Percent Change in Population by Municipality 1990-2010

Overall from 1990-2010, 14 of the region's towns and cities lost population but 11 municipalities gained more than 1,000 people. The City of Buffalo Falls lost 20.4% of its population, while the three municipalities of Tonawanda (-12%), Tonawanda (-12%), and Tonawanda (-12%) lost population. (See Appendix for a series of maps representing concentrations of race and ethnicity.)

These shifting intraregional settlement patterns continue to challenge older vacant and abandoned stock and infrastructure, place an increasing pressure on existing infrastructure, and create new areas of opportunity. (See Appendix for a series of maps representing concentrations of race and ethnicity.)

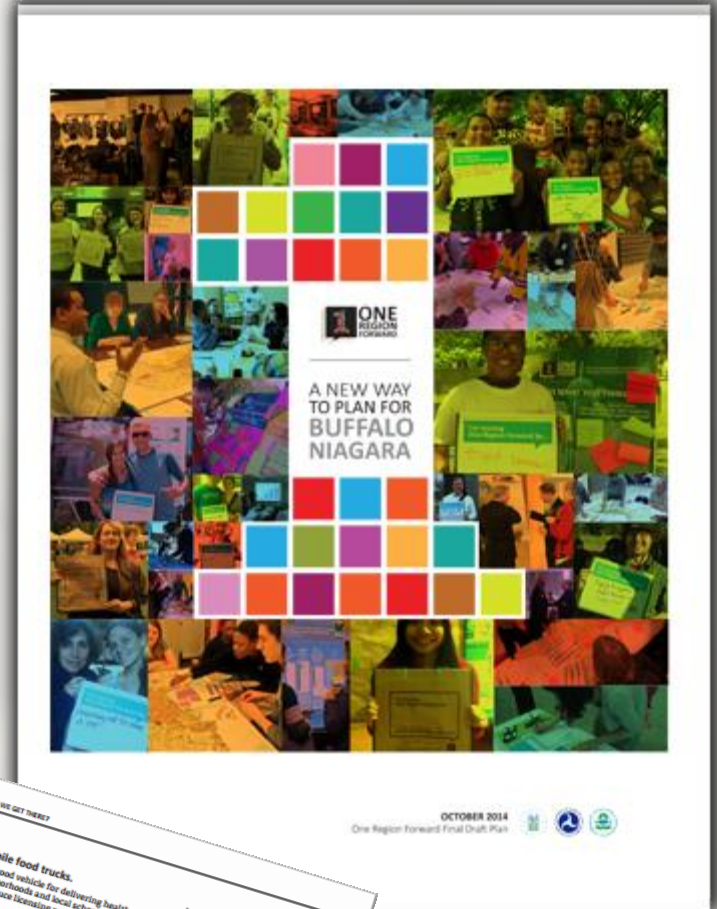
Areas of recent decline, though the region's minority population has a higher burden on these areas, but that these areas are also areas of opportunity. (See Appendix for a series of maps representing concentrations of race and ethnicity.)

Expanding Opportunity in Buffalo Niagara

Fair Housing Equity Assessment was prepared by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute in partnership with Make Communities, LLC

DECEMBER 2014

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



WHAT WE GET THERE

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

WHAT IF MORE LOCAL FARMERS WERE ABLE TO SELL DIRECTLY TO CONSUMERS?

Buffalo Niagara has seen a proliferation of farmers markets in recent years with more than 100 farmers markets operating in at least one county every day. Farmers markets make it a practical reality for thousands of local farmers to sell their products directly to consumers. From the long-standing Elmwood Farmers Market to the newest to open, the Buffalo Valley Farmers Market, there are more and more options available.

MOMENTUM TO BUILD ON

The South Advisory Council for the Healthy Kids Coalition in Buffalo has made amazing progress in Buffalo Public Schools. Specifically, the group brought a campaign to the Board of Education to bring every school in the district to offer a salad bar for every school in the district.

A NEW WAY TO PLAN | HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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 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.

A NEW WAY TO PLAN | HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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

MOMENTUM TO BUILD ON

Clean water and healthy ecosystems grow fish, which is a potential local seafood food source for Buffalo-Niagara. However, heavy contamination, storm runoff, pollution, and other factors are threatening our waterways. Great Lakes and other waterways in Buffalo Niagara need to be cleaned up and restored to improve water and fishing opportunities.

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 rides home from healthy-food retailers to customers 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" programs used to increase value of public assistance dollars at locally-grown products like farmers' markets, and for purchases at stores. Work with public officials to advertise and facilitate convenience in 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 distinctive environments. Therefore, localities should provide a strong disincentive to the threat of displacement through the S10 clean-up of vacant lots on public-owned lands.

Facilitate access to public-owned lands.

A NEW WAY TO PLAN | HOW DO WE GET THERE?

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.

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What if all school cafeterias had salad bars?

MOMENTUM TO BUILD ON

The South Advisory Council for the Healthy Kids Coalition in Buffalo has made amazing progress in Buffalo Public Schools. Specifically, the group brought a campaign to the Board of Education to bring every school in the district to offer a salad bar for every school in the district.

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

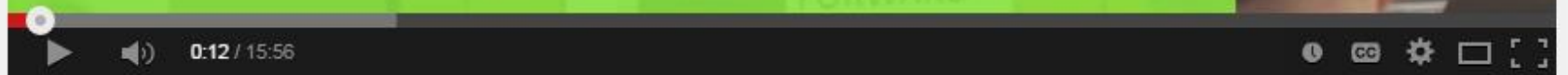


We'll be making progress if we **increase** the amount of land dedicated to farming.



Samina Raja, PhD

*Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab,
School of Architecture and Planning, University at Buffalo*



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



For more information...

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**ONE
REGION
FORWARD**

