



## ***PREAMBLE***

[One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara](#) was approved by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, as Erie and Niagara Counties' Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in January 2015 following a collaborative planning and engagement process guided by the One Region Forward Steering Committee, a cross-sectional partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations providing project oversight during the 3-year planning initiative. Recognizing what this unprecedented opportunity means for the region and its residents, a broad based coalition of stakeholders came together to identify what will be needed to create the sustainable, equitable region envisioned in the plan.

The time is now to shape our region and ensure that our development patterns and transportation improvements are: supporting sustainable development and creating a vibrant economy through efficient land use; connecting our places by expanding and diversifying our transportation options; providing housing choices in neighborhoods that are great places to live; strengthening our food systems for a healthier population and economy; and conserving energy and promoting renewables and resilience to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

One Region Forward's goals and recommendations are wide-ranging, developed with the recognition that some tools and approaches may work in some locations, but not in others, and that each partner retains flexibility and discretion in pursuing the strategies most appropriate to local needs and conditions. However, the envisioned outcomes, consistent with One Region Forward, require an ongoing dedicated partnership of many interests. This dedicated partnership includes cities, towns, villages, counties, transit agencies, businesses and employers, housing authorities, public health agencies, affordable housing providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and development interests that are committed to coordinating planning and policies; making smarter investments; fostering collaborative partnerships, community learning and action; and building capacity and tools to expand the bandwidth for One Region Forward implementation across the region.

The One Region Forward Implementation Council comprised of One Region Forward stakeholders who serve to guide and measure the region's collective progress toward implementing A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara has developed this Charter which sets out key principles and establishes a way of working together to advance the region. And while the Charter is not legally binding and does not mandate adoption of any particular policies or actions, it expresses the need for many and diverse partners to work together over time to achieve its goals, recognizing that opportunities for success cannot be achieved unless we work together.

Therefore, as signatories to the Charter, we commit ourselves to working in partnership to achieve the goals and strategies in this Charter, while respecting the diversity of interests, perspectives, and responsibilities throughout the region. We will strive to contain sprawl, build less infrastructure, conserve more natural open space, create more transportation choices, protect the quality and quantity of water, create a healthier environment, and undertake all in a manner which efficiently utilizes and respects taxpayer resources.



## **IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL CHARTER**

**Whereas** One Region Forward is a broad-based, collaborative effort to promote more sustainable forms of development in Erie and Niagara counties – the Buffalo Niagara Region; and

**Whereas** One Region Forward : A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara, a federally recognized Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”), was adopted on January 15, 2015 by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization; and

**Whereas** the Plan was guided by the One Region Forward Steering Committee, a cross-sectional partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations providing project oversight throughout the 3-year planning and engagement process; and

**Whereas** the Plan includes among its goals: (1) creating a vibrant economy through efficient land use, (2) connecting our places by expanding and diversifying our transportation options, (3) providing housing choices in neighborhoods that are great places to live, (4) strengthening our food systems for a healthier population and economy, and (5) conserving energy and promoting renewables and resilience to prepare for the impacts of climate change; and

**Whereas** a One Region Forward Implementation Council comprised of One Region Forward stakeholders will be created to help guide and measure the Buffalo Niagara Region’s collective progress toward implementing the Plan; and

**Whereas** the One Region Forward Implementation Council envisions among its goals (1) coordinating planning and policies, (2) making smarter investments, (3) fostering collaborative partnerships, (4) promoting community learning and action, and (5) providing capacity support for implementation of the Plan; and

**Whereas** in 2013 the region adopted the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, a long-range transportation plan that calls for promoting smart growth through transportation investment in priority development areas and areas with existing infrastructure; fostering regional economic competitiveness through targeted transportation investment, creating an environmentally healthy, resilient region and promoting safe, equitable regional service for all residents; and

**Whereas** the strategic plan of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC) – A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York – recognizes strengthening smart growth as a key fundamental for improving the WNY economy by reinvesting in our urban centers, neighborhoods, and rural villages to conserve energy and make great places; transforming brownfields from liabilities into assets; and reducing the cost structure of local governments by following smart growth principles in infrastructure planning; and



**Whereas** the Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan recognizes efficient infrastructure, livable cities, and revitalized, inclusive communities, including low cost energy and modern transportation systems to be key enablers to help expand labor markets and drive transformative growth; and

**Whereas** the Fair Housing Equity Assessment for Buffalo Niagara identifies a widespread pattern within the region of unequal household access to educational, economic, transportation, environmental health, and neighborhood resources; and

**Whereas** transit-oriented development is a land use pattern with many social, economic, and environmental benefits, including more sustainable and efficient use of urban land, support for regional and local economies, reduced combined housing and transportation costs per household, and improved access and mobility for residents; and

**Whereas** One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara reinforces the above principles and recognizes the importance of coordinating with other regional planning efforts; and

**Whereas** One Region Forward recognizes that communities throughout the region will have unique roles, functions, and opportunities, and will develop with different uses at varying intensities; and

**Whereas** One Region Forward believes that progress toward creating a vibrant and prosperous region will depend on active participation from a full range of cross-sector partners over the long term, including transit and planning agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, as well as local jurisdictions to enhance economic and environmental resiliency throughout the region; and

**Whereas** updates to local comprehensive plans and development regulations, transit agency plans, and the refinement of regional growth and transportation plans present continuing opportunities to implement the Plan.

**Now, therefore, the signatories to this Charter:**

Commit to undertaking specific action strategies that further a land development pattern which advances One Region Forward and the principles of the Plan; and

Agree that progress toward a more resilient Buffalo Niagara requires a cooperative, regional approach with diverse partners across governmental and nongovernmental sectors that supports and builds upon existing and ongoing planning efforts by regional and local governments and transit agencies; and

Understand that this Charter is designed to express the intent of diverse partners to work together toward common goals, with specific actions identified by partners appropriate to their roles and responsibilities; and

Support a continuing process of collaboration and coordinated action to advance smart growth and sustainable development, and



Recognize that in order to maximize this historic opportunity, show regional leadership, and act as a model of how diverse stakeholders can make transformative decisions that advance a region's goals for its people, its prosperity, and the planet, the signatories to this Charter pledge to work individually and collaboratively toward the goals described above, and toward the implementation of the Plan to move One Region Forward, as appropriate to each jurisdiction and organization.