The time is now for Buffalo Niagara.

We’re working together to build a more sustainable region. Our many efforts to grow our economy and build livable communities are coming into alignment. We have an opportunity to carry this momentum toward a prosperous future and move the region forward.

Welcome and thank you for participating in the Food Access and Justice Working Team

Your participation will help us build the guiding roadmap of this broad-based, collaborative effort to promote more sustainable forms of development in Erie and Niagara counties.

Supported by a multi-year grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, One Region Forward will develop a regional plan that builds on the work of the Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth and the WNY Regional Economic Development Plan A Strategy for Prosperity.

This plan will make our region more competitive by giving us priority status for Federal funding opportunities today and into the future. More importantly, it will allow us to come together to chart a path for a more sustainable future and solve the problems we collectively face, but cannot effectively tackle individually.

But One Region Forward is more than a plan. It will work to promote strong coordination among regional leaders, create a robust community engagement and learning program around moving sustainability to action, develop tools to promote effective implementation, and construct clear measures of our ongoing progress.

You and your fellow Working Team Members and Working Team Contributors will play a leading role in crafting the nuts and bolts of our guiding planning documents. We thank you again and look forward to your continued involvement as we move One Region Forward together.

Sincerely,

Hal Morse
Executive Director
Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council

One Region Forward is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. The effort is guided by a broad-based consortium of public, private and nonprofit sector organizations including: Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT), Erie County, Niagara County, City of Buffalo, City of Niagara Falls, Association of Erie County Governments, Niagara County Supervisors Association, University at Buffalo Regional Institute and Urban Design Project (UBRI/UDP), Daemen College Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement (CSCCE), VOICE Buffalo, Local Initiatives Support Corporation Buffalo (LISC), Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, Western New York Environmental Alliance, The John R. Oishei Foundation, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC), Belmont Housing Resources for WNY, Inc. (Belmont), Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP), Empire State Development, Niagara County Department of Social Services, and Niagara Falls Housing Authority.
The Food Access Working Team will advise the development of a regional planning document that maps out the policy steps and projects needed to create a sustainable regional food system. Specifically, this includes identifying policies, programs, and projects aimed at ensuring people have sovereignty over and spatially just access to healthful, affordable, and culturally-appropriate foods; that negative impacts on natural resources are minimized; and that food production remains an economically viable pursuit.

**ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY**

A collaborative, community driven process to develop a unified vision.

1. **REGIONAL VISION & VALUES**
   - Community Congress
   - Local Governing Council
   - Private Sector Council

**WORKING TEAM PROCESS**

- **WINTER 2013**: "Community Congress" meetings. Working Teams will confirm, revise, amend, or expand these goals as appropriate. We hope Working Teams will agree on final draft goals by our May meetings.

**OVERALL PROCESS**

- **ENGAGING THE PUBLIC**
- **WORKING TEAM**: going through different phases such as establishing goals, frame strategies, identify actions, construct indicators, review and refine, etc.

**FRAME STRATEGIES for action**

- 1. Establishing Goals
- 2. Frame Strategies
- 3. Identify Actions
- 4. Construct Indicators

**IDENTIFY ACTIONS and who will act**

Framed by the goals and strategies, and starting with the June meetings, Working Team members will be asked to identify specific policies, programs, or projects to implement the strategies and achieve the goals. This will give members a chance to drill down, not only to specifics of what needs to be done, but also to who will do what and where the resources will come from.

**CONSTRUCT INDICATORS to measure progress**

Starting in June and continuing into the fall, Working Team members will be asked to advise staff on the construction of performance indicators. This work will borrow from indicators established during the NYSERDA-funded WNY Sustainability Plan and be based on best practices research and available data. Staff will refine indicators and perform baseline measurements over summer and fall, updating Working Teams as they go. Working Team members who want to play a more active role in indicator development can help through our online Teamwork Site.

**REVIEW AND REFINE to prepare for public meetings/feedback**

At two more meetings in 2014 the working teams will consider feedback from the Fall Council and Community Congress sessions.

**DELIVERABLES you will help create**

- **Our Regional Plan for Sustainable Development**
  - Document outlining a strategy for pursuing a sustainable approach to food access - “Regional Food Access Assessment”

- **Government Toolkit – Indicators and Checklist for Local Governments**
Get Started as a Working Team Member or Contributor

Recruit Working Team Contributors

Your friends and colleagues can feed into the work of our Teams by contributing comments and suggestions to this process online. As Working Team Members and Contributors, their ideas and input can feed directly into the nuts and bolts planning occurring through our One Region Forward Working Team planning process.

Provide Feedback on our Regional Vision and Values

If you did not attend one of our Community Congress meetings in early 2013, we ask you as Working Team members to check the Regional Vision & Values Feedback Tool to make your voice heard. This online conversation will be available until May 31, 2013.

Bring One Region Forward to your Community

We want to hear from citizens and organizations across Erie and Niagara County to guide the vision and participate in the development of the plan. If you have an organization or group in your community you would like us to give a presentation to, let us know and we will arrange for a member of the One Region Forward project team to come out to your community.

Feature your work in Sustainability on our website

If you’re involved in a project or a program that you believe helps define what sustainability means for the future for our region, tell us about it and we will feature it on our website’s interactive map “Sustainability in Action.”

Help us promote One Region Forward online

Sharing One Region Forward on your website is an easy and effective way to show your support and involvement with the initiative. Let us know if you are interested and we will be happy to assist you with sharing One Region Forward on your organization, business, or personal website.

Sign up for eNews and join our online community

We’re on Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Follow us on social media, or even better, sign up to receive our newsletter and bulletins that will chart the progress of our work, report on major findings, and let you know the dates of upcoming events.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Bart Roberts at the UB Regional Institute/Urban Design Project at bjr8@buffalo.edu
Teresa Bosch de Celis at the UB Regional Institute / Urban Design Project at tboschde@buffalo.edu

To stay up to date on materials from the Working Team Meetings, please visit us at http://oneregionforward.org/data-tools/resources-documents/