towards a more sustainable Buffalo Niagara

Food Access and Justice Working Team

Brian Conley, Facilitator (UB Regional Institute)
Jessica Hall, Facilitator (UB Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab)
Agenda

Welcome, review and re-cap (15 - 20 min)

Digging deeper into the state of food consumption in Buffalo Niagara

  Reviewing terms, concepts and themes (5 min)

  Presenting the state of food consumers in Buffalo Niagara (20 min)

  Follow-up discussion: identifying assets and opportunities (10 min)

Break (5 min)

Break-out sessions in mini-teams (30 min)

  Brainstorming ways to strengthen our assets and seize opportunities related to healthy food consumption in Buffalo Niagara

Break-out mini-team presentations (20 min)

Working Team Discussion (10 min)

  Pinning down actions and solidifying strategies
Working Team Process and Timeline

6 Meetings/4 Tasks

1. ESTABLISHING GOALS
   - APR

2. FRAME STRATEGIES
   - MAY

3. IDENTIFY ACTIONS
   - JUNE

4. CONSTRUCT INDICATORS
   - AUG

+2 Additional Meetings

- SEP
- JAN

WINTER 2013

REVIEW & REFINE

2014

At two more meetings in 2014 the working teams will consider feedback from the fall Council and Community Congress sessions.
Food Access and Justice Working Team

Help us get the word out!
Tell us who to contact from your organization

1RF would like to utilize existing communication networks as we prepare for our next Community Congress this November.
Food Access and Justice Working Team

Keep involved as a Working Team Member at www.oneregionforward.org

Recruit a Working Team Contributor
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us

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You can also find us on  
Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Flickr and YouTube
What steps should our region take, both today and in the future, to ensure the long-term sustainability of widespread, equitable access to healthy food?

A reminder on our distributed implementation model (possible actors):

- Local municipalities, county governments, state or regional agencies
- Community Based Organizations, private citizens and farmers
- Private sector actors or businesses (developers, business decision-makers)
- Collaborative partnerships across these groups
Strategy:
Support all forms and scales of urban agriculture and gardening.

More Specific Strategy:
Collaborate with farmers, institutions and other entities to secure supplies needed for growing in the urban landscape.

Specific Action Item:
Establish a program with the Tool Library in order to provide gardening tools and other equipment to urban growers who lack resources.
Working Strategies: Food Access & Justice

1. **Protect** our current and potential farmland from development pressures, economic decline, and environmental misuse and keep our farms farming.

2. **Adopt** agricultural practices that reduce the consumption of water, energy and chemical inputs in the growing process.

3. **Support** all forms and scales of food production in urban areas.

4. **Connect** local farmers to the full range of local opportunities to market and distribute their products.

5. **Strengthen** the economic viability of the local food system so that local producers, processors, and distributors are competitive within the global market.

6. Attract and support a new generation of workers to careers in food production, processing, and distribution to ensure a robust and consistent food system workforce.

7. **Heighten public awareness** of local food production, processing and distribution.

8. **Create** a culture that values healthy eating and a strong local food economy.

9. **Enhance opportunity** for all individuals in all communities to obtain healthy foods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Working Actions</th>
<th>Actor Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implement the unrealized strategies of existing farmland protection plans</td>
<td>Farmland Protection Boards and others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify potential farmland and connect it to a new generation of farmers.</td>
<td>Farmland Protection Boards and others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support and guide an update of the Niagara County Farmland Protection Plan that includes actionable items, increases farmer buy-in, and shares the visions of other plans in the region.</td>
<td>County government</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Support and incentivize the adoption of more sustainable farming practices like organic and/or energy efficient production methods and energy generation</td>
<td>USDA-NRCS, CCE</td>
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<td>Provide farmers with information on the effects of climate change on crop production to encourage them to grow products that will sustain a changing climate</td>
<td>USDA-NRCS, CCE</td>
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<td>Develop or promote water capturing/conserving techniques for farmers to deal with projected precipitation changes.</td>
<td>USDA-NRCS, CCE</td>
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<td>Promote healthy urban growing practices that test for and avoid soil contaminated by polluted stormwater run-off, industrial activity or other harmful matter</td>
<td>MAP and others</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Enact policies to secure long term leases of city lots for community gardens</td>
<td>FPC, Grassroots Gardens/GreenPrint Niagara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use an economic study to contrast the return on investment of urban gardens to that of vacant lots to determine how forcefully cities should pursue the expansion of urban agriculture</td>
<td>UB Food Systems and Healthy Communities Lab</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Create a database of local food producers and retailers which would function as an interactive facilitation tool to link local growers to local markets (e.g., a “Farmlink” program)</td>
<td>REDC, FPC or other</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Establish a regional food hub to increase marketing opportunities for local farmers in the region and help shift farming focus to producing healthy food for human consumption.</td>
<td>USDA-NRCS, CCE</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ensure a sustainable supply of labor for farms through outreach and educational campaigns that foster a new generation of farmers comprised of the disadvantaged or workers in transition.</td>
<td>CCE, Map, Food Pantries</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop training programs built around food processing, preservation, distribution and preparation to limit food waste and end hunger locally</td>
<td>CCE, Map, Food Pantries</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Undertake a regional educational campaign to increase public recognition of the benefits and opportunities in local agriculture and consumers’ knowledge of their farmers.</td>
<td>Local Media</td>
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<td>Celebrate a local farmer annually by honoring them as the region’s “Farmer Laureate”</td>
<td>Local media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promote recognition of farmers through new events and through an increased recognition of ones that are ongoing</td>
<td>Local media</td>
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<td>Adopt a smart local brand for foods produced in Buffalo Niagara to allure markets both within and outside of our region</td>
<td>Food Policy Council, NYS Attorney General</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Launch a multi-faceted consumer education campaign to promote healthy eating</td>
<td>Local media, FPC</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Use the classroom and the cafeteria to increase students’ understanding of healthy and local food through local food purchasing and farmer demonstrations.</td>
<td>Public Schools; Local, county and state legislative bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote institutional purchasing of local foods by working with farmers, distributors, purchasers and consumers.</td>
<td>Local legislative bodies; Higher education institutions</td>
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Growing Together

Planning for food in a sustainable Buffalo Niagara region
Mission statement

We strive to make regional food production, food consumption, and the ties between them sustainable, just, and sovereign. We seek to ensure that food production remains a viable livelihood; that people have access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally acceptable food; and that the links between regional food producers and consumers are strengthened.
Goals

• Support food producers
• Support food consumers
• Link food producers and consumers
Terms & Definitions

Food Insecurity: “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”

Hunger: “A potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation.”
*Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure, 2006*

Diet related disparities: Differences in dietary intake, dietary behaviors and dietary patterns amongst different socioeconomic segments of the population, resulting poorer dietary quality and inferior health outcomes for certain groups and an unequal burden in terms of disease incidence, morbidity, mortality, survival, and quality of life.
(Satia, 2009)

Healthy food: “A healthy food is a plant or animal product that provides essential nutrients and energy to sustain growth, health and life while satiating hunger.”
(Parnters in Action, 2013)
What types of challenges and opportunities do our food consumers face?
Assets & Opportunities

Food culture

Food access

Cost

Spatial access

Public assistance
Why is food important?

• Satiates hunger
• Tastes good and gives us pleasure
• Shapes health outcomes
• Expresses cultural belonging
• Social activity
• Way we celebrate
Dietary behavior

- Cost
- Physical environment
- Culture
- Interpersonal forces
- Personal preferences, needs, and knowledge
- Health, security, and sovereignty
Food & Culture

- Food matters because it is an important part of how we shape our individual, cultural, and regional identity, and how it shapes us.
• In 1997, food manufacturers spent $7 billion advertising mostly packaged and processed foods.

• In contrast, the USDA spent only 4% of that amount, or $333.3 million, advertising meat, vegetables, and fruit.

• The USDA’s entire fruit, vegetable, and meat advertising budget was only 60% of what food manufacturers spent advertising carbonated drinks alone.

Local dietary behavior

- Adult fruit and vegetable consumption is low.
- Diets that are low in nutrients, lack nutritional diversity, and are high in fat and cholesterol can lead to negative health outcomes.
- ~60% of adults are overweight or obese.
- 11% of adults live with diabetes.

Food Access

Demographic trends impacting food security:

• Aging population (average median age):
  • YR 2000: 37
  • YR 2010: 40

• Rise in single-mother households
  • YR 2000: 8% of family households
  • YR 2010: 13% of family households

• Educational attainment
  • 88% HS graduates
  • 38% more than HS degree

• Growing ethnic diversity (Asian pop.)
  • YR 2000: ~15,000
  • YR 2010: 30,031

Source: US Census
The cost of food
In the Northeast

Among incomes $40k to $50k
## Food Access

**Spending on food:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>All US</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$6,532</td>
<td>$7,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food at home</td>
<td>$3,905</td>
<td>$4,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food away from home</td>
<td>$2,628</td>
<td>$2,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Retail Food Access

Source: ReferenceUSA, 2012
Access to supermarkets

• Access to supermarkets has important associations with healthy eating
  • wide selection
  • affordable relative to other retail types

• On average in Erie County:
  • less than 1 supermarket or grocery store within a 5-minute walk of neighborhoods
  • more than 12 within a five-minute drive

Access to supermarkets

- 11% of households are further than 12 driving minutes from a grocery store – the average travel time for shopping in the region.
Access to supermarkets:

Households at risk

- Households at risk are defined as households without a vehicle and further than a 5-minute walk from a supermarket

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HHAR</th>
<th>% of all households</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>48,005</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>7,949</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>55,954</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vehicle Ownership

- 13% of households (60,284) in the region don’t have access to a car
- Including the purchase of gasoline, the cost of owning a vehicle in the Northeast is over $7,000 annually

Food Assistance

13% of households in the region receive SNAP benefits

Source: ACS 2011 5-year estimates
Food Assistance

- Children receiving free or reduced lunch: 41%
- Number of locations serving low cost or free meals to seniors: 68
- Women receiving WIC benefits: 20,000 per month
  - $57.24 per month, or $687 per year

Source: ACS 2011 5-year estimates
Food Assistance

Non-recipients may still face food insecurity:

- 17% of households are food insecure; 47% of those households receive public food assistance.

- Among very low-food security households:
  - 56% received SNAP
  - 32% were in the NSLP

Source: CCE, Niagara County Food Security Survey
Food Security & Hunger

• Niagara County Food Survey, continued:
  • 17% of Niagara County residents had low or very food security, compared with less than 15% in the US as a whole.
  • Low food security experienced especially highly in urban areas in NF, Lockport, and NT – less so in rural areas.
  • Poverty, lack of access, and the price of food can result in low food security in the region
  • WNY Food Bank: 36,207 households relied on emergency food in 2011

Source: CCE, Niagara County Food Security Survey; WNY Food Bank
Food Security & Hunger

Examples of tackling food insecurity through SNAP supplements for local produce:

- **NYC Health Bucks**
  - $2 extra for $5 SNAP spent at FMs
- **Wholesome Wave Double Value Coupon Program (nationwide)**
  - Double value of benefits at FMs
- **Double Up Bucks (Michigan)**
  - Doubles $20 used on local produce at FM and produce trucks
- SNAP spending at FMs:
  - YR 2011: $579,000
  - YR 2012: $1.53 million
  - 92% of participating farmers grew more produce
Next steps

**Farmland:** identifying land that would be suitable for farmland conversion

**Connections:** identifying current local food self-reliance and the capacity of local producers to provide healthy food

**Connections:** identifying demand for and impact of a local food hub for processing, marketing, and distribution
Thank you

Questions?

Team break-out (A,B,C)

• Identify assets and opportunities.
• Propose associated actions
• Brainstorm indicators and actors.

Reconvene for team presentations and group discussion