The **Climate Change Action** working team is looking for ways to:

**Retrofit existing buildings for energy efficiency**, especially government buildings and school facilities, but also private homes, by continuing and strengthening tax incentives, finance mechanisms (e.g. Property Assessed Clean Energy and on-bill financing), and subsidies to advance insulation, window replacement, smart controls, and other building energy saving measures.

**Streamline permitting for alternative energy** production and alternative fuel vehicles to speed the propagation of distributed wind and solar power for homes and businesses and the use of plug-in electric vehicles for fleets and individuals. Public education to explain the benefits and overcome opposition is crucial.

**Establish market rules** to promote distributed alternative energy production, setting protocols and prices for the sale of “green” energy back to the grid – like the Feed-In Tariff that has pushed alternative production in Canada.

**Strengthen the New York renewable portfolio standard** to push adoption of wind, solar, geo-thermal and other renewable forms of energy by requiring state and local governments an increasing share of energy from those sources.
Find a way to price carbon emissions either through a direct tax on carbon or market mechanisms that charge users for carbon emissions or through carbon offsets linked to real investments in alternative energy production (Renewable Energy Credits) or carbon sequestration (e.g. reforestation).

Phase out coal-fired electric generation in a timely, orderly way, considering the need to compensate for loss of employment and loss of local revenue and the relative costs and benefits of other fossil fuels or green alternatives.

Encourage climate action planning by local governments, major institutions, and others as a means to measure and reduce carbon emissions by identifying the sources of emissions, potential conservation and efficiency measures, green energy replacement options, and other measures.

Improve electricity transmission and storage to promote the propagation of distributed renewable energy production and make the transmission process more efficient.

Conduct community risk assessment and preparedness planning to anticipate responses to threats of extreme weather events, changes in lake levels, migration of plant species, impacts to agriculture, and other negative effects of climate change.
The **Transportation and Mobility** working team is looking for ways to:

**Develop a regional “hub and corridor” transportation system** in which land uses and investments in transportation infrastructure are coordinated to provide multi-modal options for mobility and energy efficiency and to promote transit oriented development schemes.

**Create innovative financing mechanisms** to free needed capital for investments in strategic infrastructure and **establish programs for service sharing** across departments/ non-profits/ private sector to maximize efficiency in the provision of transportation services.

**Connect to national and bi-national freight and passenger rail systems**, taking advantage of Buffalo’s geographic location at the US-Canada border, leveraging strategic strengths in logistics and transportation documentation, providing market advantage to regionally-based firms, and creating an international trade gateway that connects road, rail, air and water-borne modes of transportation.

**Establish transportation management associations** as a means for multi-party collaboration (firms, institutions, governments) to promote transportation alternatives, manage transport demand, foster transit oriented development, coordinate provision of parking, and finance investments in facilities in services to reduce single-occupancy commuting.
The Land Use and Development working team is looking for ways to:

Create a regional body that can lead the implementation of a sustainability plan and other measures through currently available powers and authorities, and through education and provision of technical assistance, while respecting the home rule traditions of New York State and the autonomy of each county and the municipalities within.

Build support for planning through public engagement, reaching more diverse stakeholders, and through the educational and technical assistance functions noted above, as well as by making the case for the economic, environmental, and social benefits of regional planning.

Manage the cost of public services such as water, sewer, transportation infrastructure and services, as well as police, fire, and education service through improved finance, management and planning of those functions, typically on a broader basis than now occurs.

Redesign the tax structure to promote land use goals by removing perverse incentives to develop rural land, extend public infrastructure, and subsidize the production of new built space, while maintaining healthy incentives to redevelop brownfields, adaptively reuse existing buildings, and promote preservation of historic buildings.
Establish mechanisms to manage devalued properties, neighborhoods and districts, building on the new land bank law, finding funding for its operations, expanding its purview to other jurisdictions, and completing the baseline inventory needed for strategic planning.

Protect and restore natural places, conducting an inventory of farmland, wetlands, forest lands and others worthy of protection, quantifying the environmental services they provide, and providing incentives to ensure their continued survival.

Plan at the watershed scale considering both land and water use and the impacts of development on wildlife habitat and corridors, farmland, water quality, and other forms of “natural capital” while understanding that doing this work requires regulatory authority.
The **Housing and Neighborhoods** working team is looking for ways to:

Provide **resources for informed decision-making** including:

- Assessing and addressing supply against demand by housing type and neighborhood,
- Developing a Regional Property Information System including open source data on neighborhoods and municipalities, and
- Developing a tool box for municipalities, developers, non-profits and residents to effectively design and produce sustainable housing types and neighborhoods.

Anticipate, accommodate and **embrace demographic shifts** by:

- Diversifying housing types (townhouses, lofts, and “mingles”) and forms of tenure (condos, co-ops, co-housing, rentals) in mixed use neighborhoods at a variety of price points.
- Developing and deploying housing models to accommodate people with special needs by coordinating design, neighborhood context, supportive services, and other programming.
- Identifying and recruiting demographic groups that might provide impetus for focused neighborhood revitalization.
Target neighborhoods based on their **strategic assets** by:

- Emphasizing community based planning with residents and stakeholders to maximize participation, leverage diffuse resources, and focus on quality of life improvements;
- Focusing public investments in neighborhoods with existing infrastructure, community anchors, viable fabric, and active capacity to spur private investment;
- Designing “better not bigger” strategies for neighborhoods where strategic assets are missing and normal property markets have ceased to function, and;
- Connecting public policy and investment priorities to community goals to create “complete communities” with a range of accessible services and amenities.

Improve the housing **support and delivery system** by:

- Creating flexible and accessible assistance to remove stigma and reluctance to participate in housing programs;
- Developing better opportunities/ supports/ protection for renters and home buyers, particularly from traditionally vulnerable groups;
- Reconsidering the scope and scale of the housing support and delivery system to increase region-wide capacity while remaining responsive to community context;
- Enhancing the code enforcement system and connecting it to existing educational and support programs.