How we use our land and organize urban development, how we design our streets, neighborhoods and downtowns, and how we grow, process and distribute our food are all “building blocks” for a more sustainable Buffalo Niagara.

All of these building blocks – including those discussed in Session 2 of the Citizen Planning School: transportation, energy and climate change, and the emerging “blue/green” economy – are important to the growth of a region that will be prosperous, healthy and just, now and for generations to come.

Session 3 of the Citizen Planning School will explain some of the key concepts involved in land use and “smart growth,” urban design and “placemaking,” and food access and justice. It will also address how land use, urban design and food issues are related to each other and to transportation, energy and climate, and our future economy.

Land use
How we use our land determines much about the sustainability of our region. Our dominant land use pattern commonly referred to as “sprawl” consumes vast amounts of land that might be used for other purposes, makes transportation more difficult, increases demand for energy, imposes extra costs on businesses and taxpayers for infrastructure and services, and more.
If we preserve natural lands – stream corridors, woodlands, wetlands and more – they can provide “environmental services” — cleaning air and water and providing habitat to support plant and animal species. Preserving farmland instead of building houses on the metropolitan fringe will sustain our ability to grow more food locally. Promoting a more compact form of development can also preserve natural beauty, scenic values, and recreational opportunities in city and country.

The land use pattern characterized by single-use development, single-family homes on large lots, big box retail and free parking everywhere makes travel nearly impossible by any means other than the automobile. This is expensive for car owners and a huge burden for those who cannot afford one. It also constitutes a very large portion of our total energy budget. Promoting a more compact land use pattern with mixed-use development and a broader range of transportation options can preserve land, save energy, and make it easier to get around.

Sprawl also demands greater investments in public infrastructure like roads, utilities and schools and spending on services like police and fire protection. The farther a pavement or pipe has to go, the more it costs. The farther a policeman has to patrol, the more we pay. More compact forms of development cost less to operate.

Urban design
It’s not enough, however, just to make land use more efficient. We need to make truly great places where people want to live. We need to make places that will make life better and that people will love. That’s where good urban design comes in. Making great places is a lot about making places that are vibrant, walkable and have mixed uses.

The prevailing pattern of development features streets that are designed only for cars, gives priority to parking, separates homes from shopping from jobs, and puts a lot of space between everything. Making “complete streets” that accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and transit as well as cars makes everywhere more accessible. Mixing residential, retail and employment uses reduces the demand for automobile travel by making destinations reachable by alternative modes of travel. And it all makes neighborhoods more sociable, more interesting and more vibrant.

In the best sense of the word, “placemaking” is not a recipe for design. It’s about a process that should involve residents who know their neighborhood best along with professionals who understand how homes and buildings, streets and sidewalks, trees and gardens come together to make a place where people want to be. Their expert knowledge is no more important than the local knowledge of residents.

We can also enhance regional sustainability and contribute to great place-making by reusing old buildings, often for new purposes. The “greenest” building is the building that’s already built. It takes a lot more energy to build a new building than to renovate an old one. But our historic building stock is also worthy of preservation because it holds meaning for members of the community, contributes to tourism-based economic development strategies, and fits well with the walkable, human-scaled neighborhoods we are trying to create.

Food
It shouldn’t be necessary to explain why food is important to creating a more sustainable way of life. But maybe we take food for granted. We need to remember that much of our food comes from a long way away, requires a lot of energy to produce and deliver, is not accessible to everyone, and that the food we eat and the way we eat it are not always healthy.

The energy inputs to growing food (fertilizer, farm equipment) and to moving food to market (fossil fuels to power airplanes, trains and trucks) add to the cost of food and contribute to our greenhouse gas emissions. Also, food grown in California, Florida or elsewhere is increasingly vulnerable to droughts, storms and other impacts of climate change. Growing more food locally can help address both issues.

Meanwhile, the combination of our regional land use patterns and transportation systems also affect people’s access to food. Underserved urban neighborhoods and far-flung rural areas often become places where food is hard access reliably because stores are not close by and people without automobiles lack adequate transit service. Many people can’t get fresh, healthy food because they can’t get to the store or because they can’t afford it. The result for many is obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

If we grow more locally we can make food cheaper, less energy intensive, and more reliably available. To do that, however, we need to preserve farmland from suburban residential development, support farm economies, promote sustainable agricultural practices, improve “field to fork” connections, promote urban agriculture, improve food storage, and more.
Planning in Our Region

One Region Forward isn’t the beginning of planning in Buffalo Niagara. It’s an extension of a broad and growing body of work by local and regional government, community-based organizations, business and citizens to imagine a better future for our region and make it happen. The regional plan for sustainable development will build on that work and align its policies and program of action on existing regional plans that are already in place for economic development, land use, transportation, energy, environment and more.

One Region Forward took its initial direction from a careful review and analysis of more than 160 plans created by cities, towns, counties, regional authorities and others. We looked for the core values embedded in each of those plans and summarized those as a starting point for a community conversation about where we want to go as a region.

Some of the significant and current plans that are guiding our development and with which the plan for moving One Region Forward will align are featured below.

Visit http://www.oneregionforward.org/data-tools/planning-library/ for a complete, up-to-date list of plans in our region.

PLAN/PLANNING PROCESS

Room at the Table: Food System Assessment of Erie County

Description:
This 2011 plan outlines strategies for strengthening Erie County’s food system. Specifically, the plan aims to ensure economically viable and sustainable agriculture, promote access to local food, ensure lasting food security, promote residents’ overall health and wellness, and educate the general public about the food system in Erie County. It was prepared by graduate students in the Urban and Regional Planning Department at the University at Buffalo, for the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. At the time that the report was made, this department was creating a new farmland preservation plan. Thus, “Room at the Table” was meant to inform this effort.

Type: Current conditions, benefits, challenges, and recommendations

Why you should check it out...
Assesses the current conditions of the county’s entire food system, describes public policies related to food, and analyzes local growing capacity and the economic viability of agriculture in Erie County. It also discusses the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of our food system, lessons learned from other communities, and recommendations for enhancing our food system.


Ready to Grow

Description:
In 2013 the Field and Fork Network announced that it was going to start their Ready to Grow Food Hub Planning Project. This is considered essential in order to strengthen the link between local food production and our regional wholesale market. The project will involve market, agriculture production, and infrastructure analyses of the 5 county region (Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, and Wyoming). The ultimate goal of the initiative is to determine the feasibility of a local food hub. Field & Fork Network will be working with the consulting firm New Venture Advisors and Cornell University’s Harvest NY team to implement the initiative. In addition, there will be a project advisory board composed of key leaders in the local food and agriculture industry.

Type: Economic development, local food, food hubs

Why you should check it out...
Of the 7,500 farms that exist in Western New York, more than 88% of those are considered small farms. Many of these produce exceptional agricultural goods. However, market constraints have left farmers out of the wholesale market. This project will address and eventually mitigate those barriers for both farmers and institutional buyers who want to produce and consume local products.

Link: http://fieldandforknetwork.com/ready-to-grow/
Featured Plans Continued

Comprehensive Planning in the Region

Description:

Comprehensive plans (or a suite of plans) are formal planning documents that address a wide range of planning issues and are inclusive. In other words, comprehensive plans should reflect the community’s goals and objectives in regard to planning issues. Comprehensive plans are the guiding documents for the development of zoning, ordinances, land use decisions and community development. One Region Forward worked with communities across Erie and Niagara counties to create a plan library where you can review plans from all across the bi-country region.

Type: Comprehensive planning, library, resource

Why you should check it out...

NY State’s zoning enabling statutes require that zoning laws be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan. As a result, comprehensive plans should guide local zoning law. In addition to zoning, comp plans guide land use and development in a community. It is important to know what has been determined to be a priority in order to leverage planning processes. It is also important to participate in the development of comprehensive plans. Comprehensive plans can be updated or amended should the community determine there is a need to do so. Learn what your community has formally determined to be priority and visit the One Region Forward Plan Library.

Links:

One Region Forward Plan Library
http://www.oneregionforward.org/data-tools/planning-library/

NYS Department of State - Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan Technical Document

City of Buffalo Comprehensive Planning Effort

Description:

The City of Buffalo Comprehensive Planning effort resulted in a suite of plans. The main guiding document is the Comprehensive Plan (2006). The overall goal of the plan is to guide Buffalo in building a city that is a prosperous, green regional center providing livable communities for all its citizens. It also provides a framework for all other planning initiatives in the city including The Queen City Hub: A Strategic Regional Action Plan for Downtown; the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program; the Olmsted Parks Restoration and Management Plan; the Community Preservation Plan; the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Master Plan; and the neighborhood plans created by the Good Neighbors Planning Alliance. The Plan not only calls for the development of a world class downtown academic health center, but also the resurgence of the surrounding neighborhoods, led by the Medical Campus. All of these plans have overlapping and reinforcing goals that result in a stronger, more sustainable City of Buffalo.

Type: Comprehensive, downtown redevelopment, waterfront planning, parks, preservation, neighborhood plans

Why you should check it out...

Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan guides all development in the City of Buffalo, including the downtown, neighborhood, waterfront, special districts and special purposes projects outlined in the other previously mentioned plans. Thus, the comprehensive plan is necessary reading for anyone interested in creating a project in the City of Buffalo. Individuals may want to learn about the city’s development principles for more specific topics though, such as downtown or historic preservation. The more detailed plans are appropriate for these people. Overall, the Comprehensive plan offers information about the general vision that the City of Buffalo seeks to achieve, and the more specific plans offer detailed strategies for accomplishing that vision.

Links:

The Buffalo Comprehensive Plan: https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/mayor/cob_comprehensive_plan/chapter_90.html


The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program:
http://www.oneregionforward.org/plan/queen-city-waterfront/

The Olmsted Parks Restoration and Management Plan:


Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Master Plan:

Good Neighbors Planning Alliance neighborhood plans:
http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/Divisions/Planning/Good_Neighbors_Planning_Alliance
Featured Plans Continued

**Buffalo Green Code**

**Description:**
The Buffalo Green Code is a historic update of Buffalo’s development framework that will target investments, facilitate job creation, restore the environment, and improve quality of life for residents. It includes extensive components like a Land Use Plan, Unified Development Ordinance, Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Brownfield Opportunity Areas, Urban Renewal Plans, and a Generic Environmental Impact Statement. The Buffalo Green Code has been successful in terms of extensive public engagement. More than 4,000 residents and stakeholders have already participated in this bold and ambitious initiative.

**Type:** Form-based code, waterfront planning, land use, brownfields, environmental preservation, economic and community development

**Why you should check it out...**
This plan covers a wide variety of topics that would be of interest to change agents working on economic development, environmental, and community development issues. The effort is also a role model for effective and widespread community engagement.

**Link:** [http://www.buffalogreencode.com](http://www.buffalogreencode.com)

**New York State Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program**

**Description:**
New York State’s Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program offers guidance, expertise and financial assistance (up to 90 percent of the total eligible project costs) to communities throughout the state to convert unused, contaminated brownfields into productive properties. These sites in turn can spur the revitalization of their surrounding communities. Through the BOA Program, brownfields are transformed from liabilities to community assets that generate businesses, jobs and revenues for local economies and provide new housing and public amenities. Also, the program uses a neighborhood or area-wide approach, rather than the traditional site-by-site approach, to evaluate and rehabilitate brownfields. This allows communities to comprehensively assess existing conditions connected with brownfields, determine community supported redevelopment actions, and gain investment. BOA grants have been awarded to the following areas in Buffalo Niagara: the Buffalo Harbor, Buffalo River Corridor, South Buffalo, Tonawanda Street Corridor, Lackawanna’s First Ward, Lockport’s Tourism Focus Area, Highland Community in Niagara Falls, Buffalo Avenue Industrial Corridor in Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, Sheridan Drive Commercial District, and Tonawanda’s River Road. In addition, the program is connected with the brownfield redevelopment efforts of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**Type:** Brownfields

**Why you should check it out...**
The revitalization of brownfields can also improve the neighborhoods that surround them. Thus, these projects are of interest to individuals that want to make a far-reaching impact. There are also several BOAs in Erie and Niagara counties, thus change agents can chose to support a project in an area that is of particular interest to them. Furthermore, brownfields are in some respects a blank slate, that individuals can propose imaginative rehabilitation plans for.


---

**Growing Together: A Sustainable Regional Plan for Food Access and Justice**

Growing Together is a sustainable food access and food justice report for Erie and Niagara Counties. In partnership with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute, the Food Lab is identifying comparative advantages of the region’s food system through research and stakeholder engagement. The goal of the project is to develop tools that municipalities throughout the two counties can use to increase food production viability; access to nutritious, culturally acceptable, and affordable food; and the connections between local food producers and consumers. Look forward to the completion of this plan within the coming months. Growing Together is a component of the Food Access working team, that contributes to One Region Forward’s Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Other working teams of One Region Forward focus on land use and development; transportation and mobility; housing and neighborhoods; and climate change.

**For more information, visit** -

[http://foodsystystemsplanning.ap.buffalo.edu](http://foodsystemesplanning.ap.buffalo.edu)
FOOD SYSTEMS

Food Environment Atlas

Description:
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Environment Atlas consolidates statistics on food environment indicators in order to encourage research on the determinants of food choices and diet quality. In addition, it offers a spatial representation of a community’s ability and success in accessing healthy food. The Atlas gathers statistics related to the following three food environment factors: food choices, health and well-being, and community characteristics. Currently the Atlas features more than 200 food environment indicators that are either at the county, state, or regional levels. The most recent county-level data are used whenever possible.

Type: Map, statistics

Why you should check it out...
Users can generate maps displaying the variation in a single indicator across the country or view all of the county-level indicators for a specific county. Website visitors can also zoom into particular areas, export or print maps, and download full datasets in the Microsoft Excel format.


Food Availability Data System

Description:
The USDA’s Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System (FADS) includes three different but connected data sets on food availability, loss-adjusted food availability, and nutrient availability data. All serve as common proxies for actual consumption behaviors at the national level. Food availability and loss-adjusted food availability data are updated through 2012, while the nutrient availability data is updated through 2006. Documentation is available for each of the three data series.

Type: Food consumption data

Why you should check it out...
The 2012 data include estimates for over 200 commodities. Users also have access to summaries of findings, a glossary of terms, and additional readings. In general, this data set is useful for those interested in food access and nutrition in their communities.


ChangeLab Solutions

Description:
ChangeLab Solutions provides tools for community-based solutions for America’s most prevalent and preventable diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and asthma. Its site hosts research and webinars related to various programs, including their childhood obesity, healthy housing and planning, and funding healthy changes initiatives. It also features information on topics such as bicycling, complete streets, community gardens, farmer’s markets, housing, and more. In addition, the site includes catalogs of publications, workshops, and trainings.

Type: Research, webinars, and training

Why you should check it out...
The site includes information and resources on a diverse set of issues that are of interest to many different types of individuals. Also, ChangeLab Solutions reflect input from a variety of professionals - urban planners, lawyers, architects, policy analysts, and public health specialists - which ensures that solutions are comprehensive and effective.

Link: http://changelabsolutions.org/search

URBAN DESIGN

NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

Description:
This toolkit produced by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) describes strategies for making city streets safer, more livable, and more economically vibrant. It outlines what complete streets look like and how localities can create them. Specifically, it includes examples and information about how to develop various types of streets, street design elements, interim design strategies, intersections, and design controls.

Type: Complete streets design toolkit

Why you should check it out...
Streets comprise more than 80% of public space in cities, but they often fail to provide their surrounding communities with a space where people can safely walk, bicycle, drive, take transit, and socialize. This design guide explains the principles and best practices used by the nation’s foremost
engineers, planners, and designers for creating complete streets. Also, while other national manuals offer general descriptions of city street design, the Urban Street Design Guide emphasizes city street design as a unique practice with its own set of design goals, parameters, and tools.

**Link:** [http://nacto.org/usdg](http://nacto.org/usdg)

### NYC Active Design Guidelines

**Description:**
The 2010 Active Design Guidelines is a manual for urban designers and architects to develop healthier buildings, streets, and urban spaces. These tactics are founded on the most up-to-date academic research and best practices. The guidelines include urban design methods for developing neighborhoods, streets, and outdoor spaces that foster physically active transportation and recreation. It also includes building design strategies for encouraging active working, living, and playing. Finally, it explains how active, sustainable, and universal design standards relate to each other. The guidelines were created by various NYC agencies, key architectural and planning academics, and members of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter.

**Type:** Physical activity, public health, urban and building design

**Why you should check it out...**
Since 2010, over 25,000 copies of the Active Design Guidelines have been distributed and the active design team has trained over 4,000 professionals around the country, with 87% reporting that they intend to use the strategies outlined in the Guidelines in their future work. Thus, these are credible and reputable strategies. Also, active design is a little discussed, yet increasingly important topic due to its implications for the public health and sustainability of communities.


### Streetmix

**Description:**
An interactive tool that allows users to design, move segments, and share a street layout with others through social media. Site visitors can add bike paths, widen sidewalks, or increase traffic lanes. They can also revise surrounding building, transit, pedestrian, and landscaping features. Furthermore, they can see how these changes would impact their neighborhoods.

**Type:** Interactive visualization tool

**Why you should check it out...**
This tool allows you to visualize what certain types of streets look like, including complete streets, as well as the impacts of these streets on their neighborhoods. Also, the results can be easily shared with colleagues and friends through social media accounts.

**Link:** [http://streetmix.net/-/134295](http://streetmix.net/-/134295)

### Tactical Urbanism 2 (on Issuu)

**Description:**
This publication features tactical urbanism from around the world and is offered on Issuu. Issuu, is a digital publishing platform that features more than 15 million free publications from both traditional and independent publishers on a diverse set of topics including lifestyle, art, sports and global affairs. It also features several publications related to urban planning. These publications cover topics such as tactical urbanism, community engagement in architecture, and urban design. Check out this site for free resources related to a variety of urban planning issues.

**Type:** Creative urban strategies, digital publications clearinghouse

**Why you should check it out...**
The site features a diverse set of publications from all over the world related to urban planning. It also contains an exceptional number of resources related to the most up to date urban design concepts.

**Link:** [http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final](http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final)

### Featured Resources & Tools Continued

### Land Conservation Tools

Land conservation tools can serve a variety of functions, including the preservation of open space, protection of farmland, redevelopment of central business districts, limitation of urban sprawl, and improvement of water and air quality, to name a few. The tools that we feel are particularly popular and useful are conservation easements, Transfer of Development Rights programs, downzoning, critical lands overlay zone, and land banks.

**Tools:**

- **Conservation easements**, also referred to as conservation restrictions, are the most widely used tool for protecting private land. They are legal arrangements between landowners and land trusts or government agencies that permanently limit uses on the property in order to preserve their conservation worth. They do enable owners to continue to own and use their land, and sell or pass it down to heirs


- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs** work off the assumption that property owners have a “bundle of
rights” associated with their land. For example, a landowner might have the right to subdivide and develop his or her property. TDR programs allow landowners to sell their unused rights to developers, for them to use in an area where greater growth is desired.


Downzoning, which is generally a voluntary program, is a practice through which one or a group of landowners chose to have a property’s zoning revised so that it allows for lower density. For instance, a property owner could downzone her property from one unit per 10 acres to one unit per 40 acres, and thereby preserve open space and the character of a rural area.


A critical lands overlay zone is a zoning area that is positioned on top of one or more current zones. While the rules of the current zones still apply, overlay zones require additional regulations due to unique characteristics of an area. An overlay zone might be applied to a historic neighborhood or wildlife area in order to ensure that these special areas are protected.


Land banks are government entities that focus on the transformation of vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties into productive parcels. The main goal of land banks is to obtain and maintain properties that have been unsuccessful in the free market, so that they do not turn into liabilities for the communities that host them, and lead to further neighborhood deterioration.


U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Tools

Description: This site features tools and research reports on a variety of topics, such as how to identify levels of distress, develop a strategic plan, determine comparative advantages, choose between conflicting projects, and manage business incubators. The site hosts tools for calculating the innovation capacity of a community, determining and fostering venture development companies, conducting an investment analysis, and implementing best practices for business incubators.

Type: Research reports and tools

Why you should check it out...
The U.S. EDA partners with various institutions throughout the country to create and publicize tools and resources on the latest economic development concepts and strategies. Thus, users have access to resources developed from the best minds throughout the country, to make more informed and effective economic development projects.

Link: http://www.eda.gov/tools

Form Based Code Institute Resources

Description: Form-based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning regulations, that foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle. The Form Based Code Institute features a library of sample form based codes, a sample Request For Qualifications form, articles, books, related organizations, courses and webinars.

Type: Articles, training, and templates

Why you should check it out...
Provides a good overview of what a form-based code is in addition to the advantages and disadvantages of them compared to traditional zoning regulations. Also features several examples of form based codes from throughout the country in its code library. In addition, the webinars offer practical advice on a variety of topics, including form based codes for small towns, integrating sustainable design into form based codes, and community engagement for code adoption.

Link: http://formbasedcodes.org/
Organizations for Action

There are lots of local and national organizations who have opportunities for you to engage with issues related to sustainability. Many of these organizations are also a wealth of information and are great resources for Citizen Planners. Here are a few featured organizations to get you started...

**FOOD SYSTEMS**

**Massachusetts Avenue Project**

**Description:**
The mission of the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) is to nurture the growth of a diverse and equitable local food system and promote local economic opportunities, access to affordable, nutritious food, and social change education. MAP runs the Growing Green Program and its urban farm. The Growing Green Program is a youth development and urban agriculture program that seeks to increase healthy food access and improve our communities. It involves employing youth to work in the areas of urban farming and aquaponics, healthy eating and accessing fresh local food, supporting local farms and businesses, sustainable food production, and social enterprise. At Growing Green’s urban farm youth work together to grow, market and distribute organic produce for communities, restaurants and retail establishments in Buffalo.

**Type:** Youth development, urban agriculture

**Why you should check it out...**
The youth enrolled in the Growing Green Program improve healthy food access in their communities while learning marketable skills. Also, the urban farm is impressive, consisting of 13 lots that cover over an acre of reclaimed vacant lots in Buffalo’s West Side. Get involved by donating, interning, working there as a youth, or volunteering.

**Link:** [http://mass-ave.org/](http://mass-ave.org/)

**Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo**

**Description:**
The mission of Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo, founded in 1992, is to encourage community-led efforts to rehabilitate the City of Buffalo and improve quality of life by developing and maintaining community gardens. These beautify blocks, produce healthy food, and strengthen neighborhood pride. Grassroots Gardens projects include the Buffalo Food Project, Buffalo Sprouts School Gardens, and the Community Garden Stabilization Initiative. These programs aim to bring food to neighborhood youth and low-income residents, create gardens at every school, and secure the future of community gardens through long term land tenure options in Buffalo, respectively.

**Type:** Local food, youth development, public health, neighborhood revitalization

**Why you should check it out...**
Grassroots Gardens has helped establish close to 70 community gardens throughout the City of Buffalo on over 100 vacant lots, that have revitalized and provided healthy food to numerous neighborhoods. Get involved by becoming a community gardener, volunteering, attending one of their events, or donating.

**Link:** [http://www.grassrootsgardens.org/](http://www.grassrootsgardens.org/)

**Food for All**

**Description:**
Food for All, run by the Network of Religious Communities, seeks to identify and execute solutions to the hunger issue in Western New York. It accomplishes this by conducting public outreach on the magnitude of this problem in WNY, researching causes of and solutions to hunger, and increasing the supply of and access to nutritious food for disadvantaged individuals. Food for All meets these goals through its nutrition outreach and education program, advocacy and public policy activities, and emergency food providers directory.

**Type:** Outreach, advocacy, and information

**Why you should check it out...**
Food for All provides several valuable services for the people it serves, including food stamp application assistance and technical training to agency staff. It also engages in advocacy for state legislation, including the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program. In addition, it publishes and distributes the Emergency Food Providers Directory, which lists more than 140 food pantries and dining sites in Erie County by ZIP code and details information about each provider and how to make a referral to a food pantry. Join in these efforts by volunteering for office work assistance.

**Link:** [http://www.religiousnet.org/programs/program_details.asp?Type=1&Item_ID=352](http://www.religiousnet.org/programs/program_details.asp?Type=1&Item_ID=352)
Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play - Niagara County

Description:
Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play - Niagara County, is a Cornell University Cooperative Extension project to provide high quality research based information to county residents in order to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes. This cooperative extension implements initiatives such as Healthy Kids, Healthy New York, community gardens, corner stores, Plentiful Partnership of Niagara, joint use agreements, walking trails, and streetscaping improvements.

Type: Food, community gardens

Why you should check it out...
It is an excellent program for people to be more physically active and eat healthier foods. It also promotes community gardens and encourages people to grow their own produce. Furthermore, this initiative works on publicizing recreational spaces in order to increase physical activity options for residents.

Link: http://cceniagaracounty.org/program-areas/creating-healthy-places-to-live-work-and-play/

Buffalo’s Young Preservationists

Description:
Uses a holistic effort to advocate for viable market solutions for the reuse of historic, architecturally, and culturally significant buildings, structures, monuments, sites, spaces and places. BYP also offers historic preservation services at prices cheaper than most firms, including 3D Rendering and modeling, market research and real estate analysis, and energy assessments and energy retrofits. Its diverse members include young professionals, students, developers, elected officials, artists, architects, and concerned citizens. Successes include the preservation of the historic Trico building.

Type: Advocacy and professional services

Why you should check it out...
BYP mobilizes around projects and initiatives, gathers knowledge and research, assesses buildings to identify economically viable solutions for reuse, produces designs and concepts for reuse plans, and pushes for those plans through a variety of channels. It is always looking for new enthusiastic partners to assist in the effort to advocate for the reuse of buildings that are financially viable for redevelopment. BYP is open to any and all passionate members of the community from all socioeconomic backgrounds and ages to join the cause.

Link: http://buffalosyoungpres.wordpress.com/

Niagara County Farm Bureau

Description:
The Niagara County Farm Bureau invites both farmers and non-farmers to join their organization to support and improve the rural way of life. Members advocate for a variety of policies that protect an owner’s right to use land at local, state, and national political levels. They work off the belief that a strong, viable agricultural industry benefits our local economy, communities, and consumers.

Type: Farmland protection

Why you should check it out...
This group advocates for policies that affect us all, including taxation, labor force, energy conservation, pollution, and infrastructure. Even those not interested specifically in food can find their work interesting and worth supporting.

Link: http://niagarafb.org/

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

Description:
Maintains, preserves, and restores Buffalo’s Olmsted Park System. In addition, it has created the Olmsted Naturally committee, which is composed of various Olmsted employees who are working to make the Olmsted Parks the greenest parks system in the nation through sustainable practices and projects. Examples of their projects include composting, native plantings, and pesticides and fertilizer alternatives. It also hosts several events.

Type: Parks Conservancy

Why you should check it out...
This organization is responsible for maintaining and enhancing one of Buffalo’s most treasured historical assets, made by the father of landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted. Anyone who is interested in public parks and greenspace could learn from this organization. Volunteer as a board member, college intern, representative of a partner community organization, Eagle Scout, or youth group leader, among other volunteer positions.

Link: http://www.bfloparks.org/
Featured Organizations Continued

WNY Land Conservancy

Description:
The WNY Land Conservancy is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that works with landowners, municipalities, and other organizations to conserve their natural spaces and working farms throughout Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming counties. Its primary tools for protecting land are conservation easements, property acquisitions, and transaction assistance. Read up about their current projects, recent successes, events, and volunteer opportunities.

Type: Open space protection and conservation

Why you should check it out...
This site features a comprehensive list of related land trust organizations. It also features detailed information about current and past projects. This site is a good resource for those interested in land preservation within Buffalo Niagara and WNY in general.

Link: http://wnylc.org/

GrowWNY Urban Regeneration Group

Description:
The purpose of this group, which is part of the larger environmental umbrella group of GrowWNY, is to obtain and improve vacant property through advocating for new public policies, and building and zoning codes to make reclamation easier for residents. Check out its reading materials, attend a meetings, sign up for the listserv, or read the minutes of previous meetings on the group's site.

Type: Vacant properties, neighborhood and urban revitalization

Why you should check it out...
This group is working to empower citizens to reclaim the abandoned properties that are causing further disinvestment in our neighborhoods, and use them for creative, productive purposes. The group also has access to a wide range of other groups and resources that are members of GrowWNY, which fosters collaborative, effective action.

Link: http://www.growwny.org/urban-revitalization/

Featured Online Resources

There are many excellent resources on sustainable development online. Below, are a few resources that discuss the general concept of sustainable development that you may find useful.

FOOD SYSTEM

Growing Food Connections

Description:
The broad goal of this partnership is to increase community food security while guaranteeing sustainable and economically viable agriculture and food production. This involves removing public policy barriers and deploying innovative public policy tools by building the capacity of local government. It also entails identifying innovations in local and regional public policy meant to strengthen community food systems so that they work for underserved residents and for farmers, especially small and mid-sized farmers. The Growing Food Connections Team includes investigators, National Advisory Committee Members, food system experts, planning professionals, representatives of Communities of Innovation, and representatives from Communities of Opportunity.

Type: Research, education, and policy

Why you should check it out...
Growing Food Connections will coordinate and integrate research, education, planning and policy activities to build a stronger community food system from the ground up. It will use research to assess how local governments are using policy and planning tools to foster connections between family farmers and underserved community residents. Also, it will develop research-supported policy tools and training to help local governments develop and enact policies that reconnect underserved community residents with local and regional farmers. Finally, it will educate a new generation of students to continue the work of food systems planning in 10 partner universities across the U.S.. Learn more by perusing their additional resources or participating in one of their events.

Link: http://growingfoodconnections.org/

Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County

Description:
This is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supported partnership to help create a healthy food and built environment in the region. In order to improve the local food system the Food Policy Council was created
as an advisory body to provide expert information on policies regarding food systems. This initiative focuses on increasing the number of farmers markets in Erie County and also increasing the number of jobs in the local food system.

**Type:** Advocacy, food, economic development, public health, technical assistance

**Why you should check it out...**
This initiative offers volunteer positions for farmers, processors, retailers, and others interested in food issues. They also host the Buffalo Food Policy Summit, advocate for policy change in the regional food system and provide council to food systems stakeholders. The Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County use the latest research and methods to address public health concerns for marginalized groups.


**American Planning Association - Food Systems**

**Description:**
The APA’s Food System initiative promotes healthy, sustainable communities with sustainable food systems. It emphasizes the planner’s role in the development of healthy, sustainable, local and regional food systems to support and enhance the overall public, social, ecological, and economic health of communities. The APA’s Food System project focuses on collaborative planning processes that develop local and regional land use decisions, along with economic development decisions, that encompass public health and the environment.

**Type:** Information and resources

**Why you should check it out...**
The APA’s Food System Planning Interest Group (FIG) is a coalition of planners and allied professionals, who have come together to advance food systems planning. FIG currently includes more than 490 members — from local government staff and consultants, to professors and students and the general public— interested in food system topics at the intersection of planning.

**Link:** [http://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/food.htm](http://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/food.htm)

**American Farmland Trust**

**Description:**
The American Farmland Trust is dedicated to preserving the country’s farm and ranch land, keeping it viable, and improving the economic attractiveness of agriculture. It works to strengthen communities through the conservation of farmland, support of local farmers, engage farmers and landowners in protecting their land, and advocate for policies at all levels that benefit farms and farmers. The site features information on farmland protection, agriculture and the environment, and federal farm policy, among other topics. It also contains publications, research, and personal tips related to farmland protection.

**Type:** Farmland protection, research, advocacy

**Why you should check it out...**
American Farmland Trust is the only national organization committed to conserving farmland, encouraging responsible and sound farming practices, and encouraging farmers to stay on their land. Thus, they are the leading source of information for farmland protection issues and solutions.

**Link:** [http://www.farmland.org/](http://www.farmland.org/)

**URBAN DESIGN**

**Forum for Urban Design**

**Description:**
The Forum and Institute for Urban Design serves as a platform for urban designers, architects, landscape architects, planners, policy-makers, activists, developers, investors, academics and journalists to create dynamic, cooperative, competitive and sustainable cities. The key focus of the forum is to amplify the role of urban design in understanding and influencing the creation of dynamic and sustainable cities. To accomplish this mission, the Forum and Institute for Urban Design engages its fellows through programs and publications that explore recent and innovative approaches in architecture, planning,
Featured Online Resources Continued

engineering, transportation, landscape architecture, governance and community participation in the United States and around the world.

**Type:** Programs, publications, discussion

**Why you should check it out...**

Fellows of the Forum and Institute are preeminent leaders in urban design, planning, and development who gather in a collegial setting to discuss the defining issues that face our cities.

**Link:** [ffud.org](http://ffud.org)

**Congress for New Urbanism**

**Description:**

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) is the leading organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions. CNU accomplishes this through its Highways to Boulevards, Health Districts, and LEED for Neighborhood Development initiatives, among many others.

**Type:** Advocacy, research, best practices, networking

**Why you should check it out...**

Learn about continuing education opportunities, watch videos about urban design, read research, review its project database and presentation library, and stay up-to-date with the latest research and reports. Also, the annual CNU conference is in Buffalo this year. The conference is the leading venue for new urbanist networking, collaboration, and education. CNU members come from all over to discuss development practices and public policies, learn about the latest work, and advance new initiatives to transform our communities. Check out their site for more details about the event and how to sign up.

**Link:** [ffud.org](http://ffud.org)

**Planetizen**

**Description:**

Planetizen is an extensive website for public interest and information exchange featuring news about planning issues, job postings, blogs, and online courses.

**Type:** News, Jobs, Blogs, Online Courses

**Why you should check it out...**

The latest news about planning issues is available, which keeps the viewers updated about the latest happenings in the world of planning. Instructive blogs on vast planning issues are provided and are worth reading.

**Link:** [www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)

**Project for Public Spaces Place-Making Resources**

**Description:**

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization committed to fostering the creation of great public spaces that result in vibrant and prosperous communities. It hosts a comprehensive set of resources that allow individuals to create places that reflect local heritage, encourage neighborhood revitalization, and provide public needs. Available resources relate to developing public markets, waterfront areas, downtowns, and parks, among others. The site also features profiles of placemakers and examples of great places throughout the world along with pictures.

**Type:** Guidebooks, case studies, and information

**Why you should check it out...**

This site features information on a wide variety of topics related to placemaking, as well as helpful tools for creating great places. Examples of featured tools include a citizens guide on how to create better streets, “9 Steps for Creating a Great Waterfront”, and information on Latinos’ roles in placemaking. This is a great resource for those who want a broad overview of what constitutes successful place-making as well as those who want to get more detailed information about this art.


**Placemaking in Legacy Cities: Opportunities and Good Practices**

**Description:**

This report, written for the Center for Community Progress, examines how citizens and local leaders in certain cities have employed placemaking principles to convert blighted public spaces into vibrant community assets. It includes case studies of downtown, anchor district, neighborhood and corridor/trail projects in Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Detroit. This research is meant to explain how place-making can revive neighborhoods. Buffalo’s Elmwood Avenue is used as a role model in this report.

**Type:** Case studies, place-making

**Why you should check it out...**

This report not only discusses examples of great placing making in Buffalo, but also explains projects in cities very similar to Buffalo. Thus, this report is extremely useful to those interested in place-making initiatives in shrinking, Rust Belt cities, that face challenges and opportunities that are unique from those of other cities.

**Link:** [action.communityprogress.net/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7615](http://action.communityprogress.net/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7615)
**Featured Online Resources Continued**

### LAND USE

**The Nature Conservancy**

**Description:**
Research, photos, videos, articles, and blogs about various conservation issues throughout the country and the world, such as climate change, land conservation, smart development, energy, agriculture, and water.

**Type:** Conservation

**Why you should check it out...**
Features comprehensive information on a wide variety of issues that affect communities throughout the world.

**Link:** [http://www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

**Urban Land Institute**

**Description:**
The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organization composed of private and nonprofit representatives from a wide range of land use and real estate development disciplines. Its website features research on a broad range of issues including economic development, housing, infrastructure, and energy. The site also hosts a resource library, videos, case studies, and the Urban Land Magazine.

**Type:** Research and publications

**Why you should check it out...**
ULI consolidates and publicizes data and analysis about the latest issues and innovative approaches to solving these. The site also features best practices and case studies on a variety of topics.

**Link:** [http://uli.org](http://uli.org)

---

**Words and Concepts in Planning**

### Triple Bottom Line

A business model which aims towards three different motivations of public interest, capital profit and planetary environmental impact. Commonly referred as the three P’s (Public, Profit, and Planet). Companies and organizations which acknowledge the triple bottom line consider the cost and impact of operations on a large scale.


### Unified Development Ordinance

Planning approach which responds and implements the communities vision and input through workshops and public forums. Buffalo Green Code uses a UDO approach in drafting their new land use and design plan for the City of Buffalo.


### Brownfield

A term used to identify a parcel of land unsuitable for development or reuse due to the presence of hazardous materials, which creates legal liability. Contamination of a Brownfield site can normally be attributed to previous use of the land or proximity to toxic materials. Cleaning of Brownfields sites are normally very costly, disincentivising further use of that property.


### Form-Based Zoning Codes

A method of urban planning which regulates development to achieve a specific urban form and often used to promote public access through the relationship of the surrounding public streets, buildings and other spaces. Mixed land-uses are often associated with Form-Based Zoning Codes.


### Euclidean Zoning Codes

A method of urban planning where land is segregated according to classification of land use. Euclidean zones are single-use and often grouped according to similar land use types.


### Smart Growth

A placed-based design approach for communities which encourages mixed use of land, transportation and housing, compact development, and strengthening existing qualities of communities which improve the quality of life.

**New Urbanism**
A place-based strategy that incorporates interrelated patterns of land use, transportation, and urban form to create communities that nurture more desirable characteristics of human habitation: neighborliness, environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and prosperity, historic preservation, participation in civic processes, and human health.


**Rural-Urban Transect**
A method of categorizing and organizing all elements of the urban environment on a scale from rural to urban. Transect Zoning associates land use with the appropriate category of rural to urban.


**Infill Development**
An urban design strategy involving building on vacant areas in city centers and urban settings. Infill development promotes condensed neighborhood living.


**Food Systems**
Refers to the interlinked network of processes, actors, resources, policies, and regulatory tools required to produce, process, distribute, access, consume, and dispose of food—and its connection to other urban systems (such as land, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, etc.)


**Food Security**
Refers to one’s ability to obtain enough food to lead an active, healthy life. In order to be “food secure” one must also have sufficient access to foods. This involves that food be nutritional, culturally appropriate, and affordable. There must also be an income sufficient to purchase healthy foods, and proximity to travel to a food source that offer such foods.


**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**
Refers to a partnership between an individual or group and a local farm/farmer. Members pre-pay for a “share” of produce, dairy, or protein from the farming season.

Promise Land CSA at the Oles Family Farm. (n.d.) Working together to grow thriving farms and communities. CSA. retrieved from http://promisedlandcsa.com/csa/

**Farm Bill**
A comprehensive food and agriculture policy tool for the Federal Government. A controversial bill which affects elements of food and nutrition programs, rural development, commodity programs, farm credit, agricultural research, conservation, and trade.


**Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO)**
Large scale agricultural feeding operations where animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations congregate on a small land area. Feed is brought to the animals rather than the animals grazing or otherwise seeking feed in pastures, fields, or on rangeland.


**Monocropping**
Refers to the practice of growing only one type of crop. This practice is common among farmers seeking subsidies from the government for their specific product. Monocropping is an industrialized form of agriculture.


**Placemaking**
A transformative practice that reimagines public spaces as the heart of every community, that is meant to inspire people to create and improve public spaces. This strategy strengthens the connection between people and the places they share.

Acronyms

BOA: Brownfield Opportunity Area
CAFO: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
CSA: Community Supported Agriculture
UDO: Unified Development Ordinance
ULI: Urban Land Institute
PPS: Project for Public Spaces
CNU: Congress of New Urbanism
FIG: Food Systems Planning Interest Group
BYP: Buffalo’s Young Preservationists
MAP: Massachusetts Avenue Project
EDC: Economic Development Administration
FADS: Food Availability Data Systems
NACTO: National Association of City Transportation Officials
GNPA: Good Neighbor Planning Alliance