



2008 Regional Agenda

*A collaborative effort of the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls,
counties of Erie and Niagara, and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership*



UB 2020

- ◇ UB 2020 is anticipated to become one of the largest economic engines in the history of the Buffalo Niagara region**page 1**

UNSHACKLE UPSTATE

- ◇ Unshackle Upstate's priority state policy initiatives for 2008 include tax and regulatory reform, and economic development delivery systems **page 2**

FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- ◇ The most critical federal policy issues facing Buffalo Niagara are related to our CanAm border and the way transportation infrastructure maintenance and expansion is funded **page 3**
- ◇ Buffalo Niagara's top federal funding requests include the Niagara Experience Center, investment in on-going redevelopment efforts at Bethlehem Steel and Spaulding Fibre, and continuation of transportation expansion projects in the City of Buffalo and Niagara County **page 4**
- ◇ Federal funding is also needed to support other initiatives contributing to the larger economic development picture in Buffalo Niagara, which are focused on cultivating private business investment and growth **page 5**

STATE PRIORITIES

- ◇ State policy changes regarding hydropower, transportation funding and investment in our communities are necessary to improve the attractiveness of the Buffalo Niagara region to those business interests most likely to thrive here**page 6-7**
- ◇ The priority initiatives in Buffalo Niagara to be funded by Albany include the implementation of the Berger Commission recommendations, tourism and marketing efforts, and continued commitment to brownfield redevelopment and site-readiness **page 8**

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Regional Priorities
UB 2020

UB 2020 is the University at Buffalo's plan for achieving enduring academic excellence. It includes estimated growth by as much as 40% by 2020 making it one of the most significant and aggressive economic development initiatives in Buffalo Niagara's history.

UB 2020

State Policy

- Predictable and differential tuition policy
- Financing flexibility
- Commitment to long-term capital investment

State Funding

- Operational costs: \$38.4 million;
- Capital Costs: \$68 million - \$43 million for North and South Campuses; \$25 million for Downtown Campus

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Unshackle Upstate

Unshackle Upstate's 2008 agenda continues the initiative's focus on building a stronger economic environment that is more attractive for business investment and growth. It includes specific policy changes regarding taxes and the way the state administers economic development programs, as well as reform of the costly "Scaffold Law."

Unshackle Upstate

Tax Reform

- Business Tax Relief - Five-year phase in of elimination of franchise tax for all Upstate businesses; "STAR" program for small employers
- Personal Tax Relief ("Keep NYers in NY") - Change standard deduction for young people ages 18 to 25 statewide; Deduct student loan interest from taxable income statewide

Economic Development

- Urban Site Development - Initiate new urban site development program through brownfields incentive programs and easing of remediation requirements
- Workforce Development – Align State Department of Labor and local Workforce Investment Board policies and criteria with those of Empire State Development, and ensure that they are connected to employer needs and opportunities
- Energy – Create and implement a comprehensive, long-term energy program designed to yield maximum economic development benefits for the business community state-wide

Regulatory Reform

- Scaffold Law Repeal/Reform

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Federal Priorities
Policy

Throughout Buffalo Niagara's history, the free flow of goods and people to and through the region has been vital to our economic prosperity. The following policy initiatives must be implemented at the Federal level to ensure Buffalo Niagara's continued success as a logistics and transportation hub for the Northeast United States and Southern Ontario.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)

- Departments of Homeland Security and State need to implement the WHTI to accept identification that is inexpensive, easily attainable and has more than one use as appropriate identification;
- Congress needs to fully fund state implementation of the Real ID Act and reconcile it with WHTI or modify it so that it can be effectively implemented

Peace Bridge

- Expedited approvals – a "record of decision" by the Federal Highway Administration – are requested by Spring 2008; following that approval, the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority can move forward with property acquisition and right-of-way for the Peace Bridge Expansion Project

Federal Transportation Funding System

- Aggressive actions to implement the Buffalo Niagara projects funded in SAFETEA-LU legislation, such as the I-290/90 reconfiguration project - progress on the Buffalo Corridor Study to determine project sequence and design to facilitate interchange reconstruction project;
- Innovative transportation finance measures that encompass long term solutions which offset the impact of projected decreases in gas tax revenues

Anti-Poverty Programs

- Identify funding streams for urban anti-poverty initiatives such as youth employment programs, microloans and training for entrepreneurs, and home ownership initiatives

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Federal Priorities

Funding

These funding requests reflect the Buffalo Niagara region's top economic development priorities for 2008. Each initiative is either in-progress or primed for commencement, and will serve as a catalyst for further economic development efforts.

Niagara Experience Center

- Full site acquisition, full design and beginning of construction in Niagara Falls – \$20 million in federal funds (over two years)

Spaulding Fibre

- Completion of demolition - \$1.5 million
- Preparation of shovel-ready site for business development - \$1.5 million

Niagara Falls International Airport

- Terminal apron and circulatory road - \$3.5 million;

Buffalo Revitalization Initiative

- Property acquisition, remediation and development - \$5 million
- Cars on Main Street - \$15 million

Niagara Falls International Rail Station/Intermodal Transportation Center

- Creation of a rail-centered multi-modal, multi-function international transportation facility at the Whirlpool-Rapids Bridge - \$16.5 million

Bethlehem Steel

- Rail relocation - \$2 million
- Roadwork and infrastructure installation in proposed Business Park I - \$3 million

Southtowns Access Project

- Design of next phase for project to be selected from Ohio Street upgrade, Tifft Connector, or next section of Route 5 reconstruction - \$5 million

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Federal Priorities

Funding

The following projects represent economic development priorities focused on business district development – including focus on regional target industry sectors – and on the flow of consumers, workforce and commerce throughout the Buffalo Niagara region. Each project influences larger economic development efforts focused on attracting business growth and investment.

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

- Infrastructure development/Master Plan implementation - \$9 million

Buffalo Bolt Business Park Access Road

- Acquisition, demolition, and land preparation for new development at 190 Oliver Street - \$1.5 million

Olcott Harbor Breakwall Project

- Planning and construction of a breakwater or other wave attenuation system for the Olcott Harbor on Lake Ontario - \$1.8 million

Lockport “Flight of Five”

- Restore the “Flight of Five” locks on the Erie Canal in downtown Lockport - \$4 million

NFTA Metro System Upgrade

- Comprehensive Transit Infrastructure Upgrade program, initially “hybrid” bus replacement to reduce fleet age and provide alternative fuels capabilities - \$8.72 million

City of Buffalo Security Cameras

- Expand camera system in the City of Buffalo to cover neighborhoods, commercial districts and downtown – \$15 million

Buffalo/Lackawanna Sewer System Consolidation and Pump Station Improvements

- Upgrade the Erie County Pump Station to accommodate future growth at Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park - \$1 million
- Environmental review, design and construction of relocated sewer station to support development at Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, the former Bethlehem Steel site, and Outer Harbor properties - \$8 million

Reconstruction of Beebe Road

- Reconstruction of Beebe Road from Hopkins Creek to Wilson-Burt Road in the Town of Wilson - \$6.6 million

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State Priorities

Policy

Critical to regional prosperity is hydropower policy dedicated to economic development in the region where the power is generated – Buffalo Niagara. In addition, policy reform in Albany has the potential to stir economic growth in the Buffalo Niagara region through greater and more strategic investment in our communities and the transportation infrastructure which is so crucial to the cultivation and development of our target industry sectors.

Hydropower

- Maximize the flexible use of the 445 MW of Replacement Power and 250MW of Expansion Power generated at the NPP for use within the 30 mile radius of the Niagara Power Project;
- Require proceeds that may be derived from unallocated or unused RP and EP be utilized within the 30 mile radius of the NPP to align with the premise of RP and EP allocations;
- Strengthen the project recommendation role of the WNY Advisory Group;
- Provide decision rights of granting, with NYPA Trustee Approval, EP and RP Power and Proceed Allocations to Upstate Empire State Development
- Permit the use of Rural and Domestic Power for industrial and economic development purposes within New York State using the same criteria as permitted under revised RP and EP regulations.
- Continued commitment to the Power for Jobs program, incorporating more consistent and specific job creation and private sector investment criteria

State Transportation Funding System

- Reform state funding procedures for transportation infrastructure projects as follows:
 - Introduce innovative finance methodology - short term methods, not all of which are borrowing, that allow projects to begin in a scheduled time frame not dependent upon budget cycles;
 - Provide for a reliable source of dedicated funding for state and local infrastructure with indexing for cost inflation;
 - Move toward a “pay as you go” system - supplying the basic state dollars for construction through either a dedicated fund, budgeted tax dollars or both;
 - Promote and support development of an effective north/south NAFTA transportation corridor with Buffalo Niagara as a logistics hub – Continental 1;
 - Fully devote the Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund’s revenues to financing capital construction costs, not day to day state operational expenses

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State Priorities

Policy (continued)

Restore New York

- Expand the Restore New York Program to recognize smaller communities and communities that have experienced high levels of population loss and higher proportions of vacant and blighted property.

Local Revenue Streams

- Lessen cities' reliance on state aid by allowing utilization of revenue opportunities that do not burden taxpayers, such as authorization for a red light camera system and elimination of the state practice of sharing certain locally generated revenue streams, for example, motor vehicle moving violations, marriage licenses and handicapped parking fees.

Environmental Restoration Program

- Recapitalize the NYSDEC Environmental Restoration Program

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State Priorities

Funding

These items are the Buffalo Niagara region's top priorities for state funding, representing an array of regional marketing and tourism initiatives, strategic investment in cost-saving policy changes, as well as a focus on economic development through the creation of shovel-ready sites regionwide.

Niagara Experience Center

- Full site acquisition, full design and beginning of construction in Niagara Falls – \$20 million in state funds (over two years)

Berger Commission/Hospital Merger

- Dedicated funds, and necessary policy changes, to implement recommendations of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century in Buffalo Niagara
 - Kaleida/ECMC - \$250 million over three (3) years
 - Catholic Health System – \$8 million

"Buffalo Cultural and Heritage Tourism Experience 2007-2011"

- Destination marketing - \$1 million (Year 2 of \$5 million over 5 years)

Buffalo Revitalization Initiative

- Property acquisition, remediation and development - \$15 million
- Cars on Main Street - \$15 million
- Business district revitalization - \$15 million

Erie County Shovel-Ready Sites Initiative

- Establishment of an Erie County fund for land acquisition - \$2 million
- Establishment of an Erie County fund for demolition to support site preparation - \$5 million

NYS Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics & Life Sciences

- Operational Funds - \$1.4 million