RISING TIDE

A Blueprint for Community Benefits from the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Affordable Housing
Jobs & Training Opportunities
Parking & Traffic Relief
Community Investment
Historic & Cultural Preservation
Community Power & Representation

COMMUNITY FIRST ALLIANCE
Opportunity for All in a New Buffalo
www.cfabuffalo.org
About this Document

For years, the rapid growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) has sent powerful ripples into surrounding communities, such as the Fruit Belt neighborhood. While business is booming at the BNMC, the campus’ growth is placing big burdens on the backs of residents and families in the Fruit Belt — heavy traffic, disappearing parking spaces, and the danger of being pushed out of their own homes.

We believe that the development of the medical campus can one day become a positive force for businesses, workers, and the surrounding neighborhoods, if the campus agrees to a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA).

This document “A Rising Tide: Blueprint for Community Benefits from the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus” was created in partnership by more than a dozen local community groups who demand more responsible growth of the medical campus, as well as the preservation, empowerment, and uplifting of the neighborhoods that surround it.

— Community First Alliance, 2016

Contents

Affordable Housing ..........................................................Page 3
Jobs & Training Opportunities ........................................Page 4
Parking & Traffic Relief ....................................................Page 5
Community Investment ....................................................Page 5
Historic & Cultural Preservation .......................................Page 7
Community Power & Representation ..............................Page 8
Say “No” to Displacement

- Create fund for grants and low-cost loans for home improvements.
- Protect grandfathered homeowners from rising assessments and tax rates.
- Create a “Green and Healthy Home” program for the Fruit Belt.
- Enhance community health by creating playgrounds, fitness zones, and nutrition programs.

Keep the Fruit Belt Mixed-Income

- Stop sales of city-owned property in the Fruit Belt until a residential plan is developed that ensures access for low- and moderate-income families.
- Construct affordable, healthy homes on vacant Fruit Belt lots. (Give current Fruit Belt residents preference in buying them.)
- Adopt a rent-stabilization strategy.
- Require new rental properties to include affordable units.
- Fund and support home ownership programs for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Create Individual Development Accounts for current Fruit Belt residents.
- Consider creating a Land Trust to keep housing and rental prices affordable.
**Affordable Housing**

**BNMC & Community Should Create Residential Plan**

- Hire an Urban Planning team to develop business/residential neighborhood design.
- Update 2009 BNMC plan to clearly identify residential areas to be maintained.
- Maintain existing green spaces, and plan for new ones, as well as parks in the Fruit Belt.

**Jobs & Training Opportunities**

**BNMC Should Attack Unemployment in Neighboring Communities**

- Aim to reduce Fruit Belt unemployment to 2% (at area living wage).
- Identify unemployed Fruit Belt residents and develop individual training and employment programs for them.
- Use “First Source” hiring to make sure local residents get offered jobs first.
- Create community training programs and pipelines to medical campus jobs, as well as career ladder support for those hired.
- Create a BNMC “living wage policy” to ensure that medical campus jobs pay more than minimum wage.
- Hire Community Health Workers in the neighborhood to help residents navigate health systems, connect to social and wellness resources, and offer peer support.
- Create “green” jobs for local residents in areas such as recycling, food production, and storm-water management.

**Boost Minority & Women Business Ownership in the Fruit Belt**

- Change BNMC procurement policies to remove barriers to entry. Set mandatory goals.
- Hire consultants to analyze supply chains, identify opportunities, and offer technical help to minority- and women-owned businesses.
BNMC Institutions Must Provide Adequate Parking for Workers & Visitors

- BNMC employers must offer affordable on-site parking to their workers.
- Provide free bus/metro passes to workers to relieve parking congestion and reduce traffic in neighborhoods surrounding the BNMC.
- Create a BNMC sustainability plan to reduce campus pollution and environmental impact.

Residential Parking Permit Plan

- BNMC must support passage of Residential Parking Permit Plan law in Albany.
- Any funds collected from Parking Permit Program must be re-invested directly into the Fruit Belt community.

Support Community, Social Service, & Cultural Agencies in the Fruit Belt

- BNMC institutions should commit to funding General Community Investment Fund.
- Create a Community Services Board with community and BNMC institutions.

Fund a Large, Multi-purpose Community Center

- Center should serve all generations, with wellness programs, social services, educational support, and job placement services offered.
Community Investment

Forgive Residents’ Outstanding Medical Bills Owed to BNMC Institutions

- Use General Community Investment Fund to create a program for credit recovery, debt forgiveness, and financial literacy education to support home ownership and small business growth.

Make the Fruit Belt a Model Health Community

- Each resident should receive individual health and wellness services (delivered both on the campus and in the community).
- Invest more in infrastructure improvements (streets, sidewalks, trees, lighting), including improvements for bikers and walkers and sidewalk snow clearance.

Make Investments Tied to the Educational Mission of the University at Buffalo

- Invest in Pre-K, after-school programs, college readiness, and mentoring for neighborhood youth.
- Create a large, coordinated investment of volunteering and service learning in the Fruit Belt for students, faculty, and staff.
BNMC Institutions Should Support Michigan Avenue Corridor Development

- Provide financial and in-kind resources to restore and beautify Michigan Avenue as the history/arts/green corridor linking the Fruit Belt and medical campus to downtown and the waterfront.

Support Capping the Kensington & Restoration of Humboldt Parkway

- Reconnect the Fruit Belt to Buffalo’s East Side.

Provide Public Art for the Fruit Belt

- Examples might include the transformation of highway overpasses, or local sculptors working with neighborhood residents to create art in vacant lots.

Document the Fruit Belt Story

- Fund a video, print, and spoken word museum project that will serve as the legacy of the Fruit Belt neighborhood, before the story is lost.
Community Power & Representation

Develop System for Monitoring Community Benefits Agreement

- Develop monitoring and reporting plan attached to Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), where BNMC and its institutions will report progress and compliance to the public.
- Fund and independent monitor to ensure compliance with CBA.
- Implement penalties for not complying with CBA commitments.

Make Room for More Community Representation on Boards of BNMC Institutions

- Include mechanisms for community input on decisions that majorly impact the community.
- Community representatives should be selected by neighborhood groups, and reimbursed for their time and involvement.

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