

# **RIISING 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](http://www.cfabuffalo.org)



## About this Document

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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

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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.

Offer grants and low-cost loans for home improvements.



### 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.



Build affordable, healthy homes on vacant lots in the Fruit Belt.

## 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.



A Residential Plan for the Fruit Belt should include green spaces and parks.

## 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.



“First Source” hiring can make sure locals get jobs first.

### 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.

A Fruit Belt residential permit program can help relieve the parking pains caused by the medical campus.

## Community Investment

### **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.

### 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.



Invest in street and sidewalk repairs to boost public health.

### 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.



Support Pre-K for neighborhood families.



## **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.



**Support public art projects.**

## **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.

### 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 an 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.



#### Alliance Members

Black Chamber of Commerce of WNY | Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers | Buffalo Urban League | Coalition for Economic Justice | Communications Workers of America | The Foundry | Fruit Belt Advisory Council | Fruit Belt Coalition | Fruit Belt Homeowner & Tenant Council | Fruit Belt United | Local Initiatives Support Corporation | Mulberry Street & Friends Block Club | New York State Nurses Association | Open Buffalo | Orchard Community Initiative | Partnership for the Public Good | People United for Sustainable Housing | Restore Our Community Coalition | 1199 SEIU