

<u>Key:</u> <u>Funding Source</u>
AP- Annual Appropriations
TRH- Transportation Reauthorization Highway
TRA- Transportation Reauthorization Air
TRT- Transportation Reauthorization Transit

Rebuilding Buffalo Niagara 2005

The Canada/U.S. Border

Significant progress has been made in both Washington and Ottawa in devising a pilot project for shared border management at the Peace Bridge crossing. Shared border management – which for the Buffalo Niagara region entails putting all Customs and Immigration checkpoints on the Fort Erie side of the border – will not only improve security, but also allow for the quick and efficient movement of goods and people between the two countries, a key component of the Buffalo Niagara economy.

This concept is also paramount to bringing the Peace Bridge expansion project to fruition.

ACTION ITEMS

Federal policy

- Implementation of shared border management pilot project for operations and processing at the Peace Bridge.

Federal Funding

- \$110 Million Peace Bridge expansion project for highway access configuration and plaza entrances and exits to I-190 and city streets. (TRH)
- \$3 Million to reconstruct Niagara Street from Porter Avenue continuing south to Niagara Square.(TRH/AP)

Attracting & Retaining Business Investment

If the Buffalo Niagara region is to compete nationally and internationally for new economic investment, we must have the necessary economic development tools. These range from dollars targeted to specific industry sectors like the life sciences to policy changes in areas like workforce development, shovel-ready land and low-cost power.

ACTION ITEMS

Commercialization of Life Sciences

Federal Policy

- Reform State Department rules to initiate an expedited or pre-approval screening process for valid visa holders who must travel abroad and return to the United States.

Federal & State Funding

- \$3 Million (\$2 Million federal; \$1 Million state) for Bufflink's Buffalo Niagara Life Sciences Commercialization Acceleration Program. This request is the first installment of \$10 Million request over an 8-year time frame. (AP)

Brownfield Redevelopment

Federal policy

- Amend Internal Revenue Code of 1986 sec 198, to make permanent federal legislation, which allows businesses to expense remediation costs.

State Policy

- Amend the state's brownfield law to address specific timelines for DEC approvals, liability re-openers, DEC advance notification and authorization of change of use (including transfer of title.) Expand municipal exemption to make State law consistent with Federal law.
- Create regulations and policy documents consistent with the brownfields statute.
- \$10 Million in a redevelopment fund to be administered by Buffalo Urban Development Corporation to create shovel ready space for new projects.

Workforce Investment

Federal Policy

- Passage of the House version of the rewrite to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which focuses more funding on workplace based/employer driven training and retraining and provides greater flexibility to channel that funding.

Economic Development Tools

State Policy

- Pass state legislation that protects "replacement power" from the Niagara Power Project for businesses in the region and loosens the criteria to make more businesses eligible for that power.
- Renew and modify the Empire Zone program, refocusing the program on stimulating investment and job growth in distressed areas while also allowing some flexibility for special projects.

Providing Relief to Local Taxpayers.

The City of Buffalo and Erie County continue to face severe financial pressures. Both the federal and state government must take actions to provide much needed relief to local taxpayers.

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policy

- The requirements for homeland security are becoming a bigger cost to local taxpayers. That's why third year funding for the Urban Area Security Grant for the City of Buffalo, and Erie and Niagara Counties must be continued and increased. This grant is the only source of funding, which provides flexible homeland security funds to meet local identified needs. Support for eliminating the current population based funding and support a risk and vulnerability based funding system.

State policy

- Relieve counties of their portion of Medicaid costs and reform the system to reduce the statewide cost of the program.
- Enact meaningful pension reform legislation to help ease the burden on local governments, including the creation of a new retirement tier for government employees hired in 2005.
- Reworking Taylor Law/ binding arbitration so that an arbiter must give first priority to a municipality's "ability to pay without raising taxes, cutting services, causing budget deficits, causing layoffs of employees, impacting cash flow, causing undue harm to taxpayers."

Strategic Regional Investments

There are institutions in the region that are not only large employers, but with the right investment, can be catalysts for other development and/or economic activity.

ACTION ITEMS

Federal policy

- Given the strategic importance of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station with its relation to both an international border and the Niagara Power Project, consideration should be given to locating additional missions at the facility.
- All efforts must be made to keep the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station off of the list of potential bases to be closed as part of the BRAC list expected to be released May 16, 2005.

Federal and state policy

- Congress needs to initiate legislation that will direct DOE and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to resolve their differences over long-term site stewardship for West Valley. Such legislation must provide a clear path for closure and establish a stable funding source to complete the environmental cleanup.

Federal Funding

- \$15 million for development of ECC Transportation Facility for Downtown Campus hub of multi-campus system. (TRT)
- \$9 Million Cars on Main Street-Phase One Theatre District. (TRT)
- \$3 Million Heritage Heights Commerce Park for street and access improvements. (TRH/AP)
- \$5 Million for the BNMC to extend Allen Street into the medical campus as advised in the BNMC Master Plan and the NFTA Transit Oriented Development Study. (TRH/AP)
- \$10 Million for construction of a new terminal at Niagara Falls International Airport, \$28 Million total (see below). (TRA)

State Funding

- Allocation of \$1 million a year for 14 years from Niagara's share of local casino revenues for building a new terminal at Niagara Falls International Airport.
- \$8 Million to demolish the former AM&A's building on Main Street and prepare the site for new investment.
- \$2.5 Million emergency fund to support cultural organizations.
- \$25 Million for development of ECC-based "Downtown Communiversality" and shared facilities at North Campus using public/private partnerships.
- The legislation, passed in December 2004 to fund the new Javits Center in New York City, allocates \$350 million for economic development projects in New York State outside of NYC. Each of the public sector participants in this agenda has a list of projects that will be submitted to the State Legislative Delegation once the criteria for allocation have been determined. In the meantime, the state delegation is strongly urged to do everything possible to secure a fair share of this overall pool of funds for projects in Buffalo Niagara.

The Waterfront

Efforts to revitalize the Buffalo Niagara region significantly entail development of the vast waterfront lands along Lake Erie, the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. While the community has plans to accomplish this development, it is short of the necessary resources to complete them. Resources from state and federal sources are needed to fund these projects.

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policy

- Seek assistance with FHWA & FTA to ensure cooperation and coordination with prior appropriations for the downtown waterfront transportation infrastructure (e.g. parking ramp, Intermodal center and museum). The legislative intent of these appropriations -- totaling over \$25 million -- is to support and catalyze downtown waterfront development in the City of Buffalo and they are critical to the redevelopment of this strategic investment area.

Funding Funding

- \$75 Million Outer Harbor Access; river crossing and roadways. (TRH)
- \$2 Million Michigan Avenue Improvements. (TRH/AP)
- \$5 million to finish the Erie Canal Harbor project which includes Bass Pro, the Great Lakes Museum, a new Multi-modal transportation center and a parking ramp. (AP)
- \$4.5 Million Erie Street reconstruction/realignment. (TRH/AP)
- \$1.5 Million for Olcott Harbor Breakwater project. (AP)