

# Rebuilding the Economy and Quality of Life after the Control Board in The City of Buffalo & Erie County



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*Source:* <http://www.city-data.com/picfilesc/picc21085.php>

State of New York Cities: Creative Responses to Fiscal Stress  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2014

# Buffalo: From a glorious past to a promising future

Manufacturing economy to creative, service-based economy



Source: [www.ericanal.org](http://www.ericanal.org)

The historic Erie Canal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century



Proposed Canalside development

# Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority (Control Board)

“Adult supervision” or “Improved fiscal management?”



## Measures for fiscal stability:

- Wage freeze for four years
- City wide hiring freeze & large scale layoffs
- Switch to a single health insurance provider to save expenditures on employee benefits
- Positive budget in 2005-06 and improved credit ratings

## Failed to:

- Focus on how these changes impacted the quality of life of residents
- Address structural issues like poverty and demographics

# Current fiscal situation

Improved credit ratings but heavy reliance on fund balances

## Trends:

- Decreasing trend in property taxes
- Renewed commitment towards expenditures for social, cultural and community services after Control Board went into advisory status
- Dependence on fund balances to close budgetary gaps

## Fiscal Vulnerabilities:

- Open labor negotiations, limited flexibility to raise revenues due to property tax cap, and heavy reliance on State aid



Source: [www.buffalochow.com](http://www.buffalochow.com)

*Mayor Brown's 2013-2014 budget provides \$160,000 for the Buffalo Broadway Market*

# Fiscal situation in the School District

## Trend towards privatization & public-non profit partnerships

### Trends:

- Decline in school enrollment due to population decline & suburbanization
- Increase in enrollment of non-white children

### Measures:

- Cuts to special education programs, employee layoffs, and conversion of public schools to charter schools
- Partnership with 'Say Yes Buffalo' to provide special academic services



Source: The Buffalo News, 9 March 2014

*'Say Yes to Education' is providing college scholarships and support services for Buffalo Public School students*

# Innovative fiscal approaches

Parks Agreement with Erie County & Olmsted Park Conservancy to save expenditures



# People's Mandate by Erie County

## Prioritizing popular programs that matter to people



*Source:* midcenturymundane.wordpress.com

*Reinvestment in the Buffalo & Erie County public library system*



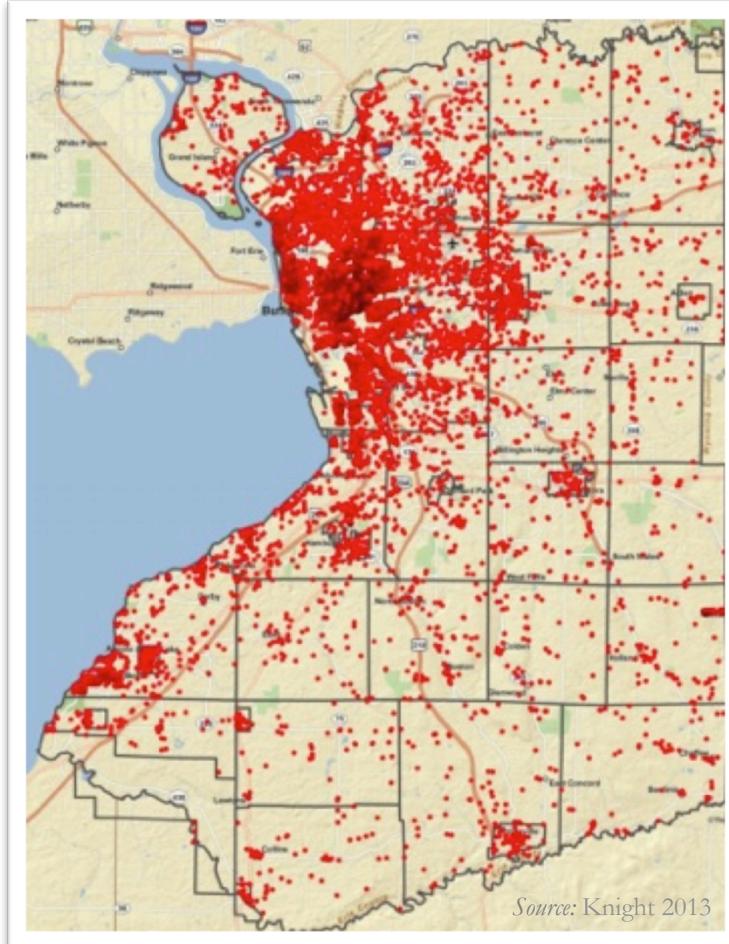
*Source:* buffalogardens.com

*Rehabilitation of greenhouses at the Botanical Gardens*

- Screening facilities for under-insured residents
- Smart Economy: Workforce development, attract tourists & investment from neighboring Canada

# The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation

## Reuse delinquent properties to revitalize neighborhoods



*Over 75,000 tax liens with a balance of \$58 million distributed over Erie County*



*Neighborhoods suffer due to delinquent properties are often vacant and/ or foreclosed*

# Social Unionism & Non-profit networks

Greater voice & democratic participation in economic and community development



Source: The Coalition for Economic Justice Buffalo



Source: Buffalo Rising 21 Jan 2014

*Cooperative strategies between unions and management in the late 1990s for economic development*

*Open Buffalo is a network of various grassroots non-profits to promote increased civic engagement through innovative policy making for sustainable economic development*

# Regional Economic Development Initiatives

WNY REDC's Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan for long term economic development in advanced manufacturing, health, life sciences, and professional services



*Source: The Buffalo News, 14 Oct 2013*

*Artist's rendering of the proposed UB Medical School at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, which currently employs 12,000 people, in 6.5 million SF of clinical, research, and support facilities.*



*Source: TripAdvisor.com 2014*

*Theatre District Main Street Program to support commercial building rehabilitation for neighborhood revitalization to increase investments*

# One Region Forward

Regional efforts to solve regional problems & conserve regional assets



Source: Buffalo Rising, 5 Nov 2013