

Environmental Data for Buffalo

Land Use (2007)

	Western New York	Erie County	City of Buffalo
Land Acreage (square miles)	6,447.4	1,044.2	40.6
Agricultural Acreage	27.80%	16.10%	0.00%
Residential Acreage	34.20%	43.10%	57.10%
Commercial Acreage	1.40%	2.70%	11.50%
Industrial Acreage	0.90%	1.20%	7.70%
Vacant Acreage	22.20%	22.00%	20.50%

Regional Institute

Vehicles

	Western New York	Erie County	City of Buffalo
Gasoline Consumption, per capita, 2005 (gallons)	382	381	-
Change in gasoline consumption, 2000-2005	-5.00%	-5.30%	-
Vehicle Registrations per capita, 2006	0.7	0.7	-
Households with no vehicles, 2000	13.00%	15.00%	31.40%
Households with 3 or more vehicles, 2000	12.30%	11.00%	5.10%

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Global Warming

- Under a business as usual scenario, Buffalo will experience 14 days over 100 degrees per year by 2100.ⁱ
- Residential energy use is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions (34%) in Buffalo; the City's municipal operations contribute about 15% of the City's total emissions.ⁱⁱ

Sprawl

- From 1950 to 2000, Buffalo's population declined by 287,484, while the county population outside Buffalo increased by 338,551.ⁱⁱⁱ
- From 1980 to 2006, the region's population fell by 5.8%, but the urbanized area grew 38%.^{iv}
- From 1984 to 1999, the average miles driven each day went from 10 to 15.^v
- From 1970 to 2000, the population of Erie-Niagara fell, but the total miles of roads increased by 5,410.^{vi}
- From 1990 to 2000, 20,134 units of housing were built outside the city.^{vii}
- The Regional Framework predicts \$800 million in public savings if compact growth principles are applied from now until 2025.^{viii}
- Buffalo workers commuting by mass transit fell from 11% (1970) to 4% (2000). In Pittsburgh, the figure now is 8%.^{ix}

Water Quality

- The DEC classifies 35 of 62 local water bodies as impaired.^x
- Erie Counties' ten beaches suffered a total of 45 beach closings in 2006.^{xi}
- The City of Buffalo's sewers overflow into our waterways 68 times per year.^{xii}

Parks, Trees, Lots

- Buffalo has 5.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents; the upstate average is 9.2 acres.^{xiii}
- Before the October storm, Buffalo had 65,000 street trees, 20,000 park trees, and a 12% canopy (the national average is 30%).^{xiv}

- Buffalo's trees remove 335,000 lbs of pollutants from the air each year.^{xv}
- Buffalo has 56 brownfields of 5 acres or more.^{xvi}
- As of 2000, Buffalo had 10,170 vacant residential lots.
- Buffalo has over 40 community gardens.

Air Quality

- Buffalo-Niagara is an EPA non-attainment area for ozone pollution.^{xvii}
- Erie County has the fourth worst air quality of counties in New York state, with 6,589,051 person days exceeding national air quality standards for ozone.^{xviii}

Energy

- Buffalo is the fourth windiest city with over 200,000 in the US, with an average wind speed of 11.9 mph.
- The Huntley Generating Station in Tonawanda, which burns coal to make electricity, is by far the largest source of toxins in Erie County, releasing 2,642,883 pounds per year (the next largest source, the 3M plant in Tonawanda, releases 684,005 pounds).^{xix}
- Nearly 59% of New York's power comes from burning hydrocarbons (coal, oil, and gas) to make electricity.^{xx}

Garbage and Recycling

- City of Buffalo discards 136,000 tons of garbage per year, paying landfill tipping fees of \$4.8 million.^{xxi}
- Buffalo pays \$43 per ton to tip garbage, \$25 to \$30 to tip yard waste, and gets paid \$10 per ton for recyclables.^{xxii}
- Buffalo recycles 6.5% of solid waste, down from 14% in mid 1990s; national average is 27%; rest of Erie County is about 42%.^{xxiii}
- Buffalo plans to demolish 1,000 homes per year (Buffalo does not require any recycling of demolition debris; Chicago requires 50%)

End Notes

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- ⁱ Union of Concerned Scientists, “New York: Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast” (2007), www.climatechoices.org.
- ⁱⁱ *Id.*, p. 40.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Final Report, Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth (October 2006), p. 8.
- ^{iv} *Id.*, p. 15.
- ^v *Id.*, p. 26.
- ^{vi} “At Taxpayers’ Expense: How Government Policies Encourage Sprawl in Erie and Niagara Counties,” p. 2, League of Women Voters (2006 Revised Edition).
- ^{vii} City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, p. 24.
- ^{viii} Final Report, Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth (October 2006), p. 46.
- ^{ix} Matthew Kahn, *Green Cities: Urban Growth and Environment*, Brookings Institution (2006), page 117.
- ^x “State of the Region: Environment, Stream and Lake Quality,” available at <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/sotr/Indicator.cfm?Indicator=554f5afc-1de1-4e61-839e-a10fcc1e4ef8>.
- ^{xi} “Testing the Waters 2007,” National Resources Defense Council.
- ^{xii} Buffalo Sewer Authority, System-wide Long Term Control Plan for CSO Abatement, Volume 1, 2004.
- ^{xiii} City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, p. 44.
- ^{xiv} City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan., p. 47; “Urban Ecosystem Analysis: Buffalo-Lackawana Area,” American Forests (2003), p. 3, p. 6.
- ^{xv} *Id.*, p. 3.
- ^{xvi} City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, p. 76.
- ^{xvii} http://www.scorecard.org/env-releases/cap/naa-counties.tcl?naa_id=018
- ^{xviii} This measures the number of days when a pollutant level went over national air quality standards, multiplied by the number of people in the county. See http://www.scorecard.org/env-releases/cap/rank-counties-risk.tcl?fips_state_code=36.
- ^{xix} www.scorecard.org
- ^{xx} “New York’s Solar Road Map,” Solar Initiative of New York (May 2007), page 7.
- ^{xxi} City of Buffalo 2007-2008 Budget.
- ^{xxii} “Recycle the recycling plan,” Editorial, Buffalo News, January 15, 2008.
- ^{xxiii} www.buffalorecycles.com. According to another source, the figure is closer to 8%. See Brian Meyer, “City recycling effort given failing grade,” Buffalo News, January 9, 2008. Another source puts the national average at 32%. See Peter Koch, “It’s Not Easy Being Green,” *Artvoice* v. 6, no. 34.