

Draft EC CCAP Agriculture and Food Systems Strategies:

1. Support the economic viability of agriculture and advance farmland protection and soil and water health.

Our ability to slow climate change and withstand its predicted and potentially unanticipated effects is tied to the health of our ecosystem, and our ability to produce the food we need within our own region. We need actions and policies to keep people farming, advance urban and rural farmland protection, discourage sprawl, support the viability of the farm economy, promote agricultural education, and encourage agricultural practices that protect the soil and ecosystem health, including providing opportunities for increasing carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reduction.

2. Protect and restore agroecosystems and working landscapes.

To restore ecosystems, we must discourage urban sprawl, promote sustainable, economically, and environmentally sound nutrient management and integrated pest management practices, and encourage agricultural and forestry practices that promote healthy ecology with clean water, clean air, and robust biodiversity. The Climate Action Plan will advocate for policies that promote carbon sequestration on farm and forest land, training and capacity building opportunities for community members and stakeholders, minimize the consumption of fossil fuels, and promote the use of renewable energy captured locally.

3. Ensure equitable and sustainable access to healthy and local food.

Food insecurity and food injustice are issues for too many Erie County residents. The historical inequity of the food system fails to serve our most vulnerable populations. The Climate Action Plan will support the many ongoing initiatives focused on creating a food system that benefits all equitably by encouraging greater participation in the growing, processing, and distribution of food in the urban, suburban, and rural area of Erie County, and will support the ethical treatment of frontline farm laborers.

Please note that food injustice is addressed in several existing documents, including:

- [**The Buffalo and Erie County Local Food Action Plan**](#)

- [The UB Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab](#)
- [One Region Forward - Growing Together Report](#)

4. Promote climate change prevention, resilience, impact mitigation, and reversal.

The impacts of climate change are already being experienced by Erie County residents. As weather extremes increase, food systems must adapt if they are to remain productive. Climate resilient farming practices, such as regenerative and sustainable agriculture, have the potential to prevent continued trends toward climate change and can contribute towards the resiliency and sovereignty of our food system. The Climate Action Plan will advocate for the continued support of regionally specific practices, which align with state, national, and global climate adaptation and mitigation programs and initiatives.

5. Advance coordination and collaboration to address regional-scale issues within agriculture and the food system.

Siloed governance systems have resulted in fragmented policy responses to the ongoing climate crisis. Recognizing that we are all facing a changed climate together, we must learn to collaborate for the benefit of our communities, including within the agricultural and food systems sectors. Acknowledging that the history of past mistakes has resulted in government mistrust, The Climate Action Plan will encourage and promote the coordination and collaboration among government agencies, Tribes and Nations, private entities, BIPOC individuals, and all stakeholders to work towards regionally unified climate action that supports agriculture and food systems.