



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senator Sean Ryan Outlines Community Priorities For Buffalo Bills Stadium Negotiations

SEAN M. RYAN February 23, 2022

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# SENATOR SEAN RYAN OUTLINES COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR BUFFALO BILLS STADIUM NEGOTIATIONS

*Senator Ryan Identifies Six Priorities to Address as He Pushes for a  
Community Benefits Agreement for a New NFL Stadium*

**BUFFALO** – Today, February 23, 2022, New York State Senator Sean Ryan outlined a list of six recommended priorities for a community benefits agreement (CBA) that he believes must be negotiated as a condition of New York State’s investment in a new Buffalo Bills stadium.

The six priority areas include: 1) a project labor agreement for construction work; 2) wage protections for stadium workers; 3) plans for public transportation and traffic management; 4) a community fund to support residents of Erie County; 5) a stormwater management plan; and 6) financial support for Orchard Park.

The priority areas were identified following discussions with community members and key stakeholders, but Senator Ryan believes further community outreach should be conducted to identify the best ways to maximize a new stadium’s impact on the Western New York community.

**Senator Sean Ryan** said, “There is plenty of evidence from past independent studies that we cannot expect a new stadium to drive economic growth. If we want the state’s investment to pay off for the people of Western New York, we need to demand high-road economic development practices. A community benefits agreement will allow us to set labor standards and wage protections that will help create an economic ripple effect, while also ensuring that the people of Western New York are guaranteed specific tangible benefits in exchange for their hard-earned tax dollars.”

A breakdown of each of the six priority areas follows:

### **A Project Labor Agreement (PLA) for Construction Work**

A PLA stipulating that all construction labor is done by unionized workers will help guarantee the state’s investment has a ripple effect on the local economy. The stadium construction project should also meet specific benchmarks for local hiring, utilize MWBE contractors and workforce participation to the greatest extent possible, and require the utilization of local vendors whenever possible.

### **Wage Protections for Stadium Workers**

It is critical that the stadium plan promotes high-road economic development after the stadium is built. All stadium employees must be guaranteed family-supporting wages, and a labor peace agreement should be in place to protect their right to unionize. These employees include – but are not limited to – security guards, concession workers, ticket takers, maintenance workers, and cleaning staff. These jobs will exist as long as the stadium is in use; ensuring they are well-compensated will help the state’s investment have the farthest-reaching impact possible.

### **Plans for Public Transportation and Traffic Management**

This publicly owned amenity must be available to all Western New Yorkers. The current stadium is relatively inaccessible by public transportation, effectively denying many people the opportunity to attend games and work at the stadium. If a new stadium is to be built in Orchard Park, public transportation must be deliberately integrated into the plans. Taking measures to encourage more people to take public transportation to and from Bills games will have the added benefit of cutting down on both greenhouse gas emissions and game-day traffic congestion. The stadium design must also include a traffic management plan that does a better job getting people in and out of parking lots than what we have become accustomed to in Orchard Park.

### **A Community Fund to Support Residents of Erie County**

When this project is completed, Western New York will have a world-class football stadium, but the disparities between cities and towns in Erie County will remain. Many children throughout the region lack access to the high-quality enrichment activities enjoyed by their peers in neighboring towns. To help address these disparities, a community fund should be established – and augmented by the Buffalo Bills Foundation – to help fund enrichment activities such as youth sports, theater, and music and dance lessons for children in disadvantaged communities throughout Western New York. The public should be consulted to help determine how this fund can most effectively support the community.

### **A Stormwater Management Plan**

If the state is to invest in a new stadium, that stadium must support New York's energy and climate goals. Upon completion, the stadium will feature one of the largest areas of paved surfaces in Erie County; in the absence of an effective stormwater management plan, it would contribute significantly to the pollution of our local waterways. A plan should therefore be put in place to ensure all stormwater generated at the stadium will be absorbed and processed on site.

### **Financial Support for Orchard Park**

Under the current stadium agreement, the Town of Orchard Park is responsible for significant overtime pay for police officers that work on event days. Orchard Park should be held harmless for these overtime costs as part of any future deal.

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