



**SOUTH BUFFALO**  
**Brownfield Opportunity Area**  
**Step 3 Implementation Strategy**

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## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION



## 1.1 Introduction

*“Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”*  
Warren Buffett

Buffalo is back and we are poised to augment our greatness. The development momentum being realized in our city today is the culmination of the passion, wisdom and vision of our community stewards. Successful planning work is exemplified in the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). Ecological foresight, rigorous site assessment, herculean clean-up efforts and place-based design are hallmarks of the work accomplished over the past two decades. The reclamation, preservation and unified assembly of abandoned industrial lands have led to the rebirth of this district. As a result, the South Buffalo BOA has emerged as an invaluable community asset and it will continue to flourish as the implementation strategies are completed.

The 2,000 acre waterfront site is strategically located in the bi-national region. Building on the natural geography, and in support of an aesthetic authenticity is the unique sense of place created by the views of Downtown Buffalo’s skyline and the mega-scale relics of the rich industrial past. The economic engine has been supercharged with the recently announced multi-billion dollar public private partnership for the development of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend, enhancing the South Buffalo BOA as fertile ground for reinvestment and redevelopment.

This document represents the South Buffalo BOA strategies and the final stage of the BOA process. The completion of this step represents a critical milestone in a process that began with preparation of the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan in the late 1990s. The very well received and award-winning Step 2 Nomination Study utilized the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan as the planning foundation.

The completed three steps and its supporting documents provide the City of Buffalo with a complete strategy to submit to the New York State Department of State for designation of the BOA. An approved BOA demonstrates the importance of this area while providing additional funding opportunities for property owners.

## 1.2 Project Sponsors

The City of Buffalo, in cooperation with the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC), was awarded a grant through the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to advance the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) into the Step 3 Implementation Strategy phase. The Brownfield Opportunity Area program provides communities with the planning and decision-making tools necessary to develop revitalization strategies for areas

impacted by the presence of brownfields. This Implementation Strategy represents the final step of a three step process to develop a community-driven plan to return areas impacted by the presence of brownfields back to productive use. Each phase of the BOA program is described briefly below:

### **1.3 Location of Study Area**

The South Buffalo BOA study area is approximately 1,968 acres, making it the largest BOA to receive funding in New York State. The BOA is located just outside the central business district in the southwest portion of the City of Buffalo, Erie County and the western region of New York. The project area represents a portion of the city with the largest concentration of former heavy industrial properties. As described in Section 1.5, the BOA is formed by NYS Route 5 to the west, Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue to the east, the Buffalo River to the north and the City of Buffalo-City of Lackawanna municipal boundary to the south. Lake Erie is located to the immediate west of the BOA, directly across NYS Route 5, and this waterfront area is included as part of the separate Buffalo Harbor BOA project area.

Neighborhoods surrounding the BOA generally include the Old First Ward to the north, the City of Lackawanna including the New Village Industrial Park and CSX Intermodal rail yard to the south, the NYS Route 5 corridor and Buffalo's Outer Harbor to the west, and the South Buffalo residential neighborhoods adjacent to the east.

***Key Findings: At over 1,900 acres, the South Buffalo BOA represents one of the city's largest opportunities for revitalization of the South Buffalo community and the City of Buffalo. Located along two waterfronts and at the intersection of several international transportation corridors, the BOA is a valuable resource that is transforming into a regional economic and recreational center.***

### **1.4 Steps to BOA Adoption**

Step 1: Pre-Nomination Study is a pre-planning phase that allows a community to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and constraints which exist within a potential study area. The key objectives in completing a Pre-Nomination Study are to identify a manageable and a justifiable study area boundary; conduct a preliminary analysis of existing conditions within the study area; to identify preliminary opportunities and constraints; and to begin to engage the community and stakeholders in a visioning and planning process. The South Buffalo BOA entered the program as a Step 2 Nomination Study as a result of the significant amount of planning previously completed for the study area.

Step 2: Nomination Study includes a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the 1,968

acres of the South Buffalo study area. Existing conditions that may have some implication on redevelopment, revitalization, and achieving the identified vision were inventoried and assessed. This includes additional research and curbside assessments of potential brownfield sites. In addition, an analysis of economic and market trends was completed to assist in strategy development. Sites are identified as having potential to serve as catalysts for further reinvestment based on a variety of environmental, community, and economic factors. This phase of the project identifies specific recommendations for revitalization and proposed targeted implementation strategies. The South Buffalo BOA Nomination Study was completed in 2009 and represented the culmination of a two-year (2007-2009) analysis and consultation process to establish a framework for the transformation of the BOA.

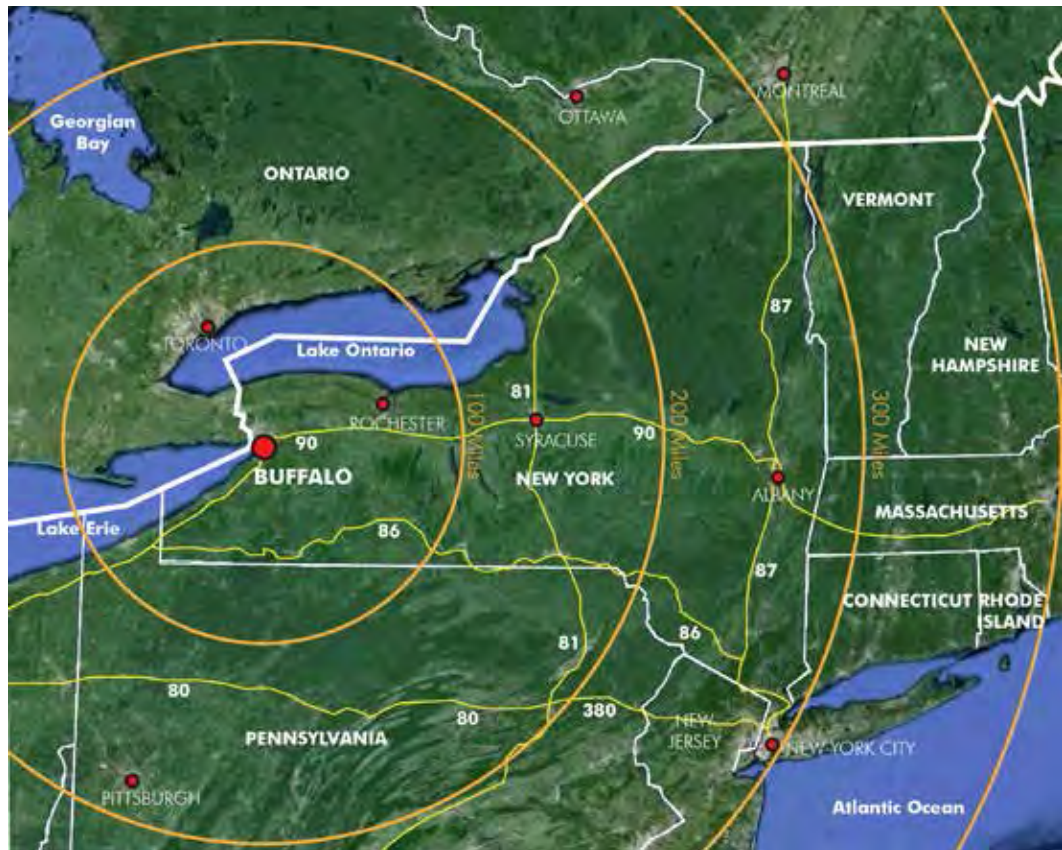
Step 3: Implementation Strategy identifies a range of potential projects to advance the recommendations developed as part of the Nomination Study into tangible projects by focusing redevelopment on strategic sites, encouraging public investment, and improving environmental quality throughout the study area. Projects and implementation tasks are identified for the specific needs of each BOA. Individual Phase II Environmental Site Assessments of suspected brownfield properties can be undertaken by individual property owners for targeted sites to better identify environmental conditions and reuse opportunities. The development of detailed redevelopment strategies for strategic sites, marketing and branding efforts are also typical in this phase of the program. BUDC is currently managing the South Buffalo BOA process on behalf of the City of Buffalo.

This Implementation Strategy was prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by NYSDOS and NYSDEC for the Implementation Strategy (Step 3) phase of the BOA Program. The Steering Committee was comprised of community representatives and public sector-based organizations that contributed significantly to the development of the Implementation Strategy. The Steering Committee and other public outreach efforts are further discussed in Section ii: Public Participation Plan & Techniques to Enlist Partners.

## **1.5 Project Overview**

The City of Buffalo is the second largest city in the State of New York and is the transportation hub of the Buffalo-Niagara Region. The City is located on the shores of the Niagara River, at the eastern end of Lake Erie. It is the fifth busiest trade city in the United States and at the center of North America's fifth largest market, with access to more than 9 million consumers living within a 125-mile radius (Map 1: Regional Context) and regional population growth of over 110,000 people per year as published in the City of Buffalo's *Queen City in the 21st Century Comprehensive Plan*. A former industrial giant, the City is transitioning from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based economy and is the center of the Buffalo-Niagara region. This new economy is made up of: law





Map 1: Regional Context

and administration; technology and communications; media and creative services; health care and medical research; research and development; culture and heritage; sports and entertainment; retail.

Due to economic restructuring over the past several decades, Buffalo's older factories and industrial buildings not easily adapted to the requirements of the new economy, have become vacant and underutilized, leaving behind large tracts of vacant land. The slow and permanent decline of large scale heavy manufacturing industries combined with an increasing substitution of technology for labor has also resulted in a fewer number of high paying, career path jobs. As a result, the city and immediate region have been losing industrial sector jobs and population for decades. Lower environmental standards during the first half of the 20th century have resulted in environmental contamination and the need for remediation before many of these sites can be reused.

Many of these sites are located in prime locations – on waterfronts and next to rail, highway and utility corridors – and represent significant redevelopment opportunities for the City of Buffalo. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these areas relieves pressures from developing on greenfields elsewhere throughout the region and improves and protects the environment.

Since completion of the Step 2 Nomination Study in 2009, the City of Buffalo has experienced a resurgence in the investment in the City of Buffalo and Western New York region. As described in the October 18, 2013 Business First edition, since 2010 and going forward there is more than \$3.78 B of investment in the development pipeline for the City of Buffalo and \$8.1 B in the overall Western New York area. The State of New York and SolarCity are investing a total of \$1.5 billion to create the largest solar-panel manufacturing facility in the Western Hemisphere at RiverBend, with the promise of the creation of approximately 1,500 new jobs at the site, along with an additional 1,500 new jobs in the Buffalo-Niagara region from businesses providing supplies and services to the Innovation Hub/SolarCity – many of which are destined to locate within the South Buffalo BOA.

Included in State of New York's investments since the completion of the Step 2 are improvements to the infrastructure along the shoreline on Buffalo's waterfront which has resulted in improved public access and amenities including Ship Canal Commons, Tifft Street Pier, Gallagher Beach, Wilkeson Point, Fuhrmann Boulevard, Central Wharf, River Fest Park and Mutual Riverfront Park. Combined with the Buffalo River remediation, associated shoreline improvements and the recent announcements regarding RiverBend on the north and the new Ship Canal Commons in Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park on the south, these public investments now frame the South Buffalo BOA, planting the seeds for further investment and revitalization.

Through the BUDC's efforts during this phase of the process, the BOA grant provides Buffalo with the resources to identify tangible implementation projects to advance the vision for redevelopment of the South Buffalo BOA and return strategic sites back to productive uses. An overview of previous and ongoing planning efforts within the study area is provided below.

South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan (1997): The planning process for the South Buffalo Brownfield Study Area commenced in the 1990s with funding through the New York State Clean Water/ Clean Air Bond Act Federal Brownfields Redevelopment Program. The City of Buffalo, in partnership with the City of Lackawanna, Erie County, Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) and other project stakeholders undertook master planning for 1,200 acres of brownfield properties, vacated following industrial decline. This planning initiative established the framework for later completion of the Step 2 Nomination Study, which updated the community vision, goals and objectives for planning throughout the BOA. This Plan also satisfied the Step 1 Pre-Nomination Study requirements under the BOA program.

South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area Step 2 Nomination Study (2009): The City of Buffalo, with funds from the NYSDOS and NYSDEC, entered South Buffalo study area into the BOA program in 2007 in the Step 2 Nomination Study phase. The Step 2

Nomination Study was approved to bypass the Step 1 Pre-Nomination Study phase as a result of prior planning completed as part of the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan. Findings and recommendations stemming from the Nomination Study process are summarized and updated, as necessary, throughout this Step 3 Implementation Strategy.

RiverBend Master Plan (2011): The RiverBend Master Plan represents the first implementation project completed for the South Buffalo BOA and concurrently being advanced as part of the Step 3 Implementation Strategy. Funded by the New York State Department of State and National Grid, the BUDC undertook the planning initiative for redevelopment of a 260-acre waterfront site to spur private sector investment and job creation. The future for RiverBend is being realized a green, modern and vital urban development that capitalizes on the site's vast size, accessible rail infrastructure, location adjacent to Downtown Buffalo, and extensive frontage on the Buffalo River. The RiverBend Master plan focused on the themes Connect (establish a strong connection between the South Buffalo BOA and adjacent neighborhoods and destinations), Restore (implement a comprehensive green infrastructure plan to restore the damaged ecosystem), Transform (develop over 3 million square feet of new development on vacant land), Engage (work with the local community and city partners to reposition Buffalo for the future), all of which are echoed throughout this Step 3 Implementation Strategy.

South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study (2013): The South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study is an implementation project identified in the Step 2 phase and conducted concurrently with the Step 3 Implementation Strategy. The study stems from recommendations developed as part of the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan, and reinforced during the Step 2 Nomination Study for development of a golf course on the existing All-Tiffit and Marilla Street landfills. The study aims to achieve two objectives: locate a recreational facility in the South Buffalo area and restore South Park to the original Olmsted design (requiring removal and relocation of the existing 9-hole golf course that currently exists within the park).

South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area Step 3 Implementation Strategy (2013): This document represents the product of the Step 3 Implementation Strategy, completed over the course of 2013, and builds on prior and concurrent planning efforts, as described above. Completion of the South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy marks a critical milestone in a long process that began with preparation of the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan in the late 1990s. As the largest BOA in the State of New York, the South Buffalo BOA is poised to serve as a precedent for successful brownfield redevelopment strategies by initiating catalyst projects that spur reinvestment in vacant and underutilized properties.

To develop implementation strategies the planning work that was completed during previous studies was analyzed and updated, and strategies were developed that match

current city trends and the community vision. Updated land use plans were reviewed with stakeholders and incorporated into the new City of Buffalo Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Priority sites within the study area were identified and outreach to landowners took place to garner interest in investing in their property and understanding the environmental conditions that exist. Throughout the study small, medium and large implementation projects were identified and discussed with the community and potential project champions. A phased approach for implementation of these projects was identified along with potential champions and funding sources. The final Implementation Strategy will provide the South Buffalo BOA stakeholders with a roadmap of opportunities that can lead to a transformative change in both the short-term as well as longer-term.

South Buffalo BOA Recreational Needs Assessment (2014): As part of the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Implementation Strategy, the City of Buffalo and BUDC commissioned an assessment of the regional indoor and outdoor recreational sports facility market. The South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Nomination plans had suggested the potential for an athletic complex adjacent to South Park along Hopkins Street. In addition, the City had been approached by several entities over the last few years proposing a major sports complex within or adjacent to the South Buffalo BOA. As part of the study, a complete identification and evaluation of City-owned recreational facilities was also conducted and guided by a Steering Committee consisting of the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works, Streets and Parks, Visit Buffalo Niagara/Buffalo Niagara Sports Commission, City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, and BUDC representatives.

The study's analysis indicated a pent up demand for both indoor and outdoor field-sports facilities, exhibited by youth and adult recreational programs, by the for-profit travel and premier-level soccer community, by City-based colleges, and by charter and private high schools. With respect to the indoor sports field investment and development option that was identified as a primary focus of the study, a critical mass of "pay-to-play" users was readily identified as including existing outdoor adult leagues, new indoor adult leagues, City-based travel, premier, and other membership soccer programs, regional baseball and softball programs (for off-season training), and City-based collegiate and private high school programs (off-season training). Based on predominant user group needs, recommendations, and requirements that were generated through the market supply and demand sections interview process, a set of preliminary base case facility parameters were developed within the indoor-outdoor turf field facility type. These included one indoor turf field, four outdoor field surfaces, plus accessory facilities and parking. The study also presents construction cost estimates, financial operations analysis and an economic impact analysis for the base case facility.

## **1.6 Brownfield Opportunity Area Boundary Description and Justification**

The South Buffalo BOA boundary was established in the 1990s as part of the South Buffalo Redevelopment Plan and reaffirmed during the Step 2 Nomination Study. The study area is bordered by NYS Route 5 on the West, the Buffalo River on the north, Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue on the east and the City of Buffalo-City of Lackawanna municipal boundary on the south. Lake Erie is located to the immediate west of the South Buffalo BOA, directly across Route 5. This boundary was identified for several reasons. The northern edge is adjacent to the Buffalo River, which creates a natural border and serves as one of the focal points of the BOA study. To the north of the river is the Buffalo River Corridor BOA, whose Nomination Study is currently underway (Map 2: South Buffalo BOA Context). The western edge, adjacent to Route 5, is appropriate as the lakefront on the other side of Route 5 is incorporated into the boundary of the Buffalo Harbor BOA, currently in the Step 2 Nomination Study phase. The eastern boundary is generally defined by the edge of the South Buffalo residential community and was aligned with major streets. Finally, the southern edge is defined by the City of Buffalo's boundary with the City of Lackawanna.

As part of the Step 3 the boundary was expanded along Reading Avenue from Hopkins Street to South Park Avenue. The expanded boundary incorporated the properties on the north side of the street as part of the BOA. This was done to achieve maximum redevelopment along Reading Avenue which is a important commercial East/West connector.

The South Buffalo BOA represents the portion of the City having the largest geographic concentration of former heavy industries (Map 3: South Buffalo BOA Context). Today, apart from the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, the New Village Industrial Park, located south in Lackawanna, and CSX Intermodal rail yard to the south, the immediate development context is primarily low rise residential, including the Old First Ward to the north and the neighborhoods of South Buffalo to the east. Other commercial and industrial operations are scattered throughout the South Buffalo BOA, primarily along Hopkins and Tift Streets. Ownership in the BOA is roughly equal between the public and private sectors, approximately 987 acres and 860 acres respectively not including public right-of-ways which make up the additional 121 acres of the BOA. The total noncontiguous City-owned land within the study area consists of approximately 530 acres, which includes City of Buffalo, the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation. The third largest ownership category includes the railroad properties, which account for approximately 258 acres. Several key properties with considerable redevelopment potential and/or representing a significant public interest include:





Map 2: South Buffalo BOA Context

#### LEGEND

●●●●● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

- Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park;
- RiverBend Commerce Park (former LTV/Republic Steel);
- Tift Nature Preserve;
- Existing and former railroad corridors;
- Former Village Farms site;
- Alltft Landfill;
- Marilla Street Landfill;
- South Park; and,
- Surrounding mixed-use residential / commercial / industrial neighborhoods.

## **1.7 Community Vision, Goals and Objectives**

The citizens of the City of Buffalo have come together to imagine the future of the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). During the past seven years, the City of Buffalo, New York State Department of State, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have guided significant efforts through the (BOA) program. Urban planning efforts have provided abundant information about the existing community, its neighborhoods, demographics, built and natural assets as well as existing conditions of property and infrastructure.

Public engagement has been pivotal to the development of the Implementation Strategy and Nomination Study. Throughout the Implementation Strategy and Nomination Study the knowledge and insights informed the approaches, recommendations and planning techniques used to develop the project plans, goals and visions. Through community meetings, stakeholder gatherings and individual sessions information was learned about the history of the district and the community's vision for its future.

The Nomination Study provided a strategy for the South Buffalo BOA as an engine of growth within the region. A Master Plan was developed that established a framework for guiding the evolution of the BOA to a higher value employment area complemented by a mix of new uses, strengthened communities, significant open space and natural areas. Transforming the South Buffalo BOA by encouraging a diverse range of land uses will lead to enduring economic stability and growth. The Master Plan proposes six prevailing themes that are drawn from key assets and opportunities of the study area. The prevailing themes place an emphasis on economic development, ecological restoration and neighborhood revitalization.

High Environmental Performance and Economic Resiliency: This theme focuses on capitalizing on the existing workforce, significant available land and beautiful ecological surroundings in an effort to promote a “green” cluster of mixed-use development.



Emphasis on Employment: A diverse land use throughout the South Buffalo BOA provides an opportunity to have a mix of business that supports the economic strengths of the region and the study area. It is critical to target marketing towards green industries, research and development, light industry and business parks that are supported by the surrounding community.

Complete Streets along Hopkins Street, Tifft Street, South Park Avenue and RiverBend Drive: Connectivity and neighborhood revitalization are critical components to the development of the South Buffalo BOA. Strengthening connections between assets such as the Buffalo River, South Park, Lake Erie, Tifft Nature Preserve and surrounding neighborhoods is of greatest importance. South Park Avenue provides a critical connection to the Central Business District, Canalside and the Erie Basin Marina from South Buffalo. (Image 1: Vision for Hopkins Street)

Strong Places and Mixed Use Communities: This theme prioritizes negotiating quality urban development with a strong sense of place and scale. This can be achieved through the use of compact development, attractive streets, an improved public realm and green linkages (Image 2: Complete Street on Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY).

Enhanced and Integrated Network of Open Space: This theme focuses on expanding the existing open space assets throughout the South Buffalo BOA study area to accommodate a range of active and passive recreational activities. (Image 3: Public Amenities at Ship Canal Commons)

Restoration and Development along the Buffalo River: The Buffalo River has long been a critical component to Buffalo's industrial success. Moving forward, redevelopment along the river must balance enhanced ecological function, natural resource conservation, and new recreational opportunities (Image 4: Shoreline Restoration at Riverbend).

During the initial outreach for the Implementation Study community members, private business owners and local officials were presented the Step 2 master plan, Riverbend master plan, the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce urban renewal plan, South Park Plan for the 21st Century and Tifft Nature Preserve Vision. When asked what was the most critical implementation project the overwhelming response was connectivity. The major connectors in the South Buffalo BOA consist of: Tifft Street to the Outer Harbor; South Park Avenue to downtown (Central Business District, Canalside, Erie Basin); Hopkins Street to South Park Avenue and South Park. The community vision includes an improved infrastructure and path system that connects South Buffalo to the areas described above and provides access to the Buffalo River while maintaining green and open space connections between major green areas.



Image 1: Vision for Hopkins Street



Image 2: Complete Street at Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY



Image 3: Public Amenities at Ship Canal Commons



Image 4: Shoreline Restoration at Riverbend

As part of the Implementation Study, the community along Hopkins Street was engaged to further refine the vision of their neighborhood. This community consists of a variety of land uses with historically industrial uses on the west side of Hopkins Street and residential neighborhoods on the east. These competing uses, building scales, vacancies, and underutilized properties generated many concerns from both sides. Through improving the quality of the infrastructure, landscape and building structures, a vision of a revitalized neighborhood that works for all users was generated from public comments. This vision provides opportunities for existing and new business to grow and residential infill to strengthen the fabric of this community. The vision of Hopkins Street promotes a diverse and successful sustainable street that is inviting to all users. To further guide the community vision five principles that are supported by specific objectives and actions were provided. These principles include workforce development, building community resources, housing, quality-of-life, and sustainable development.

The South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy builds off the success of initiatives implemented across the city and provides a comprehensive strategy with varying scale, cost techniques, time frames and actions required to achieve the community's desired vision. These strategies include improving the public realm, creating places for all users and embracing the city's unique natural habitat. The plan encourages grassroots investment in line with City of Buffalo policies including, local laws and the Green Code once approved. The South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy sets the stage and vision for long-term economic and place specific vitality.

## 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN & TECHNIQUES TO ENLIST PARTNERS



## **2.1 Introduction**

The South Buffalo BOA public participation process is comprised of techniques and methods including (22) steering committee meetings, (15) public open house meetings, (4) small stakeholder and (1) landowner site visit/planning meetings, with a total of 41 influential information gathering periods. At each step, communication tools, including advance web based outreach, were used to share current data, compelling graphics and implementable strategies with the community at large as well as with key groups or businesses who could champion projects. Properties that were determined as priority sites for the immediate and long term success of the South Buffalo BOA were engaged through information mailers, a stakeholder meeting, and in person meetings to discuss the available incentives and voluntary participation in Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) application. The public outreach occurred over six years and reached a wide swath of the South Buffalo community.

## **2.2 Community Participation Plan: Step 2 Nomination Document**

Public and stakeholder participation was an invaluable component of the Step 2 Nomination process. The participation plan and techniques to enlist partners was based upon a comprehensive approach to consultation that enabled input at a variety of levels and stages throughout the process. This laid a foundation and provided a solid framework for the dissemination of information and public feedback / direction throughout the development of the Nomination Document.

The consultation plan was organized around the project's Scope of Work to provide direct and timely inputs into the project deliverables. This helped to establish a relationship with the community which was fostered through numerous consultation events over the course of the project and multiple communication strategies. Events were timed and structured to address multiple audiences on a variety of topics. The program required a solid understanding of both the audience(s) and effective communication techniques to engage and enhance participation and is described as follows:

- Understanding our Audiences: anticipating the many groups and stakeholders who would be engaged throughout the project
- Communication Strategies: enhancing participation and gaining the support of the audiences throughout the Nomination process
- Community Participation Plan and Techniques to Enlist Partners: identifying events and opportunities for broad-based public participation

Through the course of the Nomination process the project team interacted with numerous audiences - sometimes separately and sometimes in mixed groups - each of which brought different interests and perspectives to the process. These audiences included: City Councilors, Community Leaders, General Public, Neighborhood Groups, Community Activist, Landowners and Steering Committee. This public participation effort included the following formal meetings:

- Diversifying the employment base to support greater economic resiliency;
  - Fostering distinctive communities to create a strong sense of place;
  - Mixing land uses and increasing densities to discourage sprawl;
  - Support existing or future higher order transit service and reduce car dependence;
  - Preserve open space and critical environmental areas to add ecological and economic value
1. Public Open House: Five (5) meetings for the general public. (March 11, 2008) (June 23, 2008) (December 3, 2008) (February 25, 2009) (April 23, 2009)
  2. Steering Committee: Nine (9) meetings with representatives from key organizations involved with South Buffalo BOA. (December 18, 2007) (February 11, 2008) (March 6, 2008) (May 16, 2008) (May 29, 2008) (November 6, 2008) (December 11, 2008) (January 21, 2009) (February 25, 2009)

### **2.3 Community Participation: Riverbend Master Plan**

The Riverbend Master Plan development focused on the former 200 acre Republic Steel site on the north side of the South Buffalo BOA study area. This public and stakeholder participation plan focused on understanding the community's desire for a mixed use sustainable development. The outcome of this effort lead to a holistic plan that built on the rich ecological legacy of the site. The plan provides flexibility with the infrastructure, open space and parcels to adapt to the market. This public participation effort included the following formal meetings:

1. Advisory Committee: Four (4) meetings with representatives from key or involved organizations (December 10, 2010; March 9, 2011; April 28, 2011; June 28, 2011).
2. Stakeholders: Individual or small group interviews with over 55 people from various stakeholder organizations and groups (December 9-10, 2010).
3. Public Meetings: Three (3) Public meetings: (February 1, 2011; March 9, 2011; April 27, 2011).

### **2.4 Community Participation: Golf Course Feasibility Study**

The South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study explored a range of issues affecting the feasibility of developing golf course on a 201-acre brownfield site located on the southern



portion of the South Buffalo BOA. A golf course on the site is seen as an option to put remediated lands to productive use while helping to connect the open space network in the area. The golf course would be a recreational amenity and add value for surrounding uses. The stakeholder outreach focused on understanding the community's interest for relocating the existing South Park course and if so what type of experience they would like at its new location. This feedback helped inform the size, amenities, economic realities and design of the course. This public participation effort included the following formal meetings:

1. Steering Committee: Three (3) meetings with representatives from key organizations
2. Stakeholders/Constituents: Two (2) meetings with interested and involved organizations (February 14, 2013; September 5, 2013)
3. Public Meetings: Two (2) public meetings, joint with Step 3 Implementation Strategy (April 30, 2013; December 15, 2013)

## **2.5 Community Participation Plan: Step 3 Implementation Strategy**

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) for the Step 3 Implementation Strategy expands on the success of previous outreach efforts conducted as part of the South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Nomination Study. The plan outlines a strategy to engage the local community, project partners, and stakeholders in the overall planning process. The South Buffalo BOA is strategically located with the potential to become a logistics hub, particularly with its rail assets and proximity to transportation resources in Southern Ontario. These assets along with strong incentive programs create an ideal condition to further strengthen the areas' opportunities for advanced manufacturing, life sciences and research & development.

With such competitive economic opportunities, it was important to engage stakeholders in both the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo-Niagara region. This CPP established the framework for community participation to ensure that City representatives and the consultant team had a clear understanding of the issues that are on the forefront of property/business owners and residents of the South Buffalo BOA study area. The Step 3 Implementation Strategy will set the stage for the revitalization of South Buffalo's natural, cultural, and economic assets.

### **2.5.1 Community & Stakeholders**

Enlisting community and stakeholder partners is a common theme inherent to both the Nomination Study and Implementation Strategy. Collaboration with City Councilmembers, Community Leaders, Neighborhood Groups, Community Activist, Landowners and the project steering committee provided a wide range of perspectives and priorities. The varying outreach provided a network of communication that generated interest at all levels throughout the City of Buffalo and included the following audiences:



City and State Representatives: This audience has been championing the South Buffalo BOA since the beginning of the Nomination Study. Their involvement in the steering committee and community meetings provided invaluable local insight. Throughout the selection of implementation projects, representatives helped align project selection with local initiatives while playing an instrumental role as leaders for their development. The final Implementation Strategy will have small, medium and large scale projects and in many cases will require public funding. The role of City and State representatives in supporting this effort is critical and their ongoing involvement in the South Buffalo BOA will enhance the success of pursuing funding and maintaining community engagement.

Community Leaders: The members of the South Buffalo BOA community that are vocal and have been engaged in this community prior to the Nomination Study provided significant local knowledge throughout the Implementation Strategy. This group of engaged leaders consists of community members, local business owners, residential association leaders and large institutions. Large group and individual visioning sessions took place to gain an understanding of their concerns, needs, interests and vision for the area. These sessions informed the project team of a range of important community and city issues. The insight that leaders gained during these sessions provided them with knowledge of the study that was valuable to share their constituents and furthered the project outreach. Members from this leadership group also sat on the Hopkins Street Steering Committee.

Non-for-Profit Organizations: The City of Buffalo has a committed group of non-profit organizations that are striving to improve the local community while providing critical services that affect people on a daily basis. Of utmost importance to the South Buffalo BOA is the need for small and implementable projects that can initiate physical and social change. Members of these organizations include the Olmsted Park Conservancy, Neighborhood Housing Services of South Buffalo, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, Old 1st Ward Community Association, GoBike Buffalo, Grassroots Gardens, Community Canvases to name a few, and met in group and individual settings to generate a discussion about the community within the study area and potential projects. The passion and synergy which these organizations approached the South Buffalo BOA led to many proposed implementable projects.

General Public: The four public meetings/workshops were designed to be open forums to inform and listen to a broad public audience. Similar to the Nomination Study the meetings were structured as a two-way conversation to encourage input from participants. In order to generate lively discussions, digital presentations and interactive display boards were used. To continue the discussion after all of the meetings, presentations were posted to social media and the project website to stimulate further discussions. Project specific business cards were handed out at all public meetings with contact information and website addresses. (Image 5: Business cards distributed at public meeting)

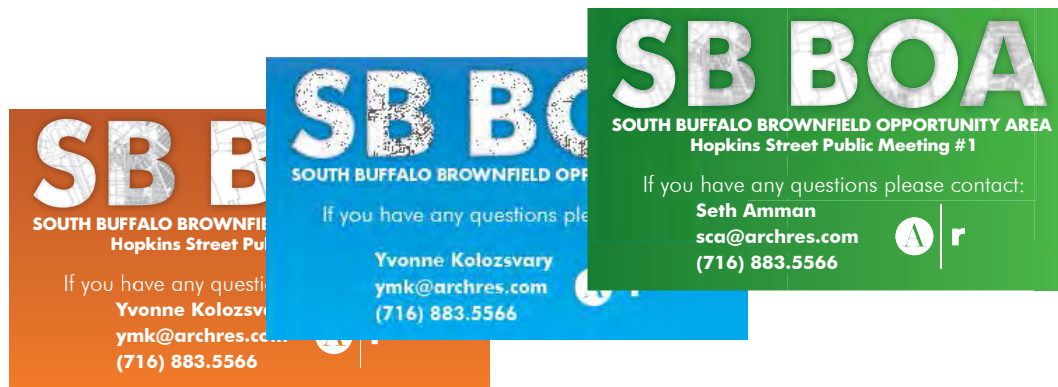


Image 5: Business cards distributed at public meeting

**Landowners:** A critical audience that can create immediate and significant change in the study area are the landowners. Through analysis of the Nomination Study and dialogue with the project leaders, priority areas were selected to focus outreach and education. This outreach included group and individual meetings. Stakeholders were contacted, visited and mailed brochures describing the project and Phase 2 Site Assessment opportunities that are available for them along with the meeting date and location. The Landowner meeting provided a forum to discuss the project, its importance to the area, how stakeholders can be involved, available incentives and simple implementation projects that they can champion. Following the Landowner meeting, individual meetings were arranged to further discuss the Phase 2 site assessments and potential early implementation projects. The face to face meetings with landowners generated a high level of interest and valuable input regarding future development opportunities. (Image 6: Landowner Informational Brochure)

1. Land owner Meeting at Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens (July 2, 2013)
2. Individual landowner meetings with BOA team (12) refer to *Appendix A*

**Steering Committee:** The Steering Committees played an integral role in the development of the South Buffalo BOA. Two separate steering committees were formed: one for the general South Buffalo BOA project and another for the Hopkins Street Neighborhood. This was done in an effort to maximize input and development strategies for the overall South Buffalo BOA project area as well as elicit detailed neighborhood information and concerns to inform the vision for the Hopkins Street Corridor. The Steering Committees worked with the planning team on the overall vision of the South Buffalo BOA Plan and Hopkins Street Vision, as well as represent a variety of community interests. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from the City of Buffalo, DOS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), project partners and stakeholders. Meetings between the project team and the Steering Committee provided a venue for discussing project specifics, planning opportunities, concept designs, presentation materials, marketing strategies, and review of comments related to the submission of project related documents.



Image 6: Landowner Informational Brochure

These outreach efforts informed the Implementation Strategy based on smart growth planning strategies, current economic conditions and incentives (e.g., BOA program incentives, the Billion for Buffalo, Consolidated Funding Application) while acknowledging recent successes (e.g. Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Canalside, and Larkinville). Most importantly, this outreach effort provides a blueprint for implementing short, medium and long-term projects.

1. Steering Committee Meetings (February 12, 2013, January 14, 2014)

## 2.5.2 Communication Strategies

**Internet:** Capitalizing on advances in technology, a web based interactive platform facilitated feedback and allowed for dissemination of information to a wider range of participants locally, regionally, and internationally. The project website, hosted by BUDC, fostered participation from the community as well as provided outreach to regional and international stakeholders. The interactive website is an efficient tool that is a source for project information (including access to project presentations and meeting information), and a forum for suggestions and strategies from the public. (Image 7: South Buffalo BOA Website & Social Media)



Image 7: South Buffalo BOA Website & Social Media

Social Media: With the advent of social media, communities of people can create, share, and exchange ideas with a global community in comparatively inexpensive ways. Facebook and Twitter accounts were created for the South Buffalo BOA and regularly updated to share information, photography, upcoming events, and pertinent news with the public. By using a variety of platforms like social media, information about the South Buffalo BOA can be accessed by a large and diverse population. Inversely, by contributing content, communities are enabled by submitting their thoughts with less formal methods. (Image 7: South Buffalo BOA Website & Social Media)

Print Media: Although the rise of the internet and 24-hour rolling news has seen print media steadily decrease, the uses of print media are still numerous and highly advantageous to individuals and businesses alike. Print media - newspapers, magazines and brochures - play an important role in attracting large audiences in addition to digital media. White Papers addressing environmental concerns, brochures physically posted in community establishments and newspaper advertisements were all deployed to reach the greatest audience possible. (Image 8: Public Meeting Flyers)

### **2.5.3 Consultation Events with Community**

A total of four public meetings were held beginning April 2013 through December 2013. Two meetings were held to discuss the overall South Buffalo BOA and two meetings were held to focus on the Hopkins Street Neighborhood. These public meetings and workshops were focused on the various stages and planning efforts of the South Buffalo BOA. The meetings and workshops were organized to inform local residents, business, and property owners of the project status and to solicit opinions on the proposed redevelopment plans of the South Buffalo BOA. The meetings promoted and encourage active participation from local community members and business owners. The general intent for each meeting, and meeting schedules, is discussed in further detail below:



Image 8: Public Meeting Flyers

Meeting #1, April 30th, 2013 (South Buffalo BOA and Golf Course Study joint presentation)

An initial kick-off meeting was jointly presented by the consultant team for the South

Buffalo BOA and by the consultant team for the South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study (located in the South Buffalo BOA). This session focused on an introduction of team members, overview of the Step 2 Nomination Document, review of the RiverBend Master Plan, Buffalo Lakeside Commerce urban renewal plan, South Park Plan for the 21st Century, Tiff Nature Preserve Vision, South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study, and Step 3 Implementation objectives. In addition, facilitators engaged participants in an open house session to encourage public input on proposed/future land uses for the Step 3, and the South Buffalo proposed Golf Course.

Meeting #2, June 5th, 2013 (Hopkins Street)

At the first Hopkins Street Neighborhood meeting/workshop the discussion was focused on:

- The Neighborhood and the importance of their participation in this process
- Revitalization and how the urban landscape can be changed
- Design opportunities for the Hopkins Street community

Information describing the existing conditions, influences on the area and opportunities for the future were discussed. The presentation included existing land use and proposed land use diagrams along with potential design precedents and early implementation opportunities. How to connect the Hopkins Street Neighborhood to South Park, Outer Harbor, Larkintown, Canalside, Central Business District and the Buffalo River was a significant focus. Facilitators engaged participants in a workshop exercise to identify immediate community needs. Feedback included opportunities for housing rehabilitation and streetscape improvements.

Meeting #3, August 28th, 2013 (Hopkins Street)

At the second Hopkins Street Neighborhood meeting/workshop the community was presented ideas on how to Connect, Restore and Transform their neighborhood. Proposed land use diagrams, a design vision for Hopkins Street and preliminary implementable projects were reviewed along with ecological opportunities connecting habitats, green spaces and communities throughout the South Buffalo BOA. Additionally, priority sites that provide the most viable opportunities for change were discussed along with opportunities for incentives through the BOA program. Participants were shown a vision of Hopkins Street and provided a description of resources that can be pursued to initiate change. Attendees were posed the question “What can you do for your community?” The workshop following the formal presentation allowed for community input that guided the final design decisions and implementable projects for the Hopkins Street Neighborhood.

Meeting #4, December 4th, 2013 (Hopkins Street, South Buffalo BOA, Golf Course Study)

The Final South Buffalo BOA meeting brought together and summarized all the activities performed per the Implementation Strategy phase. The benefits of property cleanup was stressed. The recent announcement of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend were described. These projects could not have happened without the prior site assessment, and thorough planning initiatives that previously had been done. The Golf Course Study team presented findings that highlighted the feasibility of a 9-hole course with multi-seasonal activities which could support year-round community use. Underscoring the importance of past planning efforts the Implementation Strategy utilizes Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper techniques to create initial low-cost, but high impact changes that help empower the community. Emphasizing that partnerships and collaboration of community, business, and civic groups can have the largest impact. Prioritization maps were displayed outlining the steps to implementing three key changes: Complete Street initiatives, enhanced landscaping, and creating an enhanced network of pedestrian connections. More information can be found in *Appendix A: Meeting Minutes*.



### 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES







Map 3: Golden Horseshoe

### 3.1 Introduction

#### The South Buffalo BOA

The City of Buffalo is the second largest city in the State of New York and the transportation hub of the Buffalo-Niagara Region. The total area within city limits is 41 square miles. It is located on the eastern end of Lake Erie and also borders the Niagara River which flows northward, over Niagara Falls and into Lake Ontario. The Buffalo-Niagara region (Map 3: Golden Horseshoe) is situated upon the shores and in the midst of the Great Lakes where nearly one-fifth of the world's fresh water located. This fresh water is both a crucial resource and a precious commodity. It is growing in importance, not only for this region, but also has the potential to impact the health and welfare of the world's population. The city is the center of the Buffalo-Niagara region for law and administration, banking and business, technology and communications, media and creative services, healthcare and medical research, culture and heritage, sports and entertainment, restaurants and retailing. Also, energy production such as hydroelectric and wind power have been or are becoming a regional attribute.

Located south of downtown, adjacent to Lake Erie and the Buffalo River, is the 1,968 acre South Buffalo BOA. The BOA represents a unique opportunity for the City of Buffalo to capitalize on many of these regional core strengths and mitigate its market challenges, capture current and projected regional growth industries, and leverage the BOA's natural assets, both economic and environmental, in order to transform the BOA from an underutilized industrial area into an engine of growth for the city and region. A critical component of the Nomination Study therefore included an evaluation of the local and regional economy to identify opportunities for growth within the BOA. In keeping with these ideals, the overall demographic and market trends in the nation, state, and region were examined and compared to those of the City of Buffalo, followed by a focus on the city's strengths, weaknesses, physical land base and emerging or sustainable industries.

Ultimately a series of directions and strategies began to emerge for the BOA, and have been updated to reflect changing environmental, economic and physical conditions within the BOA throughout this process.

Within the region, there has been an increase in redevelopment momentum, which has resulted in numerous redevelopment projects and plans for revitalization, particularly with respect to the city's long underutilized waterfront and within the downtown core. The strategy for the BOA must acknowledge and respect these ongoing and planned efforts, in addition to the economic clusters that are emerging in other parts of the city and region. It is important to realize that the BOA can both benefit from emerging economic, academic, cultural and environmental sectors in the Central Business District (CBD) and other parts of the region, and act as an engine of growth in complementary or new sectors. By using its unique site characteristics and assets to generate growth in new sectors, the BOA can play an important role in the economic resurgence of Buffalo and the diversification of its economic base.

Often the focus of development policy in industrial cities that have been losing population and not experiencing job growth, such as Buffalo, has been to search for one or a few economic solutions to solve the region's problems. The reliance on only one or a few companies, strategies, or initiatives to bring revitalization, makes a city vulnerable to changes in the economic climate and independent decisions of only a few businesses. Opportunities for long-term growth of multiple sectors are provided by the diversification of the labor force, the focus on several industries that have long term- growth potential, in the city, state, and country, and the incorporation of the inherent environmental, cultural and historic value of an area or city into its revitalization efforts. Ultimately this creates a residential and commercial community that is truly diverse and sustainable, with an emphasis on the environmental, economic and social attributes of the community.

## **3.2 Community and Regional Setting**

This community and regional setting section provides an update of the demographic changes and market trends that have occurred since completion of the Step 2 Nomination Document, and includes data describing population change, income and age characteristics, labor force and employment growth and housing characteristics.

### **3.2.1 Demographic Context**

Demographic information describes the characteristics of a population, which provides an understanding of the services, housing types, and community resources that may be in demand or required within a community. Understanding the population base enables an understanding of additional services that may be required to serve the community.

## Population

Population growth or decline has direct impacts on the services required both locally and regionally. Rapid population growth may indicate the need for additional infrastructure, community services and housing demand. Similarly, population decline may indicate that certain community needs are not being met or quality-of-life issues causing residents to move elsewhere. Understanding the changing nature of the population base can better enable a community to meet the needs of residents and sustain neighborhoods.

In the 1950s, the City of Buffalo was the 15th largest city in the United States, with just under 600,000 residents. Anticipating continued population growth, the city and surrounding areas invested in infrastructure which, in part, resulted in widespread suburbanization. Deindustrialization followed, and the city of Buffalo experienced population loss to the surrounding region and out-of-state regions as people left for outside employment opportunities. Nationally, the trend is slowly starting to reverse; younger generations are realizing the value of living and working near employment centers and companies are choosing to locate near educational institutions to capitalize on knowledge capital. Between 1990 and 2000, the city of Buffalo lost approximately 11 percent of its population. Between 2000 and 2010, the city lost an additional 11 percent of its residents. The study area reflected this trend, losing approximately 12 percent of its population between 2000 and 2010.

By comparison, the Buffalo-Niagara MSA lost only 3.3 percent of its population, suggesting the city continues to experience population loss to surrounding first and outer ring suburbs. New York State grew slightly during the same time period, increasing the number of residents by 2 percent. Population retention continues to be an important goal for the study area and the city of Buffalo. (Table 1: Population Change 2000-2010)

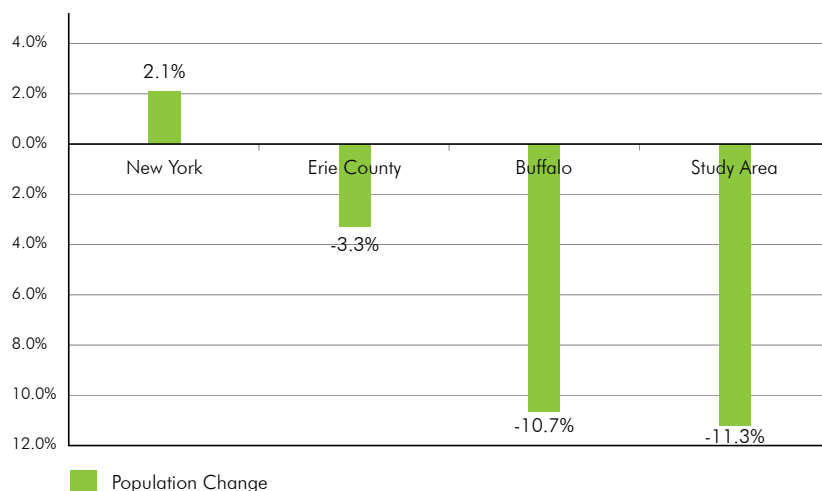


Table 1: Population Change 2000-2010

Another important indicator of a population group is the age breakdown of an area’s residents as different age groups require different municipal services to contribute to their quality-of-life. A study area with a large population of school-aged children may require more active recreational opportunities or childcare facilities, whereas a neighborhood with an aging population may require accessible senior services, healthcare facilities and public transportation options. The age group of an area additionally has implications for the community’s vision and goals. For example, if the community’s goal is to attract new families, it may need to develop specialized services and amenities to attract such families to the area.

According to the 2010 census, the majority of study area residents are between 40 and 64 years of age (33.5 percent) which essentially mirrors the proportion of residents in this age bracket in New York State and Erie County. It will be important for the city to ensure that adequate services and public amenities are accessible to these residents to enable them to continue to age in place. The second largest age group in the study area consists of residents under the age of 19 years (29 percent). This age bracket represents school-aged children who tend to utilize recreational amenities and community centers more frequently than other population groups, and rely on quality schools to provide the educational tools needed for future success. By contrast, the city of Buffalo has a larger proportion of residents aged 20 to 39 than the study area, Erie County and New York State. Many of these residents are likely affiliated with area institutions that provide educational and employment opportunities throughout the city. (Table 2: Regional Age Distribution 2010)

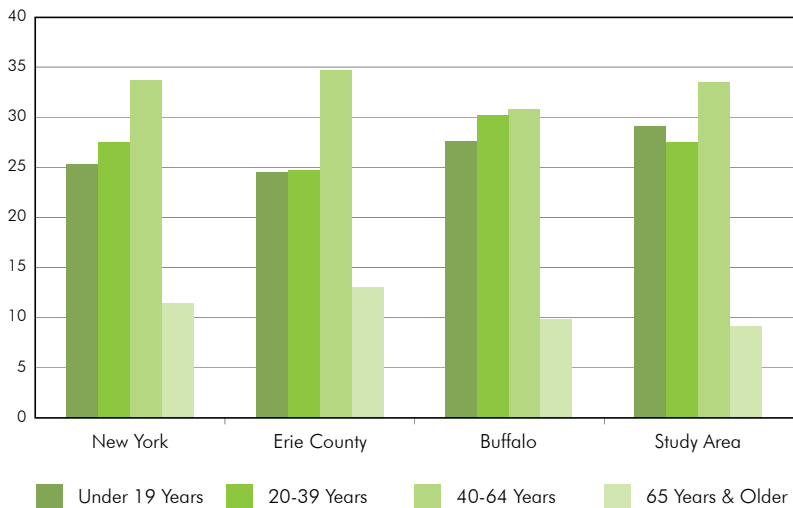


Table 2: Regional Age Distribution 2010

***Key Findings: Areas experiencing population growth are attractive places for businesses to locate. Similar to the city as a whole, the study area has been losing residents over the last several decades. However, the city has the opportunity to identify improvements and amenities to retain and attract residents to the study area. The study area is well represented by a cross section of age groups. Age diversity is beneficial to communities as each age group contributes different knowledge, experiences and skill sets.***

#### Income

The average income in the City of Buffalo is significantly lower than the region, county and state. According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2012), the median income in the City of Buffalo is approximately \$30,000 compared to a median income of approximately \$50,000 in the Buffalo MSA, Erie County, and median income of \$56,000 in New York State. According to 2012 census data, 55 percent of households in the City of Buffalo had earnings less than \$35,000. By comparison, 37 percent of households in Erie County and 33 percent of households in New York State earn less than \$35,000.

According to recently released census data, the city of Buffalo ranks as one of the poorest cities in the nation. Between 2007 and 2011, it is estimated that approximately 30 percent of the population was living below the federally established poverty level. Other upstate New York cities also make the list, including Rochester with approximately 31 percent below the poverty level, and Syracuse with approximately 32 percent below the poverty level. While these findings are less than ideal, the city of Buffalo has begun to adapt to its transitioning economy and is attracting new businesses ranging from small start-up companies to large, globally competitive manufacturing firms. This transition is evidenced by the recent announcement that green energy companies are establishing operations at the RiverBend site. This investment provides the study area and the city of Buffalo the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of the clean energy revolution and is projected to create 850 permanent jobs and 500 construction jobs. Workforce development programs would also assist in generating a trained labor pool to attract additional businesses, and provide the opportunity for residents to attain higher paying jobs. (Table 3: Percentage of people living below the poverty level)

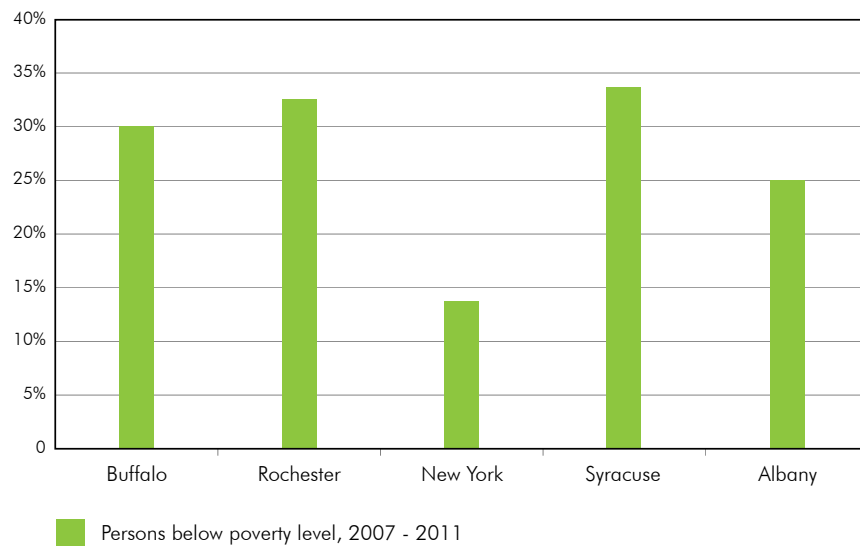


Table 3: Percentage of people living below the poverty level

***Key Findings: Although the city continues to face challenges related to slow income growth and high poverty rates, it is slowly realizing successes in attracting new, niche businesses and industries to former industrial areas including the RiverBend Commerce Park and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park within the study area. This positive trend provides the opportunity to educate and train the workforce and attract skilled workers to the region. As people are attracted to the city for job opportunities, this may result in increased housing demand.***

### Housing

Residential areas in and around the study area were developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to a variety of factors. During the mid-19th century, several land companies developed areas along South Park and Abbott Road. In addition, as conditions in Buffalo's First Ward began to change with increased industrial development, and early immigrants became more established, residents in the neighborhood opted to relocate. In addition, municipal investment in infrastructure and community services made other areas of the city more accessible. The most influential development occurred following establishment of several grain elevators along the Buffalo River. The resulting influx of workers created demand for housing close to their place of employment. Following World War II, newer housing was constructed in areas in and adjacent to the study area. The changing nature of the neighborhood has resulted in a variety of housing types that contribute to the diversity of the neighborhood. The Marilla Street neighborhood, located in the southeast area of the BOA, has a post-World War II housing stock including modest cape cods and ranch-style homes. According to 2012 data obtained from Erie County, the majority of housing in this neighborhood is assessed between \$50,000 and \$70,000. The

Hickory Woods neighborhood, located west of Hopkins Street to the north of Tifft Street, was developed in the 1990's. As part of this development, approximately 60 new single-family homes were constructed. This housing project was facilitated through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME program using Community Development Block Grant Funds. The majority of homes in this neighborhood are assessed between \$30,000 and \$50,000, although some newer homes along Abby Street are assessed at more than \$60,000.

Over the past several decades, the city of Buffalo has experienced a decline in the number of households and consequently has had an oversupply of housing stock. According to the State of the Cities Data System (SOCDS), since 2000, there has been a 72 percent decline in the number of new construction building permits issued throughout the city. While this could indicate decreasing demand for residential and commercial building space, it may also indicate that more existing structures are being rehabilitated and reused. According to 2000 and 2010 census data, approximately 12.6 percent of housing within the study area is vacant, which is slightly lower than 2000 vacancy rates (12.7 percent). By comparison, 15.7 percent of housing is vacant in the City of Buffalo. Both the study area and the city of Buffalo exhibit higher vacancy rates than the county (8.8 percent) and New York State (9.7 percent).

Homeownership can be another important consideration for neighborhood quality-of-life. The study area's housing stock is more affordable than many homes located elsewhere in the city, and a larger proportion of residents in the study area own their homes than the city as a whole. According to the 2010 census, 43.3 percent of residents within the study area rented their homes, compared to 59.3 percent citywide. While this higher rate of homeownership is a positive quality, between 2000 and 2010 the study area's owner-occupied housing decreased and renter-occupied housing increased by nearly 10 percent. While affordable housing offers the opportunity to attract young families, professionals or singles who may be just starting out, a focus should be placed on stabilizing homeownership and/or encouraging longer-term renters. Residents who intend to live in the neighborhood over the long term generally have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of their properties and community. It is also important to note that a higher absentee landlord/ renter ratio frequently results in reported nuisances within a neighborhood. Short-term renters have less incentive to make improvements to properties they do not own or intend to reside in for prolonged periods. In addition, they may have less capacity for such investments or contributions to their community. Although these issues may not be prevalent within the study area, owner-occupancy should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

***Key Findings: The study area has a mix of older and newer housing units that are relatively affordable. In addition, the study area is home to an increasing number of renters and decline in homeownership, which dropped by 6.4 percent between 2000***



***and 2010. Homeownership and investment in the community should be encouraged to improve quality-of-life and retain residents. Long-term goals for the study area should include rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and identifying programs and methods for increasing homeownership.***

#### Educational Attainment

Educational attainment directly relates to the ability of community residents to obtain higher paying jobs, acquire the capital to invest in properties and communities, and transition from blue collar-focused employment to a knowledge-based economy. Educational attainment is an attractive quality to encourage businesses to tap into a skilled workforce. According to the 2010 census data for 19 to 24 year olds, the study area has a larger proportion of residents who have less than a high school degree (22.3 percent) compared to the city (16.5 percent), Erie County (11.4 percent) and New York State (15.2 percent). Within this same cohort, only 9.4 percent of the study area has obtained a Bachelor's degree, and only 2.5 percent of residents 25-years or older have obtained graduate degrees. This lags behind the city of Buffalo, Erie County and New York State.

***Key Findings: The South Buffalo BOA would benefit from having an educated and trained workforce, particularly with the announcement of new advanced manufacturing companies locating to the study area. The city has the opportunity to engage study area residents regarding new employment opportunities and assist with identifying workforce development opportunities, as determined relevant to the goals of the community.***

### **3.2.2 Market Context**

A comprehensive Market Study was completed by economic analysts as part of the Nomination Study. Subsequent to that project, a separate labor, economic and real estate analysis was completed for potential build-out of the RiverBend study area. The findings from each of these market analyses as they pertain to the city and the study area are described in the following sections.

#### Nomination Study Market Analysis

The market study completed as part of the Nomination Study determined that the city of Buffalo has a strong office market, but a smaller share of the regional industrial market. More than half of the county's regional office space is located within the city, and office vacancy rates in the city are comparable to those in the suburbs.

The study additionally illustrates the trend of a weakened industrial market, which is largely the result of older industries and facilities that have vacated since deindustrialization. Still, the city's functional manufacturing space represented approximately one-third of the

county's in 2007. Although the study projected increased vacancies since completion of the Nomination Study as older facilities outlive their usefulness, it also recognized that since the city is the center for manufacturing in the region, there is potential for growth in the high tech manufacturing sector. This trend is being realized as large advanced manufacturing firms such as Solar City are selecting Buffalo to establish their operations.

#### Buffalo RiverBend – Labor Market, Economic and Real Estate Assessment

The market study completed as part of the RiverBend Master Plan built upon the market study completed in 2008 as part of the Step 2 South Buffalo BOA Nomination Study, focusing more specifically on the strengths and challenges associated with the brownfield site. The RiverBend site is a former brownfield that consists of 200 developable acres adjacent to the Buffalo River in South Buffalo. Its proximity to the Central Business District, location adjacent to the Buffalo River, legacy infrastructure from historic industrial uses, and on-going initiatives to restore the Buffalo River shoreline are a few of the strengths that make the site an appealing location for future industrial and office space development. The indicators for new development demands were based on an analysis of regional assets, real estate and economic trends, and site-specific attributes including:

- Access to major transportation assets including road, freight and waterways;
- A regionally competitive industrial market (including the presence of Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park);
- BUDC site ownership;
- Growing area institutional anchors, including a biomedical cluster;
- Available knowledge capital and a diversifying regional employment base; and
- Flexibility to accommodate a range of uses that are less appropriate in downtown areas.

The Real Estate Industry Sector Analysis was completed to assess individual market sectors including office space, industrial/flex space, residential, retail, and alternative energy opportunities. Findings from this portion of the analysis are summarized below.

- Office Space: indicates that Buffalo has a relatively large office market concentrated downtown and in area suburbs. Approximately one-third of regional office space is located in the Buffalo Central Business District. Vacancy rates, both regionally and locally in the CBD, indicate stability of the market, ranging from approximately eight to 11 percent. Although rates are stable, these relatively high vacancy rates and lack of market velocity may make new construction challenging.
- Industrial/Flex: The Buffalo industrial market is strong compared to other competitor cities. South Buffalo's market for industrial and flex space combined has approximately one third of the space available in East Buffalo, yet the vacancy rate is approximately 5 percentage points lower.

- **Residential:** Residential development is complicated due to population loss and high housing vacancy rates. Encouraging residential development on the site in the form of single family, townhouse or garden-style apartments will be complicated by environmental conditions that will likely prohibit construction of ground floor housing. However, streetscape and infrastructure improvements to South Park Avenue and along the river may encourage demand for a small amount of multifamily residential housing, which may include live/work space or senior housing.
- **Retail:** Most of the regional retail is concentrated in the CBD or in suburban shopping centers. However, there are several possible scenarios for retail development that may be viable for the RiverBend site. One scenario may be destination retail/ industrial pairing, such as a brewery or niche food producer that wants to include an on-site retail outfit. Another may include destination retail that capitalizes on the site's proximity to the river and unique views of downtown. There also may be opportunity for neighborhood retail along South Park Avenue as the area begins to develop.
- **Alternative Energy:** Regional and National trends indicate growing interest for alternative energy in the region. This is evidenced by the high visibility of the Steel Winds project, and additional grant allocation to evaluate wind energy potential in the area (e.g., EPA Wind Grant). The study identifies mid-size turbines and solar panels as a potentially viable short to medium term use for the site. While the study also identifies challenges for alternative energy development, recent state investments and tax incentives have already attracted Soraa and Silevo to the RiverBend site from out-of-state locations.

The Implementation Strategy developed as part of the RiverBend Market Analysis recognizes that development on the RiverBend site will rely on successful public and private partnerships and a coordinated effort by BUDC, the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo-Niagara Enterprise, Empire State Development Corporation and other regional leaders. The study additionally identifies interim site uses, a management and governance structure, and a financial strategy for successful marketing and build-out of the site.

***Key Findings: Both office and industrial uses should be encouraged and have a role in the redeveloped BOA. Although challenged, the office market can take advantage of the BOA's central location, with potential for both prime and back office. The industrial market analysis indicates the potential for either high tech manufacturing space or industrial flex space in the BOA. A key consideration will be to accommodate these uses without precluding future residential, high value commercial or recreational development.***

### **3.2.3 City and Regional Challenges**

The city of Buffalo's challenges have primarily stemmed from the sudden shift in its economic base during the mid-20th century without an appropriate replacement economic structure. The decline of manufacturing over a prolonged period of time had a significant impact on the city and the region and contributed to urban decay, population loss, increased housing vacancies, infrastructure oversupply and deterioration, and increased supply of brownfield, abandoned and vacant sites. This decline also led to an increased cost of doing business, and difficulty retaining and attracting new businesses and a skilled workforce. While many of these challenges still exist, changes in the regional economic climate, public investment and state subsidies have begun to mitigate these impacts and encourage reinvestment in neglected areas.

#### Urban Decay

Urban decay is a core impact of deindustrialization. Many of the industrial, commercial and residential properties throughout the city and within the region have experienced increased vacancies and disinvestment as older industries closed down. Today, there is increased momentum for redevelopment to counteract urban decay that has been facilitated through development of revitalization strategies, as well as through state and federal programs, subsidies, and private investment. These successes are evidenced by the redevelopment and growth of the Larkin District, expansion of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, continued programming and expansion at Tifft Nature Preserve, development of the RiverBend Commerce park, and completion of this South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy, to name a few. In addition, the governor's commitment to invest \$1 billion in targeted areas throughout Western New York provides the potential for catalyst projects that will further bolster momentum for revitalization throughout the City and the South Buffalo study area.

#### Attracting and Retaining a Quality Workforce

The city of Buffalo and Western New York region have been challenged by their ability to attract a young, educated workforce. Younger generations generally relocate to the region to pursue higher education and leave following graduation for outside job opportunities. This challenge has been spurred by several area factors. First, it is well-known that the creative class is attracted to vibrant areas with diverse employment opportunities. In addition, the region's colleges and universities have produced a surplus of graduates that may be forced to look to other regions for employment. The Match-Gap analysis study completed by the University at Buffalo's Regional Institute (2008) found that an overwhelming majority of overall job openings require no college degree – nearly 16,000 (75 percent) – compared to the 5,000 annual job openings requiring a college degree. In addition, the vast majority of degrees awarded in the region (nearly half) are in the fields of education, business, liberal arts and health. One in five students earns a degree in education, resulting in a ratio of

2.5 graduates for every job opening. Many graduates within this cohort will be forced to relocate to find jobs in their respective fields, or pursue jobs in different fields, for which they may be overqualified.

There are, however, opportunities and the atmosphere throughout the city of Buffalo is generally improving due to increased investment and redevelopment momentum. The surplus of graduates with advanced degrees provides the opportunity for expansion of the region's knowledge economy if coupled with appropriate job growth. Strategic alignment of graduate supply and workforce demand will be essential to avoid "brain-drain" and encourage growth in the regional knowledge economy.

#### Deteriorating and Excessive Infrastructure

One of the key challenges in the city and region is the oversupply of infrastructure that was constructed when the city had a much larger population base. As a result of population loss, the city is continually faced with increased maintenance costs associated with existing infrastructure despite a reduced tax base. Infrastructure costs and deficiencies can be a major factor in deterring investment from businesses and industries.

Since completion of the Nomination Study, several initiatives have been undertaken to address infrastructure issues in or in proximity to the study area including upgrading the Hopkins Street bridge south of Tift Street and the Ridge Road bridge in nearby Lackawanna; pavement upgrades along Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue; and water line improvements along Hopkins Street north of Tift Street.

#### High Vacancy Rates

The city of Buffalo's population today is less than half of what it was during its period of economic prosperity, yet it maintains an infrastructure, housing, and commercial and industrial building footprint for a much larger city. Population loss resulted in an increasing number of vacant properties, which have only recently begun to stabilize. In 2000, 15.7 percent of overall housing units were vacant. According to the 2010 census, the same proportion of housing units are vacant (15.7 percent). Issues associated with nuisance response, inspections, property maintenance, foregone taxes, public safety, and demolition costs represent public services and public funds that could be better spent on other city priorities.

With the more recent development momentum and the city's strategic efforts to right-size and encourage infill development, vacant properties also represent numerous opportunities including:

- Available land at affordable prices;
- Land assembly opportunities;
- Opportunities for new development incentives;
- Available areas for public spaces linked to new development opportunities;
- Brownfield redevelopment strategies, including the South Buffalo BOA Plan;

- Green Infrastructure Strategies, as are currently being stewarded by the Buffalo Sewer Authority and Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper; and
- Right Sizing Approaches.

With increasing public and private investment happening throughout the city, vacant properties, more than ever, represent a tremendous opportunity for the city to encourage infill development and spur further private investment in key areas.

### High Cost of Doing Business

Although land values generate lower costs for businesses, at the time the Nomination Study was completed, the Buffalo-Niagara region was ranked as the 57th most expensive region to do business in the nation. In 2013, Forbes completed its annual ranking of Best Places for Business and Careers, evaluating the largest metropolitan statistical areas in the United States. The study used 12 metrics relating to job growth, costs (business and living), income growth over a five-year period, educational attainment, and project economic growth through 2014. Net migration patterns, cultural and recreational opportunities and each area's inventory of highly ranked colleges were also taken into consideration. According to this study, Buffalo ranked 75th nationally as the best place for business and careers. Among its upstate peers, Rochester (45th) and Albany (60th) ranked better, with Syracuse falling behind at 118th. Similarly, the study ranked the cost of doing business for large metropolitan areas. Buffalo ranked 111th, compared to Rochester, which ranked 73rd. Syracuse and Albany came in lower at 136th and 162nd, respectively. A key consideration during implementation will be identifying ways to leverage the region's workforce supply to attract additional new companies to the region, and mitigate the fiscal obstacles associated with operation in the region. Table 4 below illustrates job growth rankings for peer cities in Upstate New York based on the Forbes study.

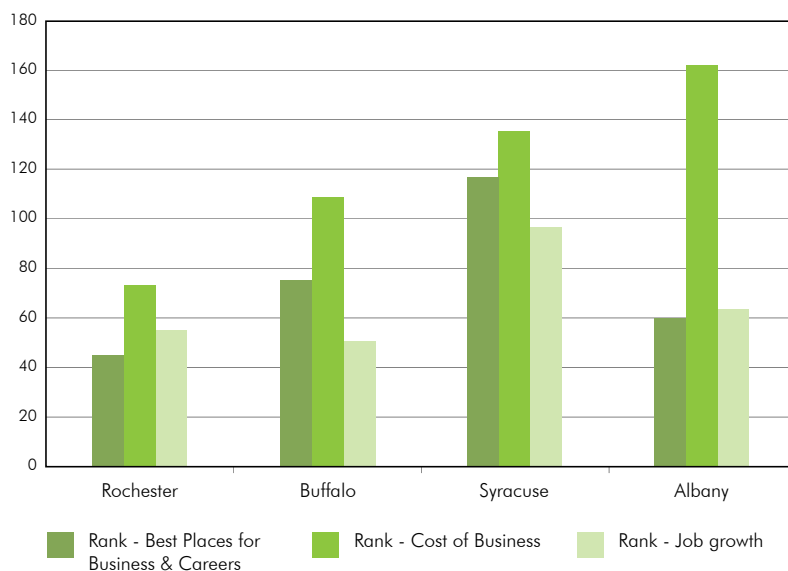


Table 4: Forbes Best Places for Businesses and Careers Statistics (2013)

Cost of Living Ranking, Selected Cities	Urban Area	Utilities
67	Des, Moines, IA	90.2
58	St., Louis, MO-IL	92.9
82	Pittsburgh, PA	97.0
249	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	98.6
19	Louisville, KY	99.1
136	Cincinnati, OH	103.8
275	Minneapolis, MN	104.7
234	Akron, OH	107.9
242	Cleveland, OH	109.0
232	Rochester, NY	114.4
174	Buffalo, NY	115.6
290	Chicago, IL	117.3
225	Detroit, MI	129.5

Table 5: Cost of Living Ranking

#### High Cost of Energy

Nationally there has been a trend of increasing energy consumption, associated with the lateral expansion of communities and economies. Approximately 86 percent of the Nation's energy comes from non-renewable energy sources. The majority of energy consumption is associated with industrial processes and transportation of goods, materials, and people. It is well documented that low-density single-use communities have higher rates of energy consumption than communities designed for higher-densities and mixed-uses.

The Greater Buffalo Region, in particular, struggles with high energy costs. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Cost of Living Index (2010), compared to other peer Manufacturing Cities throughout the United States, Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo have the highest utility rates, respectively. Peer cities with the lowest utility rates include Des Moines, St. Louis and Pittsburgh. To relocate from a city with lower utility rates to Buffalo would require an after-tax salary increase ranging from 1.1 percent (Rochester) to 22 percent (Des Moines).

Incentives offered throughout New York State are increasing the viability of incorporating renewable energy sources on a site and project-specific basis resulting in decreased energy costs. For example, there are currently incentives for installation of solar panels on residential units or ground-mounted on properties which include a 30 percent Federal tax credit, 25 percent state tax credit, and 30 percent tax credit from NYSERDA. This equates to a 15 percent project cost for the entire system. As renewable energy sources continue to be promoted and energy efficiencies are gained through improved technologies, it is anticipated that regional utility rates will improve .



### Tax Burden

Population loss contributes to a lower tax base, impacting the city's fiscal health. These conditions complicate the city and region's ability to attract desirable businesses and a skilled workforce to sustain the local and regional economy. Lower property values and limited commercial development result in a lowered tax capacity, which may challenge a municipality's ability to provide adequate public services. At the time the Nomination Study was completed, New York State had established Empire Development Zones, which provided incentives to businesses within designated Empire Zone boundaries. Since that time, the program has been terminated and is no longer accepting new applicants. However, businesses that were approved prior to program termination may continue to receive tax benefits. The city of Buffalo continues to struggle with a tax burden resulting from these issues, however, increased investment from the city and state have spurred increased interest from private developers.

### **3.2.4 City and Regional Strengths and Opportunities**

Although the city and region have faced development challenges over the past several decades, they possess existing and emerging strengths and opportunities which can be used to regain a foothold as a nationally competitive city and region. The South Buffalo BOA has ample supply of rail, port access, and infrastructure which can aid in this effort. Additional regional and local strengths are highlighted below.

### Affordable Cost of Living

The Buffalo-Niagara region continues to be an affordable place to live. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Cost of Living Index (2010), of the 325 selected cities evaluated, Buffalo ranked 174th for cost of living (Table 5 & 6). Key factors used to determine the cost of living for a selected city include the cost of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care and miscellaneous goods and services. Compared to peer manufacturing cities, the city of Buffalo has lower grocery, health care and miscellaneous goods and services costs than the majority of its peer cities, despite having higher housing and transportation costs compared to the same areas. The composite cost-of-living index for the city of Buffalo is 95.8 compared to 100.0 for Rochester, NY. This indicates that an individual choosing to relocate from Rochester to Buffalo would require four percent less of their after-tax income to live in Buffalo than Rochester. Table 6 summarizes peer metropolitan areas and their respective cost-of-living indexes.

### Location

The Buffalo-Niagara region is strategically located at one of the primary borders between the U.S. and Canada, serving as a gateway for bi-national trade. The Buffalo-Niagara region continues to strive for economic synergies with its Canadian neighbors. The region has abundant road, rail and water transport infrastructure making it easily accessible from

Rank	Urban Area	100% Composite Index
19	Louisville, KY	87.7
58	St. Louis, MO-IL	90.4
67	Des, Moines, IA	90.9
82	Pittsburgh, PA	91.5
136	Cincinnati, OH	93.8
174	Buffalo, NY	95.8
225	Detroit, MI	99.4
232	Rochester, NY	100.0
234	Akron, OH	100.2
242	Cleveland, OH	101.0
249	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	101.9
275	Minneapolis, MN	111.0
290	Chicago, IL	116.9

Table 6: Cost of Living Index

international and national locations. In addition, the city continues to boast an extensive waterfront, providing significant opportunities for cultural, entertainment and recreational amenities. Regional organizations, such as Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper, are actively working to restore the environmental integrity of the region's waterfront and waterways, which will enable the region to capitalize on this asset as a focus for reinvestment, recreation and tourism opportunities.

### Tourism

Tourism continues to be an increasing selling point for regional economic growth. The Buffalo-Niagara region boasts a wealth of tourist attractions, including notable architectural assets, the historic Olmsted Parks System, Niagara Falls and area waterways, the Roycroft Campus, and various presidential sites (Image 9: Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens). Continued redevelopment, historic preservation, and environmental restoration initiatives throughout the region provide increased opportunities to market the region's assets for economic growth. Organizations and initiatives such as the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau and Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative continue to promote tourism throughout the region.

### Economic Diversification

The Western New York region is moving away from an industrial-based economy and is continuing to diversify. Economic diversification is a key characteristic of resilient regions, enabling them to weather the impacts of economic stagnation or shifts and respond accordingly. Manufacturing, which was the former economic driver in the region, is diminishing as professional and health services become the greatest job generators. Health



Image 9: Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens

and Professional Services account for one in four jobs in the region (15 percent). Retail services (11.8 percent), Professional and Business services (11.6 percent) and Education (10.9 percent) closely follow. By comparison, manufacturing comprises 10.4 percent of available job opportunities within the region. The region's current economic profile closely mirrors the nation's more than ever before. Regional economic diversification provides Western New York with the opportunity to attract a broader range of businesses and capture the surplus of graduates from area-wide higher educational institutions to further strengthen its knowledge economy.

#### Research and Higher Education Institutions

Western New York consists of 22 higher education institutions, which are estimated to contribute approximately \$3.2 billion annually in direct spending to the regional economy. These institutions are pivotal in providing a knowledgeable workforce to support the region's employment base and attract new industries. The wealth of institutions throughout the region provides the opportunity to develop strategies to better align the workforce with employment opportunities. In addition, supporting these institutions and encouraging their growth will spur further investment in the local and regional economy. According to the University at Buffalo Regional Institute's Impact of Higher Education In Western New York report (2008), the current indirect spending stimulated by these institutions is estimated at approximately \$1.2 billion.

#### Buffalo Billion Investment Strategy

The Buffalo Billion Investment Strategy is an initiative that seeks to address Western New York's shifting economic structure, from an industry-based to knowledge-based economy. The initiative seeks to build on the priorities established by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, and is intended to leverage public dollars allocated by the state to invest in six strategies for economic growth including manufacturing, life sciences, tourism, workforce development, entrepreneurship and revitalization. Collectively, these strategies are intended to provide a framework to guide future economic growth initiatives.

This substantial investment provides the region with the opportunity to identify high-impact projects that can spur smaller scale redevelopment initiatives and additional private investment in target areas throughout the region.

### **3.3 Land Use Patterns & Controls**

The purpose of the land use analysis is to better understand the environmental conditions of the area, identify barriers and opportunities for redevelopment, clarify the regulatory framework governing the project area, and identify assets and opportunities that can leverage additional public and private investment within the BOA. Since development of the Nomination Study, the South Buffalo BOA has experienced significant redevelopment momentum, evidenced by the establishment of the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, completion of the RiverBend Master Plan, the Buffalo River Shoreline Restoration, Buffalo River Dredging and commencement of the Golf Course Feasibility Study. In addition to these public investments significant private investment has also occurred by; Sonwil Distribution, Certain Teed Corporation, Cobey Incorporated, Modern Recycling & Transfer Center, Hydro Air, English Pork Pies, and the recent announcements of Solar City committing to the High Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend. The recent announcements by Solar City will lead to \$1.5 Billion in investment and 1,000 new jobs to start with more than 2,000 proposed.

#### **3.3.1 Land Use Patterns**

The South Buffalo BOA has a transitioning land use base. Historically, properties within the BOA were used for heavy industrial operations, and commercial operations with some nearby residential uses. As older factories within the BOA started to close, they left behind large empty tracts of land and underutilized buildings, such as the former Republic Steel and Donner Hanna Coke properties and the grain elevators located in and around the BOA. The BOA and adjacent areas are categorized by a mix of land uses, including existing light and heavy industrial, rail yard, closed landfills, scrap yards, commercial, residential, natural heritage and park and open space uses, in addition to vacant, abandoned and/or underutilized sites that formerly served heavy steel manufacturing industries. According to City of Buffalo 2010 parcel data, the predominant land use within the BOA is vacant land or properties that do not have a New York State Office of Real Property Services (NYSORPS) class code, typically rights-of-way. Together, these vacant and/or underutilized properties comprise 52.4 percent of the land area within the BOA. The primary land uses as they exist throughout the BOA study area are further described below. Existing land uses, as presented, exclude transportation rights-of-way (Table 7: Property Class Acreage).

Property Class Code	Property Class Description	Parcels		Acreage	
		Count	% BOA	Acres	% BOA
0	Not Classified	64	7.2%	453.1	24.5%
100	Agricultural	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
200	Residential	407	45.5%	47.1	2.6%
300	Vacant	304	34.0%	514.5	27.9%
400	Commercial	71	7.9%	151.9	8.2%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	1	0.1%	147.9	8.0%
600	Community Services	2	0.2%	2.2	0.1%
700	Industrial	28	3.1%	126.9	6.9%
800	Public Services	13	1.5%	128.1	6.9%
900	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks	4	0.4%	274.3	14.9%
	Totals	894	—	1845.9	—

Table 7: Property Class Acreage

### Residential

Approximately 45.5 percent of the parcels located in the BOA (2.6 percent of land area) are characterized by residential land uses. The primary residential land uses in the BOA are located to the north, as part of the Hickory Woods residential development, and to the southeast. The number of residential properties located within the BOA is comparable to the amount present during completion of the Nomination Study in 2009. Residential neighborhoods are primarily located adjacent to the study area on the eastern side of Hopkins Street.

### Vacant

Approximately 30 percent of the land area in the BOA is characterized as vacant properties. These primarily consist of large tracts of land formerly used for commercial and industrial purposes located along Tifft and Hopkins Streets, and adjacent to the BOA's existing and former rail corridors. Uses east of the rail corridor include the abandoned grain elevators on the Buffalo River, and vacant former commercial and industrial properties including the former Republic Steel. Significant vacant properties which includes the RiverBend redevelopment sites provide the BOA with the greatest redevelopment opportunities. The recent announcement by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo that two new companies (Sorra and Silveo) will be located on RiverBend provides an example of the potential for vacant sites in the South Buffalo BOA. The three new projects on RiverBend are projected to provide \$1.5 Billion in investment and 1,000 new jobs to start with more than 2,000 proposed. These projects will transform the former Republic Steel site into a new clean energy manufacturing campus called the High Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend.

### Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and industrial properties within the BOA are primarily located along Hopkins and Tifft Streets. Cumulatively, commercial properties comprise approximately 8.2 percent of land area within the BOA, representing a two percent increase from the time the Nomination Study was completed. New commercial operations exist along South Park Avenue, including the English Pork Pie Company, recently established by British ex-pats on the former “Village Farms” site. Other commercial operations within the study area are limited; however, viable commercial and industrial operations exist along South Park Avenue and some side streets in the southeast portion of the BOA along Reading Street. Existing industrial properties make up approximately seven percent of the BOA project area, which is slightly less than the amount of industrial property present at the time the Nomination Study was completed (nine percent). Recent announcements by Solar City to locate on 200 plus acres of RiverBend show significant increase in Manufacturing and Research & Development uses within the South Buffalo BOA.

### Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks

While the study area was historically characterized by heavy industrial uses, considerable investment has been made in restoring natural and wildlife areas throughout the BOA. Today, approximately 14.9 percent of land use in the study area is classified as wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks. Much of this area consists of Tifft Nature Preserve, a 264-acre refuge, opened in 1976, dedicated to environmental and conservation education. A portion of the site, a former municipal waste site, was capped in clay and covered with soil excavated from other areas. Today, the area is a natural setting consisting of ponds, marshes, and plantings that serve as habitat for a host of wildlife. Current plans include expansion of the visitor and education center, and acquisition of the former Lehigh Valley rail properties to the east for incorporation into the preserve. In addition to Tifft Nature Preserve, South Park and the Botanical Gardens anchor the BOA to the southeast. The Botanical Gardens is in the midst of a multi-year restoration effort and has completed construction of new offices, greenhouses, and parking facilities. Both of these assets form part of the Cazenovia Park-South Park System of Olmsted Park and Parkways, and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

***Key Findings: Land use patterns within the South Buffalo BOA are comparable to those exhibited at the time the Nomination Study was completed. The study area’s open space network continues to be one of the area’s most important assets, and continues to be strengthened and leveraged through public and private investment. Nonetheless, land uses within the South Buffalo BOA still reveal a pattern of lower value uses, as illustrated by the number of vacant properties within the study area (27.9 percent of land area).***

### 3.3.2 Existing and Proposed Land Use Controls

Land use throughout the City of Buffalo is governed by a mix of development controls, including regulatory land use restrictions, special review districts, urban design review frameworks, a heritage conservation framework and other city-wide policies and programs. The city is currently in the process of updating its zoning code from a traditional Euclidean Zoning Code to a Form-Based Code intended to be a place-based development strategy building off the City of Buffalo's Queen City in the 21st Century Comprehensive Plan. The updated zoning code focuses on the placement and design of buildings. The revised Uniform Development Ordinance (UDO) is intended to streamline the development process by combining zoning, subdivision and public realm standards into a single document. The existing and proposed zoning, as well as other land use controls are described further in the following sections.

#### Existing and Proposed Zoning

The City of Buffalo's existing zoning regulations were adopted in the mid-20th century with numerous subsequent amendments. The zoning regulations divide the City of Buffalo into districts based on use and include various residential, commercial and industrial districts. The City of Buffalo has 15 zoning districts that are intended to address development throughout the city. In addition, the existing zoning code is cumulative, and therefore less restrictive zoning districts permit all uses allowed in more restrictive zoning districts as well as certain higher intensity uses, with some exceptions. The city has also established a number of "special districts," designed as overlay districts, to address unique character areas that exist throughout the city.

Within the South Buffalo BOA, there are six zoning designations, which include a residential district (R2 Two Family District), two commercial districts (C2 Community Business District and CM General Commercial District) and three industrial districts (M1 Light Industrial, M2 General Industrial and M3 Heavy Industrial). The majority of the BOA is zoned for industrial uses, which comprise 80 percent of the study area. Uses currently permitted within industrial zones include trucking terminals, manufacturing facilities, automobile assembling and repair establishments, and other light to heavy industrial uses (Map 4: Current Zoning).

There are 9 new zoning designations proposed as part of the new Unified Development Ordinance within the BOA study area. New zoning designations include one corridor zone (C-R Rail), three employment zones (D-C Flex Commercial, D-IH Heavy Industrial, and D-IL Light Industrial), two open space zones (D-ON Natural and D-OG Green), and three neighborhood zones (N-3E Mixed-Use Edge, N-3R Residential, and N-4-30 Single Family) (Map 6: UDO / Buffalo Green Code). The proposed zoning designations within the South Buffalo BOA are summarized in Table 8.



Proposed Zoning	Acres	Percentage
C-R Rail	308.40	16.61%
D-C Flex Commercial	240.10	12.93%
D-IH Heavy Industrial	10.88	0.59%
D-IL Light Industrial	477.76	25.73%
D-ON Natural	370.62	19.96%
D-OG Green	364.47	19.63%
N-3E Mixed-Use Edge	15.19	0.82%
N-3R Residential	62.91	3.39%
N-4-30 Single Family	6.83	0.37%
TOTAL	1857.14	100.0%

Table 8: Proposed Zoning

***Key Findings: The current zoning code reflects development patterns that occurred traditionally throughout the City of Buffalo and the South Buffalo BOA study area. Historically, light and heavy industrial land uses were encouraged throughout the South Buffalo BOA, and the original zoning designations reflect that. The proposed zoning code recognizes changing land use patterns and serves as a mechanism for preserving and promoting current desirable land uses. For example, Tifft Nature Preserve, which historically was zoned for industrial uses, has been re-designated as a Natural Zone, intended to preserve open spaces typically set aside for land conservation, passive recreation or ecological restoration. Within the BOA, the proposed open space districts represents the largest proposed zoning designation, nearly 40% percent of the BOA.***

#### Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

In 2005, the City of Buffalo completed a Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) which was submitted to the NYSDOS for review, comment and approval. Subsequent revisions were made to the draft LWRP since its initial submission, and the draft is currently under review by the NYSDOS. A revised and expanded boundary was proposed to ensure that the LWRA includes the full reach of Scajaquada Creek, Buffalo River, Cazenovia Creek; the Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway; the city's waterfront Olmsted Parks, including Riverside, the southern portion of Delaware Park, Front Park, Cazenovia Park and South Park; and the Canalside and Cobblestone areas.



Map 4: Current Zoning

#### LEGEND

----- SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

C2 - COMMUNITY BUSINESS

CM - GENERAL COMMERCIAL

M1 - LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

M2 - GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

M3 - HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

R2 - DWELLING



Map 5: Current Land Use

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

RAILROAD ROW

RESIDENTIAL

VACANT LAND

COMMERCIAL

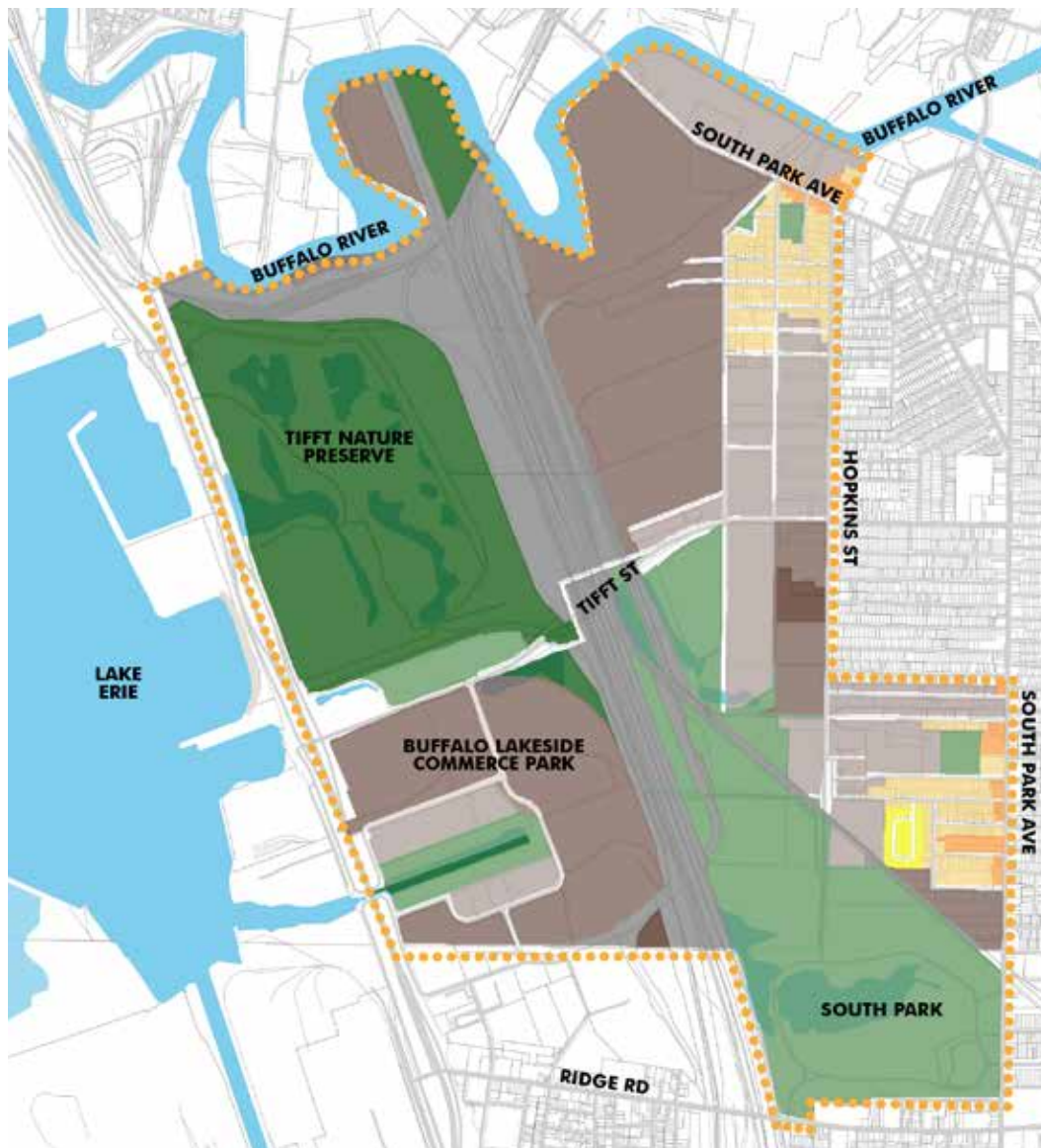
CLOSED LANDFILLS

INSTITUTIONAL

INDUSTRIAL

PUBLIC SERVICES/UTILITIES

PARKS & OPEN SPACES



Map 6: UDO / Buffalo Green Code

#### LEGEND

----- SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

N-3E (MIXED-USE EDGE)

N-4-30 (SINGLE FAMILY)

N-3R (RESIDENTIAL)

D-OG (GREEN)

D-ON (NATURAL)

D-C (FLEX COMMERCIAL)

D-IL (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

D-IH (HEAVY INDUSTRIAL)

C-R (RAIL CORRIDOR)

As part of the LWRP planning process, major development nodes and sites, future build-out potential within these areas, and the proposed zoning designation, were identified. The plan focuses on nine development areas, which include: Black Rock Harbor Village, the Niagara Belt Line, Cotter Point/Porter, Waterfront Village, the Erie Street Corridor, Canalside, Cobblestone, Michigan to Ohio Bridge Corridor, and the Outer Harbor.

In addition, the LWRP identifies several short-term projects, intended to induce private investment in the redevelopment areas identified in the UDO. These redevelopment projects are intended to enhance the vibrancy of the waterfront and contribute to the long-term tax base of the city. Redevelopment projects identified within the South Buffalo BOA study area include:

- **Grain Elevator and Bridge Lighting Project:** The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation has approved a phased master plan to install lighting to celebrate Buffalo's collection of grain elevators and bridges with lights and video projections. The phased master plan includes future phases to illuminate all 13 elevators located along the Buffalo River (Image 10: Illuminated Grain Elevator & Bridge Lighting Proposal).
- **Open Space and Recreation Master Plan:** The LWRP recommends the City of Buffalo complete a city-wide open space and recreation master plan including full property survey, facilities inventory, updated parks and open space master plan, a capital improvement plan, operations maintenance plan, and recreational facilities plan. The process is to include a review of existing open space and master recreational plans (i.e. Olmsted Parks Master Plan, Niagara River Greenway Plan, etc.), and may impact existing open space and recreational resources located within the South Buffalo BOA.
- **Cargill Superior and Concrete Central Grain Elevator:** The City of Buffalo owns two major vacant grain elevators located along the Buffalo River and located within the South Buffalo BOA. The Concrete Central Grain Elevator is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed project relating to the elevators would evaluate the required actions to stabilize the sites as well as opportunities for short-term heritage interpretation and long-term adaptive reuse.

#### Buffalo Coastal Special Review District

The Buffalo Coastal Special Review District was established as part of the city's zoning ordinance to protect the lakefront and riverfront from incompatible uses. The district encompasses a majority of the BOA, including areas west of Hopkins Street, north of the City of Buffalo-City of Lackawanna municipal line, and south of the Buffalo River. Restricted use permits are required to establish or expand a use within the district. In addition, the Buffalo River Open Space Corridor requires a 100-foot shoreline setback





Image 10: Illuminated Grain Elevator & Bridge Lighting Proposal

for non-water dependent development. Water-dependent uses are exempt from the 100-foot setback requirement.

The proposed new Unified Development Ordinance establishes new districts that reflect the changing land use patterns throughout the city. As part of the zoning update, new overlay districts were established, including the C-W Waterfront overlay district. The purpose and intent of the C-W Waterfront overlay district is similar to the former Buffalo Coastal Special Review District. The proposed overlay addresses land areas within 500 feet of the high water line of lakes, rivers, streams, channels, ponds and other water bodies. The C-W zone has two designations: the C-W-25 and C-W-100 zones. The C-W-25 zone is located on highly urbanized waterfronts that enable intense public interaction with the water's edge. The C-W-100 zoning designation is located on less urbanized waterfronts that are generally characterized by shoreline buffers of native vegetation to protect and restore wildlife habitat and the natural ecosystem.

#### Union Ship Canal Urban Renewal Plan

The Union Ship Canal Urban Renewal Plan (URP) was authorized by the Common Council of the City of Buffalo on January 2003 and amended in 2005. The Union Ship Canal URP was developed to address conditions within a 275-acre former industrial area targeted for redevelopment. The project area is bounded by Tifft Street to the north, the Seneca Rail Yard to the east, the City of Buffalo municipal boundary on the south and New York State Route 5 to the west. Today, this redevelopment area is referred to as Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park. The Union Ship Canal URP was intended to provide the legal mechanism to implement the Union Ship Canal Master Plan, which was intended to focus on attracting office, research, clean industry and light manufacturing to locate within the study area. The Renewal Plan established a land use plan and design and development standards for the study area. The Unified Development Ordinance that is being drafted by the City of Buffalo is intended to update and replace the requirements set forth in the Union Ship Urban Renewal Plan, which is therefore proposed to be terminated.

### Citywide Design and Site Plan

The Citywide Design and Site Plan Code, as part of the City of Buffalo's original zoning ordinance, established urban design controls to review development that may have adverse impacts on adjoining uses. The Code authorized the City Planning Board to review and approve, approve with modifications or disapprove design and site plans, including proposed development or activities within the South Buffalo BOA. The Code additionally governed elements such as parking, means of ingress and egress, pedestrian sensitivity, screening, signage, landscaping, architectural features, location and dimension of buildings, impact of development on adjacent properties, and environmental matters impacting the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

In an effort to streamline the development review process for both city staff and prospective developers, the Citywide Design and Site Plan Code will be replaced by the UDO. The UDO, drafted with a form-based approach, intends to reinforce the mixed-use, walkable places that historically have characterized the City of Buffalo. The regulations are modeled to emphasize character-of-place as the overarching principle as opposed to strictly use based regulations. The design controls and development review that are comprehensively incorporated throughout the new code, therefore, will require less discretionary review by the city planning board.

### Preservation Standards

Chapter 337 Preservation Standards of the City of Buffalo's Charter of Ordinances establishes controls for preservation of city-designated landmarks, landmark sites and historic districts, to avoid the loss of historic or architecturally important properties, and to preserve the economic and architectural integrity of vacant and underutilized landmark properties through rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. The Standards authorize the Preservation Board, in part, to approve or disapprove certificates of no effect, certificates of appropriateness, or certificates of exception, for the erection, alteration, restoration, renovation, relocation, demolition or site improvement of any landmark, landmark site or of any building, structure, or site within an historic district when the exterior of such property would be affected. Within the BOA, South Park is the only designated City of Buffalo Landmark and, therefore, any proposed construction or alteration activities within the park would be subject to the Preservation Standards and would require Preservation Board approval.

The City of Buffalo's Preservation Standards are regulations independent of the city's Zoning Ordinance, and therefore will not be impacted by the new zoning regulations. As opportunities arise, the city may opt to conduct future historic surveys, which may result in the identification of new or revised historic district boundaries, or additional buildings or properties considered worthy of local, state or national designation.



### 3.4 Economic Development Designations and Incentive Programs

Much of the BOA is supported by State and Federal economic development programs, though there have been some changes to those available since the Nomination Study effort.

#### New York State Empire Zone

The Empire Zone was a state incentive program that allowed businesses located within those zones to apply for state sales tax exemption, real property tax credits and business credits for increasing employment in a designated area. Within the BOA, a portion of the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park was located within an Empire Zone. Other Empire Zone-designated areas included the former “Village Farms” parcels north of South Park Avenue, parcels along Colgate Avenue and the Sorrento Lactalis parcels along South Park Avenue. Since completion of the Nomination Study, the New York State Empire Zone program no longer accepts applications for new entrants. The program, however, continues to provide benefits to existing certified businesses, which must still submit Business Annual Reports to the local Zone Administrative Board for processing and review.

#### New York State Environmental Zone

As part of the Brownfield Cleanup Program, the Conrail/CSX “peninsula” area adjacent to the Buffalo River is designated an Environmental Zone by the Empire State Development Corporation. Based on poverty rates by census tracts, the designation provides enhanced tax credits for remediation and redevelopment of this area. The recently amended Brownfields Cleanup Program legislation might suggest modification of the Environmental Zone boundaries throughout the City of Buffalo based on changes to census tract poverty rates.

#### Brownfield Cleanup Program

The Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) provides liability relief and tax credits associated with the cleanup and remediation of brownfield sites. Tax credits are provided in four areas including cleanup, redevelopment, real property taxes, and for the purchase of environmental insurance. The benefits associated with each of these areas are highlighted as follows:

- **Site Preparation and Remediation:** The credits cover site preparation and on-site groundwater cleanup. Activities include remediation, demolition, excavation, fencing, security, site acquisition and other capital costs to make the site usable for redevelopment. Tax credits range from 22-50 percent of the total cost of remediation, based on the level of cleanup.
- **Tangible Property Credit Component:** Credits associated with this area cover the cost of buildings and improvements, including structural components of buildings that are placed into service within 10 years after a certificate of completion is issued

by the NYSDEC for site cleanup. Credits range from 10-24 percent of eligible costs with the base credit being increased based on the level of cleanup, location of site in an Environmental Zone, and redevelopment of the site in conformance with a Brownfield Opportunity Area plan. Tax credits are capped based on whether the project is manufacturing (\$45 million or six times site preparation and remediation costs, whichever is less) or non-manufacturing (\$35 million or three times the site preparation and remediation costs, whichever is less).

- **Real Property Tax Credit:** This credit is provided for a portion of real property taxes for a qualified remediated site. The credit amount is determined by formula based on the number of employees on the site, with a maximum credit of \$10,000 per employee.
- **Remediation Insurance Credit:** The Remediation Insurance Credit is for premiums paid for environmental remediation insurance and is capped at 50 percent the cost of the premium or \$30,000, whichever is less.

***Key Findings: Although state and federal economic programs have changed since the time the Nomination Study was completed, there are still economic incentives through New York State programs that can assist property owners and prospective buyers with redevelopment opportunities and projects.***

### **3.5 Brownfield, Underutilized and Vacant Sites**

The majority of properties located within the SBBOA are brownfield, underutilized or vacant sites. Although these properties often represent disinvestment and can have widespread impacts, lowering property values, discouraging redevelopment and imposing potential health threats on surrounding neighborhoods, they also represent the largest redevelopment opportunities to spur area-wide revitalization. Properties most poised for immediate or future redevelopment are defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria, which are not mutually exclusive.

- **Underutilized:** Underutilized properties have an active use and/or are occupied, but are not being utilized to their highest and best use, given their location, zoning and size or percentage of developed area. Underutilized properties also include lands with viable structures or buildings not being utilized to their intended use or capacity.
- **Vacant:** Vacant properties are identified through the City of Buffalo tax rolls and New York State Office of Real Property Service's Property Classification Codes. Reported results were verified or refined during field visits.
- **Brownfield:** Brownfields sites are often former commercial or industrial properties that may have had environmental impacts. A brownfield site may have an active commercial or industrial operation, or may be a vacant or abandoned property. According to New

York State Environmental Conservation law, a brownfield is defined as “...any real property, the redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a contaminant.” Examples of sites that fit this description include abandoned gas stations, old factories, mill complexes or foundries.

Much of the publicly owned land within the BOA has been remediated and is ready for public or private investment and/or redevelopment. These properties include RiverBend Commerce Park (formerly Steelfields) and vacant land within Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park. A few publicly owned sites require additional site characterization and/or remediation. Privately owned land within the BOA generally includes active businesses, many of which are underutilized and considered brownfields or have no site characterization. Before redevelopment can occur, these privately owned lands require further characterization. One of the benefits of the BOA program is the ability for the city (on the owners behalf) to apply for Phase II Environmental Site Assessment funding, an investigation consisting of invasive environmental sampling to better determine the type and extent of potential contamination on a site. The various types of environmental site assessments are summarized below:

- **Curbside Assessments:** completed as part of this investigation, these are visual assessments that are intended to identify the types of activities taking place on a property and characteristics of a site that might imply prior environmental impact (e.g. the presence of groundwater monitoring wells). This assessment is conducted independently of the EPA certified standard practices for environmental site assessments (ASTM standards) and is intended to be a preliminary investigation.
- **Phase I Environmental Site Assessments:** A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is a voluntary, non-intrusive investigation into historical uses of the site and visible evidence of environmental conditions based on publicly available records. Generally this phase consists of: site inspection, interviews with property owners, review of available documents and databases, and consideration of potential impacts from adjacent properties. Property owners willing to participate in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment applications who have not previously had a Phase I ESA completed may opt to complete both concurrently with funding available through the NYSDOS.
- **Phase II Environmental Site Assessments:** If a Phase I establishes there are Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC), a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment may be conducted to further evaluate potential impacts to the property. Typically this includes sampling of environmental media which may include soil, air, groundwater and surface water. Funding for Phase II Environmental Site Assessments is available through the BOA program.
- **Remediation Action Work Plan (RAWP):** Based on the Phase II ESA, a RAWP may be determined necessary. A RAWP consists of design and implementation of remediation measures and necessary reports, permits and engineering/institutional

controls to achieve cleanup of the site to redevelopment objectives. Participation in the Phase II Environmental Site Assessments through the BOA program can better poise a site for inclusion in a number of remediation programs available through the EPA and NYSDEC. The Brownfield Cleanup Program, for example, provides a number of incentives for remediation and redevelopment of brownfield properties (*see Appendix C: Environmental Site Profiles*).

### 3.6 Strategic Brownfield Sites

A majority of the properties located within the South Buffalo BOA were researched to identify past and present uses during the Nomination Study and the information for these sites was updated during the Step 3 Implementation Strategy effort. This inventory was used to develop site specific recommendations to help the city determine viable next steps for properties as redevelopment opportunities are presented. Recommendations stemming from this analysis are sometimes pertinent to a change in land use or ownership and are not intended to suggest necessary actions on the part of land owners who are actively and appropriately using their properties. This research serves as one layer of analysis that was then used in the context of strategic sites and existing land uses to further refine recommendations.

Research was conducted on the historic use and potential environmental impact of each parcel located within the South Buffalo BOA. Facility and site information, maintained at both the state and federal level, was reviewed to determine changes in site conditions since preparation of the Nomination Study. Information was obtained from the following main sources:

- **Spills Incident Database (NYSDEC):** This database, maintained by the NYSDEC, contains listing of chemical and petroleum spills throughout New York State, dating back to 1978. Information includes the type and/or volume of contaminant spilled, media impacted, and the status of the spill. Closed spills have been successfully addressed by NYSDEC standards, and active spills are those still undergoing cleanup.
- **Remedial Site Database (NYSDEC):** The remedial site database includes a listing of all properties that are currently enlisted in one of the NYSDEC's remediation programs. The NYSDEC programs are distinguished by property ownership, type of assistance and level of cleanup required. Programs include the Brownfield Cleanup Program, Environmental Restoration Program, State Superfund Program, Resource Conservation and Recovery Program, and the Voluntary Cleanup Program.
- **Bulk Storage Database (NYSDEC):** This database lists all properties that are considered Bulk Storage Facilities in New York State. Such facilities include petroleum bulk storage, chemical bulk storage and major oil storage facilities. Each facility is classified by the volume and type of substance stored on-site.

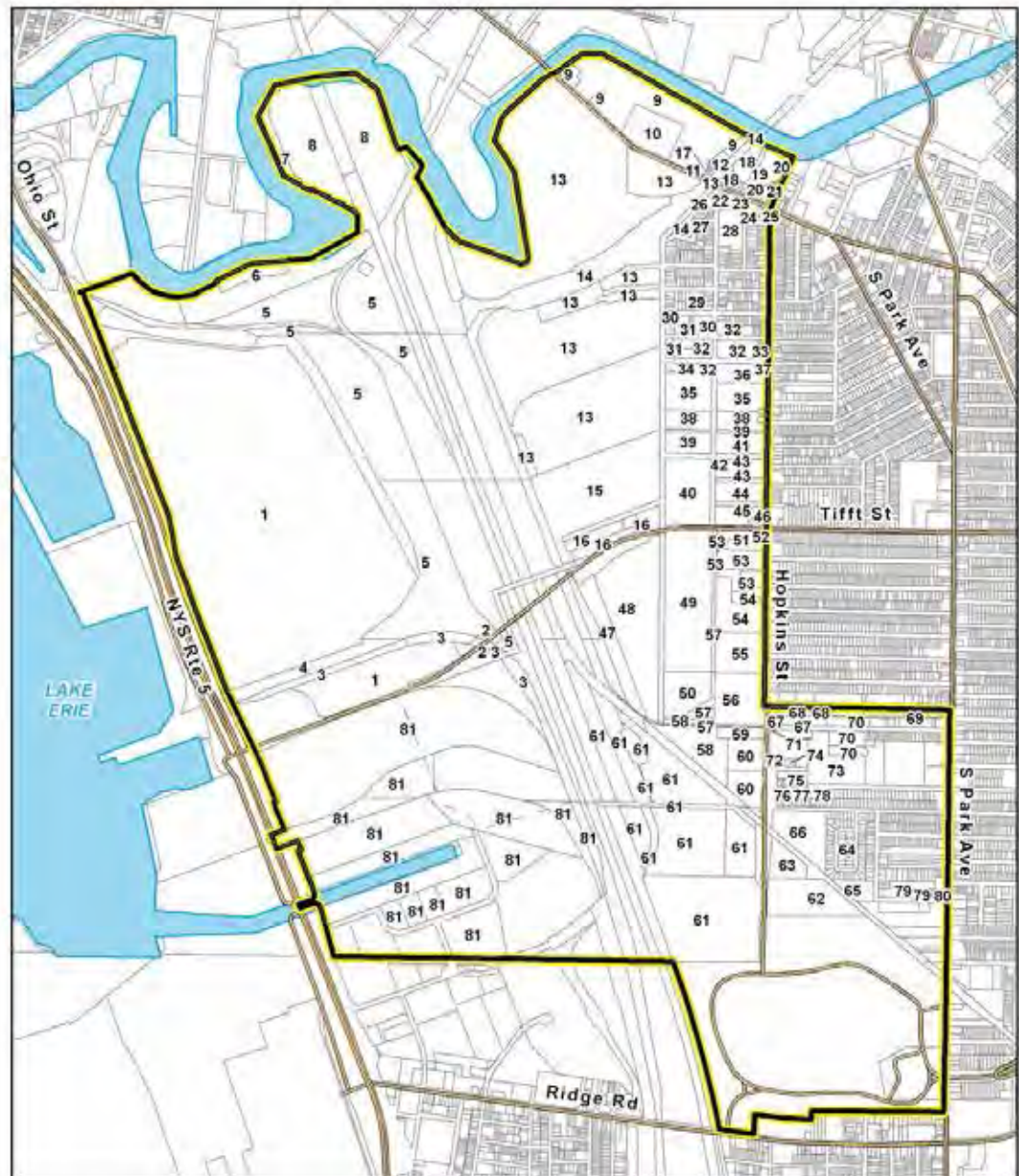
- **Envirofacts Database (USEPA):** Information contained within this database is used to identify whether or not a facility is certified to handle hazardous waste. The EPA utilizes specific testing methods to determine whether or not a material is hazardous. Hazardous waste generators are divided into three categories based upon the quantity of waste they produce:
  - Large Quantity Generators (LQGs): generate 1,000 kilograms per month or more of hazardous waste, more than 1 kilogram per month of acutely hazardous waste, or more than 100 kilograms per month of acute spill residue.
  - Small Quantity Generators (SQGs): generate more than 100 kilograms but less than 1,000 kilograms of hazardous waste per month.
  - Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQGs): These facilities generate 100 kilograms or less per month of hazardous waste, or 1 kilogram or less per month of acutely hazardous waste, or less than 100 kilograms per month of acute spill residue or soil.

All hazardous waste generators are subject to 40 CFR 262, which establishes requirements for how generators can accumulate hazardous waste and how it is managed.

- **Parcel Data (Erie County):** This database, provided by Erie County, includes New York State Office of Real Property Services (NYSORPS) land use classes, which identifies the types of activities occurring on individual properties (e.g., commercial, industrial, or residential uses).
- **Sanborn Maps:** Sanborn maps were obtained for a range of dates to identify historic uses of sites within the BOA. Historically, Sanborn maps were created for assessing fire insurance liability for urbanized areas. Sanborn maps inform of the historic use of properties and can also provide a baseline for determining potential sources of environmental impacts based on prior land uses.

During the Nomination Study, Strategic Sites were identified utilizing existing environmental information, through extensive input from the Steering Committee and with consideration given to the following: overall importance to the community, location, ownership, property size, and capacity for redevelopment or potential to spur additional economic development or positive change in the community. In addition, consideration was given to the potential for the site to improve quality-of-life within the community, to site new public amenities, and the adequacy of supporting or nearby infrastructure, utilities and transportation systems.

A total of 86 individual tax parcels on approximately 311 acres were initially identified as priority strategic sites for which site assessments were recommended (Map 7: Key Map of Profiled Sites). Since the Step 2 two of the strategic sites have and are going through redevelopment; RiverBend (Site 13 & 15) and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park (Site 81).



Map 7: Key Map of Profiled Sites

Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park has seen three light manufacturing businesses move in while RiverBend is the site that has become known as Solar City and is seeing significant investment.

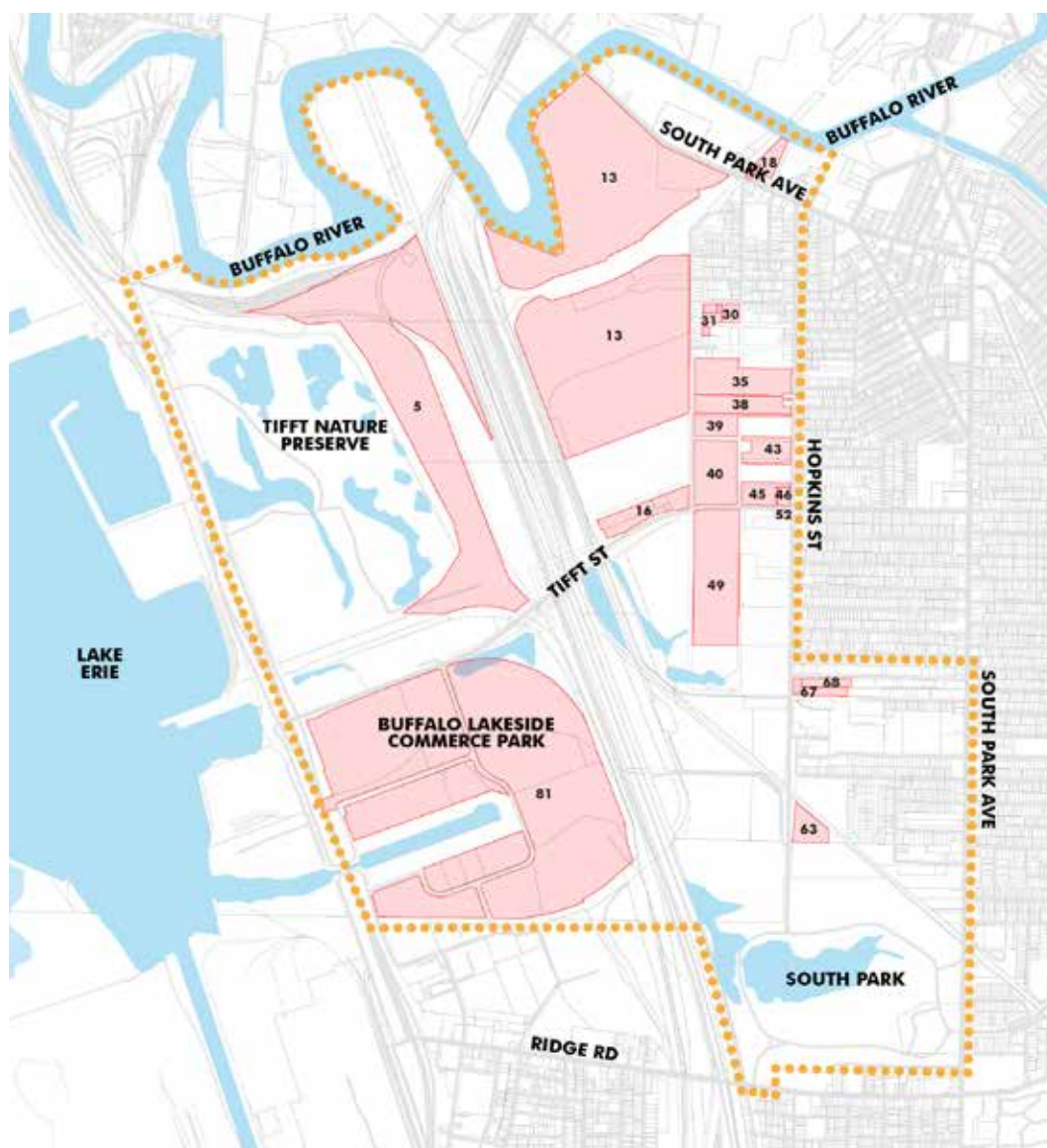
Information pertaining to the site selection and site characteristics was summarized as part of an Assessment and Remediation Strategy for Strategic Sites. Under the Step 3 Implementation Strategy, funding for the environmental site assessments is made available on a competitive basis. Remediation activities are not eligible for funding under the BOA program; however, applicants may be eligible for funding and tax incentives through other programs available through the EPA or NYSDEC. As a result, the 86 tax parcels identified during the Nomination Study were refined to identify properties that would be most strategic for redevelopment and benefit most from inclusion in the BOA Site Assessment program.

As a result of refined analysis during this Step 3 Implementation Strategy, 17 tax parcels were identified to be included in targeted landowner outreach (Map 8: 17 Strategic Brownfield Sites). Fliers were mailed to each property owner and door-to-door visits were conducted to describe the project, gauge potential interest in being involved in the project, and request voluntary participation in the BOA Site Assessment application process. Of those identified, there was potential interest on the part of eight property owners in learning more information and possible involvement with the Site Assessment program. These properties included:

- **Krog Site (site 16):** The Krog site consists of seven parcels comprising approximately seven acres located at the southernmost portion of the RiverBend site area along Tifft Street. These parcels are collectively owned by Krog USC Associates LLC. Current and past uses and proximity to nearby past and present industrial operations indicate this area may have environmental impacts. Consultation with Krog Associates indicated that environmental investigations have already been completed at the property. The property owner is willing to participate in short, mid and long-term implementation strategies, the BCP program, and has a strong desire to secure a tenant for the premises.
- **620 Tifft Street, L.A. Woolley (site 40):** The L.A. Woolley site is primarily used for office space and distribution of electrical products. Woolley acquired the property in 1986. The site consists of approximately six acres of paved area and four acres of meadow to the rear of the property.
- **478 Hopkins, Inc., L.C.A. Development (site 38, 39 & 41):** The properties located at 456 Hopkins and 263 Germania (contiguous properties, separated by a paper street), are currently being utilized for trucking operations. The property owner/operator has a desire to continue the business at this location, but indicated a desire to contribute to the South Buffalo BOA through participation and consideration of early implementation projects (i.e., art installations).

- **637 Tifft Street, Skyway Auto Parts (site 49):** Since the time of the Nomination Study, Skyway Auto Parts changed ownership, but is still being operated as an automotive scrap yard, as it has been since approximately 1963. Skyway Auto Parts has operated on the site since 1982, and there is history of environmental impacts associated with adjacent uses. Representatives of Skyway Auto Parts were engaged to determine interest in pursuing BOA Site Assessment funding, and a meeting was held to describe the South Buffalo BOA project and vision for the study area. To date, Skyway Auto Parts does not have plans to relocate from the current site.
- **420 Hopkins Street, Kulp Waco (site 43):** The property owned by Kulp Waco (420 Hopkins Street) is currently for sale. The property was formerly operated as a trucking terminal, and prior to that was a vacant residential property circa 1950. Records indicate that the site had aboveground storage tanks storing diesel fuel and that three underground storage tanks storing diesel fuel and leaded gasoline were removed from the site in 1998. The project team engaged this property owner but was unable to set-up an independent meeting to discuss applying for Site Assessment funding.
- **666 and 744 Tifft Street and 360 Hopkins Street, Frontier Service (site 45 & 46):** Frontier Service is located at 666 and 744 Tifft Street, and 360 Hopkins Street. Automotive repair and parts and service operations are currently associated with this site. The current property owner purchased the property in 2000-2001. Historic records indicate that polyaromatic hydrocarbons were found on the site, and that six abandoned underground storage tanks were removed from the site in 2005.
- **346 Hopkins Street, JP Auto Sales and Repair (site 52):** The site was formerly operated as an automobile repair shop at the southwest corner of Tifft and Hopkins Streets. At the time the Nomination Study was completed, the site was active. Since that time, the repair facility has ceased operations and the owner has expressed interest in selling the property. According to historic Sanborn maps, prior to auto sales and repair the site was used as a filling station. Conversations with the property owner indicated no testing has been completed on this property. The site is strategically located at the corner of Hopkins and Tifft Streets, and redevelopment of this site could serve as a catalyst for other revitalization opportunities.
- **49 Hopkins Street, Bob & Don's Auto Parts Site (site 63):** Bob and Don's Auto Parts is located at 49 Hopkins Street and is an underutilized site. Given the historic operation of the site as an auto salvage yard, a Phase II ESA would be recommended to determine the amount and extent of environmental impact, if any. The site is currently for sale and the property owners and real estate agent were engaged to gauge interest in submitting a Phase II ESA application.





Map 8: Strategic Brownfield Sites

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT PARCELS

Out of the eight property owners that were engaged as part of this process, two private property owners indicated a desire to complete and submit Phase II ESA applications for BOA site assessment funding. Of the remaining six properties numerous showed interest in the site assessment process however passed on the application but maintained engagement in the BOA planning. This engagement provided an opportunity to discuss small and medium implementation projects that they could champion (Re-tree, art installations, landscape improvement). In addition to the two successful site assessment applications for the private properties, a city-owned property (170 Germania Street) was selected as a candidate to apply for Site Assessment funding.

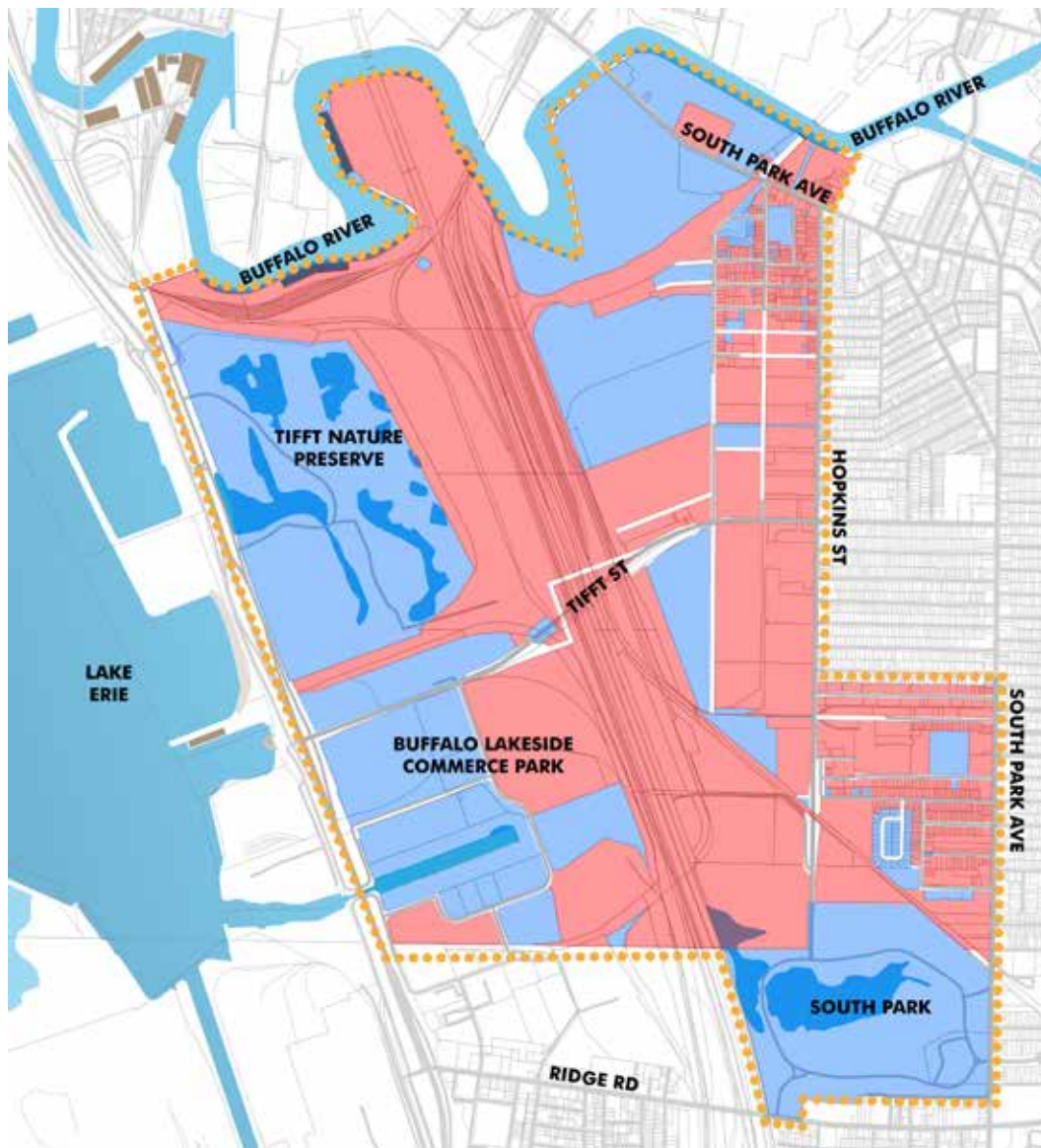
### **3.7 Land Ownership**

The total land area within the South Buffalo BOA is approximately 1,968 acres, which includes public and private lands, as well as transportation rights-of-way. Transportation rights-of-way comprise approximately 100 acres within the BOA, and are not considered developable areas. Of the South Buffalo BOA's remaining land area (approximately 1,846 acres) public land accounts for approximately 40.5 percent of the land area; this is less than private land holdings that make up approximately 59.5 percent of the South Buffalo BOA study area (Map 9: Private and Public Ownership). The distribution of publicly and privately owned properties is comparable to the distribution at the time the Nomination Study was completed. The percentage of publicly owned properties calculated at the time of the Nomination Study was slightly higher as a result of including public rights-of-way, which are not considered to be immediately developable properties.

The study area is unique in that it contains a large number of publicly owned properties which provide immediate redevelopment opportunities. Public land is primarily owned by two public sector entities – the City of Buffalo and BUDC, which together control 704 acres in the BOA. The majority of city-owned properties are associated with Tiffit Nature Preserve and South Park. BUDC owned properties are primarily located within the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, in which lands remain available for development, and within RiverBend Commerce Park, the former Steelfields property. Both BUDC- owned areas are being actively programmed and marketed for redevelopment. As mentioned previously the recent announcement by Solar City to locate on 200 plus acres of RiverBend will reduce the acreage of city and BUDC ownership. The Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation, a public benefit corporation, owns a portion of the former Village Farms property on the north along the Buffalo River.

### **3.8 Historic and Archaeological Resources**

There are several historic assets within the BOA study area that celebrate the area's industrial past and highlight the area's park and open space system. Historic designations provide



Map 9: Private and Public Ownership

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- PUBLIC SECTOR
- PRIVATE SECTOR

an advantage to projects seeking to obtain State and Federal funding. (Map 10: Historic Resources) illustrates Historic Resources and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas located within the BOA. These resources include South Park, which include the Botanical Gardens and 1927 golf structure as contributing structures, the Concrete-Central Elevator on the Buffalo River, Cargill Superior Elevator on the Buffalo River, and the Union Ship Canal. The historic grain elevators provide opportunities for reuse and to promote the industrial heritage of the area. More recently, the city has embraced event programming to celebrate the structures, and there is some evidence of interest in reuse of the grain elevators along the Buffalo River and Lake Erie. Just outside of the study area, developers are interested in investing \$15 million dollar into the Buffalo RiverWorks project, which proposes to convert the Wheeler GLF grain elevator site into a mixed-use waterfront destination, including bars, restaurants and a brewery as well as locations for seasonal events.

In addition to the cultural resources located within the study area, according to the New York State database for Archaeological Sensitivity, the majority of the BOA is included within an Archaeologically Sensitive Area. The only areas not identified as archaeologically sensitive are along the western boundary of Okell Park and east of South Park Avenue. Areas that are identified as archaeologically sensitive are subject to a measure of protection when State and Federal agencies fund, license or approve projects. Since completion of the Nomination Study, no new buildings or sites have been designated as historic or cultural resources.

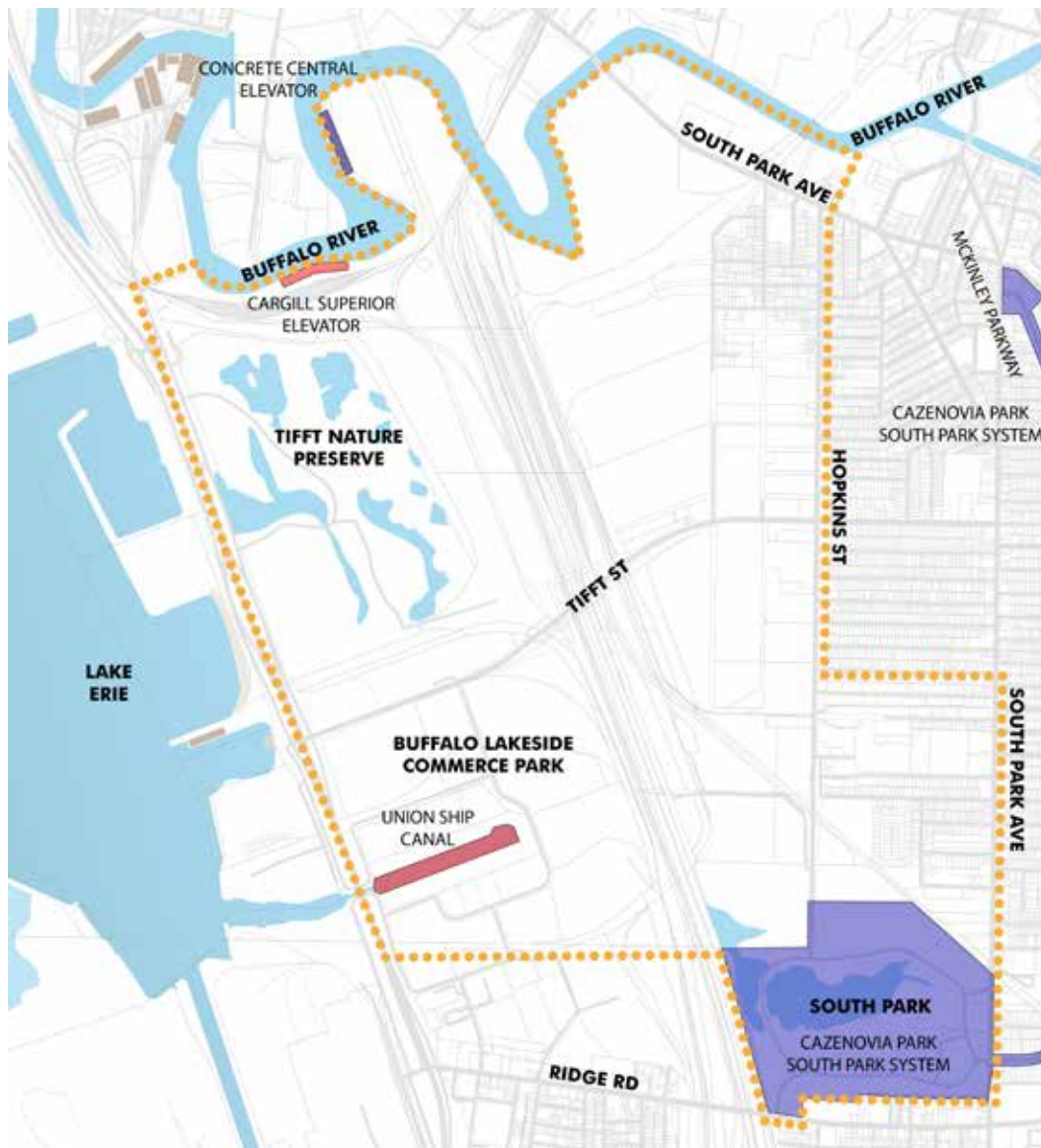
***Key Findings: The South Buffalo BOA has the opportunity to capitalize on the momentum stemming from investment occurring elsewhere in the city and to celebrate its historic and cultural assets. Celebrating the area's industrial heritage provides educational and economic opportunities, and promotes pride in the area. The BOA has a unique opportunity to capitalize on these assets to attract visitors through creative adaptive reuse.***

### **3.9 Transportation Systems**

The BOA is located at the intersection of an international transportation hub with rail, navigable waterway and roadway infrastructure. The existing transportation networks contribute extensively to the study area's accessibility, and provide it with the opportunity to attract additional industrial and commercial development that will utilize and benefit from these assets. The transportation network and system improvements since the Nomination Study are described further in the following sections.

#### Rail

The BOA is divided by an active rail corridor which provides the study area with opportunities, as well as physical constraints on redevelopment (Map 11: Rail Network).



Map 10: Historic Resources

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- NATIONAL REGISTER SITE
- NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBLE SITE



The primary railroad operators within the study area include CSX Transportation (Class I), Norfolk Southern Railroad (Class I), Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad (Class II), and Buffalo Southern Railroad (Class III). Generally all rail lines are active freight lines, which make the study area an ideal location for industrial operations. There is one inactive CSX line located in the study area just north of the Union Ship Canal and one line that is utilized for mixed freight and passenger service, with Amtrak maintaining track rights. The BOA additionally includes several rail yards including the Ohio Street Yard, operated by CSX, the Tiff Street Yard, operated by Buffalo Southern and Norfolk Southern, and the Buffalo Creek Yard, operated by the Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad.

#### Navigable Waterways

According to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), the Buffalo River Entrance Channel and Buffalo Ship Canal are considered navigable waters. The shipping channel has direct access to the St. Lawrence Seaway by way of Lake Erie. Historically the Buffalo River was utilized for industrial shipping until the decline of the steel industry. The USACOE is charged with maintaining the Buffalo River channel to a depth up to 23 feet. The channel depth is measured annually and dredged at 2 to 3 year intervals (Map 12: Navigable Waterways).

In 2011, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was commenced with funds obtained from the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The Buffalo River Restoration project was included as part of this initiative. The scope of the project included dredging the channel, which added a foot of depth, and removal of legacy sediment contamination. The dredging maintains the channel depth to benefit commercial navigation and contributes to the ecological restoration of the Buffalo River and Great Lakes. Removal of contaminated sediment moves the Buffalo River closer to “delisting” as a Great Lakes Area of Concern.

#### Roadways

The study area is well accessed by several main roadways including Route 5, a major arterial commuter route located along the western boundary of the BOA. In addition, Fuhrmann Boulevard and Ohio Street run parallel to New York State Route 5 and serve as at-grade service roads. Several improvements have been made to the road network since the time the Nomination Study was completed, as discussed in the following sections.

In 2006, a Final Design Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement was completed for the Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project. The Project included a series of road improvements on the NYS Route 5 corridor along the Lake Erie waterfront. The improvements were intended to provide improved and/or new road access to redevelopment sites within the corridor. These sites include the NFTA Outer Harbor Lands, Union Ship Canal Redevelopment Area, former LTV/Republic Steel site and the former Bethlehem Steel site. In addition, road reconfiguration was proposed to create a system more



Map 11: Rail Network

## LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

### PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

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<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #d9d9d9; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	CITY OF BUFFALO (PUBLIC)
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #a9c9e9; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	BUFFALO ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE CORPORATION (BERC)
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #49a9d9; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	BUFFALO URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (BUDC)

### TRAIN OWNERSHIP

<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #003366; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	CSX
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	BUFFALO & PITTSBURGH
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #804020; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	BUFFALO SOUTHERN RAILROAD, INC (ERIE COUNTY)
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #40bfff; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY, INC
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #ff0000; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	SOUTH BUFFALO RAILWAY

compatible with surrounding land uses. Finally, proposed improvements were intended to improve local access to and along the waterfront for alternate modes of transportation including public transit, bicycles and pedestrians while continuing to serve as an adequate system for commuter and commercial traffic between the Southtowns and downtown Buffalo (Map 13: Roadway Improvements). To date, road reconfiguration of Fuhrmann Boulevard, the Union Ship Canal Enhancements, Ohio Street and the Times and Gallagher Beach Improvements have been completed. Construction of the Industrial Heritage Trail and Tift Street pier is also completed.

In addition to the Route 5 reconstruction, other local road and trail improvements were made at the following locations near the study area:

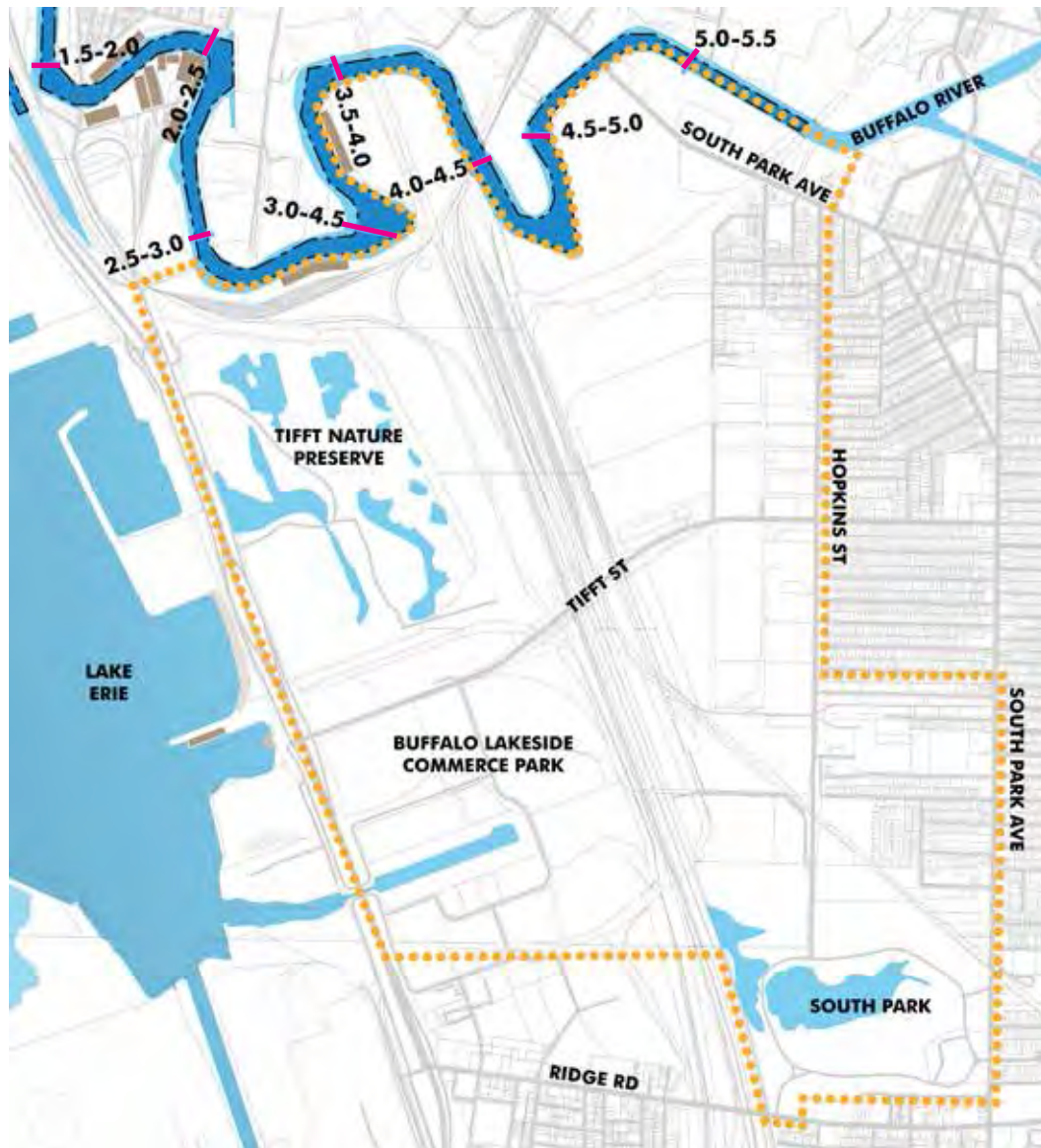
- A new internal access road was implemented by the City of Buffalo for the Union Ship Canal Redevelopment Area, extending from Commerce Drive in the City of Lackawanna;
- A NYSDOT in-kind replacement of the Ridge Road Bridge passing over the CSX rail corridor in the City of Lackawanna;
- A new truck access road connecting Lake Avenue with Milestrip Road (Route 179);
- Design of a multi-purpose greenway along the Outer Harbor to create interim and permanent pedestrian and bicycle access improvements along Fuhrmann Boulevard and Ohio Street; and
- A Tift Street Greenway, designed by the City of Buffalo, to pedestrian and bicycle access improvements along the Fuhrmann Boulevard and Tift Street corridors.
- The City of Buffalo reviewed the condition of the Hopkins Street Bridge and made select repairs.
- Mill and pavement work was completed on Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue. South Park Avenue was restriped to include a bike lane.

***Key Findings: Underutilized transportation infrastructure throughout the SBBOA, such as inactive rail lines, provides the city with opportunities to pursue adaptive reuse initiatives that can contribute to redevelopment throughout the study area. In addition, there is the opportunity to improve road networks to provide increased access to developable properties and promote neighborhood walkability.***

### **3.10 Infrastructure**

Adequate public utilities for power, public water supply and sanitary sewer are generally available around the perimeter of the South Buffalo BOA study area and in developed areas along Abby Street, Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue. The majority of vacant interior lands, as is the case with the RiverBend project area, will require new utility extensions.





Map 12: Navigable Waterways

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- — — NAVIGATION CHANNEL
- RIVER MILE MARKERS

### EPA Wind Grant

In 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency announced funding for a Wind Feasibility Study as part of its RE-powering America's Land initiative. The program aims to encourage renewable energy development on formerly contaminated properties and mine sites when it is aligned with the community's vision for the site. The EPA is partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy laboratory to evaluate the feasibility of locating renewable energy on reclaimed brownfield sites.

As part of this initiative, the EPA selected a 3,500-acre area in South Buffalo to determine the feasibility for solar or wind power generation. This area included the South Buffalo and Buffalo River BOAs. This area in the City of Buffalo is one of 26 sites selected nationwide to receive this renewable energy grant. Other sites selected in New York State include the ArcelorMittal Tecumseh Redevelopment, Inc. property located in Lackawanna, and TechCity located in Ulster County.

The area includes numerous brownfield sites associated with the South Buffalo BOA and the Buffalo River BOA. The feasibility study will evaluate the technical and economic opportunities and challenges associated with the site and additionally may:

- Provide a preliminary analysis of the viability of the site
- Assess solar or wind resource availability
- Identify possible system size, design and location
- Review the economics of the proposed system

The renewable energy feasibility study is currently underway.

### Public Water System

The city of Buffalo's public water system is essential for water distribution, which is used for human consumption, public safety, and numerous industrial applications. The City of Buffalo's existing public water system was designed to handle the high demands of the area's former industries. Since demand in the BOA is reduced from historic peaks, the capacity of the existing system is adequate, with few exceptions. In 2011, the city of Buffalo treated 23.7 billion gallons with an average of 65.4 million gallons each day. Potable water is distributed to approximately 276,000 and covers 46 square miles of piping network.

The Buffalo Water Authority is responsible for maintaining the city's network of pipes, valves, service connections and hydrants. In the past year, the Buffalo Water Authority replaced or renovated approximately 2.2 miles of water mains. The city has approximately 800 miles of pipes, which include 25,000 valves to 80,000 service connections and to 7,800 fire hydrants. The city has been coordinating public infrastructure and rights-of-way improvements.



Map 13: Roadway Improvements

**LEGEND**

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- COMPLETED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

### Buffalo River Improvement Corporation Water System (BRIC)

The Buffalo River Improvement Corporation was developed in the mid 1960's to develop a source and distribution system to supply industrial cooling water to specific sites in and around the South Buffalo BOA study area. These sites include the former Republic Steel site (RiverBend Commerce Park) located on the northern portion of the BOA. The BRIC system was designed to supply 120 million gallons per day for industrial uses. However, due to plant closures and process shutdowns, only one company, PVC Chemicals, Inc. (located outside of the study area), is utilizing and maintaining the system.

The BRIC system is non-potable water, which is not suitable for consumption but continues to be usable for industrial cooling and makeup water supply. Currently, the system is supplying approximately 5-6 million gallons per day to PVS Chemicals. Once the water is used for cooling, it is discharged into the Buffalo River which results in augmentation of the base river flow, particularly during the low flow summer months.

### Sewer System

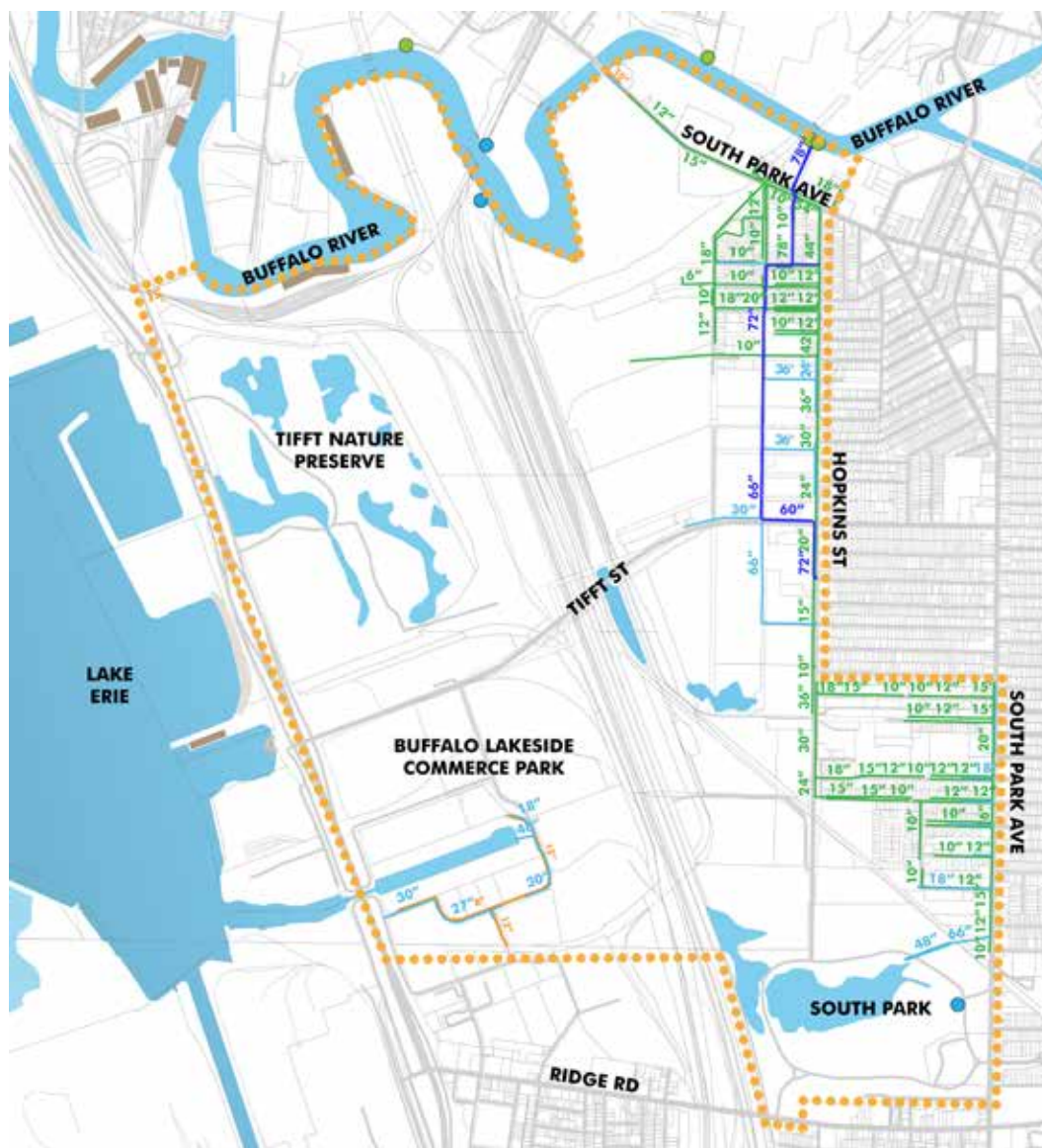
The Buffalo Sewer Authority (BSA) operates and maintains the city's public sewage collection and waste water treatment system. Within the South Buffalo BOA, the collection system consists of a mix of separate sanitary sewers, separate storm sewers and combined sewers. The collection system conveys flows to the BSA Bird Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), the second largest wastewater treatment plant in New York State, for full primary and secondary wastewater treatment.

During rain and snow melt events, the actual amount of wastewater (both stormwater and sewage) collected within the combined system at times exceeds WWTP capacity. To protect the treatment plant and private property from flooding (including basements), excess flow is discharged to local waterways through combined sewer overflow (CSO) points. While several CSO's enter the Buffalo River upstream and across the river from the South Buffalo BOA, only three CSOs discharge into the Buffalo River from the South Buffalo BOA area itself: 28, 29 and 48. Of those, only CSO 28 discharges combined sewage under typical year conditions. The other two CSOs do not discharge.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) CSO Control Policy provides guidance on how communities with combined sewer systems can meet Clean Water Act goals in as flexible and cost-effective a manner as possible. Under the CSO Control Policy, communities with CSOs must develop long-term CSO control plans that will ultimately provide for full compliance with the Clean Water Act, including attainment of water quality standards.

In 2014, the US EPA and NYS DEC approved the Buffalo Sewer Authority's Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan. The strategy will dramatically reduce combined





Map 14: Municipal Sanitary Sewer System

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- COMBINED (292)
- SANITARY (28)
- STORM (89)
- STORM OVERFLOW (58)

sewer overflow events to our local waterways, improving water quality while helping to promote economic development. System-wide, the \$380 million, 20 year plan, will result in :

- 97.4% total capture of combined sewer volume;
- 6 or fewer combined sewer overflows per year;
- 73% decrease in overflow volume from 1.89 billion to 504 million gallons per year;
- 10% reduction in City impervious surfaces; and
- 1315 -1620 acres of stormwater management.

Within the South Buffalo BOA, the plan calls for 27.4 acres of green infrastructure impervious surface management and the construction of a 2.3 million gallon satellite storage facility in 2031 to ensure CSO 28 does not discharge more than six times during a typical year. Currently, approximately 250/615 acres of the CSO 28 drainage basin is impervious largely driven by over 133 acres of streets and their rights of way. Green infrastructure uses landscaping including vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water where it falls.

As a condition of connecting to the BSA collection system, BSA requires that all new development within the BOA both manage its stormwater on site and ensure that there sufficient downstream sanitary sewage capacity as per NYS DEC sanitary sewer regulations. Development seeking a direct discharge of stormwater to local waterbodies are regulated directly by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

***Key Findings: Infrastructure upgrade opportunities provide the city with the opportunity to invest in green infrastructure techniques, where feasible, to further enhance the environmental quality throughout the study area. In addition, as redevelopment occurs over time, the city has the opportunity to introduce creative solutions to address infrastructure needs in an environmentally beneficial manner.***

### **3.11 Natural Resources and Environmental Features**

Some of the most important assets of the study area are the natural resources and environmental features. These assets include the Buffalo River (located to the north), Tiff Nature Preserve on the western boundary, Union Ship Canal, and South Park. In addition to these waterways and established parks and preserves, the study area contains fish and wildlife habitats, federal and state wetlands as well floodplain areas.

#### Topography

The BOA is located in the Erie-Ontario lake plain province which has minimal topographic relief, and generally slopes north and west towards the Buffalo River and Lake Erie. Elevations within the study area range from 571 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) to 630 feet AMSL. The highest elevations within the study area are associated with man-made

landfill areas in the southwest corner of the Tift Nature Preserve and in the Marilla Street landfill, as well as areas within South Park.

### Soils

The majority of the study area is classified as Urban Land (approximately 72 percent). This map unit is a miscellaneous area characterized by 80 percent or more of the soil surface being covered by asphalt, concrete, buildings, or other impervious structures. The soils underlying impervious urban land areas are not practical to evaluate and therefore careful on-site investigations are necessary to determine the suitability and limitations of abandoned areas for any proposed use. Abandoned areas in this soil class may be suitable for playgrounds or other recreation uses requiring a hard, impervious surface. The remaining non-urban soils within the study area are mostly located in Tift Nature Preserve, South Park, the area in the vicinity of Okell Playground and the northern portion of Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park where State freshwater and mapped NWI wetlands are located. In addition, soil types classified as dumps (Dp) are located within the Tift Nature Preserve, the Marilla Street Landfill, and the Alltiff Landfill (Map 15: Soils).

### Geology

The bedrock underlying the BOA is composed of three formations roughly dividing the area into three areas from north to south. The formations present within the study area include Onondaga Limestone (13.8 percent), Marcellus formation (52.4 percent), and Skaneateles formation (33 percent). The Onondaga Limestone formation consists of Moorehouse Limestone and is approximately 120 feet in depth; the Marcellus Formation, consisting of Oatka Creek Shale Formation is approximately 30-55 feet in depth; and the Skaneateles Formation, which consists of Levanna Shale and Stafford Limestone approximately 60-90 feet in depth (Map 16: Geology).

### Surface Waters and Tributaries

Surface waters within the study area consist of the Buffalo River to the north, the Union Ship Canal to the south in Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, and small lakes, ponds and wetlands within Tift Nature Preserve, South Park and along the rail corridor.

The Buffalo River is classified by the NYSDEC as a Class C, Standard C watercourse suitable for fishing, fish propagation and survival, and for primary and secondary contact recreation, although other factors may limit the use for these purposes. The Buffalo River is additionally listed as a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC) by the EPA. The area is listed due to the historically heavy industrial development along the river. Three major streams create the AOC “source area,” including Cayuga Creek, Buffalo Creek and Cazenovia Creek.

The EPA requires preparation of a three-phase Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for all areas of



Map 15: Soils

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

CANANDAIGUA MUCKY SILT LOAM

COLLAMER SILT LOAM, TILL SUBSTRATUM

DUMPS

HAPLAQUOLLS, PONDED

NIAGARA SILT LOAM

NIAGARA SILT LOAM, TILL SUBSTRATUM

PALMS MUCK

RAYNHAM SILT LOAM

UDORTENTS, SMOOTHED

URBAN LAND

URBAN LAND / GALEN COMPLEX

URBAN LAND / LIMA COMPLEX

URBAN LAND / NIAGARA COMPLEX

URBAN LAND / TEEL COMPLEX

URBAN - CHURCHVILLE COMPLEX

WATER





Map 16: Geology

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- ONONDAGA LIMESTONE
- MARCELLUS FORMATION
- SKANEATELES FORMATION



Image 11: Remediation and shoreline restoration along Buffalo River

concern throughout the Great Lakes. Stage I identifies and assesses use impairments and sources of contamination, Stage II identifies proposed remedial actions and method of implementation, and Stage III documents evidence that uses have been restored. To date, the EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) have partnered with the Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper to form the Buffalo River Restoration partnership (Image 11: Remediation and Shoreline Restoration along Buffalo River). This partnership most recently completed a Buffalo River RAP Status Report in October 2005.

#### Parks and Open Space

Taking in the broader landscape and natural resources of the region, the South Buffalo BOA can support enhanced habitat for migratory bird, fish, and other native wildlife (Map 17: Parks & Open Space). The Buffalo River is a key regional ecological corridor, connecting to Lake Erie and the Niagara River. The Niagara River Corridor, which connects the Niagara Escarpment area south to other Atlantic Flyway tributaries, was recognized as a globally significant important Bird Area (NRCIBA) in 1996 by an international consortium of conservation and nature organizations including the National Audubon Society. The region is noted as an important wintering area for thousands of waterfowl and gulls, as well as an important stop-over and breeding ground for migrating birds, with important habitat including: old growth forest, marsh, and meadow.

In the South Buffalo BOA there are important ecological stepping stones that provide sensitive habitat zones and potential broader connections including Tifft Nature Preserve (an Audubon Important Bird Area and one of the largest remnant wetlands in Erie County) and Olmsted's South Park and the Botanical Gardens. Significant open space and park areas within the South Buffalo BOA also include the planned meadow park at the RiverBend Commerce Park, the George J. Hartman Play Fields, and the Ship Canal Commons at Lakeside Commerce Park – which all offer further open space and habitat patches that promote connectivity and ecological function throughout the BOA. The Buffalo River is a significant ecological corridor and its health and function will be considered below.



Map 17: Parks & Open Space

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- PARKS & OPEN SPACES

The RiverBend planning and implementation effort is opening up new opportunities for accessing the river for neighborhood residents. Planned shoreline restoration work along the Buffalo River at the RiverBend site has already begun. The comprehensive green infrastructure approach developed for the RiverBend master plan is recommended to be maintained in the new proposed development for Sorra and Silveo.

The South Buffalo BOA provides an opportunity to restore ecological processes and connections to the Olmsted Parks system, Times Beach Nature Preserve, the Buffalo River and Lake Erie waterfront. Integrated ecological restoration promotes the return of forest, grasslands, wetlands, and the natural shoreline of the Buffalo River, providing habitat for birds and other native wildlife and contributing to ongoing river restoration efforts. Developed areas – such as the Hopkins Street corridor – can be interspersed with “green infrastructure” that bridges the natural landscape and the built environment, providing more ecological approaches to stormwater and landscape management. The combination of ecological restoration and green infrastructure will result in a functional and sustainable landscape while cultivating a thriving and complementary human and natural resource community. The interstitial neighborhood spaces (vacant lots and small gardens) and streets can help better connect neighbors to open space and also act as green corridors, with the integration of various green infrastructure practices. These practices range from front yard rain gardens and conversions of turf to gardens and meadows, to stormwater treatment swales along streets that integrates trees and plantings.

Increased tree canopy can help provide further connections for birds and other wildlife that depend on these patches as they travel across the landscape. In RiverBend the aim is to promote a diverse and ecologically rich tree canopy through a combination of mesic forest zone (with widths of 100’ – 300’ for increased habitat), riparian woodland along the Buffalo River (as a restored riparian corridor), and street trees. Created wetlands can help treat water and provide new amenity spaces that foster habitat linkages to the natural wetlands found at Tifft Nature Preserve. Stormwater treatment can be designed into parking lots and other paved spaces to create spaces with treatment, as well as increased shade and new aesthetics. Opportunities exist for enhanced habitat in existing preserves and new connections to strengthen the urban ecology of the area. Streets can be considered green corridors, vacant lots could be habitat patches and community spaces, recreational spaces can have integrated stormwater treatment and habitat improvements, and there can be improved connections between the River and the historic parks and preserves within the BOA. Within the BOA there are significant opportunities to cultivate community engagement, stewardship, and educational activities with Tifft Nature Preserve, Botanical Gardens, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and Buffalo Niagara RiverKeeper.

#### River Habitat and Shoreline Restoration

The Great Lakes Legacy Act provides funding to take the necessary steps to clean up

contaminated sediments in Areas of Concern (AOCs). Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) are being developed for each of these Areas of Concern, to address impairments to beneficial uses. The Buffalo River AOC impact area is 6.2 miles long and extends from the mouth of the river to the farthest point upstream at which the backwater condition exists during Lake Erie's highest monthly average lake level. Land use in the tributary watersheds consists of residential communities, farmland, wooded areas and parks interspersed with commercial land use. There are six beneficial use impairments (BUIs) identified along the Buffalo River: restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, fish tumors or other deformities, degradation of aesthetics, degradation of benthos, restriction on dredging activities, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District performed a reconnaissance level study from 2001-2003, which determined that there was Federal interest in initiating a cost-shared feasibility study of environmental dredging on the Buffalo River from Hamburg Street to the confluence of Cazenovia Creek and the River. The non-federal sponsor for the feasibility study was Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, who agreed to cost share half of the \$2.1 million feasibility study.

#### Groundwater Resources

According to the USGS Map, Potential Yields of Wells in Unconsolidated Aquifers in New York State – Niagara Sheet, the BOA is not located over an unconfined aquifer. According to the NYSDEC, however, the northern portion of the South Buffalo BOA is located over a New York and New England carbonate-rock aquifer, which is considered a principal aquifer. According to the NYSDEC, principal aquifers are “aquifers known to be highly productive or whose geology suggests abundant potential water supply but which are not intensively used as sources of water supply by major municipal systems at the present time.” Groundwater within the study area has been impacted by former industrial operations, including Republic Steel and Hanna Furnace. At many of the sites throughout the BOA, remediation has been completed or is planned. Remediation activities include source removal and mitigation. Both the South Buffalo BOA and the city of Buffalo are served by public water and therefore exposure to contaminated water is not expected.

#### Floodplains

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) are prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The FIRM for the BOA indicates Special Flood Hazard Areas associated with Tifft Nature Preserve, the Buffalo River, and Lake Erie. In addition, large portions of the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park are located within a Special Flood Hazard Area. Development activities within Special Flood Hazard Areas are regulated by the City of Buffalo's Flood Damage Prevention Law, which requires a Floodplain Development Permit. Since completion of the Nomination Study, the boundaries of the 100-year floodplain have not changed (Map 18: Floodplains).





Map 18: Floodplains

**LEGEND**

----- SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

100 YEAR SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA

### Wetlands& Wildlife Habitat

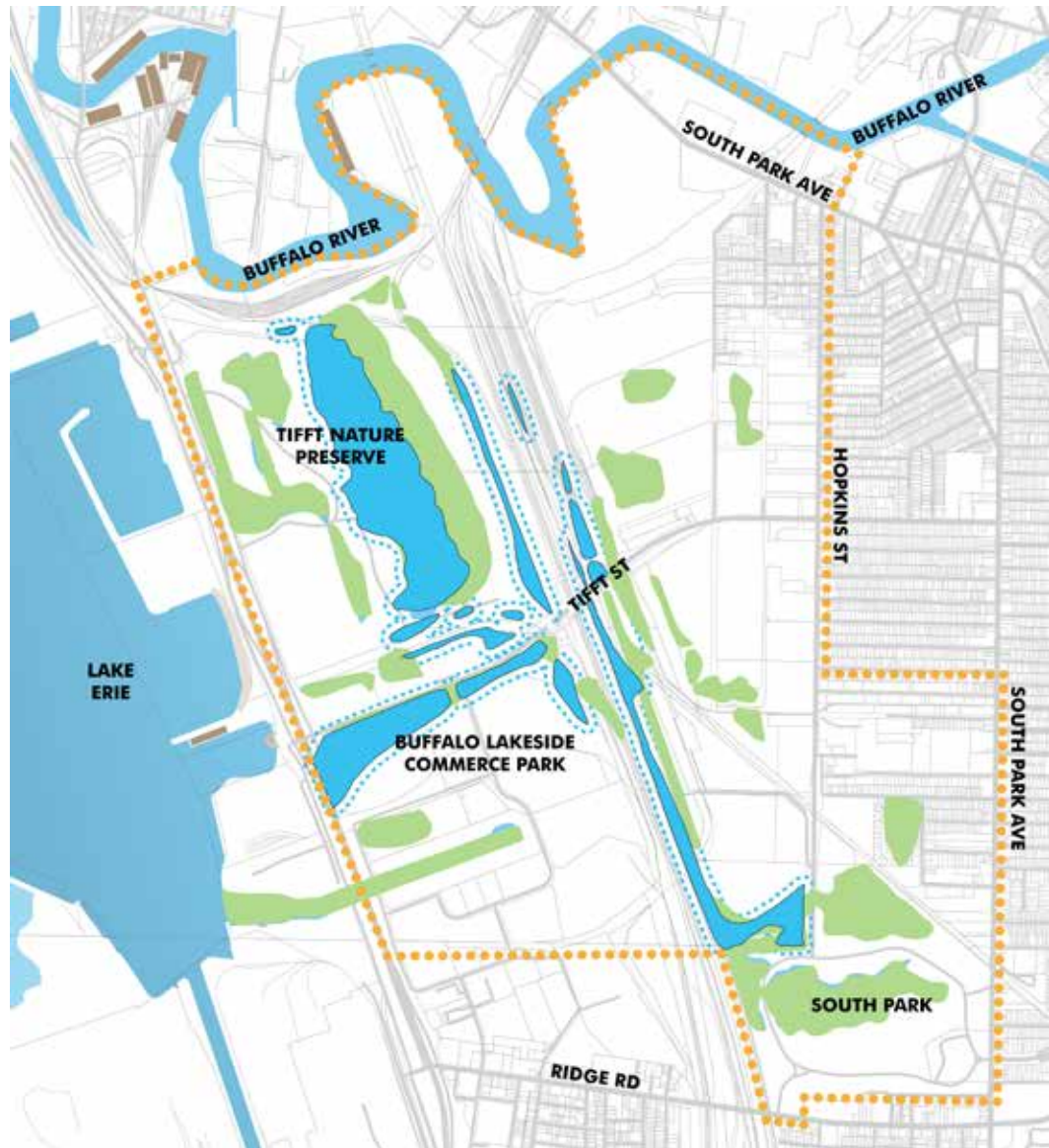
Large areas within the BOA, comprising approximately 425 acres, are designated as either State freshwater wetlands or wetlands mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). State freshwater wetlands, which comprise 34 percent of wetlands in the BOA, are associated with Tifft Nature Preserve, the northern side of Buffalo Lake Commerce Park along Tifft Street, and linear areas extending along the railroad corridor from Tifft Street to the northwest portion of South Park. NWI wetlands, which make up 66 percent of wetlands within the BOA, include lake and pond areas in the Tifft Nature Preserve, portions of the Hydro-Air property, small areas adjacent to Alltft and Marilla Street landfills, areas around South Park Lake, and portions of Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park including the areas surrounding the Union Ship Canal (Map 19: Wetlands).

As part of the Golf Course Feasibility Study, the project team sent an ecologist to conduct a field reconnaissance to identify dominant ecological communities and habitats present throughout the proposed golf course study area. As part of this field reconnaissance, an ecological field report was prepared detailing the existing cover types, habitat assessment and enhancement and restoration opportunities associated with the golf course study area. Potential wetlands of various types were identified on several of the properties evaluated as part of the Golf Course Feasibility Study. Wetland types identified include both forested and emergent wetlands. In addition, the following ecological community types were identified:

- Meadow Habitat
- Shrub Scrub and Scrub Shrub Wetland Habitat
- Upland Forest and Forested Wetland Habitats
- Emergent Wetlands and Open Water
- Developed and Disturbed lands

Although a formal wetland delineation was not completed, the Ecological Field Report details the wetland communities and habitat types present throughout the Golf Course Feasibility Study area as well as their importance to local wildlife. In addition, enhancement and restoration opportunities were identified, including:

- **Development of an Invasive Species Control Plan:** Many of the wetland communities throughout the study area include non-native invasive species. Invasive species that are not native to a particular ecosystem have the potential to adversely impact the economy, human health and/or the environment. Many of the properties within the study area are dominated by phragmites as well as other non-native plant types.
- **Wildlife Habitat Management Plan:** Wildlife habitat management within the study area would benefit many species that depend on the habitat and are experiencing population declines throughout New York State and the region. In particular, the area's



Map 19: Wetlands

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- ● ● ● 100 FOOT STATE FRESHWATER WETLANDS BUFFER
- STATE FRESHWATER WETLANDS
- NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY



meadow habitat and white-tailed deer population were recommended to be assessed and addressed. Concern of deer overpopulation suggests the need to conduct an assessment of the deer population. If overpopulation is determined, coordination with the NYSDEC to develop an approach to population control and vegetation protection is recommended.

***Key Findings: Natural resources and environmental features located within the BOA provide the greatest opportunities for enhancements and connectivity to other parks, open space and recreational areas in proximity to the South Buffalo BOA. One of the key challenges will be to identify ways to provide access to natural features and environmental education opportunities in consideration of access issues associated with some of the BOA's existing physical infrastructure.***

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

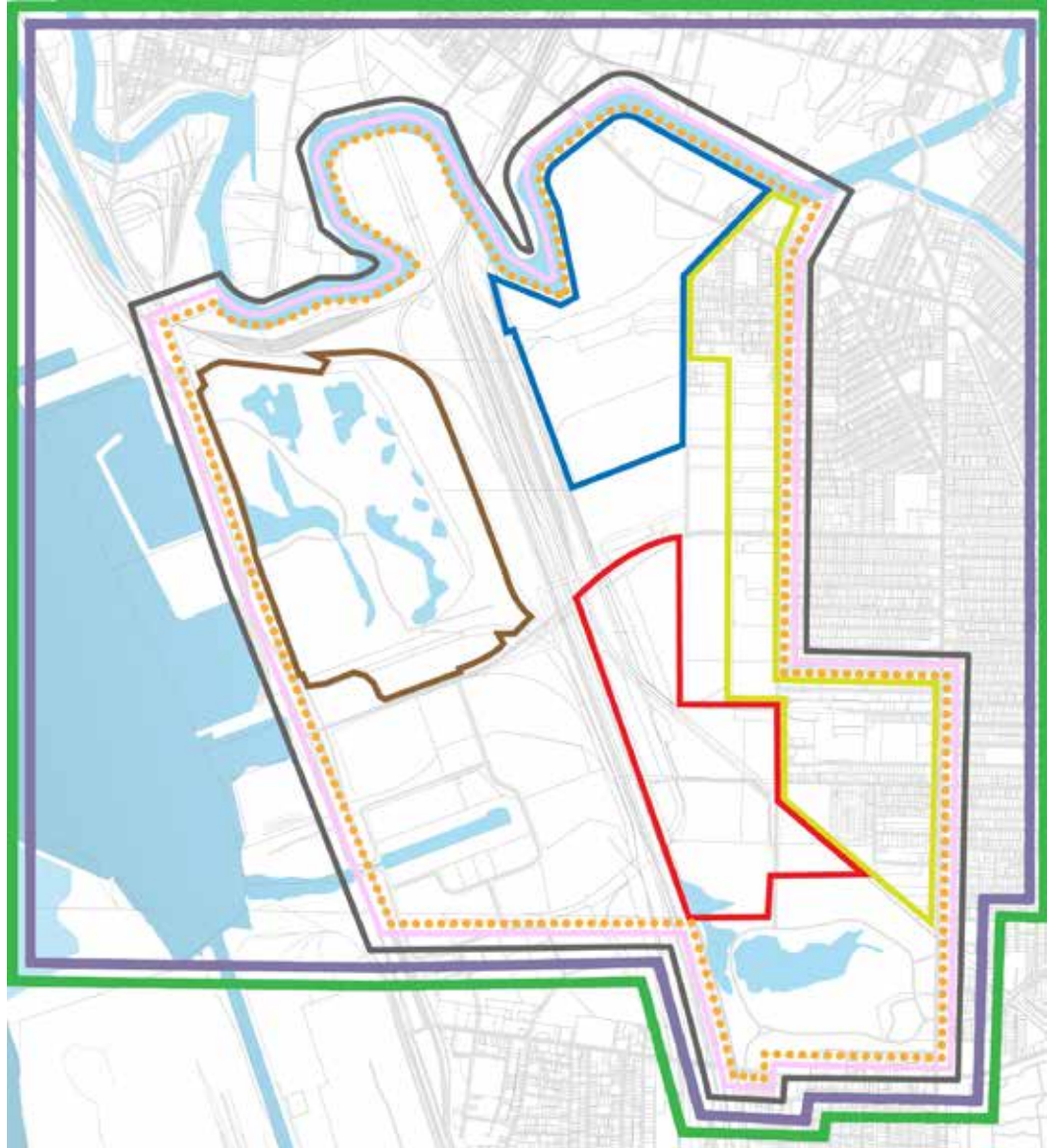


## 4.1 Introduction

The citizens of the City of Buffalo have come together to imagine the future of the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). During the past seven years, the City of Buffalo, New York State Department of State, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have guided significant efforts through the (BOA) program. Urban planning efforts have provided abundant information about the existing community, its neighborhoods, demographics, built and natural assets as well as existing conditions of property and infrastructure. Community engagement was integral to understanding the desires of the community, and numerous innovative planning initiatives, collaborations, and techniques have been used to identify transformational projects.

The City of Buffalo, community organizations, and local developers have recently undertaken lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) projects to make Buffalo a great place to live, learn, work, and play. LQC approaches aim to provide low cost, high impact interventions in the public realm to generate interest in a project area, thereby attracting additional investment and/or reclamation of a natural asset. Examples of this approach are evident at Canalside, with Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation's use of brightly painted Adirondack chairs. At Larkinville "Food Truck Tuesdays" are a staple of spring, summer, and fall. New kayak/canoe launches established along the Buffalo River are other key examples allowing public access to the Buffalo River and Central Wharf. In addition to the LQC approaches, larger infrastructure investments have been made at the Central Wharf, along Main Street, and at Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park. These projects have attracted a critical mass of visitors and acted as a catalyst to additional private and community investments. Taken together, the South Buffalo BOA is a pillar of Buffalo's Renaissance: a foundation of innovative planning techniques and initiatives that has resulted in the creation of unique and authentic Buffalo experiences. It is the goal of the Implementation Strategy to provide guidance for transformational projects that are or will contribute to positive views and excitement about Buffalo's near and longer term future.

The South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy builds off the success of initiatives implemented across the city and provides a comprehensive strategy with varying scale, cost techniques, timeframes and actions required to achieve the community's desired vision. These strategies include improving the public realm, creating places for all users and embracing the city's unique natural habitat. The plan encourages grassroots investment in line with City of Buffalo policies including, local laws and the recently drafted Green Code. The Implementation Strategy is grounded in a community vision and includes the following transformative plans: Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, Step 3 Neighborhood Placemaking Initiatives, Step 2 Nomination Study, RiverBend Master Plan, Buffalo Green Code, South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study, and Recreational Needs Assessment. The following sections detail these Implementation Plans and the initiatives proposed to transform the South Buffalo BOA (Map 20: Planning Map Areas).



Map 20: Planning Map Areas

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

— GREEN CODE (CITY-WIDE)

— RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CITY-WIDE)

— STEP 2 NOMINATION STUDY

— NEIGHBORHOOD PLACEMAKING  
INITIATIVES

— NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

— RIVERBEND

— PROPOSED GOLF COURSE

— TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE AND  
SUSTAINABILITY CENTER



## **4.2 Step 2 Nomination Study Summary**

The South Buffalo BOA Master Plan prepared during the Step 2 Nomination Study phase represented extensive analysis and consultation that occurred over a two year period ending in 2009. The Master Plan establishes a framework for guiding the evolution of the BOA to a higher value employment area complemented by a mix of new uses, strengthened communities, significant open space and natural areas. The master plan encourages a diverse range of land uses to create enduring economic stability and growth. It proposes several prevailing themes that are drawn from key assets and opportunities of the study area. The prevailing themes place an emphasis on economic development, ecological restoration and neighborhood revitalization.

In addition to the changing economic environment the South Buffalo BOA has also seen numerous projects and initiatives set forth in the Nomination Study Master Plan successfully completed. Because of this progress the master plan required updating to respond to the success seen throughout the community and region. Section 4.2.1 & 4.2.2 illustrate the progress in each precinct area defined by the master plan and the proposed changes. The district planning areas can be seen in color-coded Map 20.

Since the Master Plan was prepared, numerous economic and development changes have occurred; however, the guiding principles and framework developed through the Nomination Study process remain relevant.

### **4.2.1 Master Plan Land Use Update**

The Nomination Study Master Plan provides a broad mix of land use recommendations to achieve economic viability throughout the South Buffalo BOA while encouraging smart growth (Map 21: RiverBend Master Plan, Nomination Study, 2009). The land uses are based on a market analysis and designed to encourage a diverse community offering a range of employment and housing typologies. The master plan draws upon the tenets set forth in Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan (The Queen City in the 21st Century) and the Buffalo Green Code.

The Green Code includes a legislated and enforceable zoning ordinance that provides the support required to implement the South Buffalo BOA Master Plan. In collaboration with the Office of Strategic Planning, the final South Buffalo BOA Master Plan proposes land use patterns that are consistent with the proposed zoning set forth in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) which is part of the overall Green Code effort. The UDO is designed to create a community that embraces its existing assets and encourages infill development. (Image 12: Complete Street on Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY) The future land use types proposed as part of the Land Use Plan include: commercial and office (e.g.



Image 12: Complete Street on Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY



Image 13: Public Amenities at Ship Canal Commons

research and development, business park, business services), light industrial, rail, mixed-use, residential, recreational (i.e. proposed golf course), and parks and open space (e.g. Tift and South Park) (Map 22: UDO / Buffalo Green Code) (Image 13: Public Amenities at Ship Canal Commons).

Since the Nomination Study was approved, city officials and residents determined that encouraging a light industrial land use in certain portions of the BOA was pivotal to support the goals of the South Buffalo BOA. This land use is envisioned to primarily be located adjacent to RiverBend, All-Tift Landfill, and on to Reading Avenue (Map 23: South Buffalo BOA Proposed Land Use). These areas provide opportunities for front-of-house office space and back-of-house light industrial space. Typically this use will have 5,000 to 30,000 square foot floor plates with supported surface parking based on the proposed zoning recommendations in the UDO. This proposed commercial and industrial mixed-use expands on the Business Office commercial land use proposed in the Nomination Study.

In addition, areas identified for warehouse and distribution have been updated to include manufacturing. These uses are intended to accommodate larger scale single or two-story warehouses with an estimated build-out between 100,000 – 500,000 square feet. These land uses would be supported by the existing rail connections and accessible by large trucks, encouraging regional and super-regional trade.

#### **4.2.2 Precinct Areas Update and Ongoing Developments**

The South Buffalo BOA consists of numerous areas distinguished by character and scale. The Master Plan defines nine precinct areas that are distinguished by complementary land uses and varying development opportunities. This approach allows for analysis and recommendations that address the diverse characteristics and specific needs of each area.

Since the Nomination Study, these precincts have been further refined with development of

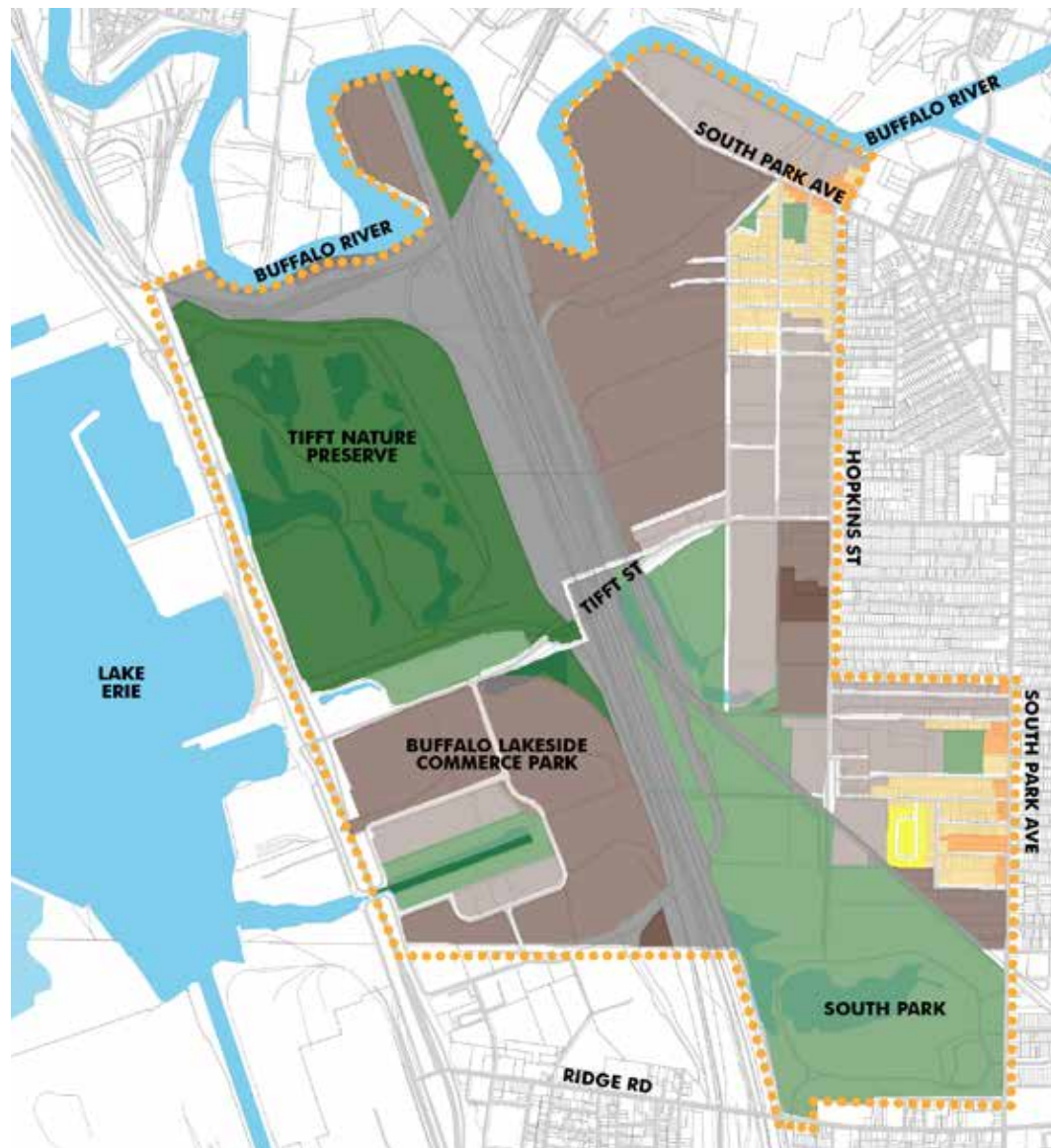


Map 21: RiverBend Master Plan, Nomination Study, 2009

the RiverBend Master Plan, South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy, and the South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study. These studies analyzed future land use opportunities through land owner outreach and existing conditions analyses. The precinct boundaries associated with the RiverBend Peninsula, RiverBend Employment, South Park Open Space System, Hopkins North and Hopkins South have been adjusted as a result of these studies (Map 24: South Buffalo BOA Precincts).

As part of the Implementation Strategy the Nomination Study Master Plan has been updated to incorporate ongoing planning initiatives and economic development in the area (Map 25: Step 2 Nomination Study Master Plan) (Map 26: Step 3 Implementation Strategy





Map 22: UDO / Buffalo Green Code

### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

N-3E (MIXED-USE EDGE)

N-4-30 (SINGLE FAMILY)

N-3R (RESIDENTIAL)

D-OG (GREEN)

D-ON (NATURAL)

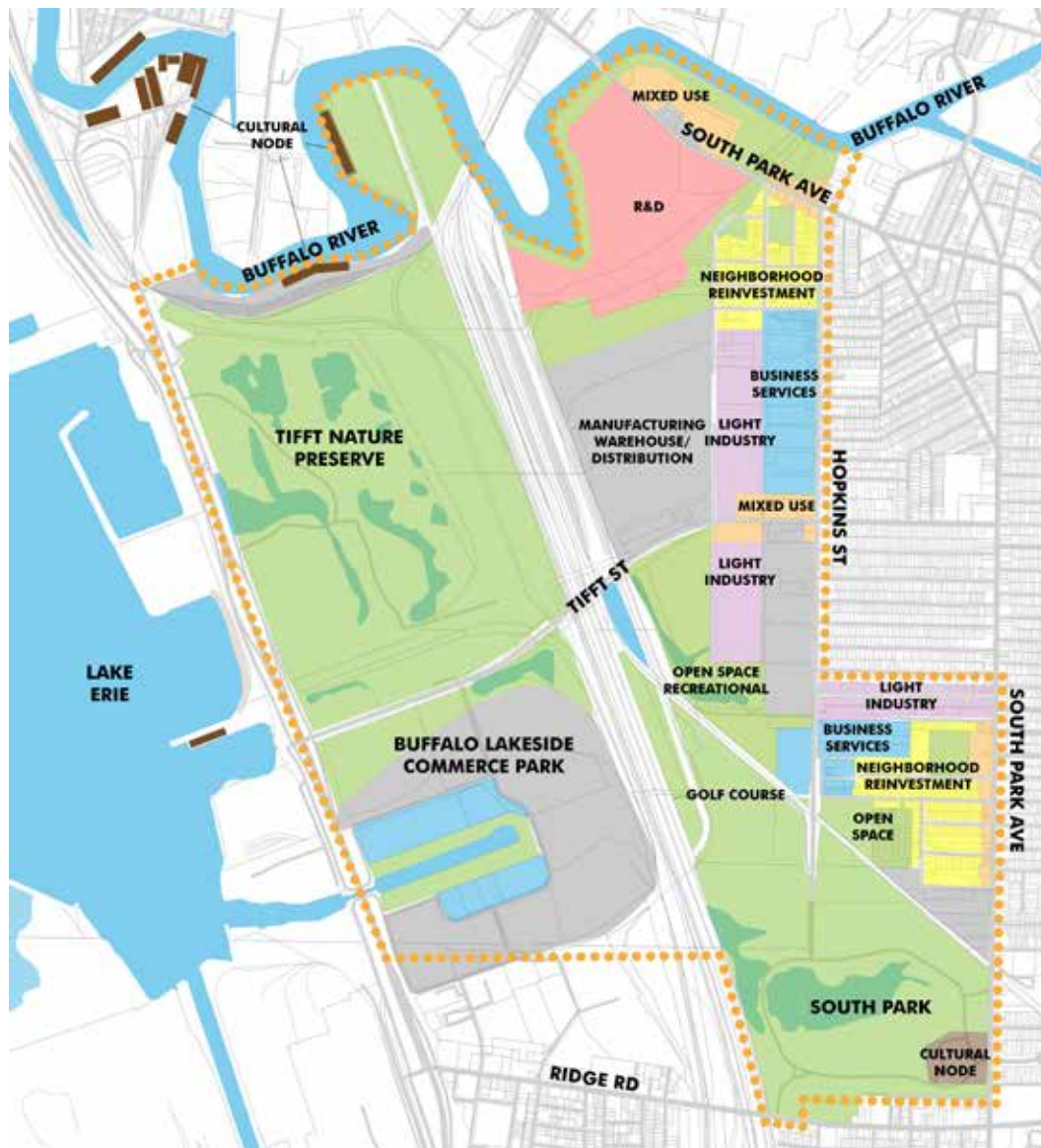
D-C (FLEX COMMERCIAL)

D-IL (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

D-IH (HEAVY INDUSTRIAL)

C-R (RAIL CORRIDOR)





Map 23: South Buffalo BOA Proposed Land Use

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

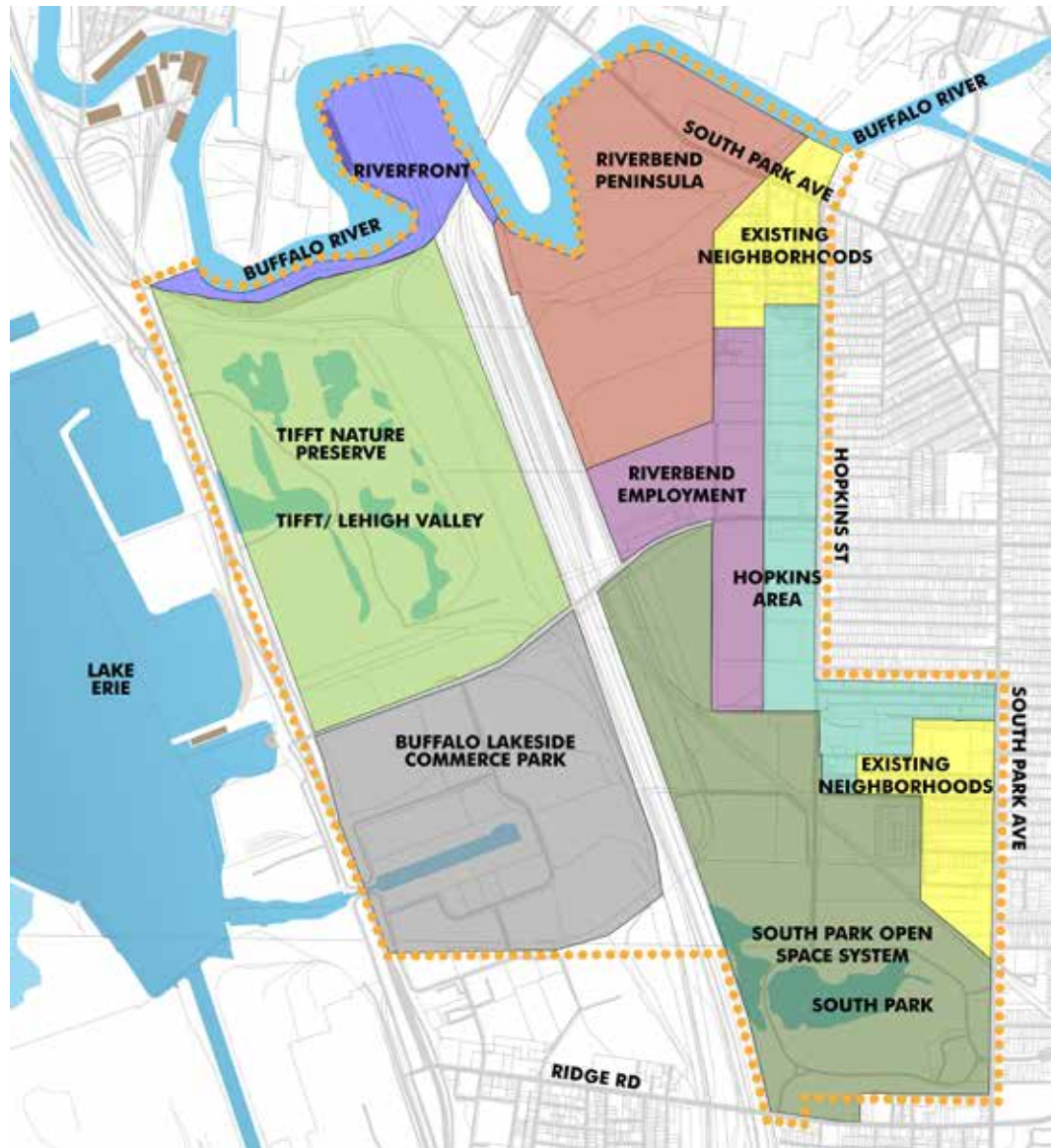
NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT

BUSINESS SERVICES & LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

MANUFACTURING, WAREHOUSE/DISTRIBUTION

MIXED USE

RECREATION / OPEN SPACE



Map 24: South Buffalo BOA Precincts

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

Master Plan Update). The following paragraphs provide updates pertaining to each area.

A Master Plan for RiverBend, a 260-acre study area within the South Buffalo BOA was developed in 2011. This plan advances the work completed as part of the Nomination Study for the RiverBend Peninsula and RiverBend Employment area while also redefining these precincts. Similar to the Nomination Study Master Plan, the RiverBend plan proposes a sustainable mixed-use development with a multi-modal transportation system and a holistic



Image 14: English Pork Pies Company masterplan

approach to the site's ecology. The Master Plan is based on themes to Connect, Restore, Transform, and Engage with an emphasis on the creation of a regional asset. The land uses and performance criteria considerations defined in the Nomination Study and expanded upon in the RiverBend Master Plan have been summarized in Section 4.4 RiverBend Summary. The complete RiverBend Master Plan can be found in *Appendix E*.

In addition to the Riverbend master plan other project opportunities are the drawing board that include:

#### English Pork Pies Company

On the northern end of RiverBend, the English Pork Pie Company (EPPC), which produces traditional English pork pies for distribution nationally and internationally, relocated their food manufacturing plant and headquarters to the existing Village Farms facility in 2011. Recently the company has expanded its commercial line by opening an authentic British Fish Chippy restaurant which has had huge success and is studying options for franchising the restaurant. With lands surrounding the food plant EPPC aims to create publicly accessible sports fields and a mixed used development centered around a traditional English 'High Street' (Image 14: English Pork Pies Company Masterplan). The EPPC plans are to target tourism with their traditional English experience and use their sports facility to market their product to the sports industry. These plans are evolving with the announcement of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend across the street. The EPPC is currently looking into development options to provide food services to support that facility and its projected 3,000 employees.

#### Kulp Waco Parcels

The Kulp Waco parcels are located on the western side of Hopkins Street in an area zoned as Flex Commercial in the proposed Green Code. These parcels include an





Map 25: Step 2 Nomination Study Master Plan





Map 26: Step 3 Implementation Strategy Master Plan Update

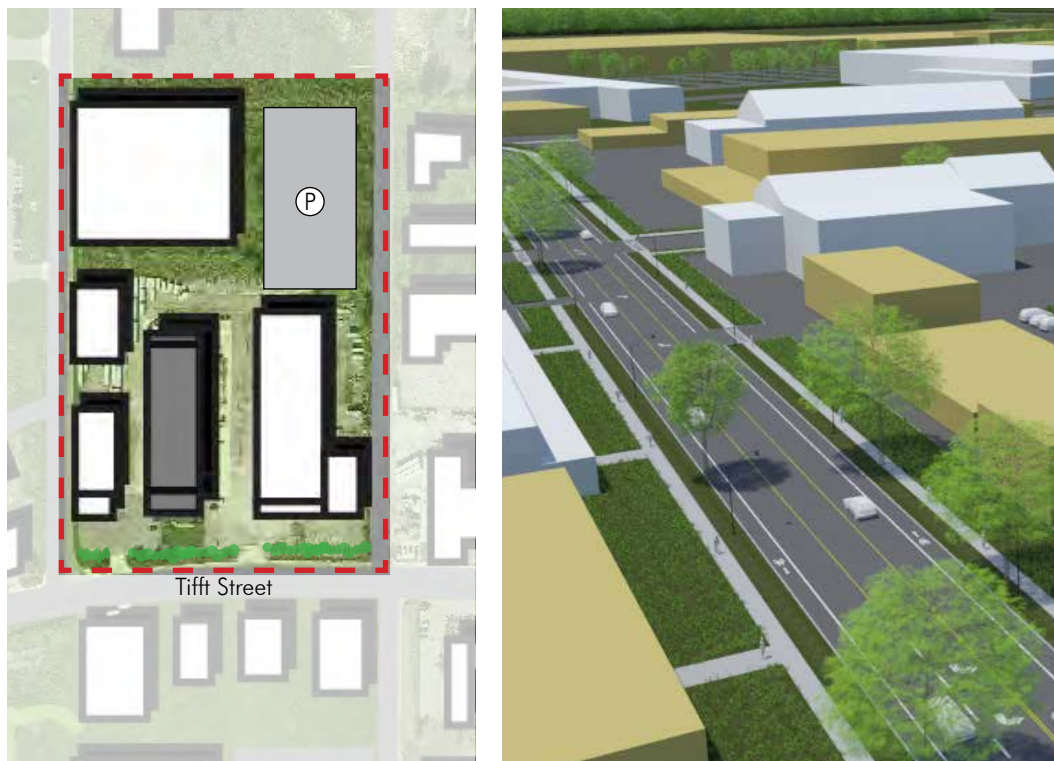
underutilized warehouse building that was previously used as a truck terminal. The Step 3 Consultant team talked with the owner and discussed development opportunities along with BOA and BCP incentives. With large setbacks from the street and a large lot there is an opportunity to break up the property into smaller parcels. This approach allows for buildings along the street (potentially mixed use) while maintaining the existing light industrial use behind which aligns with the vision for Hopkins Street. This approach would be further enhanced if Germania Street was reopened to car traffic as recommended as part of the Step 3 Implementation Strategy. Germania Street is currently a paper street along the west side of the property and by installing a city street it would provide another street front access to this property and numerous others. Jeff Higgins, the owner, indicated that he has been willing to sell the land and has determined that the brownfield program benefits may help with sale of the property. The owner is currently coordinating with his realtor to discuss these benefits prior to moving forward.

#### LCA Development

LCA Development is a family owned and operated large equipment business located on Hopkins Street across from a residential community. Additionally, LCA Development owns an underutilized building and property to the south of their active business. From early on in the Step 3 process Linda Artmeier, the owner of LCA Development, has been engaged in community meetings and the private landowner roundtable. Linda Artmeier is very interested in keeping the family business along Hopkins Street and worked with the Step 3 consultants to develop site concepts that align with the vision for Hopkins Street. Much like Kulp Waco LCA Development would benefit from reopening Germania Street providing a secondary entrance to all of their properties. Linda Artmeier has expressed interest in completing a Phase II ESA to make her properties more marketable for future expansion and development. The LCA Development Phase II ESA application is currently pending completion.

#### LA Woolley

Dave Woolley, the owner of LA Woolley, has been an active participant in the planning process for the South Buffalo BOA. They purchased their property in 1985, and is the site of a former dump and former trucking terminal. There is approximately 4 acres of undeveloped land behind the warehouse, and six acres of paved area that the current business does not use. Dave Woolley plans to continue operating his business in this location but is interested in pursuing BOA program incentives to increase property values and capitalize on his underutilized property (Map 27: LA Woolley proposed development). As part of the Step 3 process the consultant team created design concepts that create smaller parcels from the larger property and a stronger building presence along Tiffit Street. The location of the property along Tiffit Street and Rittling Drive provide high visibility and great investment opportunities. Rittling Drive is proposed



Map 27: LA Woolley proposed development

as a southern gateway into Riverbend which if implemented will significantly increase the value of the property and enhance the potential of additional development.

South Park Open Space System precinct is an area with a range of social, cultural and recreational activities that is an asset to the neighborhood and commercial uses. This precinct includes the Olmsted-designed South Park, Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens and two landfills that have been capped and closed: Marilla Street Landfill and Alltiff Landfill which are currently publicly inaccessible open spaces. Since the Nomination Study, a South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study has been completed and an Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment study has been initiated. The results of these studies can be examined further in *Appendix D and H*. The Athletic Center and Library originally proposed for this precinct in the Nomination Study have since been determined as not feasible.

Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park (BLCP) precinct is the premier ‘smart growth’ brownfield redevelopment project in the City of Buffalo, developed under the auspices of Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC). Nearly \$30 million has been invested by New York State, Erie County, the City of Buffalo and National Grid in site preparation and infrastructure construction, to reclaim this once fallow land for productive use and the tax rolls. CertainTeed Corp., Cobey, Inc. and Sonwil Distribution have made



multi-million dollar investments as the initial land purchasers, employing approximately 400 workers. This urban commerce park is located on reclaimed waterfront land with multi-modal transportation opportunities and excellent access to the interstate. Physical improvements and studies have been undertaken to bring the site to a “development ready.” These improvements and studies include: geo-technical analysis, surface and subsurface investigation, demolition, site clearance, and road/utility/infrastructure construction.

BLCP includes a dynamic park called Ship Canal Commons which was a transformative project not only for those located within the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, but also for residents of the City of Buffalo. The park is built on a parcel of land that is adjacent to a shipping canal and was once the site of Hanna Furnace, an iron smelting facility. The park designed to focus on four important goals: recreational access, historical authenticity, ecological restoration, and visual enhancement. In 2013 a giant molten ladle was added to the east side of the shipping canal to further expand on the area heritage.

Planning and design for BLCP began in 2007 with an initial groundbreaking occurring in April 2010 and completion in Fall 2011. In March 2014, BLCP was designated as a New York State Build-Now Shovel Ready Certified Site. This distinction was awarded to BUDC from the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers, the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation, Agriculture and Markets, and Transportation, and the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, and New York State’s Empire State Development. BLCP is destined for significant development and is a prime area for support businesses for the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at Riverbend.

The Riverfront precinct incorporates a large naturalized area that overlooks the Buffalo River along with two monumental grain elevators that are important icons of the city’s rich industrial past. Pedestrian access to this area is restricted by active rail lines that border the precinct on the south and also cut through a naturalized peninsula to the north. These natural areas and former industrial lands provide an opportunity to maintain a naturalized area that encourages passive recreation along the riverfront, while improving ecological function through enhancement and conservation.

The Nomination Study Master Plan proposed creating a renewable energy campus south of the rail lines that would be part of the Buffalo Green Belt. Since the completion of the Nomination Study, the proposed Buffalo Green Belt plan faced challenges that led to abandoning this effort and the proposed projects. Also based on further investigations during the implementation phase, it was determined that access to this site is extremely difficult and that the land was more appropriate as an expansion of Tiff Nature Preserve. With its remote location and value as an ecological preserve and cultural tourism node, conserving the peninsula through a land trust offers interim protection of the property until a proposed use can be implemented. It is recommended that a non-for-profit organization



Image 15: Concrete Central and Buffalo River

with a mission to protect land with significant conservation value be pursued to acquire this property. With the exception of Concrete Central the property is currently owned by CSX. The peninsula, with its location, history and adjacencies to major ecological assets, deserves a form of protection (Image 15: Concrete Central and Buffalo River).

Tifft/Lehigh Valley precinct includes Tifft Nature Preserve, which is a 264-acre nature refuge dedicated to conservation and environmental education (Image 12: Tifft Nature Preserve walking trail). The preserve originally was a dairy farm in the 19th century that was converted to a rail trans-shipment center primarily for iron ore and coal. In the 1950's and 1960's, the site was used as a dumping location for city refuse near the present day Route 5. Since the 1970's, Tifft Nature Preserve has been transformed into a destination for recreation and ecological education. Tifft Nature Preserve, which is operated by the Buffalo Museum of Science, continues to pursue opportunities to expand its boundaries to the east, south and north on non-publicly owned lands. Approximately 100 acres within this precinct consists of inactive rail lands owned by Lehigh Valley. In collaboration with the City of Buffalo, Tifft Nature Preserve is pursuing acquisition of the Lehigh Valley property located east of the preserve. Environmental conditions determined in the Lehigh Valley Phase I Environmental Analysis (*Appendix F*) indicate that there are suspect contaminants on the Lehigh Valley Railroad properties. While this conclusion has made property acquisition difficult representatives of Tifft Nature Preserve continue to work with the city and Lehigh Valley on acquiring this property.

Since completion of the Nomination Study, efforts have begun to expand the existing Tifft Nature Preserve visitor facility to include a Sustainability Center. The facility upgrade and expansion plans incorporate green building techniques including alternative energy options and sustainable materials. The facility and its programming are designed to be an educational tool for visitors. The addition to the existing visitor center was selected over development of a new facility along Tifft Street as identified in the Nomination Study. Refer to section 4.8, Tifft Nature & Sustainability Center for more information.

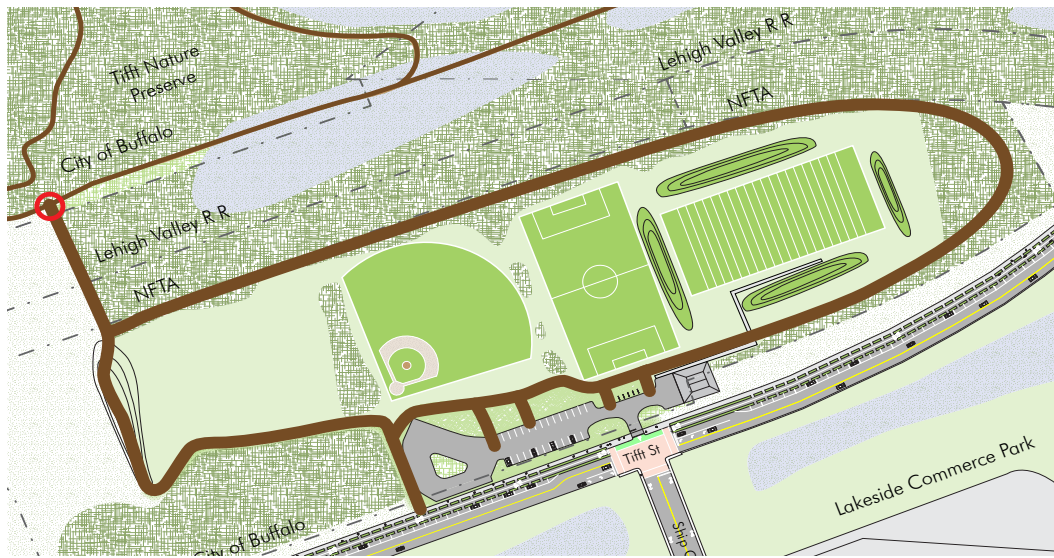


Image 16: Tift Nature Preserve walking trail

The Nomination Study recommends a new north-south road west of the rail corridor and an east-west road south of the Buffalo River to improve connectivity to within this precinct and the South Buffalo BOA. During the RiverBend Master Plan and Implementation Strategy planning efforts, it was determined that these connections were not required to support the build out and vision of the South Buffalo BOA. In its place the expansion of Tift Nature Preserve east to the rail lines and north to the Buffalo River will enhance the ecological and environmental goals of the South Buffalo BOA.

Throughout the Implementation Strategy, special focus was placed on the George J. Hartman Play Fields which forms a southern connection to Tift Nature Preserve. Through the public input process, citizens informed the planning team that the fields are a key community recreational resource utilized by city residents for football, baseball, soccer, and other athletic activities. Although the Hartman fields are an important asset, there is limited community access. Additionally, an undefined pathway, known as the ‘human cowpath,’ traverses wetlands and private property along the western edge of the fields connecting Hartman fields to Tift Nature Preserve. These assets sit at the gateway to the Outer Harbor and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park providing an optimal gateway location for South Buffalo (Image 16: Tift Nature Preserve walking trail).

Through collaboration with the City of Buffalo Parks and Recreation Department and Tift Nature Preserve, there is an opportunity to use portions of the George J. Hartman Play Fields for passive ecological education and recreation. Tift Nature Preserve is supportive of developing a formal pathway to connect to the fields and create a southern entrance to the preserve. Extending this new pathway around the field with educational signage about the ecology and history of the area provides an opportunity to inspire a vast and diverse population. Currently, metal bleachers exist around the fields and require ongoing maintenance to the structures and vegetation surrounding them. In the short-term, the Implementation Strategy proposes creating grassy berms to provide additional seating, and over time introducing permanent benches built into the earth mounds to further connect



Map 28: Enhanced trail system at George J. Hartman Play Fields

#### LEGEND

● ● ● ●	SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA		NATURAL VEGETATION
—	PARCEL BOUNDARY		RAIN GARDEN
	8' - 10' BERM		WETLAND
	ENTRANCE TO TIFT		TRAFFIC

visitors with the surrounding environment. By modifying the seating, maintenance will be reduced to mowing, which is already a required maintenance activity (Map 28: Enhanced trail system at George J. Hartman Play Fields).

The Hopkins Area precinct was defined as South Hopkins and North Hopkins in the Nomination Study Master Plan and includes areas primarily along Hopkins Street and Reading Avenue. Due to similar land use designations in these areas, as well as recommendations made in the Green Code, the precincts have been joined and are now referred to as the Hopkins Area. The Hopkins Area also incorporates part of the Alltiff landfill and is proposed as a light industrial park in the Nomination Study.

The Hopkins Area is defined by its light industrial and residential uses that coexist throughout the community. The Nomination Master Plan recommends that Hopkins Street be transformed into a mixed use Main Street community with 2-3 story structures comprised of commercial uses at grade and potential residential, office or commercial uses above. Through the development of the Green Code and Implementation Strategy it was determined that retail and commercial uses are most desirable on South Park Avenue where a Main Street condition already exists. Hopkins Street and Reading Avenue provide an opportunity to have small scale support uses for RiverBend and Buffalo Lakeside

Commerce Park. These uses along with appropriately scaled development, as defined in the Green Code, will create a desirable transition and buffer between the residential community and the adjacent light industrial uses.

Existing Neighborhoods precinct boundaries define the edges of residential neighborhoods within the South Buffalo BOA. The Nomination Study Master Plan expanded the residential areas to include new development opportunities at Nevilly Court and the adjacent streets. Since completion of the Nomination Study it has been determined that an expanded residential area is not desired and that reinvestment in the existing neighborhood is preferred. The updated precinct areas include this revision.

Many of the existing residential streets include incompatible uses and vacant lots which impact the quality and character of the community. The Green Code provides specific zoning and design guidelines that eliminate the future potential of these conflicts in use and character. The city's proposed zoning regulations are consistent with the South Buffalo BOA's vision to create a community that embraces its existing assets and encourages infill development.

The Existing Neighborhoods precinct in the north includes three Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA) owned parcels. These sites have been assessed and are waiting funding to complete remediation pursuant to a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Consent Order. This Strategy reiterates the Nomination Study recommendation that these specific parcels be remediated. It is recommended that the city explore remediation funding opportunities through the Environmental Restoration Program. These remediated parcels will improve the quality of the neighborhoods and allow for stronger, long-term investment in the area by residents.



### 4.3 Buffalo Green Code Summary

The Buffalo Green Code, “The Green Code”, is a place-based development strategy intended to implement Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan: The Queen City in the 21st Century. The Green Code includes a number of planning initiatives that inform, and are incorporated into, two fundamental components. The first component applies the principles of the Comprehensive Plan to a Land Use Plan that will guide the city’s physical development over the next 20 years. The second component codifies the Land Use Plan via a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which combines zoning, subdivision, and public realm standards into a single, user-friendly set of development regulations. This project represents Buffalo’s first citywide land use reassessment since 1977 and first comprehensive zoning rewrite since 1953.

The Green Code is based on the concept of place-based planning, which emphasizes building form and design rather than simply the separation of land uses. The project is organized around the idea of “place types,” which reflect the existing and desired character of distinct areas of the city. This approach embraces the city’s tradition of mixed use development where a variety of complementary uses often coexist, creating diverse urban centers.

The principles of the Green Code are represented by a three tiered approach, prioritizing economic well-being, social equity and environmental quality. The Green Code translates these principles into three main themes, all of which must be addressed in order to achieve true sustainability. The themes are:

- **Grow the Economy.** Accelerate downtown’s momentum, strengthen anchors along the knowledge corridor, create great places on the waterfront, and leverage and repurpose industrial assets.
- **Strengthen Neighborhoods.** Promote diversity and affordability, reinforce neighborhood centers, promote transportation choice, and reclaim vacant properties.
- **Repair the Environment.** Protect natural assets, enhance open spaces, and conserve energy and water.

Specific planning initiatives that have informed and have been incorporated into the Green Code include The following:

- **Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOAs).** The BOA planning effort places renewed focus on vacant and underutilized land in commercial and industrial districts. A majority of these lands are considered brownfields, which is defined as land that has perceived or actual environmental conditions that hamper redevelopment. Since 2006 the City of Buffalo has been evaluating the redevelopment potential of various locations that have a concentration of potentially contaminated lands. With financial and technical assistance from the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the City has been able to advance planning efforts for four BOAs in





Map 29: City of Buffalo and Brownfield Opportunity Areas

#### LEGEND

- BORDER OF THE CITY OF BUFFALO
- ..... SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA



Image 17: Green Code Future Places

the City. These BOAs include: South Buffalo, Buffalo River Corridor, Buffalo Harbor and Tonawanda Street Corridor (Map 29: City of Buffalo and Brownfield Opportunity Areas). The BOA Master Plans identify redevelopment and reuse strategies for these areas.

- Urban Renewal Plans (URPs). Many areas of the City have an additional layer of regulations that are found in the 30 existing Urban Renewal Plans (URP). The plans associated with Urban Renewal Areas were intended to guide development in specific areas of the City. In practice, the URPs acted as another layer of zoning which, at times, conflicted with the base zoning of an area. Removal, replacement or modification of these plans will eliminate zoning conflicts and are intended to give additional predictability to developers proposing projects in these areas under the new UDO.
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). The City has approximately 57.7 linear miles of waterfront land along Lake Erie, the Niagara River, the Buffalo River, Cazenovia Creek, and Scajaquada Creek. This waterfront land is a recreational, economic and ecological resource. Many of the areas along these waterways are located in a State-designated Coastal Management Program Boundary. In order to protect and enhance these areas the City has prepared a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) which establishes waterfront development and protection policies.

The intent of the Green Code is to promote sustainable development that reinvests in the city's core while preserving and enhancing the natural environment. The goal is to achieve maximum social benefit, creating vibrant neighborhoods that have a clear blueprint for sustainable growth (Image 17: Green Code Future Places). Since the South Buffalo BOA planning process was concurrent with the Green Code process, all of the land use and zoning implementation strategies recommended by the South Buffalo BOA are incorporated into the draft Green Code documents, including the Land Use Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The Green Code is expected to be complete and adopted by 2016.



## 4.4 RiverBend Summary



Image 18: RiverBend Aerial

RiverBend is a strategic, 260-acre brownfield site along the Buffalo River and a core area of the South Buffalo BOA. This site is undergoing a major transformation into the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend as a result of the planning and analysis conducted through the Step 2 and Step 3 BOA processes. The State of New York and SolarCity are investing a total of \$1.5 billion to create the largest solar-panel manufacturing facility in the Western Hemisphere at RiverBend, with the promise of the creation of approximately 1,500 new jobs at the site, along with an additional 1,500 new jobs in the Buffalo-Niagara region from businesses providing supplies and services to the Innovation Hub/SolarCity – many of which are destined to locate within the South Buffalo BOA.

The major implementation project advanced through the BOA Step 3 process is RiverBend. RiverBend – the former Republic Steel & Donner-Hanna Coke complex – was identified as a strategic brownfield site during the Step 2 Nomination phase of the BOA. It was the largest, undeveloped brownfield site within the South Buffalo BOA. The land use strategy developed through the Step 2 process anticipated that RiverBend would serve as the core of a new knowledge-based economic development strategy that included green industries, research & development, and advanced manufacturing (Image 18: RiverBend Aerial). Given the strategic importance of this site and prior to the completion of the Step 2 process, the core 185-acre RiverBend site was acquired by the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC) as a result of the analysis that was conducted during this planning process. This strategic acquisition was accomplished to ensure that this site achieved its economic development potential. In order to advance the implementation of the Step 2 Nomination Study recommendations, a detailed Master Plan for the RiverBend site was prepared during Step 3, with the goals of:

- Creating a regional model for “green,” sustainable development;
- Fostering long-term economic growth by leveraging the assets of the site and region along the themes of green industries, research & development and advanced manufacturing; and
- Applying place-making principles to create special public spaces and a new community along the banks of the Buffalo River.

The RiverBend Master Plan (2011) includes:

- A detailed real estate market analysis;
- a detailed subdivision, road and urban street system;
- an integrated green infrastructure plan;
- opportunities for renewable energy facilities;
- a public space and public access system, especially along the Buffalo River and with connections to adjoining neighborhoods;
- a flexible phasing plan with key infrastructure projects and cost estimates;
- Design guidelines for both public infrastructure and private development/building forms; and
- Recommendations for zoning and unified development ordinance regulations and requirements.

The RiverBend site is defined on the south by Tifft Street, the rail corridor on the west, Buffalo River on the North and Rittling Drive, Abby Street and New Abby Street on the east. RiverBend's development focus draws upon the region's assets, its real estate and economic trends, the metropolitan area's diverse employment base, and a highly competitive industrial market. The Master Plan is based on themes to Connect, Restore, Transform, and Engage with an emphasis on the creation of a regional asset.

#### Connect

A new road and urban street system will connect RiverBend to its surroundings, to downtown, and make links to the regional economy. The master plan envisions a transformation in scale for this former industrial site, from the massive infrastructure of the industrial era to a more human-scaled community that connects to early master planning efforts for the city, to the city's urban grid, and to the residential neighborhoods to the east of the site. A new system of roads, pedestrian circulation and transit define the framework for the urban grid and create a flexible layout of parcels that are adaptable to meet the market and at a walkable and human scale. The plan includes five (5) street typologies with varying Right-of-Way widths, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, green infrastructure and utility corridors.

#### Restore

The RiverBend Master Plan represents a holistic approach to regenerative design and development that integrates the rich ecological legacy of the waterfront site with contemporary "green" development, creating a functional and sustainable landscape that complements the economic and urban dimensions of the site. The Master Plan builds on the major remediation and restoration of the Buffalo River and shoreline being implemented by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a federal effort and partnership with state and local organizations including the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. Through the implementation of a green infrastructure



Map 30: RiverBend Masterplan

system throughout the site (Map 31: RiverBend Green Infrastructure). RiverBend will be able to realize a new, post-industrial potential for functionality. The green infrastructure plan includes new parks and public spaces, stormwater management, ecological corridors, recreational trails and open space, wastewater treatment, renewable energy systems, and public transportation. The strategy for the site combines naturalized areas that aim for more full ecological restoration with strategies that are integrated into the development footprint in a way that bridges the natural landscape with the built environment, providing more natural approaches to stormwater and landscape management within an urbanized context. Restored riparian and mesic forest, and grassland will provide habitat corridors and connections to existing preserves within the South Buffalo BOA (Tift Nature Preserve, Concrete Central Peninsula, and South Park), creating important ecological stepping-stones for birds and other native wildlife. Habitat improvements along the shoreline of the Buffalo will contribute to concurrent river restoration efforts, providing improved stormwater filtration before it reaches the river, and increased shade cover from overhanging vegetation for aquatic species. The existing landfill-containment cell is proposed to be transformed into a grassland for ecological purposes. Native grassland restoration on the containment cell will increase local and regional biodiversity and provide forage and resting habitat for migratory bird and butterfly species, transforming what is currently a liability into an ecological asset.

#### Transform

The RiverBend Master Plan proposes subdividing the site into five neighborhoods (Map 32: RiverBend land use by district map):

Republic Park;  
RiverBend Promenade;  
South Park Village;  
RiverBend Promenade South;  
RiverBend Commerce Park.

The grasslands-containment cell creates a natural division between the northern region, proposed as a more urban, mixed-use district, and the southern half of the site, intended for light industrial and logistic uses. Each neighborhood is centered around or along a different public space, with different building scales, uses and street typologies proposed for each. Within these neighborhoods, flexible land uses and parcel sizes provide market adaptability (Map 32: RiverBend Land Use by District).

Republic Park – is proposed as a mixed-use district occupying the north-west corner of the site and focused around a new public space, Republic Park. Uses in the district are proposed to contain a mix of research and development, offices and other supportive uses.

RiverBend Promenade – is the neighborhood along the Buffalo River and a proposed





Map 31: RiverBend Green Infrastructure



new riverfront promenade. This district is proposed as an area for waterfront-related and enhanced uses, as well as research and development.

South Park Village – is proposed as a district of small-scale, mixed-use development. The proposed uses are focused around small business incubation and R&D, although smaller-in scale than Republic Park. This neighborhood is centered around a proposed “Transit Plaza” at the bend in South Park Avenue and the intersection with a north-south street through the development site.

RiverBend Promenade South – is intended for longer-term build-out and would be centered on a new marina at the Buffalo River’s dramatic bend. This could be a location for mid-rise waterfront housing as well as marine related services and uses.

RiverBend Commerce Park – the southern portion of the site is proposed to be devoted to large-scale light-industrial and logistics uses. It is a complementary development to Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park and is intended to leverage the adjoining rail access and existing industrial uses (Zehnder-Rittling).

The RiverBend Master Plan provides development guidelines that encourage a green, modern and vital urban neighborhood to create a regional destination for jobs and a new urban destination. A new system of roads, pedestrian circulation and transit defines the framework for the urban grid (Image 19: RiverBend Vehicular Network cross-section). A comprehensive green infrastructure plan will restore damaged ecosystems and allow the riverfront to be better utilized and appreciated by the local community. The land use recommendations of the RiverBend Master Plan have been incorporated into the City of Buffalo’s new, draft Unified Development Ordinance. The RiverBend site has been designated as A D-IL District-Light Industrial Zone. District Zones correspond to specialized places serving a predominant use, such as retail centers, college campuses or industrial sites. The D-IL Zone addresses sites intended for low-impact and moderate impact employment uses, which may benefit from close proximity to, but clear separation from, mixed-use residential neighborhoods, and are typically located adjacent to highway, rail and water access points. All of these conditions apply to RiverBend. The current zoning is M-3 Heavy Industrial. The RiverBend Master Plan and Design Guidance document can be found in *Appendix E*.



Map 32: Riverbend Land Use by District Map

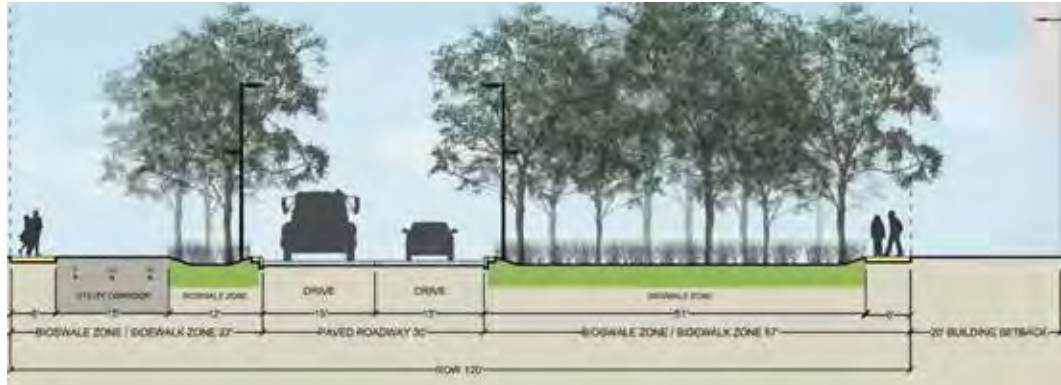


Image 19: RiverBend Vehicular Network Cross-Section

### Flexible Phasing Plan & Implementation

At full build-out, the RiverBend Master Plan, predicts that 3,550 jobs will be created and 3,115,000 gross square footage (GSF) of development will occur over a twenty year period. The RiverBend Master Plan is intended as a long-term redevelopment effort, with a flexible phasing plan that can take advantage of changing real estate markets and emerging opportunities. The thematic foundations to the plan – advanced manufacturing based on emerging research and development, renewable energy and sustainable development principles, and uses that support and complement the emergence of the Buffalo River as a regional recreational amenity – will be the cornerstones to future development.

This flexibility and foundational principles were advanced in dramatic fashion with the announcement by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo of the creation of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend (2013), and even more dramatically with the subsequent announcement of the expansion of the project with the entry of SolarCity into the project. As currently proposed, a 1.2 million square foot advanced manufacturing and research and development facility will occupy the northern-half of the development site (Image 20: Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend under construction). This facility will create more than 2,000 jobs, attract \$1.5 billion in public and private investments and will occupy approximately 10% of the South Buffalo BOA acreage. Although the detailed site infrastructure and subdivision of this portion of the site into smaller development parcels will not be implemented as a result of this project, the principles of sustainable development and a regional destination for jobs and transformational economic development envisioned by the RiverBend Master Plan will hold true (Image 20: Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend under construction).



Image 20: Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend under construction

On the northern end of RiverBend at the former Village Farms site, the English Pork Pie Company, which produces traditional English pork pies for distribution nationally and internationally, relocated their food manufacturing plant and headquarters to an existing facility in 2011. The company is currently studying options for expanding their product and employment opportunities in the near future. The diversity of manufacturing represented by these companies demonstrates that economic redevelopment is viable in the South Buffalo BOA.

In addition to the development announcements, one phase of a shoreline restoration project proposed in the Nomination Study Master Plan and RiverBend Master Plan has been completed by the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper on the north-east side of South Park Avenue. A second phase is on the south-west side – the RiverBend Promenade – is under construction. The RiverBend Master Plan emphasizes public access throughout the 1.3 miles of riverfront in the form of naturalized trails and public promenade.



## **4.5 South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study Summary**

The South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study explores a range of issues affecting the feasibility of developing an 18-hole golf course on a 201-acre brownfield site located within the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (SBBOA). A golf course on the site was a recommended implementation action proposed in the SBBOA Step 2 Nomination study. It was seen as an option to put underutilized brownfield lands to productive use while helping to connect the open space network within the South Buffalo BOA. The golf course would be a recreational amenity for the BOA and entire Buffalo-Niagara community, as well as adding value for surrounding uses. In addition, a new golf course would enable the removal of the existing golf course from historic South Park and the restoration of Olmsted's 1894 vision for an arboretum in the park.

The Team for the South Buffalo Golf Course Feasibility Study assessed the site's physical layout, its environmental features, such as wetlands, and known environmental concerns (brownfields). The Team also conducted a thorough assessment of financial issues associated with developing a golf course, as well as a market study and a user survey of Buffalo-area residents. A number of site concept plans were developed, including 18-hole, 9-hole and other configurations to evaluate how a golf course would fit on the property. The design looked at all configurations, including using the entire site. The conclusion from the analysis is that environmental concerns, space limitations, other physical constraints and financial issues preclude the development of a financially feasible 18-hole course on the site. The best option for success is the development of a high quality 9-hole course on the southern portion of the site (Steelfields/ Marilla Street landfill property), along with additional recreational amenities within the project area (Image 21 Proposed Golf Course Plan).

The study area is approximately 201 acres in size, consisting of 27 parcels with nine separate owners. A variety of constraints effectively limit the useable area to about 62 acres. While most of the parcels are vacant, some remain in active use, including two automobile scrap yards. One 24-acre parcel included within the study area is no longer available for sale. Many of the parcels present significant environmental issues, including closed landfills and former industrial uses. The site is bisected by an active railroad line, constraining the ability to use the entire site. The central area of the site includes a large wetland area and a lime pile that further complicate connections between the northern and the southern sections. The wetland, created as part of the remediation of the property, is a valued resource. Removal of the lime pile is underway, but will likely require approximately seven years to complete. The study Team completed Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) for 10 properties within the study area to get a better idea about prior contamination, and evaluated the ecological and habitat conditions of the property. Based on the physical analysis, the southern portion of the property, known as the Steelfields/ Marilla Street Landfill property, emerged as the best option for development as a golf course.





Image 21: Proposed Golf Course Plan

The Team conducted an extensive analysis into the market feasibility of the project, looking at existing supply and expected demand, and factoring in area demographics, different price points, the type of course (private vs. public; executive vs. 9-hole vs. 18-hole, etc.) and proposed marketing efforts. The results suggest that the golf market in the Buffalo area is reaching the saturation point, and a new course must be carefully positioned in order to be successful. A 9-hole facility that essentially replaces the existing golf course at South Park with no new addition of supply has a greater chance for success, particularly since development costs would be significantly lower.

Potential user demand is expected to derive largely from current residents living within the market area, although some additional demand will derive from seasonal residents, new player development and attraction of golfers from outside the market area. The market study suggests, based on national trends, that there is untapped latent demand made up of people who are not yet golfers or who may be interested in playing more golf. There is also the opportunity to draw more rounds, particularly since the existing golf course at South Park has the lowest amount of play of comparable 9-hole courses in the region. The inherent draw of an attractive, high quality, well designed course will help boost play. In addition, a strong marketing program will help the course capture an increased share of the golfing market, and a focus on a strong and enjoyable player development program will help attract new players to the location.

The study also commissioned a user survey to increase knowledge of customer and local golf behaviors, and perceptions of golf courses owned by the City of Buffalo, and, in particular, the South Park facility. The survey was sent to 10,000 individuals within a 20-minute drive time of the proposed new golf course, and included both local golfers and non-golfers. A statistically significant number of responses were received (433 total, 219 golfers and 214 non-golfers). The information gathered from the survey was used to drive more fact-based decisions in positioning, services, marketing and pricing; as well as the concept of closing the existing facility and opening the new one. Results of the survey suggested that golfers would prefer South Park be replaced with an 18-hole course, but would settle for a full-length 9-hole course that has multiple tees and flexible length; to include amenities such as a driving range, putting green, and short-game area; and adding non-golf amenities such as walking/bicycling paths and an amphitheater.

The study carefully analyzed what the appropriate price range for the new course would be, balancing the desire to stay affordable with the need to be financially sustainable. Based on an analysis of the competing supply, it was recommended that the course be targeted at the affordable “Public Price” market, with a published fee of \$31.60 per round, including cart. While this is higher than the current comparable rates of \$26.50, the higher rate takes into consideration that these rates are projected out to 2015, and the course will be a high quality facility. Consistent and effective marketing will help operators achieve these rates. The



Image 22: Proposed Golf Course Aerial

study includes a strategy for implementing a comprehensive marketing program, including affinity programs, clinics, outings, and player development programs. The proposed new golf facility will include practice greens, a putting course, a ‘pitch and putt’ facility and a driving range, ideally positioning it as a golf learning center.

In developing the concept designs for the golf course, designers took into consideration size, shape, ownership, topography, slope and past uses, as well as constraints such as the active rail line, the lime piles and the need to avoid wetlands. While it is possible to design around these features, it would add significantly to costs, not only for construction, but also for on-going operations. Another consideration was the desire to avoid disturbing the landfill cap and to limit the amount of fill needed to develop the course. The southern site, with its more moderate slopes, would be more cost effective to develop.

Several alternative course routing plans were developed. The cornerstone of the design was the desire to place the clubhouse at the highest point, which offers spectacular views of the Buffalo skyline. The idea is to make the clubhouse a community gathering place. Its scenic character will help attract visitors and create a year-round destination, increasing the revenue potential of the facility. Other considerations included a desire to design a course that would play quickly, be accessible to players at differing skill levels, and offer a fun playing environment. These factors were balanced with considerations of adequate space (length/width per hole), safe sightlines, hole separation, flow and the variety of hole configurations.

Options considered included a full size 18-hole course; an executive length 18-hole course;



a full-size 9-hole course; an executive size 9-hole course that would be expandable to 12 holes; and a flexible ‘outside the box’ approach that offered several different loops. In addition, the design recognized that expanding the variety of amenities offered would expand the length of the season, help make the facility more popular and increase the potential for revenues. To this end, the design incorporates both golf related amenities and other recreational facilities. Where feasible, these features would have dual purposes. For example, the driving range could function as a sledding hill in the winter. Classrooms for golf learning could also be used for other types of instructional activities, and the clubhouse can accommodate activities and events year-round. The facility could become a stop on the regional bicycle trail network, and offer a host of winter time attractions and activities. There should be room to add onto the clubhouse as demand is increased, and/or as new attractions are developed.

Other recommended amenities include a practice putting green; a short game center where students can practice approach shots from a variety of course situations (sand traps, long grass, hills and hollows); and a 9-hole pitch & putt facility. A pitch & putt facility is a short course with holes that are 30- to 100-yards from tee to green. This length falls within the ability of beginner golfers, and offers a quick, fun practice environment for more experienced players. Other possibilities include outdoor lawn seating for concerts, movies, fireworks watching, and leisure time gatherings. The property should accommodate as many different uses and reasons for people to visit as possible. This approach will increase potential revenues, as well as help create a four season community asset.

The final conceptual master plan is designed to fit on one contiguous 62-acre parcel. The site is owned by one entity, simplifying the development process. This owner is willing to consider a long-term lease, eliminating land acquisition costs. Although further evaluation will be needed, the site appears to be solid. As a landfill that received largely inorganic waste, issues with organic wastes, such as landfill gases, leachate or subsidence, are less likely to occur. It may be possible to plant some trees and shrubs in some areas to add character and enhance habitat value. The site is generally well drained and should support growing golf course grasses if properly irrigated. Using a municipal water source is recommended to guarantee high quality water and reduce issues of soil salt build up.

The design of the course is intended to provide a fast playing, fun golf experience that reduces delays and lost balls, and increases chances for pars and birdies. The final design includes holes of varied length that play in four different compass directions, both up and down the slopes. A great variety of sun and varying wind directions adds to the playing experience. The course is designed to appeal to all skill levels, with multiple tees for each hole. It also includes two starting and two finishing holes near the clubhouse. This design gives the golf course maximum flexibility to host the greatest number of golfers. Golfers can choose a variety of loops (four, five or nine holes), and operators can double load the



Image 23: Proposed Golf Course Green with view to Downtown Buffalo

course for leagues or during peak times, getting golfers on the course twice as fast.

While the design is conceptual in nature, it is recommended that the facility incorporate a strong theme to create a distinct identity. Given its location in South Buffalo, one suggestion is an Irish theme. The design would include small pot bunkers instead of big sand traps, wide bluegrass fairways, undulating greens, and the use of stonewalls as visual separators of holes.

The study took a careful look at the financial viability of the proposed facility. Based on the pro forma developed for the 9-hole golf course, the facility will be able to support on-going operations costs; however, the course is unlikely to generate sufficient funds to also cover the cost of debt service. It is projected that it will require some level of initial subsidy to reduce the amount that must be financed.

Total development costs are estimated to be approximately \$10 million. This estimate includes building the golf course; construction of buildings (club house/ community center, maintenance building, cart storage and a pavilion for outside events); interior furniture, fixtures and equipment; utilities; and soft costs. It assumes that the project will be built using prevailing wage rates, and includes a 15% contingency due to the level of uncertainty that remains about the site. Cost projections include allowances for leasing the land, golf carts, mowers, and other maintenance equipment, while revenue projections include pro shop and food and beverage sales in addition to greens fees. Calculations for debt service assume the capital costs would be financed at prime rate (3.25%) for a 30-year term. Based on these assumptions, a subsidy of approximately \$4 million would be necessary for the facility to cover debt service by year 7. The assumptions in the pro forma are conservative. To the extent that the course is able to raise additional revenues, particularly through increasing rounds and generating additional non-golf revenues from food and beverage sales and other revenue streams, the amount to be subsidized would be lower.





Image 24: Proposed Golf Course Green with view to Our Lady of Victory Basilica

The study also detailed a plan to restore the historic arboretum in South Park. South Park is considered to be one of the best preserved remaining Olmsted-designed parks in the country. Relocating the existing South Park Golf Course from the park would enable a more historically sensitive implementation of Olmsted’s vision from 1894. This has the potential to establish a world-class attraction. Capital costs for the arboretum are estimated to be \$2.3 million. Plans will need to be phased in gradually over time, as the landscape is transitioned away from a golf course and historic park elements are reintroduced.

This project has the potential to be the “New Face of Golf - Post Recession.” It is a creative adoptive reuse of underutilized land for recreational, business and environmental objectives that could be a model for other similar situations and sites. The complete Feasibility Study can be found in *Appendix D*, along with additional supporting materials for this study (Ecological Field Reports, Marketing Assessment, Golfers’ Survey, and other materials).

As a result of the feasibility study and suggested land use recommendations prepared for the South Buffalo BOA, the proposed new City of Buffalo Unified Development Ordinance has designated the proposed golf course site as a District Green (D-OG) Zone. This zone addresses civic greens and parks, characterized by trees and landscape, framed by landscape elements of building facades, and designed for passive or recreational use. The current zoning is M-2 General Industrial. In addition, the Golf Course Feasibility Study was presented to the Board of Directors of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy. As the not-for-profit responsible for guiding the future restoration and development of the Olmsted Parks and Parkways in the City of Buffalo, this organization has agreed to accept the responsibility for further exploration and implementation of the recommendations of the Feasibility Study, in coordination with the City of Buffalo’s Division of Parks & Recreation.

## 4.6 Hopkins Street Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

The Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy focuses on the Hopkins Street Neighborhood which is located along Hopkins Street, and runs north-south on the eastern edge of the South Buffalo BOA. This community includes a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses. For most of this community's history, the neighborhood has been defined by the steel industry which was in operation for much of the 20th century. The image of a 'pub on every corner' with vibrant commercial districts and dense residential neighborhoods intermingled with industrial facilities was typical for this era. Strong neighborhood connections existed, linking residents to places of commerce and to social and recreational amenities in the community. As the steel industry diminished and no longer held a presence in the South Buffalo BOA, the neighborhood fabric deteriorated.

There is a growing trend in municipal planning to focus on developing Neighborhood Revitalization Plans to address many of these issues, particularly in rust-belt cities where economic opportunities drastically changed over the course of the past century. Effective Revitalization Plans are typically resident-led to give those most affected by the plan a voice. In addition they generally adopt a place-based approach to improve quality-of-life, address critical environmental, economic, and social challenges, and focus on the strengths of the community to more effectively capitalize on future development opportunities.

The Revitalization Strategy for the Hopkins Street neighborhood seeks to address many of these similar challenges. As the steel industry left the area, people relocated and many homes and businesses became vacant and experienced disinvestment. In recent years, brownfield cleanup efforts and public infrastructure investments throughout the South Buffalo BOA have paved the way for redevelopment.

The Hopkins Street Neighborhood is now undergoing transformation and has the opportunity to develop as a place where residents can live, work, play and learn. Ongoing planning and development efforts by New York State and the City of Buffalo are kick starting further development in South Buffalo. The creation of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend will provide a center for green manufacturing and become a catalyst for investment in the area (Image 25: Rendering of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub). The Innovation Hub is a major stepping stone towards making Buffalo a hub for innovation, and attracting businesses from around the world. This initiative projects the generation of over 1,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion of investment in properties adjacent to the Hopkins Street Community. In addition to these investments, there has been increased growth of existing companies within the Hopkins Street Community including: the English Pork Pie Company and Modern Recycling. Business investments and job opportunities in the Hopkins Street Community and adjacent neighborhoods further enhance the potential to create a thriving live-work community.

By empowering residents to embrace the community's assets, untapped resources, energy and creativity, the collective desires of the community for a better future can become a



Image 25: Rendering of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub

reality. Developing area-wide initiatives that build on and enhance ongoing investments will provide the groundwork for the future of the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) outlines guiding principles and initiatives that have been developed through community and stakeholder input throughout the planning process. These principles aim to create a community that includes spaces to live, work, play and learn in order to achieve the community's vision. An attractive, healthy and vibrant community is one that has businesses that support housing, educational facilities, community services and includes recreational destinations. Therefore, the key strategies in the NRS are intended to address issues associated with and improve: quality of life, workforce development and housing.

Two target areas are identified within the Hopkins Street Neighborhood. The northern section ("North Hopkins") is defined by New Abby Street and South Park Avenue on the North, Abby Street to the west, Tiff Street on the South, and Hopkins Street on the east. The southern section ("South Hopkins") is bounded by Reading Avenue on the north, Hopkins Street on the west, South Park on the south and South Park Avenue on the east. A map of the Hopkins Street Neighborhood Revitalization Study area and target areas is included as (Map 33: Map of Neighborhoods).

#### **4.6.1 Existing Conditions Summary**

A plan is only as good as the information on which it is based. To develop a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy it is therefore necessary to conduct a thorough review of the demographic, economic, physical and environmental conditions of the community, which was completed in Section 3, Existing Conditions Analysis of the South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy. Information Sources such as the United States Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics were used to compile the data to portray the physical and demographic information related to the study area. A more comprehensive



Map 33: Map of Neighborhoods

existing conditions analysis for the entire SBBOA study area is included in the Nomination Study, with an update provided as part of this Step 3 Implementation Strategy. The existing conditions for the study area, as identified through the initial inventory, are summarized below.

#### Population

Population composition as well as growth or decline has a direct impact on the services required both locally and regionally. Population change may additionally indicate the inability of a community to meet the needs of its residents, causing them to relocate to



areas with improved quality-of-life. Between 1990 and 2000, the city of Buffalo lost approximately 11 percent of its residents, with an additional 11 percent loss between 2000 and 2010. The Hopkins Street neighborhood has mirrored city-wide trends, losing approximately 12 percent of its population between 2000 and 2010 (Table 9: Population Change). By comparison, the Buffalo-Niagara MSA lost only 3.3 percent of its population, suggesting the city continues to experience population loss to surrounding first and outer ring suburbs.

Another important consideration is a community's age breakdown. Different age groups require different services to enhance their quality-of-life. The age breakdown of an area additionally has implications on the community's vision and goals, and may require the addition of specialized services and amenities in order to realize their vision. According to the 2010 census, the majority of the study area residents are between 40 and 64 years of age (33.5 percent). The second largest age group in the study area consists of residents under the age of 19 years (29 percent). This age bracket represents school aged children who tend to utilize recreational amenities and community centers and require quality schools to provide the educational tools required for future success.

The study area is well represented by a cross section of age groups. Age diversity is beneficial to communities as each age group contributes different knowledge, experiences and skill sets. However, the study area has experienced population loss, similar to the City of Buffalo. Population retention and quality-of-life are key considerations to promote long-term residency and ownership in neighborhoods. The City has the opportunity to identify improvements and amenities to retain and attract residents to the study area as has been seen with the recent economic announcements.

### Income

According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2012), the median income in the City of Buffalo is approximately \$30,000 compared to a median income of \$50,000 in Erie County and \$56,000 in New York State. Approximate income data through the U.S. Census Bureau is only released for larger geographic areas due to the sensitivity of the information, and therefore is not available for the study area, which was evaluated at the census tract level. However, other demographic information, such as population and housing characteristics, suggest that income growth within the study area mirrors the city. Recent successes throughout the city to attract new, niche industries to former industrial areas (i.e. RiverBend Commerce Park) are increasingly providing opportunities for the city to educate and train the workforce and attract skilled workers to the region. New employment opportunities may additionally provide higher paying job opportunities for existing and new residents.



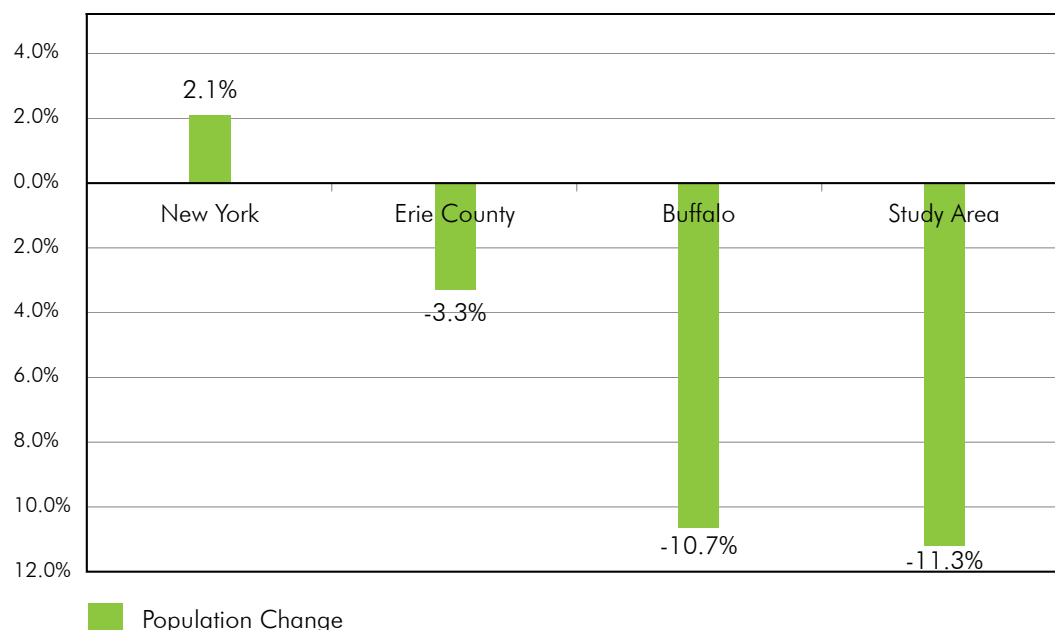


Table 9: Population Change

### Educational Attainment

Educational attainment directly relates to the ability of residents to attain higher paying jobs, acquire the capital to invest in their communities, and to adapt to changing economic conditions. According to the 2010 census, the study area has a larger proportion of residents who have less than a high school degree (22.3 percent) compared to the city, Erie County, and New York State. In addition, only 9.4 percent of individuals in the study area have obtained a Bachelor's degree and only 2.5 percent of residents have obtained graduate degrees. The study area lags behind the city, county and state with respect to residents attaining advanced degrees. The study area would benefit from having an educated and trained workforce, particularly with the announcement of new advanced manufacturing companies locating to the district area. The city has the opportunity to engage residents regarding new employment opportunities and assist with identifying workforce development opportunities, as determined to be relevant to the goals of the community.

### Housing

The study area has a mix of older and newer housing units that are relatively affordable (Image 26: Hopkins Street). The Hickory Woods neighborhood (i.e. the North Hopkins target area), was developed in the 1990s. As part of this development, approximately 60 new single family homes were constructed. The majority of homes in this neighborhood are assessed between \$30,000 and \$50,000, although some newer homes along Abby Street are assessed at more than \$60,000. At both steering committee meetings and community meetings, residents and stakeholders raised concern over the poor neighborhood housing



Image 26: Hopkins Street

conditions that exist. Stakeholders and residents noted that the majority of property maintenance issues are due to absentee landlords failing to maintain their rental units. As part of this NRS, a neighborhood survey was completed. During field visits, several vacant buildings and lots were observed in disrepair with numerous code violations. An overview of building conditions per block is included in the Curbside Assessment Surveys (*See Appendix B*) to identify areas that would benefit from additional enforcement or investment.

Over the past several decades, the city of Buffalo has been experiencing a decline in the number of households and consequently has had an oversupply of housing stock. According to the 2000 and 2010 census, approximately 12.6 percent of the housing within the study area is vacant, which is slightly lower than 2000 vacancy rates (12.7 percent). By comparison, 15.7 percent of housing is vacant in the City of Buffalo. High vacancy rates have an adverse impact on neighborhood quality, often signaling disinvestment or inviting nuisance activities.

Homeownership is another important consideration for neighborhood quality-of-life. Residents who intend to live in the neighborhood over the long-term generally have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of their properties and community. It is important to note that higher numbers of absentee landlords frequently contribute to reported nuisance activity. While the majority of area residents are homeowners (56.7%) there has been an increase in the number of renter-occupied housing over the past decade. A larger proportion of residents within the study area own their homes than the city as a whole. However, between 2000 and 2010, home ownership declined by 6.4 percent.

Homeownership and investment in the community should be encouraged to improve quality-of-life and retain residents. Long-term goals for the study area should include rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and identifying programs and methods for increasing homeownership.



Image 27: Curbside Assessment Report sample

## Infrastructure

As part of the existing condition summary, a visual assessment was performed to determine the condition of the existing infrastructure in the Hopkins Street Neighborhood. These observations include assessment of the existing land use, street, sidewalk, building stock and landscape conditions (Image 27: Curbside Assessment Report Sample). The assessments are intended to provide information to determine areas that require investment and where opportunities exist for development.

The condition of the streets and sidewalks in the Hopkins Street Neighborhood varies throughout the corridor from recently paved and striped to unimproved areas lacking curbs and sidewalks. The assessment accounts for these conditions along with the condition of the material (Image 28: Existing street condition on Reading Avenue). The quality of the community's streets and sidewalks should enhance a sense of community while providing accessibility for all users. Streets that have delineated areas for motorists, bicyclists and parked cars provide a sense of safety for users. Continuous and accessible sidewalk networks improve mobility for all pedestrians and are particularly important for pedestrians with disabilities.

An example of the curbside assessment is below with the complete Hopkins Street Curbside Assessment included in *Appendix B*.

### 4.6.2 Vision, Guiding Principles, Objectives and Actions

The vision for Hopkins Street was developed through input from residents, non-for-profit organizations, private sector representatives, neighborhoods groups, government agencies, and other interested parties. Below is the vision for the community:



Image 28: Existing street condition on Reading Avenue

### Vision Statement

*The Hopkins Street Neighborhood is a community with a vibrant, engaging setting that embraces its natural assets and invests in sustainable development projects. The Hopkins Street Neighborhood is characterized by clean and safe streets that promote alternative transportation options and connect residents to assets and destinations outside of the community. Residents invest in the existing residential building stock to maintain the character of the area, and new investments continue to be made to generate housing for a mix of income levels. Hopkins Street is known for its successful retail, office, service and hospitality businesses, which enable residents to enjoy all the attributes of urban living. (Image 29: Vision for Hopkins Street Rendering)*

The NRS offers techniques and best practices to achieve the vision set forth above. The NRS is a working document that is intended to be flexible and adapt to external factors while being guided by the vision and principles set forth by the community. Success will be achieved through small incremental actions and continued community advocacy.

### Guiding Principles, Objectives and Actions

This NRS identifies five guiding principles that are supported by specific objectives and actions. They represent the core values identified through the stakeholder working groups and align with the development priorities established by the Western New York Regional Economic Council. The guiding principles for the Hopkins Street Neighborhood include workforce development, building community resources, housing, quality-of-life, and sustainable development. The principles, when considered together, will contribute towards achieving the community's vision.

**1. Workforce Development:** The Hopkins Street Community was defined by the steel industry throughout the late 19th and early 20th Century. During this era the residents



Image 29: Vision for Hopkins Street Rendering

fulfilled the needs of the local manufacturing plants providing a blue collar workforce. With the demise of the local steel industry, these workers and the community were left with an employment void. The community and City at large have an opportunity to increase business investment and expand employment by training its workforce with the skills required for growing and hiring industries. This guiding principle aligns with the goals and vision outlined in the Buffalo Billion Investment Strategy for workforce development. Supporting workforce development opportunities promotes aligning the skills of workers behind career paths, certificates and degrees required for core industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare and tourism. This approach will create a flexible, industry-demand-driven and inclusive training environment.

**Challenges and Opportunities:** Western New York has an abundance of colleges and universities, which are a critical source of educated labor for employers throughout the region. However, the graduates entering the workforce do not necessarily align with workforce needs. In Western New York, for example, a majority of job openings (75 percent) require no college degree. This gap often leads to “brain drain,” where much of knowledge capital opts to relocate, impacting the region’s competitive advantage in attracting and sustaining businesses and residents. With the recent economic announcements of incoming industry, Buffalo, and particularly the Hopkins Street neighborhood, have the opportunity to identify workforce needs and create workforce development programs to better align job seekers to meet those requirements.

**Objective A:** Educate neighborhood residents to training opportunities in targeted industries.

**Actions:**

- Identify opportunities to provide evening adult basic education and computer classes at neighborhood schools, through existing community centers and faith-based organizations.



- Use best practices to link non-profits, community organizations, community colleges and technical schools to enable residents to develop hard skills, soft skills and support services training.
- Work with area schools to design and support early and middle college programs that provide students with the skills they need to advance to higher education and in-demand occupations.
- Work with neighborhood businesses to create scholarship funds for neighborhood students.

**Objective B:** Ensure that neighborhood residents are aware of job opportunities that align with their skills or available training opportunities.

**Actions:** Connect neighborhood residents to training opportunities in targeted industries. Promote adult education opportunities such as programs offered at the Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology.

- Collaborate with local schools and churches to provide evening adult education courses.
- Work with local businesses and intermediaries to ensure local residents are aware of job opportunities.
- Work with local businesses on work training programs for neighborhood residents who work in entry-level or apprentice jobs in companies where advancement potential exists.

**2. Building Community Resources:** The availability of and access to community resources is an important neighborhood quality that may directly impact an individual's desire to reside in an area. Community resources, including community centers, childcare facilities, continuing education opportunities and others contribute to quality-of-life.

**Objective A:** Establish partnerships and provide resources necessary to encourage mixed income and mixed-use neighborhoods.

**Actions:** Strengthen public and private partnerships to align neighborhood revitalization efforts with this Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.

- Support and promote home-buyer education, financial and budget management programs to help households maintain and increase the value of their investments in homeownership.
- When possible, co-locate workforce development programs with homeownership centers and vice versa.

**Objective B:** Create the organizational capacity necessary to see recommendations of the NRS and South Buffalo BOA Implementation Strategy through to implementation.

**Actions:**

- Create the North Hopkins Community Association. The current community has two city registered block clubs: Abby Street and Hickory Woods. Currently there are no strong business advocates that have been defined in the community. These existing block clubs have been very vocal in the past and would provide engaged community members that can form and lead a community association effort. Leaders of the Association can contact the City Board of Block Clubs to organize and guide its effort for forming the association.
- Create the South Hopkins Community Association. The current community has two city registered block clubs: Colgate Avenue and Marilla Street. There are numerous successful local and international businesses in the community including Sorrento Lactilis, Pellicano Specialty Food and Heintz & Weber Company to name a few. The Reading Avenue community has come together in the past for the South Buffalo Italian Festival showing a strong interest in celebrating its community. Create a single association that focuses on community wide issues led by residents and business leaders. This approach will provide the most leverage in pursuing the initiatives defined in this strategy and ongoing community concerns. Strong engaged leaders within these groups should form the association. These leaders can contact the City Board of Block Clubs to organize and guide its effort for forming the association.
- Strengthen the relationships between residents and businesses to facilitate alignment of the neighborhood efforts with this strategy
- Promote the Revitalization Strategy throughout the community to build on community support
- Promote membership to new community associations
- Create a Hopkins Street Steering Committee formed by the local city councilmember that includes leaders from the following organizations: proposed North Hopkins Community Association, proposed South Hopkins Community Association, Office of Strategic Planning, Office of Public Works, Parks & Streets, South Buffalo Neighborhood Housing Services, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, South District Council Member (currently Christopher Scanlon), Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. The goal of the committee is to coordinate the initiatives defined for the community and advocate as one voice.
- Pursue initiatives defined in the revitalization strategy based on priority list and available funding.

**3. Housing:** A mix of market rate and affordable housing are central to the health of a community. The healthiest neighborhoods have individuals and families of varying income



Image 30: Market Rate Housing

levels living side-by-side, in safe environments.

**Challenges and Opportunities:** One of the primary challenges associated with housing in the Hopkins Street Neighborhood is an aging housing stock. In particular, homeowners with modest income levels may have a more difficult time rehabilitating or maintaining their properties if the proper resources are not available. In addition, the neighborhood may experience difficulty establishing new, market rate housing and overcoming environmental issues associated with former industrial operations in the area. However, large numbers of vacant properties and new industrial development at RiverBend provide the opportunity to attract new residents and introduce market rate housing to the area.

**Objective A:** Introduce market-rate and mixed-use housing to the neighborhood. (Image 30: Market Rate Housing)

**Actions:**

- Identify publicly owned properties that are candidates for short-term redevelopment opportunities.
- Collaborate with major employers to provide a comprehensive Employer-Assisted Housing Program to attract and retain new residents along with a diverse, quality workforce, thereby reinforcing the connection between housing and economic development.
- Encourage incorporation of new housing into RiverBend development.

**Objective B:** Develop and promote housing programs that advocate homeownership and maintenance, while increasing the value of neighborhood assets and improving quality-of-life.

**Actions:**

- Promote homeownership as a means to build wealth.
- Encourage home-buyers and existing homeowners to work with NHS for education, financial and budget management programs to help maintain and increase the

value of their investments. NHS offers additional programs on predatory lending practices and identity theft.

- Encourage existing homeowners to work with NHS weatherization team to evaluate their existing homes and identify opportunities to create a more comfortable and efficient environment.
- Provide down payment assistance programs that help buyers build equity through homeownership.

**4. Quality of Life:** The natural, open space and historic assets surrounding the Hopkins Street Community can be a catalyst for strengthening its competitive advantage and attracting higher value uses to the area. In particular Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens, South Park, the Outer Harbor, and Buffalo River can be used to leverage both public and private investment. By connecting these natural assets and branding them as a whole, the community will be distinguished from other areas in the city and attract visitors, new residents, infill development and new business opportunities.

**Objective A:** Support development and further integration of pedestrian path network to connect residents and businesses to commercial, social, recreation and natural amenities. The Implementation Strategy provides six detailed targeted initiatives to achieve these objectives.

**Actions:** Section 4.8.2 of the Implementation Strategy details the initiatives defined to implement this strategy. The initiatives include:

- RiverBend Trail Initiative: Create a north-south recreational pedestrian and bicycle connection that connects the trails along the Buffalo River and South Park Avenue in the north with Tifft Street and the proposed All-Tifft trail system in the South.
- All-Tifft Trail Initiative: Creation of a pedestrian trail system at the All-Tifft recreational site will connect South Park and the residential community on the southern end of the South Buffalo BOA with the proposed RiverBend trail system. This connection will provide a trail system from South Park to the Buffalo River.
- Paper Street Trails Initiative: Paper streets are public streets identified in the real property system but never constructed. The South Buffalo BOA has two significant paper streets, Germania Street and Colgate Avenue, which provide an opportunity to be linkages to a larger trail system. (Image 31: Paper Street Trail)

**Objective B:** Transform the existing street network into an integrated community system for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. In conjunction with the South Buffalo BOA implementation effort the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works installed bike lanes along South Park Avenue to improve the bicycle connectivity to the downtown core and begin the transformation of the street condition. (Image 32: Complete Street Infrastructure at South Park Avenue)



Image 31: Paper Street Trail

**Actions:** Section 4.8.1 of the Implementation Strategy details the initiatives defined to implement this strategy. The initiatives include:

- **Tift Street Initiative:** Tift Street from Route 5 to Hopkins Street is the major connector between South Buffalo and the Outer Harbor. Creating a safe and welcoming condition for all users with gateways, on the east and west of Tift Street, will create a welcoming condition that transforms the appearance of this community.
- **South Park Avenue Initiative:** South Park Avenue provides a critical link from downtown Buffalo to the South Buffalo Community. Creating a gateway condition at the South Park Bridge and improving the infrastructure can provide a desirable and memorable entry to the South Buffalo BOA.
- **Hopkins Street Initiative:** Hopkins Street represents a key north-south connector for the South Buffalo BOA with a variety of uses, property conditions and street conditions. The vision for Hopkins Street is a tree lined condition that incorporates all standards of the complete street practices to encourage community engagement and development in this area.
- **Reading Avenue Initiative:** Reading Avenue is an important east-west connector between Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue. The development of this corridor will create a gateway condition for the southern portion of the South Buffalo BOA.
- **Germania Street Initiative:** Germania Street bisects a residential and light industrial area on the east edge of the South Buffalo BOA. The location that bisects the Hickory Woods neighborhood should continue to serve the community as a pedestrian friendly and low-speed neighborhood street. Germania Street, from Beacon Street to Tift Street, can offer back door access for the Hopkins Street light industrial and commercial businesses. By allowing rear access the truck traffic can be diverted to Germania Street to create a safer and improved residential condition along Hopkins Street
- **New Abby Street and Amelia Street Initiative:** The connection of New Abby Street





Image 32: Complete Street Infrastructure at South Park Avenue

and Amelia Street allows for the removal of New Abby Street from Amelia to South Park Avenue. This approach provides an area for additional residential development, expanded landscape buffer at RiverBend and a improved intersection condition at Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue.

**Objective C:** Enhance the feeling of safety and security within the neighborhood. In conjunction with the South Buffalo BOA implementation effort Modern Recycling conducted a neighborhood cleanup day in the spring of 2014 in partnership with NHS, Old First Ward Community Association, the Buffalo Sabres Green Team and other local partners.

**Actions:**

- Establish and/or support a neighborhood watch group to deter crime and promote property maintenance by providing “more eyes on the street.”
- Evaluate locations within the study area in need of lighting improvements.
- Promote increased police presence in areas identified with safety issues.

**5. Sustainable Development:** Creating a community that offers a better quality of life for everyone, without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is the core philosophy of sustainable development. As is the case with many industrial downtowns in the past, they were built in response to the needs of the time while not taking into consideration the long term economic and health of the area and its residents. Sustainable development policies and practices challenge us to undertake neighborhood revitalization in ways that protect the physical environment, efficiently use resources, promote social equality/social responsibility and improving the quality of life and well being of residents.

**Objective A:** Promote clean-up and redevelopment of former industrial properties to



Image 33: Vacant lot community garden

promote economic development opportunities. (Image 33: Vacant lot community garden)

**Actions:**

- Section 4.8.3 of the Implementation Strategy details an initiative defined to implement this objective. The initiative includes:
  - Vacant Lands Initiative: Vacant lands are often perceived as places of crime, neglect, and abandonment, with legitimate concerns for safety. These parcels, some of which may remain vacant during revitalization, can instead have a positive influence in the community, especially if considered as temporary gardens or habitat areas. Vacant lands located throughout the South Buffalo BOA vary in condition. However, they should be considered when creating new connective spaces throughout the neighborhood, in order to provide community benefits and accommodate a range of uses
- Continue to work with property owners of strategic sites to inform of benefits associated with environmental testing/remediation.
- Identify funding sources to provide assistance with testing, remediation, and property redevelopment.

**Objective B:** Promote the use of green infrastructure in redevelopment and infill development projects. (Image 34: Storm water mitigation using rain gardens)

**Actions:**

- Section 4.8.3 of the Implementation Strategy details the initiatives defined to implement this objective. The initiatives include:
  - Re-Tree Streetscapes Initiative: Urban forests play an important role in the overall ecological health of city and street trees. Improved streetscapes may provide a seamless transition between formerly isolated areas. Creating a healthy and diverse tree canopy will transform streetscapes in the South Buffalo BOA into an inviting and vibrant condition.



Image 34: Stormwater mitigation using rain gardens

- Stormwater Management Initiative: Green infrastructure practices are critical to improving the condition of our natural waterways and reducing the demand on the cities stormwater infrastructure. Integration of green infrastructure throughout the urban landscape will provide treatment of stormwater and safe conveyance of treated runoff to the Buffalo River. This cost-effective and sustainable approach to stormwater management includes technologies to infiltrate, capture and reuse stormwater.

## 4.7 Buffalo Recreational Needs Assessment

The South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Master Plan identified the potential for an athletic center complex in the vicinity of the proposed Golf Course and South Park. Furthermore, the City of Buffalo has been approached by multiple private parties seeking to develop a major sports and athletic complex, either within or in close proximity to the South Buffalo BOA. In order to determine the need for and feasibility of relocating or constructing one or more indoor and/or outdoor recreational facilities within the South Buffalo BOA, the Step 3 Implementation strategy recommended the preparation of a Recreational Needs Assessment. The Assessment will also provide direction on whether the South Buffalo BOA is the optimal location for such a recreation facility and to address both sports tourism and community recreational needs. Elements of the study include: Preliminary Analysis, Existing Conditions/Supply Analysis, Demand Analysis, Market Analysis, Comparable Identification and Analysis, Location Analysis, Construction Cost Estimates, Financial Operations Analysis, and Economic Impact Analysis. The study was initiated in January of 2014, with Paradigm Economics and its project team. An advisory committee comprised of representatives from the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, the State of New York, Visit Buffalo Niagara/Buffalo Niagara Sports Commission, the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, and the City of Buffalo Division of Parks and Recreation was established to guide the study.

### Existing Conditions/Supply Analysis

The project team first confirmed and quantified the inventory of outdoor recreational assets (football, soccer, baseball, softball, little league, t-ball, basketball, tennis, track, roller hockey) within the four traditional recreation districts designated by the City (South, East, West, Olmsted). Findings related to this inventory determined that most sports fields were in fair to good condition, and in need of common repairs including drainage improvement, regarding, weed removal, and installation of amenities (fences, benches, paths). Facility concentrations were determined to exist in North Buffalo, South Buffalo, and the East Side, and are generally lacking on the City's West Side. (Map 34: Existing Recreation Facilities)

The overall facilities inventory within the City is represented by a variety of owners and operators including the City, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Buffalo Public Schools, private high schools, and colleges. The City-owned facilities inventory is supplemented by seven existing outdoor all-weather surface fields, as well as five confirmed and potential additions to this inventory, including a new complex owned by D'Youville College (opened Q3 of 2014), and a proposed rugby & soccer pitch at the English Pork Pie Company within the South Buffalo BOA. Lastly, a thorough inventory of for-profit (20 groups) and not-for-profit (50 groups) users was conducted to measure both the distribution and density of annual usage received by the City facilities.

### Demand Analysis

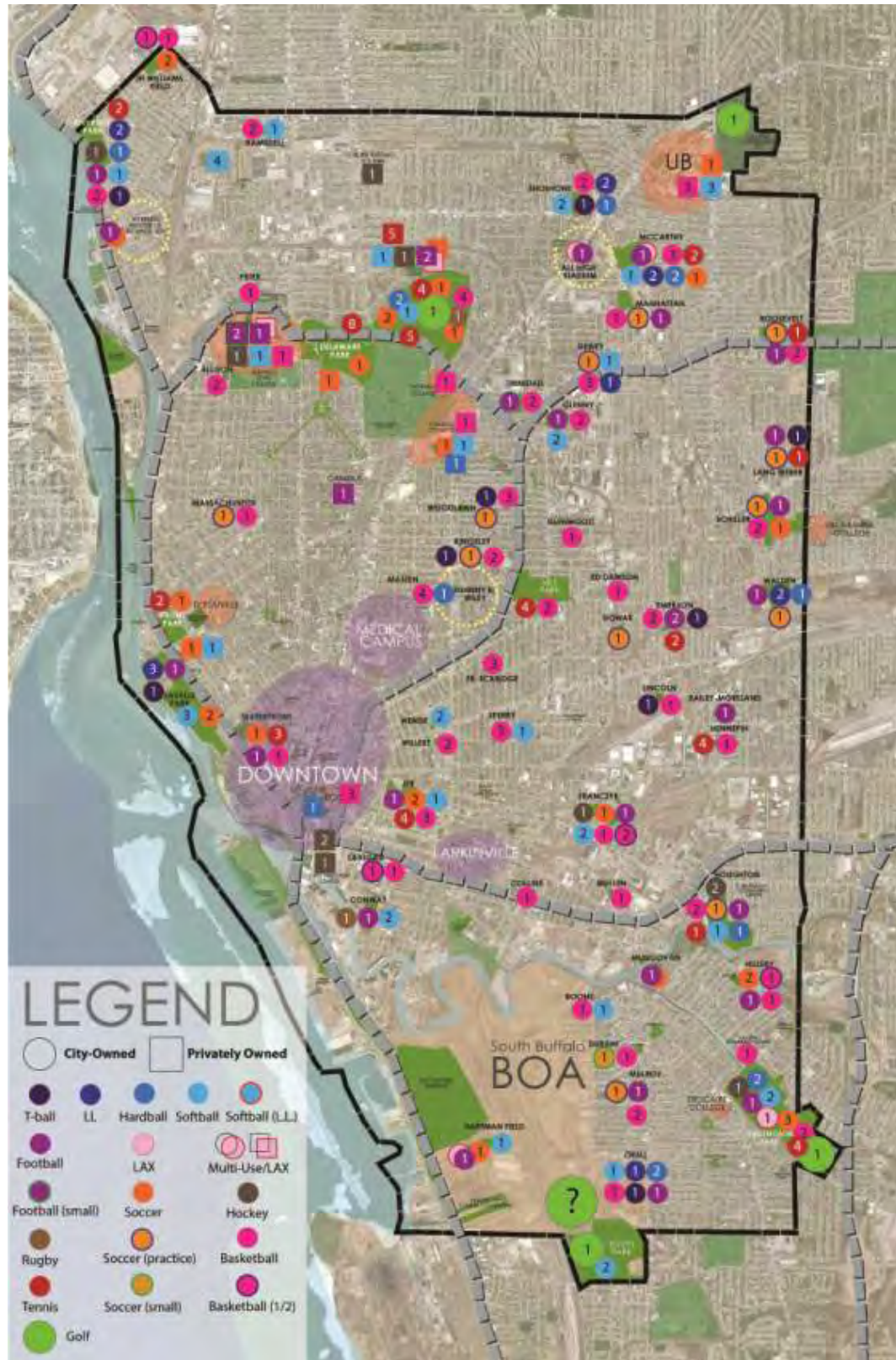
The demand analysis for the SBBOA recreation needs assessment was intended to evaluate the ability of identified recreational resources within the City of Buffalo to meet current and future market demand. Census data shows that between the years 1940-2010 the City of Buffalo population decreased by 55%, with the population density decreasing to 6,472 residents per square mile. At the same time, the recreational-youth sports-market in the City grew significantly since the 1960s and 1970s. The net effect on the City's recreational assets has been that, in spite of declining population, pressure on the facilities from user groups in fact has increased over historical levels, especially in the past 40+ years. This pressure has been exacerbated by a significant increase in adult-recreational sports programs hosted within the City during that period.

Comparative analysis of City of Buffalo facilities against National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) standards confirmed that user demand in Buffalo aligned with a 30-year national trend showing a decrease in demand for basketball and tennis courts, but an increase in demand for baseball and softball diamonds, as well as for rectangular sports fields. Interviews confirmed that both City-based non-profit and for-profit recreational youth and adult sports programs are now constrained by a lack of field space facilities in particular. The City's Division of Parks and Recreation's own experience in allocating user permits indicates a significant need for more ball field and rectangular field space. Interviews with for-profit user groups indicated a strong demand for additional indoor turf/training facilities within the market.

### Market Analysis

The study's demand analysis indicated a pent up demand for both indoor and outdoor field sports facilities, exhibited by youth and adult recreational programs, by the for-profit travel and premier-level soccer community, by City-based colleges, and by charter and private high schools. With respect to the indoor sports field investment and development option that was identified as a primary focus of the study, a critical mass of "pay-to-play" users was readily identified as including existing outdoor adult leagues, new indoor adult leagues, City-based travel, premier, and other membership soccer programs, regional baseball and softball programs (for off-season training), and City-based collegiate and private high school programs (off-season training). Within the seven-member cohort of counties having indoor turf field facilities, Erie County had the lowest density of indoor turf facilities per 100,000 population unit, with half as many facilities per population unit as Monroe County in particular. This finding supports the general premise that is implicit in the study's program representative interviews, that there is significant pressure within the local-regional sports market for greater access to indoor "off-season" facilities and turf time.





Map 34: Existing Recreational Facilities

### Comparables Identification and Analysis

The study also examined contemporary industry standards for indoor facility design, operation, ownership, and development. Key findings in this analysis included economical design programs and use of lower-cost exterior and interior materials, multi-field configurations to allow for program flexibility and maximization of rental revenues, inclusion of basic retail (i.e. food service, equipment sales) components, a high incidence of private sector investment, ownership and operation, exhibited financial sustainability through facility operations, and user-promoted and supported facility development and operation.

### **Location Analysis**

Based on the determination of a potential new facility type that was identified in this study's market supply and demand analysis, a preliminary location analysis was conducted that considered potential geographic footprints within the both the South Buffalo BOA and the City of Buffalo that might serve as host sites for the indoor-outdoor turf field facility. This location analysis included three main components:

- development of criteria for optimal project location;
- creation of a comparative analysis of primary and secondary locations based on evaluation criteria; and
- evaluation of sites within the South Buffalo BOA against the location criteria.

The location criteria were applied against 11 preliminary target locations provided to the project team by the BUDC. These locations were identified based on location and available acreage. No effort was made at this time to determine their availability. This set of location options happened to include seven (7) geographic footprints that were located in one of the four current Brownfield Opportunity Areas within the City of Buffalo. Analysis of all 11 locations against the primary and secondary location criteria resulted in a list of seven with enough of a footprint to allow for both initial facility development (+/- 13 acres), and expansion potential. One of those locations is within the South Buffalo BOA and four locations are in other City of Buffalo BOA's. Those seven locations are:

1. Village Farms/Hydroponics/English Pork Pie Company (South Buffalo BOA);
2. Outer Harbor (Buffalo Harbor BOA);
3. Elk Street (Buffalo River BOA);
4. Tee-to-Green property (Tonawanda Corridor BOA);
5. Black Rock Yard (Tonawanda Corridor BOA);
6. 1070 Seneca Street; and
7. Kensington Heights.

### Construction Cost Estimates

Based on the previous analysis, a set of preliminary base case facility parameters were developed by that reflected the indoor, outdoor, and support space construction specifications

that would support a conservative construction scenario within the indoor-outdoor turf field facility type. These parameters are as follows:

- One (1) 330'x210' indoor turf field surface;
- Two (2) 180'x300' outdoor field surfaces;
- Two (2) 240'x360' outdoor field surfaces;
- Paved parking for 200 vehicles (@325 SF/space);
- Interior support space that includes retail, administration, food service, lavatories, and storage;
- Adequate interior circulation space;
- Basic Butler building-type metal clad structure and materials;
- HVAC system that allows for year-round utilization of indoor spaces;
- 50' ceiling height over indoor playing surface;
- Security fencing around the footprint perimeter.

The total construction cost estimate, which includes soft costs, site preparation, some non-fixed equipment, bonding costs, insurance, and a 15% contingency, overhead, and profit, was determined to total \$10,498,678. This construction cost does not include cost of land. The 21-acre footprint includes approximately 13 acres for building, parking lots, and outdoor fields, and eight additional acres for outdoor circulation, landscaping, and auxiliary space.

#### Financial Operations Analysis

A set of assumptions were generated that provided the basis for a preliminary financial performance analysis for the proposed facility operation. A summary of these key characteristics included but was not limited to the following:

- A private legal structure and operation (either for-profit or not-for-profit) is preferred;
- The business operation essentially has a 6-month revenue period (November-April); and
- The facility will be required to internally develop, market, and administer a variety of leagues and programs including but not limited to youth and adult soccer, flag football, and similar.

Other key characteristics for the cash flow model were preliminarily selected for illustrative purposes, and are described as follows:

- Indoor utilization reflects a 90% utilization of available prime time hours, including a combination of league and tournament play (run by the facility) and straight rentals by outside user groups;
- Not-for-profit legal status, allowing for solicitation of grants, donations, and pledges;
- Third-party management company and associated expense;

- An 80% loan over 25 years on a construction budget of \$10,498,678 at 6.5% has been factored in as an expense.

The preliminary cash flow model included revenues from indoor and outdoor field utilization (“Total Usage Revenue”), as well as non-rental revenues that include concessions revenues (net), field sponsorship rights, revenues from grants, donations, and pledges, and sponsorship package revenues (“Ancillary Revenues”).

The expense side of the cash flow model includes expense line items such as payroll (facility management, sports coordinators), utilities, management company fee, telephone/internet, insurance, building/grounds maintenance, equipment replacement fund, office expenses and supplies, contract services, legal and accounting fees, marketing, and debt service.

The result of the analysis indicated that the proposed facility is financially viable, generating a slightly positive Net Operating Income with total revenues of \$1,174,098, against total expenses of \$1,099,172 to generate a net cash flow figure of \$74,926.

#### Economic Impact Analysis

The study utilized estimations of projected facility construction cost and facility financial performance to determine an estimation of economic impact generated by both the single event (construction) and ongoing annual activity (financial performance). In this effort, the Minnesota IMPLAN economic impact model was utilized in conjunction with current Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) market data for Erie County.

The economic impact generated within Erie County by the proposed indoor facility construction is summarized as follows:

<b>Impact Type</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Labor Income</b>	<b>Output</b>
Direct Effect	66.8	\$3,196,756	\$7,417,760
Indirect Effect	13.5	\$772,878	\$1,964,339
Induced Effect	21.0	\$896,164	\$2,651,473
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>101.3</b>	<b>\$4,865,797</b>	<b>\$12,033,572</b>

Estimated economic impact for indoor facility operations from the IMPLAN model based on an annual revenue projection of \$1,174,098 is as follows:

<b>Impact Type</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Labor Income</b>	<b>Output</b>
Direct Effect	6.0	\$146,500	\$1,174,098
Indirect Effect	2.1	\$110,093	\$314,420
Induced Effect	1.4	\$57,729	\$170,796
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>\$317,322</b>	<b>\$1,659,313</b>

#### Summary & Conclusions

The Recreational Needs Assessment study concluded that there is demand and a market for an indoor/outdoor recreational complex focused on turf and field sports. A facility of this type can be financially viable and will generate significant economic impact for the region. Although there is one site within the South Buffalo BOA that could accommodate this type of facility, there is no clear indication that this would be a preferred site. Therefore, no land use or zoning recommendations, or other immediate implementation strategy were recommended for the South Buffalo BOA. However, the study was distributed to over 100 sports facility developers and operators, both locally and nationally. The City of Buffalo's Division of Parks & Recreation and the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation will work with interested facility operators to locate and implement the recommendations of the study. In addition, the inventory and assessment of existing facilities contained in the study will be used by the City of Buffalo's Division of Parks & Recreation to determine future maintenance strategies, both within the South Buffalo BOA and throughout the City of Buffalo. A complete copy of the Recreational Needs Assessment is in *Appendix H*.



## 4.8 Tifft Nature Preserve & Sustainability Center

### Transformation of the existing Visitors Center into an Education Center

Tifft Nature Preserve is a 264-acre nature refuge dedicated to conservation and environmental education. The Step 2 Nomination document and Master Plan rightfully identified Tifft as a key ecological component and green space within the South Buffalo BOA.

The South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Nomination Document Master Plan recommended the development of a Sustainability / Research & Development Center within the Tifft Nature Preserve along Tifft Street, replacing the George Hartman Playfields. This R&D Center was suggested to focus on brownfield related research. Construction of the R&D Center would require relocation of the existing playfields along Tifft Street to a new athletic center proposed for a location immediately north of South Park. The Step 2 Master Plan also suggested the expansion of Tifft Nature Preserve on the vacant industrial (railroad) land to the east and the naturalization of the Conrail (CSX) property as a species habitat, as well as enhancing the existing interpretive center. This recommendation is part of the larger recommendation of enhancing and connecting the network of open spaces in the South Buffalo BOA, from South Park to Tifft. The South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Nomination document did affirm that Tifft Nature Preserve is an important and relevant natural resource for the Western New York community and a key asset in South Buffalo.

The Step 3 Work Plan suggested conducting an analysis of the feasibility of developing the Sustainability Center in conjunction with the Buffalo Museum of Science. The Center would be intended to create a focus for research and educational activities related to energy conservation, the environment, brownfield remediation and/or green development. Working with the Buffalo Museum of Science/Tifft Nature Preserve and the City of Buffalo, the BUDC explored the feasibility of developing this Center. This initial exploration included:

- Discussions with the City of Buffalo regarding the use and need of Hartman Playfields and the potential to relocate the athletic fields located at Hartman to a new location;
- Exploration of the concept of a Sustainability Center with a large group of regional environmental organizations through the auspices of the WNY Environmental Alliance, an umbrella organization that provides a common forum for organizations in the Buffalo-Niagara region working on environmental issues; and
- Discussions with the Buffalo Museum of Science regarding their future plans for Tifft Nature Preserve and the existing Visitor Center within the Preserve.

Explorations with the WNY Environmental Alliance did not support creation of a new, Sustainability Center along Tifft Street. However, since completion of the Nomination Study, efforts have begun to enhance and expand the existing Tifft Nature Preserve visitor facility to include the principles and components of the “Sustainability Center” envisioned in the Step 2 Master Plan. The completion of the Buffalo Outer Harbor Parkway Project

along the western edge of the South Buffalo BOA provided a prominent and more visible gateway entrance into the Preserve from the new Outer Harbor Parkway and, with linkages to NYS Route 5 and the regional highway system, significantly improved regional access and connectivity to the Preserve.

With this improved connectivity and building on the recommendations of the South Buffalo BOA Master Plan, the Buffalo Museum of Science renewed the efforts to develop and expand this unique regional resource. In 2009, Tift Nature Preserve received a multi-year award from the Niagara River Greenway Commission to maintain and enhance the tree canopy within the preserve, as well as to control invasive species. These projects not only enhance habitat for wildlife on the preserve, but also increase educational opportunities and visitor access along trails.

In 2010, the Buffalo Museum of Science was awarded an additional grant from the Niagara River Greenway Commission's to stabilize and add energy efficient enhancements to the existing visitor center, including energy efficient windows, insulation throughout the building, water conserving fixtures, LED lighting, geothermal heating and cooling and solar panel arrays on two south-facing roofs of the visitor center. These enhancements set the foundation for Tift Nature Preserve becoming an interpretive center for not only environmental education but also for sustainable practices. Additional grant funding was received to expand educational capacity, and host regional environmental workshops, seminars and speakers. Expansion of the existing solar array and an interpretive display on solar power within the visitor center are also being implemented.

With assistance from the South Buffalo BOA Step 3 Implementation grant, the Buffalo Museum of Science has completed conceptual site designs around the visitor center to improve access, manage stormwater and provide habitat. These improvements will include interpretation of features such as renewable energy, green infrastructure and landscaping with native plants. A [Stormwater Practice Feasibility Report](#) and schematic design drawings were prepared and are included as *Appendix F*. The Buffalo Museum of Science will be pursuing funding from several sources to implement these exterior site improvements.

The Buffalo Museum of Science has been diligently working on establishing regional partnerships and becoming part of the larger BOA story. As outlined in the South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Nomination document, Tift Nature Preserve has a unique sense of place. It is grounded in the industrial heritage of the site as a former trans-shipment center. As a reclaimed brownfield turned nature preserve, Tift Nature Preserve can tell a unique story of how nature can return and transform the landscape. It is one of few local sites that can tell the history of the Great Lakes and South Buffalo due to its proximity to the Lake Erie, the Buffalo River and surrounding former industrial sites. Tift Nature Preserve provides significant connections to other natural areas with the South Buffalo BOA and beyond.



Image 35: Tiffi Nature Preserve Sustainability Center site plan



Image 36: Tiffi Nature Preserve Sustainability Center rendering

#### Tifft Expansion & Lehigh Valley Railroad Property

Tifft Nature Preserve is surrounded on the northeast, east and south by an abandoned railroad property locally known as the Lehigh Valley Railroad property (110 Fuhrmann Boulevard). The site is comprised of four (4) separate parcels totaling approximately 101 acres (Map 35: Lehigh Valley Railroad parcels adjacent to Tifft Nature Preserve). The properties were historically owned and utilized by the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company from at least the mid- to late-1800s through the early to mid-1970s. The property has since been abandoned and has been the subject of a pending tax foreclosure by the City of Buffalo for a number of years. The site is currently fallow-wooded land containing some remaining railroad tracks and former track beds. It is intersected by some active rail lines operated by CSX.

The South Buffalo BOA Step 2 Master Plan recommended the expansion of Tifft Nature Preserve on a portion of this site to the east of the preserve, and creation of an Advanced Recycling / Green Industry cluster on a portion of the site to the northeast of the preserve.

As an initial step towards implementation of these recommendations and with funding from the Step 3 Implementation grant, BUDC commissioned an “All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of these properties in order to provide a beginning understanding of the environmental conditions of the property, updating the site profile prepared under the Step 2 Nomination Phase of the South Buffalo BOA. The analyses and report were prepared by LaBella Associates and completed in February 2013 (*Appendix F*). The report concluded that, despite extensive remedial activities on the southeastern portion of the site, the site has been the subject of only very limited characterization activities. Therefore, the report concluded that additional investigation may be warranted, but would be contingent upon gaining access to the site – a potential obstacle given the tax delinquency of the property.

LaBella also prepared a “Pre-Acquisition and Re-Use Evaluation Report” (*Appendix F*), which includes a summary of the above-noted Phase I ESA and the identified concerns, the exposure assessment, data gap discussions and recommendations. This report concluded that the Site’s physical characteristics suggest that the Site is a good candidate for the expansion of the adjacent Tifft Nature Preserve. The Site and the Preserve share a history of rail and canal operations; are relatively flat-lying and contain wetlands. The flora and fauna of the Site appear to be similar to that of the Tifft Nature Preserve, and the addition of the Site to the Preserve would create a buffer between the active rail yard operations to the north and east of the Preserve. The report further concluded that, although additional investigation may be warranted to identify the presence/absence of significant environmental concerns, measures such as restricting access to fill areas and development of covered and/or elevated trails would help to minimize exposure risks.





Map 35: Lehigh Valley Railroad parcels adjacent to Tifft Nature Preserve



Subsequent to the completion of the environmental reports described above, the BUDC conducted a series of meetings with representatives from the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo Museum of Science (managers of Tifft Nature Preserve), Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The objectives of the meetings were to:

- Explore the likelihood for the development of a Recycling / Green Industry cluster on a portion of the property;
- Explore the expected use and development of the site if it were to be added to the Tifft Nature Preserve holdings;
- The cost, scope and expected outcomes of a comprehensive environmental site investigation, as well as potential funding sources;
- Opportunities to gain access to the property to conduct additional site investigations, in particular the exercise of a Temporary Incidence of Ownership by the City of Buffalo;
- Strategies for, and candidates to take ownership of the property to implement the recommended expansion of the Nature Preserve, including the City of Buffalo, the Museum of Science, BUDC or a third-party land trust.

The results of those meetings and discussions are outlined below.

#### Recycling / Green Industry Cluster

Access to the portion of the site suggested for this use is extremely challenged, due to the elevated approach to the Tifft Street Bridge as it crosses the major rail corridor – which restricts the potential location for an entrance from Tifft Street; active rail lines that cross the site, and the presence of numerous wetlands along the former rail corridor. Since this type of use would result in extensive disturbance of the site, a comprehensive environmental investigation of the Site would be necessary prior to engaging in any redevelopment activities. The conclusions drawn were that this type of use could have adverse environmental impacts on Tifft Nature Preserve as well as the Buffalo River corridor; and there are an adequate number of sites in other parts of the South Buffalo BOA as well as the City of Buffalo and region that could accept this type of use and that are better suited to this type of activity. Therefore, the suggested use of this was not appropriate for the former Lehigh Valley Railroad properties and other sites adjacent to Tifft Nature Preserve, including the “Concrete Central” peninsula. This shift in recommendation from the Step 2 Master Plan is reflected in the updated Step 3 Implementation Strategy, in both the proposed land use – from “Industrial” to “Recreation & Open Space” and proposed zoning – from Industrial to Green/Open Space (D-OG).

#### Tifft Nature Preserve expansion

The Buffalo Museum of Science has expressed a strong desire to include the former Lehigh Valley Railroad properties as part of the Tifft Nature Preserve. This property is an integral piece of land for several reasons. It provides a buffer for the main portion of the Preserve from the railroad and industrial uses to the east, protects the boundaries of Tifft Nature Preserve and is important to the overall water ecology of the preserve. It could provide an opportunity to expand existing nature trails and interpretive features of the Preserve and also provides a critical link to the Buffalo River. The Buffalo River is an important ecological story that can be told and with this connection and through the Museum's partnership with Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers, this resource and its stories can be shared with the region. These proposed uses would be minimally invasive and involve little or no soil disturbances of the Lehigh properties. These proposed uses would also likely include only a small portion of the entire 101-acre site.

In order to implement the expansion of Tifft Nature Preserve onto the Lehigh Valley Railroad property, the BUDC explored a number of acquisition scenarios with the Buffalo Museum of Science and the City of Buffalo. The City of Buffalo is the current owner of Tifft Nature Preserve. The Buffalo Museum of Science operates the nature Preserve under a management agreement with the City of Buffalo. Options include Tax Foreclosure by the City and adding the property to the current management agreement, or acquisition by the Museum of Science (or affiliated entity) at a Tax Auction. The involved parties are continuing to explore these options.

#### Additional Environmental Investigation

The BUDC explored the merits of pursuing more comprehensive environmental investigations of the Lehigh Valley Railroad properties with representatives from NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning and the Buffalo Museum of Science. Preliminary estimates prepared by LaBella Associates suggested that a generic investigation of the 101-acre property would cost approximately \$166,630, initially targeting areas of known concern and sampling based on a geophysical grid approach to the site.

Since the site is privately owned but tax delinquent, the City of Buffalo could obtain rights to access the property through a Temporary Incidence of Ownership exercise as part of a tax foreclosure process. If the investigation showed no or limited contamination, the City could complete the foreclosure process. If, however, significant contamination was identified, the City could abandon the foreclosure process leaving the property privately owned but tax delinquent.

The results of these explorations concluded that:

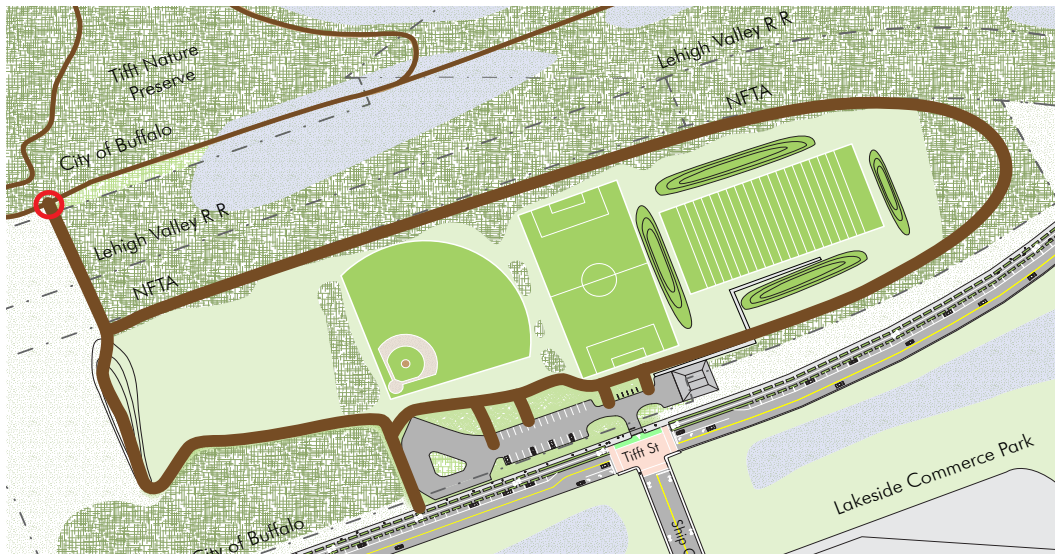
- Even the relatively comprehensive investigation proposed by the consultant would only reduce – not eliminate - the risk of finding hazardous or contaminated substances on the Lehigh Valley Railroad property;
- Given the proposed future use of the Site, as an expansion of Tifft Nature Preserve with minimal if any intrusive activities proposed, there is a very low likelihood of disturbing any contaminated materials;
- If severely contaminated or hazardous materials are found on the Site in the future, it is very probable that the NYSDEC will be able to identify the source and responsible party and compel that party to assume the costs of cleanup and remediation.

The conclusion, therefore, is that the extra cost of additional investigation is not warranted by the benefits (risk reduction) and proposed future use of the property (passive recreation) at this time.

#### Hartman Playfields

The George J. Hartman Playfields is a dedicated City of Buffalo park located on Tifft Street opposite Ship Canal Parkway (Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park), and along the southern edge of Tifft nature Preserve. The 20 acre park contains a softball diamond, soccer field, football field, parking, a shelter house and some natural areas. There are some undeveloped sections in the park. Recent improvements include work done on the football field in the amount of \$197,000 in 2010. The facility is one of the City's busiest, hosting athletic events in spring, summer and fall; featuring softball & little league baseball; Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School football, lacrosse and soccer; semi-pro football club games; flag football tournaments, as well as other events. Notwithstanding the relative isolation of the Playfields from residential neighborhoods, they are easily accessible from NYS Route 5 and South Buffalo. Although this park was proposed for the Sustainability Center & Brownfield Research & Development facility in the Step 2 BOA Master Plan, given the heavy utilization and recent capital investment in the facilities at George J. Hartman Playfields, and the on-going expansion and transformation of the Visitors facility in Tifft Nature Preserve, this proposal is not warranted at this time.

Therefore, the Step 3 BOA Implementation Strategy focused on maintaining the playing fields, providing more passive recreational opportunities, and providing better connections between the playing fields and Tifft Nature Preserve immediately to the north, as well improved connections to the parks and green spaces east of the rail corridor. Although the Hartman Play Fields are an important community asset, there is limited access. Additionally, an undefined pathway, known as the 'human cowpath,' traverses wetlands and private property along the northwestern edge of the fields provides an existing, albeit inadequate, connection between the Hartman Play Fields to Tifft Nature Preserve. These



Map 36: Enhanced trail system at George J. Hartman Play Fields

assets, if tapped, sit at the gateway to the Outer Harbor and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, providing a potential gateway between South Buffalo and the waterfront.

Implementation of the strategies suggested here coupled with the other recreational and pedestrian/bicycle trail strategies suggested for Tift Street, the “Golf Course” site, RiverBend and Hopkins Street will complete the network of green space and recreational improvements envisioned in the South Buffalo BOA Master Plan and detailed in the BOA Step 3 Implementation Strategy. (Map 36: Enhanced trail system at George J. Hartman Play Fields)

## 4.9 Neighborhood Placemaking Initiatives Summary

While there are myriad initiatives that have been developed throughout the master planning effort, the purpose of this Implementation Strategy is to focus on critical initiatives that can lead to immediate and lasting change. While there remain challenges to redevelopment throughout the South Buffalo BOA, small scale implementation strategies can have a cumulative impact, creating a critical mass of successes. Initiatives, such as creating pedestrian friendly streets, an integrated pedestrian trail system and environmentally sustainable developments, will induce positive change. This transformation will require tangible short-term lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) projects to generate momentum, excitement and community buy-in. The South Buffalo BOA transformation has begun with the recent completion of Ship Canal Commons and investment announcements at RiverBend. In addition, smaller neighborhood cleanup partnerships between community organizations and local businesses have also spun off as part of the Implementation Strategy initiatives. Small scale, visible and tangible neighborhood projects will be the transformational energy needed to move forward.

The Implementation Strategy identifies three priority strategies, targeted for completion within one to three year, three to five year, and five to fifteen year time-frames. In addition to guiding future funding decisions, the Implementation Strategy provides a framework to enable and promote public-private partnerships that will benefit the South Buffalo BOA and City of Buffalo residents. Each initiative provides a partnership and a funding matrix to help direct resources more effectively.

Strategy 1 is the transformation of the existing street network into an integrated community system for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Streets account for a significant amount of public space and the community desires tree lined avenues, green infrastructure and integrated pedestrian systems. Transformation of the street infrastructure has the potential to foster business activity and generate community pride. We must Create enjoyable streets for everyone.

Strategy 2 complements Strategy 1 by integrating a network of pedestrian paths to connect residents and businesses to commercial, social, recreation, and natural amenities throughout the South Buffalo BOA and beyond. We must Integrate pedestrian trails for community access.

Strategy 3 takes into account the vast amount of land that is underutilized and represents a significant asset in the South Buffalo BOA. Although much of this vacant land has historically been industrial, many properties have been remediated, redeveloped, or allowed to return to a natural setting. While portions of the South Buffalo BOA will be best utilized as a natural preserve, much of the vacant land is poised for greater economic and social benefit. We must Leverage nature's economic and social potential.





Image 37: Complete Street of Main Street, Buffalo, NY



Image 38: Pedestrian nature trail



Image 39: Maintained vacant lot & community driven art, Philadelphia, PA

These strategies are designed to transform the community and link its assets. The South Buffalo BOA has numerous ecological and community assets that provide significant value to the area including: South Park, Buffalo River, Tift Nature Preserve, Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens, Ship Canal Commons. The current street conditions throughout the South Buffalo BOA do not encourage multi-modal transportation. Numerous street conditions are over designed and create dangerous conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. The trail system and street bicycle facilities are not inter-connected nor are they safe for all users. (Map 36: Existing connections in the South Buffalo BOA)

To rectify these issues the City of Buffalo has undertaken an aggressive approach to implementing a Complete Streets ordinance mandating that all new street construction, street reconstruction and street maintenance projects undertaken by the City of Buffalo include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Since the Nomination Study bicycle lanes have been installed on South Park Avenue, Tift Street, Fuhrmann Boulevard, and surrounding streets which connect the South Buffalo BOA with the adjacent neighborhoods. The city has recently announced that they will be completing a bicycle master plan to further link the community and encourage multi-modal transportation.

The connection component of the South Buffalo BOA is critical to achieving the transformative vision as defined in the Master Plan. During the planning effort the city was engaged to review connection opportunities and initiatives as defined in the strategies above. An integrated system of streets and trails was proposed with short, medium and long term investments to achieve this plan. (Map 37: Proposed connections in the South Buffalo BOA) These initiatives provide the basis for reconnecting the community's assets and further enhancing the South Buffalo community. These initiatives provide the basis for strengthening the community's assets and laying the groundwork for large-scale redevelopment opportunities in the South Buffalo BOA.

The following sections provide a summary of each strategy and the recommended initiatives. A complete in depth strategy is included in *Appendix J*.

### **Strategy 1: Create Enjoyable Streets for Everyone**

#### Why is this needed?

Streets are the most dominant public spaces; they are the most visible and plentiful. We engage with them everyday. The best designed streets meet the needs of all people, whether walking, driving, cycling, or by mass transit. They generate dramatic private investment, increase property values, provide opportunities for integrated stormwater management, and enhance the vibrancy and image of place. The best street design also adds to the value of local businesses, offices, and civic places located along the street. During the middle of the



Image 40: Tift Street long-term complete street initiative

20th century, streets were transformed from places for people to places for vehicles. Prior to this policy, streets accommodated the many means that people use to transport themselves; i.e. vehicle, mass transit, bicycle, and foot. They provided a fertile environment for a variety of businesses, including corner stores, restaurants, and pubs to name a few. From public health and safety to environmental and economic sustainability, Complete Streets are valuable to everyone. Implementing Complete Streets policies allows for an efficient and optimal use of limited resources including time, fuel, land, and money. A long-term vision of implementable Complete Street strategies will incentivize the physical and economic environment of the 21st century

#### Tift Street Initiative

Tift Street, from Route 5 to Hopkins Street, is challenged by an oversized 4-lane thoroughfare. The foremost strategy to improve Tift Street is to reduce the number of lanes, and devote the remainder of street space to pedestrian walkways and dedicated bike lanes. Establishing gateways and nodes at major intersections will provide breaks along long stretches of continuous roadway and further improve the character of the street and calm traffic (Image 40: Tift Street long-term complete street initiative).

#### South Park Avenue Initiative

South Park Avenue provides a critical link from downtown Buffalo to the South Buffalo community. Despite years of disinvestment and vast vacant lands in this area of the South Buffalo BOA, success is being realized with large investments made possible by the SBBOA & RiverBend Master Plan. The masterplan proposed transforming the area into a mixed-use Commercial, Research and Development, and Recreation district and is coming to fruition with the Solar City Project. The combination of private investment and public investment shows promise and demonstrates positive public / private partnerships. Implementation projects for this initiative include: striping S. Park Bridge, green infrastructure and district standards for street amenities.

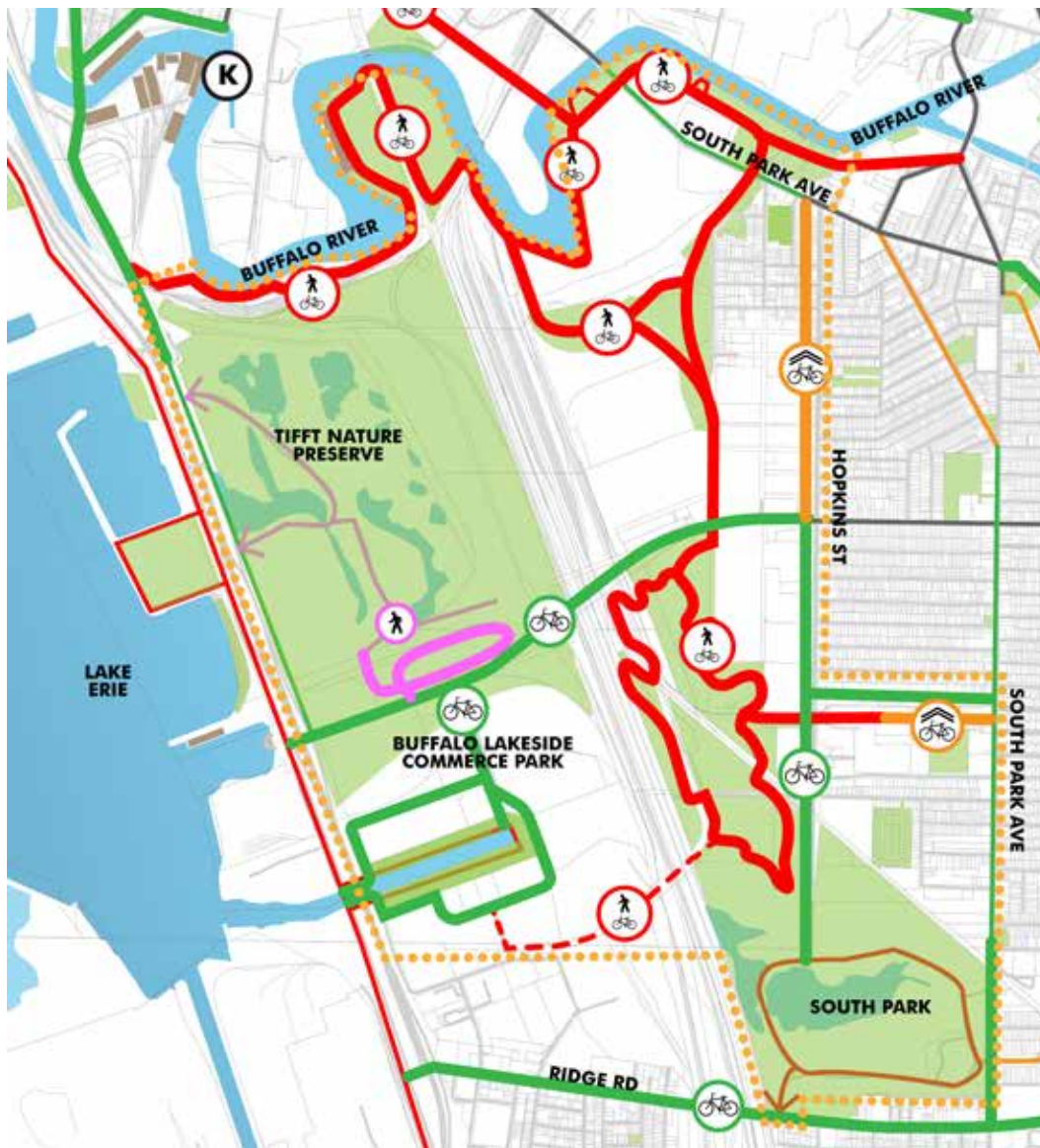


Map 37: Existing connections in the South Buffalo BOA

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- PUBLIC SPACE
- ← (Bike Icon) → DEDICATED BIKE PATH
- ← (Bike Icon) → SHARROWS (SHARED BIKE FACILITIES)
- ← (Bike Icon) → FUTURE BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE (CITY)
- ← (Bike Icon) → MULTI USE PATH
- ← (Pedestrian Icon) → PEDESTRIAN PATH
- (K) KAYAK





Map 38: Proposed connections in the South Buffalo BOA

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- PUBLIC SPACE
- ↔ (bicycle icon) DEDICATED BIKE PATH
- ↔ (bicycle icon) SHARROWS (SHARED BIKE FACILITIES)
- ↔ (bicycle icon) FUTURE BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE (CITY)
- ↔ (pedestrian and bicycle icons) MULTI USE PATH
- ↔ (pedestrian icon) PEDESTRIAN PATH
- K KAYAK





Image 41: Vision for Hopkins Street

#### Hopkins Street Initiative

Hopkins Street represents a key north-south connector for the South Buffalo BOA with a variety of uses, property conditions and street conditions. Lighter Quicker Cheaper (LQC) strategies, such as landscape and street enhancements, will improve the character of the neighborhood, encourage investment and lead to increased property values. The long term goal along Hopkins Street includes the development of small scale office and commercial buildings along the street frontage with supporting uses in the rear of the property. The long-term vision includes a street that accommodates all users, is lined with a canopy of trees creating a defined promenade, low maintenance green buffers, and district-wide neighborhood scaled lighting (Image 41: Vision for Hopkins Street).

#### Reading Avenue Initiative

Reading Avenue is an important east west connector between Hopkins Streets and South Park Avenue. This street provides the only connection between the two streets that does not bisect a residential neighborhood and is currently characterized by vacant and commercial parcels. Smart Growth development will foster a greater sense of place and establish compact forms of development, an attractive street, an improved public realm, and green linkages from Hopkins Street to South Park Avenue. Implementation projects include: restriping, constructing curbs and sidewalks, and planting trees.

#### Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park Initiative

Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park (BLCP) is a successful industrial business park located east of Route 5 and south of Tift Street. Ship Canal Commons, located at the heart of the business park, provides a rare South Buffalo BOA open space amenity mixing commerce, industrial heritage, and nature in the public realm. BLCP is poised to connect the South Buffalo Community through business development and recreation as well as take advantage of its unique position along the Route 5 artery and secondary Tift Street connector. Implementation projects include: Bike lanes, green infrastructure, planting trees, and Lighter Quicker Cheaper initiatives/program activities.

### Germania Street Initiative

Germania Street bisects a residential and light industrial area on the east edge of the South Buffalo BOA. Partially a paper street, from Beacon to Tifft Street, Germania Street is abutted by light industrial and commercial uses on the Hopkins Street side and large vacant or underutilized properties on the west close to RiverBend. Repairing existing infrastructure and maintaining the tree lined streets will emphasize the intimate neighborhood and reinforce safety. Germania Street, from Beacon to Tifft Street, currently an unmaintained paper street, can offer a back door for Hopkins Streets' light industrial and commercial businesses through the installation of a city road.

### New Abby and Amelia Street Initiative

To coincide with the master planning efforts developed at RiverBend and the new zoning in the forthcoming Unified Development Ordinance, connecting New Abby and Amelia Streets is recommended. This connection will eliminate a section of New Abby Street from the proposed Amelia Street extension to South Park Avenue allowing for the creation of a mesic forest (temperate hardwood forest) with an integrated trail system upon currently vacant land.

## **Strategy 2: Integrate Pedestrian Trails through the Community**

### Why is this needed?

Dedicated pedestrian trails are an asset to a community that make it more livable, preserve and restore open spaces, connect people with their surrounding environment, all the while providing opportunities for physical activity. Connected trail systems are ideal transportation routes for visitors to experience the city as well. From previous planning efforts the networks of trails have been reviewed and prioritized to create the most impactful strategy. The foundation of this planning embraces Joseph Ellicott's 1804 radial plan and Frederick Law Olmsted's green necklace of parks and parkways. These historic planning guidelines are also incorporated in the Queen City in the 21st Century Plan. This ambitious plan incorporates a connection to the Niagara River Greenway trail that extends the trail system from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie along the Niagara River and Buffalo River. Further organizing the South Buffalo BOA trails around the Niagara River Greenway trail, mass transit and motor vehicles will encourage multiple forms of connection that will engage more users.

### George J. Hartman Play Fields / Tifft Nature Preserve Trail Initiative

Although the George J. Hartman Play Fields are an important asset, there is limited community access currently. These assets sit at the gateway to the Outer Harbor and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park providing optimal connection opportunities for the City of Buffalo and South Buffalo communities. Through collaboration with the City of Buffalo



Image 42: Pedestrian trail and boardwalk under train bridge rendering

Public Work, Parks and Street Department and Tift Nature Preserve an extended pathway into Tift Nature Preserve would provide an eastern gateway to the preserve. Also providing pathways throughout the park connecting to the preserve will enhance the educational aspects of the park (Map 38/39 Trail network at Hartman Play Fields).

#### RiverBend Trail Initiative

The RiverBend Trail initiative is a north-south recreational pedestrian and bicycle trail that connects with the pedestrian trails along the Buffalo River and South Park Avenue in the north to Tift Street and the proposed All-Tift trail system in the South (Image 42: Pedestrian trail and boardwalk under train bridge rendering). This initiative provides additional opportunities for people to transverse the SBBOA.

#### Paper Street Trails Initiative

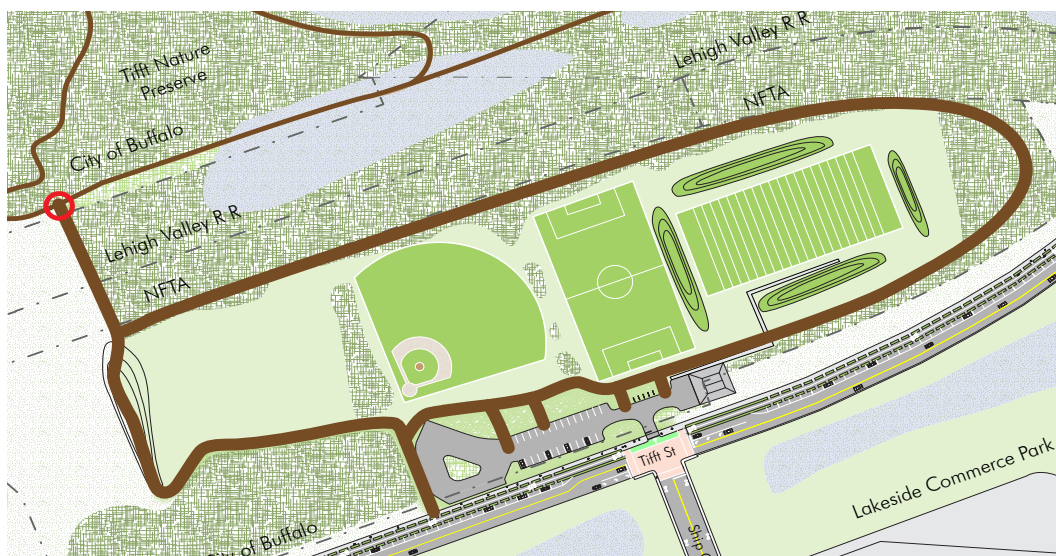
Paper streets are public streets defined on paper but not built. The South Buffalo BOA has two significant paper streets, Germania Street and Colgate Avenue, which provide an opportunity to be linkages to a larger trail system. While the paper streets are currently underutilized, and in some cases are being utilized by adjacent landowners, these publicly owned lands can better serve the public realm as natural trails with minimal maintenance.

#### Bridging Water and Rail Lines Initiative

Over its history the Buffalo River has been a natural element shaped to connect people and goods, yet it also creates a natural barrier which creates challenges. The rail lines act in a similar manner, bisecting the South Buffalo BOA. Providing connections across the river and rail lines can be accomplished with varying degree of difficulty and expense and is considered a long term strategy that will respond to development demand.



Map 39: Phase 1: Entrance to Tift Nature Preserve through George J. Hartman Play Fields rendering



Map 40: Phase 2: Enhanced trail system and field infrastructure rendering

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- — PARCEL BOUNDARY
- 8' - 10' BERM
- EXISTING TREES
- TRAIL
- ENTRANCE TO TIFFT

### **Strategy 3: Leverage Nature's Economic & Social Potential**

#### Why is this needed?

There are important ecological opportunities associated with the South Buffalo BOA. Considering the broader landscape and natural resources of the region, there is a need for enhanced migratory bird and fish habitats. There is opportunity to support larger ecological relationships and ecosystem functions within the South Buffalo BOA. The Buffalo River is a key regional ecological corridor, connecting to Lake Erie and the broader Niagara River Corridor and Escarpment zone. It is also an important node on the Atlantic Migratory Bird flyway and therefore provides an important stopover point for various species.

Within or near the South Buffalo BOA, there are important ecological stepping-stones that provide sensitive habitat zones and the potential for broader landscape ecological connections. These include Tiff Nature Preserve, Times Beach Preserve, as well as the small parks and restored areas along the Buffalo River, and South Park. There are inherent connections between these various ecological spaces within the South Buffalo BOA and the residential neighborhood along Hopkins Street. As enhancements are made to streetscapes, vacant lots, and open space parcels throughout the South Buffalo BOA, connections to the river will be expanded and enhanced. There has already been significant work completed to explore the ecological character of this area as part of the Master Planning effort at the RiverBend site, including incorporating a green infrastructure framework and the commencement of shoreline restoration efforts, overseen by the Buffalo Niagara RiverKeeper. Interstitial neighborhood spaces, such as vacant lots, small gardens, and streets can help better connect neighbors to open space and act as green corridors and ecological stepping-stones, with the integration of various green infrastructure practices. There will continue to be opportunities to increase ecosystem services and access to open space and natural resource features like the Buffalo River.

Despite the benefits of green infrastructure and open space utilization, one of the major challenges to adoption of these practices is uncertainty surrounding how they will be maintained. Operations and maintenance is a technical barrier to adoption and remains a concern for local government. Some of the barriers to effective operations and maintenance are: Financing Operations and Maintenance, Lack of Awareness or Poor Public Perception of Green Infrastructure and Vacant Land Strategies, Limited Training for proper Operation and Maintenance, and Minimal or Ineffective Enforcement and Inspection Procedures.

#### Buffalo River Shoreline Restoration Initiative

Restoration along the riverfront will promote ecological resilience while at the same time reconnecting the community to the native ecology of the river and its upland habitat. The area was once the home to the largest freshwater marsh along Lake Erie. The Phase 1 Riverbend Shoreline Habitat Restoration construction has been implemented and was





Image 43: Shoreline Restoration east of South Park Ave

completed in the Fall of 2013 with Phase II underway. The Buffalo Niagara RiverKeeper has identified 15 sites along the river as candidates for potential restoration projects which includes shoreline and upland restoration (Image 43: Shoreline Restoration).

#### Re-Tree Streetscapes Initiative

Urban forests play an important role in the overall ecological health of a city and street trees serve to enhance streetscapes. Improved streetscapes may provide a seamless transition between formerly isolated areas (Image 44: Existing street conditions in South Buffalo BOA). The objective for the South Buffalo BOA is to create a healthy and diverse tree canopy along streets that promotes landscape function, green infrastructure goals, and improved community health. An increase in the amount of healthy tree canopy along major streetscapes can help meet this goal, with special attention to the main north/south thoroughfares of South Park Avenue and Hopkins Street, and the main east/west thoroughfares of Tift Street and Reading Avenue (Image 45: Example of well-defined street trees).

#### Stormwater Management Initiative

The objective is to intercept, detain, and capture stormwater runoff throughout the South Buffalo BOA before it enters the Buffalo River or the City's combined sewer and stormwater system, in order to maximize reuse and filtration of stormwater runoff, reduce flows and velocity of runoff, and maximize filtration to promote water quality improvement. Ideally, green infrastructure is integrated throughout the urban landscape to provide treatment of stormwater and safe conveyance of filtered stormwater runoff to the Buffalo River. Implementation projects include: neighborhood stormwater treatment survey and implementation of green infrastructure.



Image 44: Existing street conditions in South Buffalo BOA



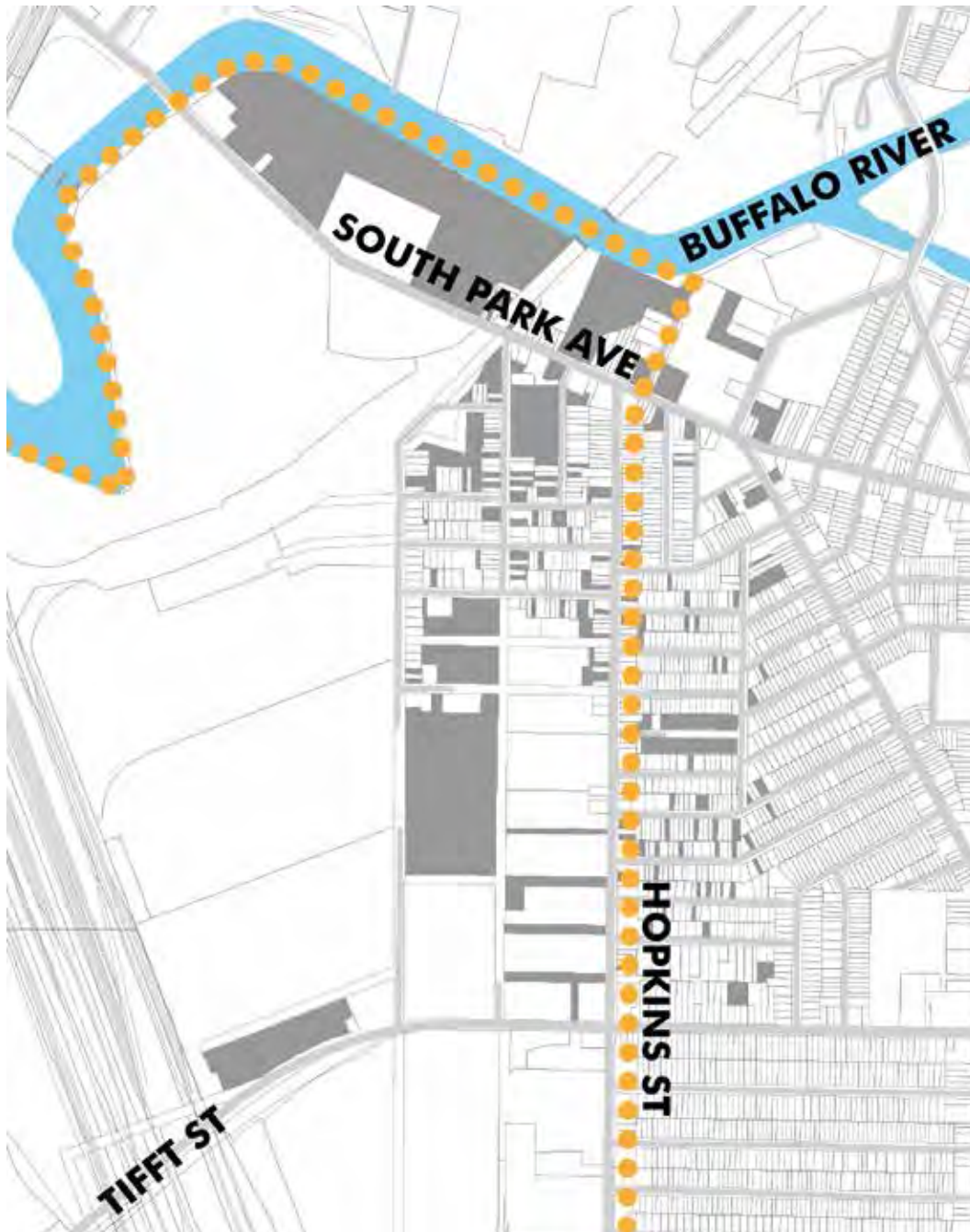
Image 45: Example of well-defined street trees

#### Vacant Lands Initiative

Vacant lands are often perceived as places of crime, neglect, and abandonment, with legitimate concerns for safety. These parcels, some of which may remain vacant during revitalization, can instead have a positive influence in the community, especially if considered as temporary gardens or habitat areas. Vacant lands located throughout the South Buffalo BOA vary in condition, however they should be considered when creating new connective spaces throughout the neighborhood in order to provide community benefits and accommodate a range of uses such as community gardens, community gathering spaces to eat, play, and work. (Map 40: Vacant Lots in the Hopkins Street area of the SBBOA)

#### Buffalo River Dredging

Dredging occurs on the Buffalo River to achieve two main objectives: to facilitate navigation and removal of sediments. As a 6.2-mile federal navigation channel, Congress mandates the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintain the channel of the Buffalo River to a depth of 22 feet. The second objective is to remove contaminated sediment from the River. Despite a significant lack of aquatic habitat within the river, water quality has improved and fish presence has increased in the Buffalo River. Implementation projects include: aquatic restoration & benches, create green bulkheads, and restore natural shorelines.



Map 41: Vacant lots in the Hopkins St area of the South Buffalo BOA

**LEGEND**

● ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

■ VACANT LOTS

#### 4.9.1 Brownfield Remediation Strategy

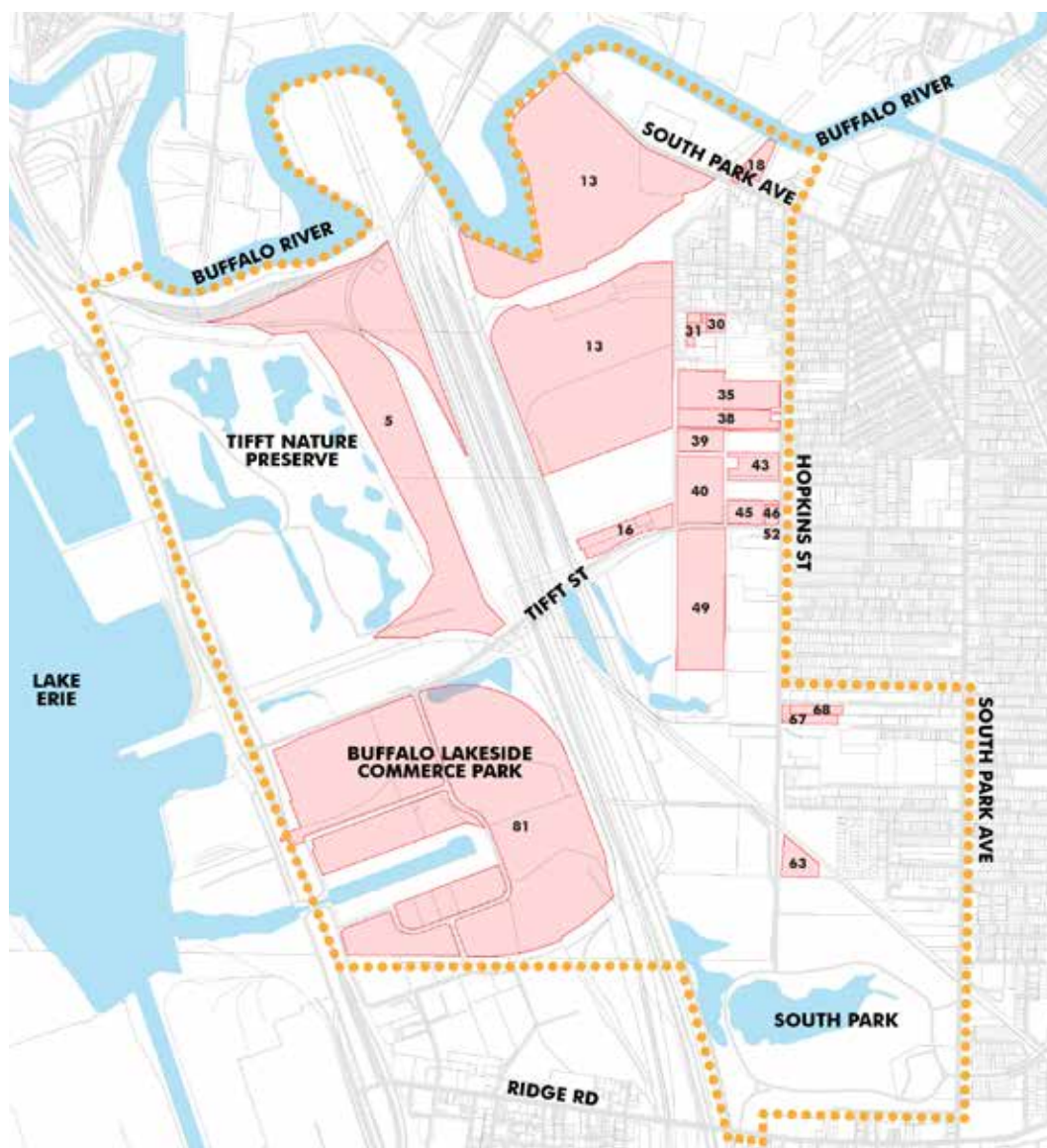
During the Nomination Study, strategic sites were identified utilizing existing environmental information, through extensive input from the Steering Committee and with consideration given to the following: overall importance to the community, location, ownership, property size, and capacity to spur redevelopment or additional economic development. In addition, consideration was given to the potential for the site to improve quality-of-life within the community, to site new public amenities, and the adequacy of supporting or nearby infrastructure, utilities and transportation systems.

Each property located within the South Buffalo study area was researched to identify past and present uses, and potential environmental impacts during the Nomination Study. Facility and site information, maintained at both the state and federal level, was reviewed to determine changes in site conditions during and since preparation of the Nomination Study. Information was obtained from six main sources: NYSDEC Spills Incident Database, NYSDEC Remedial Site Database, NYSDEC Bulk Storage Database, EPA Envirofacts Database, Erie County Parcel Data, and Sanborn Maps. This inventory was used to develop recommendations to help the City determine viable next steps for properties as redevelopment opportunities are presented. Recommendations stemming from this analysis are sometimes pertinent to a change in land use or ownership and are not intended to suggest necessary actions on the part of land owners who are actively and appropriately using their properties. This research serves as one layer of analysis that was then used in the context of strategic sites and existing land uses to further refine recommendations.

As a result of refined analysis during this Step 3 Implementation Strategy, 17 tax parcels were identified to be included in targeted landowner outreach (Map 41: 17 Strategic Brownfield Sites). Fliers were mailed to each property owner and door to door visits were conducted to describe the project and gauge potential interest in being involved in the Project and voluntary participation in the Phase II ESA application process. Of those identified, there was interest on the part of three property owners in learning more information and possible involvement with the Phase II applications. These properties included:

- **Site 16 Krog Site:** The Krog site consists of seven parcels comprising approximately seven acres located at the southernmost portion of the RiverBend site area. These parcels are collectively owned by Krog USC Associates LLC. Current and past uses and proximity to nearby past and present industrial operations indicate this area may have environmental impacts. Consultation with Krog Associates indicated that environmental investigations have already been completed at the property. The property owner is willing to participate in short, mid and long-term implementation strategies and has a strong desire to secure a tenant for the premises. Phase II Environmental Site Assessments should be completed and results updated to develop a remediation strategy and identify potential future site use.





Map 42: Strategic Brownfield Sites

#### LEGEND

- ● ● ● SOUTH BUFFALO BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
- ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT PARCELS



- **Site 31 – BURA Hickory Woods Parcels:** The BURA properties are located between Mystic and Beacon Streets, west of Germania and Hopkins Streets and south of South Park Avenue. This site was formerly the location of the Donner Hanna Coke Corporation and was used for employee housing, parking and vehicle maintenance. Although the site was not historically used for manufacturing operations, remediation of these parcels is required as part of the historic Hickory Woods settlement as a result of elevated concentrations of PAHs that have impacted on-site surface and subsurface soils. The site is currently capped and access is limited. However, funding for remediation activities should be identified and site cleanup pursued to encourage future redevelopment. Remediating this particular site is especially important since it is part of the Hickory Woods neighborhood and would renew residents' faith in the City's interest and investment in the neighborhood.
- **Site 38 - 478 Hopkins, Inc. (Artmeier Trucking):** The properties located at 456 Hopkins and 263 Germania (contiguous properties, separated by a paper street), are currently being utilized for trucking operations. The property owner/operator has a desire to continue the business at this location, but also indicated a desire to contribute to the South Buffalo BOA through participation and consideration of early implementation projects (i.e. art installations). Involvement in a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is contingent on the owner's acquisition of the adjacent paper street.
- **Site 39 – 170 Germania Street:** This property is located along Hopkins and Germania Streets. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted in 2007 and recommended a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment be completed. Recognized environmental concerns identified by the ESA included cutting and/or filling activities completed between 1970 and 1990 and existing construction, demolition, and fill debris stockpiled on a portion of the site. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is recommended for this site prior to redevelopment.
- **Site 40 - L.A. Woolley:** The L.A. Woolley site is primarily used for office space and distribution of electrical products. Prior to site acquisition, a limited Phase II Environmental Site Assessment was conducted. The site consists of approximately six acres of paved area and four acres of meadow in the rear, which was remediated as part of the Republic Steel remediation effort. An updated Phase II Environmental Site Assessment should be conducted prior to business expansion and/or parcelizing the site for redevelopment opportunities. The property owner has provided permission for the city to submit an application for Phase II Environmental Site Assessment funding under the Step 3 Implementation Strategy.
- **Site 43 - Kulp Waco:** The property owned by Kulp Waco (420 Hopkins Street) is currently for sale. The property was formerly operated as a trucking terminal, and prior

to that was a vacant residential property circa 1950. Records indicate that the site had aboveground storage tanks storing diesel fuel and that three underground storage tanks storing diesel fuel and leaded gasoline were removed from the site in 1998. The project team engaged this property owner but was unable to set-up an independent meeting to discuss applying for Phase II ESA funding. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment should be pursued to facilitate sale of the property and encourage site redevelopment.

- **Site 45 - Frontier Service:** Frontier Service is located at 666 and 744 Tifft Street, and 360 Hopkins Street. Automotive repair and parts and service operations are currently associated with this site. The current property owner purchased the property in 2000-2001. Historic records indicate that polyaromatic hydrocarbons were found on the site, and that six abandoned underground storage tanks were removed from the site in 2005. The property owner currently intends to continue operation of the business at the existing site, and opted not to pursue Phase II ESA funding. If plans for the site should change, a Phase II ESA is recommended to further characterize environmental conditions on the site.
- **Site 49 - Skyway Auto Parts:** Since the time of the Nomination Study, Skyway Auto Parts changed ownership, but is still being operated as an automotive scrap yard, as it has been since approximately 1963. Skyway Auto Parts has operated on the site since 1982, and there is history of environmental impact. Representatives of Skyway Auto Parts were engaged to determine interest in pursuing Phase II Environmental Site Assessment funding, and a meeting was held to describe the South Buffalo BOA project and vision for the study area. To date, Skyway Auto Parts does not have plans to relocate from the current site and is not pursuing funding for environmental assessment of the site.
- **Site 52 - JP Auto Sales and Repair:** The site was formerly operated as an automobile repair shop. At the time the Nomination Study was completed, the site was active. Since that time, the repair facility has ceased operations and the owner has expressed interest in selling the property. According to historic Sanborn maps, prior to auto sales and repair the site was used as a filling station. Conversations with the property owner indicated no testing has been completed on this property. The site is strategically located at the corner of Hopkins and Tifft Streets, and redevelopment of this site could serve as a catalyst for other revitalization opportunities. It is recommended that Phase II Environmental Site Assessments be completed prior to sale and/or redevelopment of the property.
- **Site 63 - Bob & Don's Auto Parts Site:** Bob and Don's Auto Parts is located at 49 Hopkins Street and is an underutilized site. Given the historic operation of the site, a Phase II ESA would be recommended to determine the amount and extent of

environmental impact, if any. The site is currently for sale and the property owners and real estate agent were engaged to gauge interest in submitting a Phase II ESA application. It is uncertain at this time whether or not the owners will opt to pursue environmental characterization of the site, however a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is recommended based on limited information regarding conditions.

(Table 3: Environmental Recommendations for Strategic Sites) below summarizes the environmental recommendations and next steps based on the refined strategic sites identified during the Step 3 Implementation Strategy process. Out of the property owners who were engaged, one private property owner and the City of Buffalo have committed to participating in the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment application process through the BOA program once funding is available. In addition, it is recommended that the City of Buffalo identify and pursue funding for remediation of the city-owned BURA Hickory Wood parcels. Should any additional strategic sites, as identified above, become available for redevelopment, Phase II Environmental Site Assessments are recommended to better identify site conditions and redevelopment opportunities.

Site #	Site Name	Approx. Acreage	Environmental Site Recommendations	Phase II ESA Participation	Property Status
16	Krog Site	6.9	Update Phase II ESA	No	Underutilized
31	BURA Hickory Woods Parcels	1.3	Pursue funding for remediation	No	Vacant
38	Artmeier Trucking	6.4	Pursue Phase II ESA	Pending	Active
39	170 Germania	4.4	Pursue Phase II ESA	Yes	Vacant
40	L.A. Woolley	11.0	Pursue Phase II ESA	Yes	Active/Underutilized
43	Kulp Waco	4.8	Pursue Phase II ESA	No	Inactive/for sale
45	Frontier Service	3.4	Pursue Phase II ESA	No	Active
49	Skyway Autoparts	24.3	Pursue Phase II ESA/remediation	No	Active/Underutilized
52	JP Auto Sales and Repair	0.4	Update Phase II ESA	No	Vacant
63	Bob & Don's Auto Parts	3.7	Phase II ESA/remediation	No	Inactive/for Sale

Table 10: Environmental Recommendations for Strategic Sites

## 4.9.2 Local Laws and Regulations

Project area recommendations for the Implementation Strategy primarily focus on improvements to the public realm, streetscape enhancements, incorporating green infrastructure strategies, improvement environmental conditions and enhancing the local identity of the study area. To facilitate implementation, the regulatory framework needs to be considered to ensure regulations will not inhibit the strategies developed for area-wide revitalization. Laws and regulations that either exist or should be considered to support implementation are described briefly by the intent of identified initiatives.

- **Complete Streets:** The City of Buffalo passed an ordinance amendment to Chapter 413 in 2008 requiring inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities into all new street construction, reconstruction, maintenance and public works and parks projects undertaken by the city. This requirement closely aligns with recommendations made for various streets in the study area as part of this process. In addition in 2011, Governor Cuomo signed the Complete Streets Act, requirement state, county and local agencies to consider the convenience and mobility of all users for transportation projects using state and federal funding sources.
- **Green Infrastructure:** Various green infrastructure techniques are recommended to address environmental, aesthetic and grey infrastructure issues throughout the South Buffalo BOA. The NYSDEC Stormwater Management Design Manual establishes best green infrastructure practices to be employed for runoff reduction, and should be used as a resource when considering employing green infrastructure techniques. In addition, the City of Buffalo's Unified Development Ordinance is structured to support emerging practices, including encouraging local food production, on-site and district stormwater management, and alternative energy production. In addition, for each use outlined in the UDO, the city identifies maximum impervious surface thresholds.
- **Re-Tree:** Many of the recommendations in this Implementation Strategy relate to streetscape improvements, which are increasingly recognized as an urban amenity and important component of the green infrastructure network. Chapter 309 of the city code establishes regulations for the protection of trees. In addition, Chapter 476 sets forth regulations to protect trees located on public property or public rights-of-way. Other regulations, policies and programs that could be considered include incompatible development protection, which protect trees from development that may be damaging, requirement of a landscape protection plan to preserve the extant treescape from development impacts, tree replacement and density requirements, and adoption of a neighborhood program, through which the municipality provides residents with free trees to plant near city streets.

- **Community Gardens:** Community gardens are an emerging initiative impacting communities throughout the country. To facilitate their development, many communities are revising zoning regulations to establish them as an “As-of-Right” use. The City’s proposed Green Code establishes community gardens as an approved principal use in most of the proposed zoning designations, with the exception of areas zoned for heavy industrial uses and in certain corridor zones. Other communities establish density requirements, to ensure equitable access to healthy local food opportunities. In addition, certain Planned Development requirements require a yard or other shared space to be dedicated as a community garden. Finally, “Adopt-a-Lot” policies permit vacant public or private properties to be used as community gardens in the short-term until redevelopment opportunities present themselves.
- **Public Art Installations:** Public art can be used to create a sense of place, celebrate an area’s history, develop neighborhood identity and to improve the public realm. Chapter 409 of the City Code establishes an Art in Public Places program, which requires projects equal to or greater than \$1,000,000 dedicate 1% of the total budgeted design and construction cost to public art costs. This stipulation applies to city projects located on city-owned properties. The proposed Green Code further identifies areas located throughout the city of Buffalo that are appropriate for public art projects, establishing “Furnishing Zones.” Although the city already has public art requirements in place, other communities have taken these requirements a step further and established Private Developer Cultural Arts Requirement. These require the developer to incorporate public art into the proposed project, or contribute to an arts fund in lieu of installation. Sign regulations also may preclude art installation.



### 4.9.3 Step 3 Funding Agencies and Partners

Through its course the Implementation Strategy has been an inclusive networking process to create awareness and bring together many parties ranging from; neighborhood residents, community organizations, business owners, City of Buffalo departments, civic leaders, and cultural institutions. By partnering, interested groups are equipped to share knowledge and execute implementation projects as outlined in the Implementation Strategy. Financial resources are pivotal to the success of the outlined initiatives. The following section provides a resource list of potential funding sources. In many cases, it is possible to combine smaller grants to capture a greater net sum for priority projects. Below are possible funding sources to make projects a success:

Consolidated Funding Application: In 2011, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo created ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to advance the administration's efforts to improve New York's business climate and expand economic growth by directing state resources to support economic development.

The Regional Economic Development Councils developed strategic plans with advice from a broad spectrum of stakeholders taking into account the unique strengths and weaknesses of each region. The strategic plans serve as a 5-year road map, guiding each region's efforts to stimulate economic growth. Western New York's strategic plan and implementation agenda can be found online at <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/western-new-york>. Information about each agency's programs can be found below.

#### 1. New York State Council on the Arts – Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects

##### **Overview:**

Funds for Local Assistance are available under Article 3 of NYS Arts and Cultural Affairs Law for the study of and presentation of the performing and fine arts; surveys and capital investments to encourage participation of the arts; to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of the state; and to promote tourism by supporting arts and cultural projects.

##### **Eligible Applicants:**

Non-Profit Organization, New York State Indian Tribes, and units of local and state government

##### **Available Funds:**

\$50,000 - \$100,000

##### **Contact:**

[www.arts.ny.gov/public/grants/index.htm](http://www.arts.ny.gov/public/grants/index.htm)

2. **Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation - Recreational Trails Program**

**Overview:**

The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. Funding is available for the maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails, purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction of new recreational trails, and acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Non-Profit Organization and units of local and state government

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

Nancy Stoner, 518-486-2699

[nysparks.com/recreation/trails/default.aspx](http://nysparks.com/recreation/trails/default.aspx)

3. **New York State Department of State - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program**

**Overview:**

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program provides 50:50 matching grants on a competitive basis to revitalize communities and waterfronts. This is a reimbursement program.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Villages, Towns, Cities

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

Ken Smith, [kenneth.smith@dos.ny.gov](mailto:kenneth.smith@dos.ny.gov)

[www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/lwrp.html](http://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/lwrp.html)

4. **New York State DEC/EFC Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant**

**Overview:**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in conjunction with the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC), will offer grants to municipalities to help pay for the initial planning of eligible Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) water quality projects. The ultimate goal of this wastewater infrastructure engineering planning grant program is to assist needy communities to initiate a planning process with a follow-up implementation

plan to address local water quality problems. Successful applicants will use the engineering report when seeking financing through the CWSRF program or other financial means to further pursue the identified solution.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Municipalities

**Available Funds:**

\$30,000 - \$50,000

**Contact:**

[www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/81196.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/81196.html)

5. **Environmental Facilities Corporation - Green Innovation Grant Program**

**Overview:**

The Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) provides grants on a competitive basis to projects that improve water quality and demonstrate green stormwater infrastructure in New York. GIGP is administered by NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and is funded through a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**Eligible Applicants:**

Municipalities, State Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations, Partnerships, Individuals

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

<http://www.efc.ny.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=461>

Other Funding Sources

6. **Baird Foundation**

**Overview:**

Arts, Health & Wellness, Community Development, Education

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

Catherine Schweitzer

[cfs@bairdfoundation.org](mailto:cfs@bairdfoundation.org)

7. **M & T Bank Charitable Foundation**

**Overview:**

Providing resources to not-for-profit organizations that make communities better places to live and work

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

[www.mtb.com/aboutus/community/Pages/TheMTCharitableFoundation.aspx](http://www.mtb.com/aboutus/community/Pages/TheMTCharitableFoundation.aspx)

8. **The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation**

**Overview:**

Arts, Community Development, Education, Human Services, Energy & Environment

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

Robert Kresse

[mlwendt@aol.com](mailto:mlwendt@aol.com)

716-885-2146

9. **Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo**

**Overview:**

Helping donors identify options for giving and carrying out their wishes. And assisting donors in making the most of their generosity.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

[www.cfgb.org/](http://www.cfgb.org/)

10. **Western New York Foundation**

**Overview:**

The Foundation makes investments that build on nonprofits' proven strengths in order to improve their effectiveness and their ability to fulfill their missions

**Eligible Applicants:**

Non-profit organization

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

[www.wnyfoundation.org/](http://www.wnyfoundation.org/)

11. **The John R. Oishei Foundation**

**Overview:**

To improve the lives of Western New York's residents. Focusing support on programs and organizations which are clearly based upon attainment of excellence both in concept and ultimate implementation.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

[www.oishei.org](http://www.oishei.org)

12. **National Endowment for the Arts**

**Overview:**

Organizations may apply for creative place making projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

\$25,000 - \$200,000

**Contact:**

[arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town](http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town)

13. **NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program**

**Overview:**

NOAA delivers funding and technical expertise to restore Great Lakes coastal habitats. These habitats support valuable fisheries and protected resources; improve the quality of our water; provide recreational opportunities for the public's use and enjoyment; and buffer our coastal communities from the impacts of changing lake levels. Projects funded through NOAA have strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that provide social and economic benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological habitat improvements.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Municipalities, State Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations, Partnerships, Individuals

**Available Funds:**

TBD

**Contact:**

[www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/index.html](http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/index.html)



14. **Great Lakes Protection Fund**

**Overview:**

A funding source for research projects that protect, restore and improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem in New York.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Government, Academia, Non-governmental groups

**Available Funds:**

Varies, up to \$100,000

**Contact:**

[www.glpf.org](http://www.glpf.org)

15. **Federal Highway Administration: Transportation Enhancement Program (TAP)**

**Overview:**

To strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation's intermodal transportation system, including on and off road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former divided highways.

\*Please check the NYS DOT website for future funding opportunities as they may change due to congressional legislature.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Available Funds:

**Contact:**

[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/)

16. **Department of Environmental Conservation Cost-Share Grant**

**Overview:**

DEC is committed to providing support and assistance to communities in comprehensive planning, management, and education to create healthy urban and community forests, and enhance the quality of life for urban residents through its Cost Share Grant program.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variable

**Available Funds:**

\$2,500 - \$50,000

**Contact:**

[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html)

17. **Sustain our Great Lakes: Stewardship Grants Program**  
**Overview:**  
To sustain, restore and protect fish, wildlife and habitat in the Great Lakes basin leveraging funding, building conservation capacity, and focusing partners and resources toward key ecological issues.  
**Eligible Applicants:**  
Non-profit Organizations; State, Tribal, Provincial & Local Governments; and Education Institutions.  
**Available Funds:**  
\$150,000-\$1,500,000  
**Contact:**  
[www.sustainourgreatlakes.org/Apply.aspx](http://www.sustainourgreatlakes.org/Apply.aspx)
18. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: 5 Star Restoration Program**  
**Overview:**  
The Five Star Restoration Program provides challenge grants, technical support and opportunities for information exchange to provide environmental education and training through projects that restore wetlands and streams  
**Eligible Applicants:**  
Students, conservation corps, other youth groups, citizen groups, corporations, landowners and government agencies  
**Available Funds:**  
\$5,000 – \$20,000  
**Contact:**  
[www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/)
19. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Great Lakes Program Funding**  
**Overview:**  
Restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes basin.  
**Eligible Applicants:**  
Variety  
**Available Funds:**  
TBD  
**Contact:**  
[www.epa.gov/greatlakes/fund/glf.html](http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/fund/glf.html)
20. **Fish America Foundation: Conservation Grants**  
**Overview:**  
FishAmerica provides grants to non-profits, conservation minded groups to enhance fish populations, restore fisheries habitat, improve water quality and

advance fisheries research to improve sport fishing opportunities and success.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Non-profit organizations such as local sporting clubs and conservation associations, educational institutions, and local and state governments

**Available Funds:**

\$10,000- \$75,000

**Contact:**

[www.fishamerica.org/grants.html](http://www.fishamerica.org/grants.html)

21. **U.S. Department of Agriculture: Restore Urban and Community Forests**

**Overview:**

Existing management plans and tree cover assessments to plant and maintain tree canopy cover

**Eligible Applicants:**

State agencies, non-profits, academia, and municipalities

**Available Funds:**

\$30,000- \$50,000

**Contact:**

USDA

22. **U.S. Department of Agriculture: Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**Plant Materials Program**

**Overview:**

The Plant Materials Program selects conservation plants and develops innovative planting technology to address today's natural resource challenges. Six major objectives addressed by the Center are cropland erosion/soil health; water quality; native plants; biofuels/agroforestry; wildlife habitat improvement; and critical area stabilization.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Variety

**Available Funds:**

NA

**Contact:**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/northeast/nypmc/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/northeast/nypmc/)

## Brownfield Redevelopment Incentives & Benefits

### 23. **U.S. Department of Treasury: Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, New Markets Tax Credit**

#### **Overview:**

The New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) was established by Congress in December 2000 to help economically distressed communities attract private investment capital by providing investors with a Federal tax credit. Investments made through the NMTC Program are used to finance businesses and real estate projects to breathe new life into neglected, underserved low-income communities. The NMTC Program is aimed at offsetting the risk of investing in distressed and low-income communities.

Advantages to Brownfield Developers:

- Community Development Entities may be willing to structure a more favorable deal than traditional lending institutions.
- Community Development Entities can offer funding for a range of development activities.
- Community Development Entities involved in brownfield projects can facilitate packaging of different public financing sources for one project. Sources include state and local programs and credits, tax increment financing initiatives, CDBG funds and the EPA's Brownfields Grants.

#### **Eligible Applicants:**

An organization wishing to receive awards under the NMTC Program must be certified as a Community Development Entity (CDE) by the Fund.

To qualify as a CDE, an organization must:

- be a domestic corporation or partnership at the time of the certification application;
- demonstrate a primary mission of serving, or providing investment capital for, low-income communities or low-income persons; and
- maintain accountability to residents of low-income communities through representation on a governing board of or advisory board to the entity.

#### **Available Funds:**

In exchange for cash investment in a CDE's project, the investor receives 39 percent of the investment value in tax credits over a seven-year schedule.

#### **Contact:**

[www.cdfifund.gov/what\\_we\\_do/programs\\_id.asp?programID=5](http://www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=5)

### 24. **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)**

#### **Overview:**

The LIHTC program enables funding for affordable housing by allowing the

taxpayer to claim federal tax credits for the costs incurred during development of affordable units in a rental housing project. To the extent that these policies dovetail with local brownfields priorities, they may encourage investment in brownfields revitalization. Both profit and non-profit brownfields developers can use LIHTCs to help finance low-income housing projects. The program can be used to construct new buildings or rehabilitate existing buildings. All activities associated with the development of housing, including cleanup and demolition, can be claimed as expenses for the purposes of claiming a tax credit. The program is administered at the state level.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Project must have at least 20 percent of its units rented to households whose incomes are at or below 50 percent of the area median income, or at least 40 percent of its units rented to households whose incomes are at or below 60 percent of the area median income.

**Available Funds:**

The percentage of qualified low-income units is referred to as the “applicable fraction.” If the owner fails to achieve the projected applicable fraction, the amount of credits is reduced.

**Contact:**

[portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/lihtcmou](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/lihtcmou)

25. **National Park Service: Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits**

**Overview:**

This program provides investors a tax credit that can be claimed for the year in which the renovated building is put into service. A certified historic structure is defined as a building that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually as a contributing building in a National Register historic district, or as a contributing building within a local historic district certified by the US Department of the Interior. Rehabilitation of income producing certified historic structures qualifies for a credit equal to 20 percent of the cost of the work. Rehabilitation on non-certified structures built before 1936 qualifies for a credit equal to 10 percent of the cost of the work. All restored buildings and properties must be income-producing and rehabilitated according to the Department of Interior’s standards

**Eligible Applicants:**

Applicants must have a Project that meets IRS criteria to qualify for the credit, including:

- Structure must be depreciable;
- Rehabilitation must be substantial, defined as expenditures greater than \$5,000;
- Property must be returned to an income-producing use;
- Building must be maintained as a certified historic structure when returned to service.



Projects that plan to claim the 10 percent rehabilitation tax credit must meet several physical structure tests:

- At least 50 percent of the building's external walls existing at the time rehabilitation begins must remain in place as external walls upon completion.
- At least 75 percent of the building's existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls.

**Available Funds:**

Tax credit amounts range between 10 and 30 percent.

**Contact:**

[www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm)

26. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Clean Energy**

**Overview:**

Combining energy incentives with contaminated land cleanup incentives can allow investors and communities to create economically viable, non-polluting, renewable energy projects on brownfields, particularly where local economic conditions prohibit traditional reuse of the site.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Through the various programs, funding is available for a wide range of renewable and sustainable energy projects for commercial and residential developers. Integrating energy tax incentives into a project's financing strategy can enhance project cash flow by offsetting cleanup and construction costs. Energy projects can be ideal at brownfield sites for which there is insufficient market interest to support more traditional economic redevelopment projects.

**Available Funds:**

Tax credits/incentives vary based on the project

**Contact:**

[www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/](http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/)

27. **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Brownfield Cleanup Grant**

**Overview:**

The U.S. EPA Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, communities and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, cleanup and sustainably reuse brownfield properties. EPA provides the technical and financial assistance for brownfield activities through an approach based on four goals: protecting human health and the environment, sustaining reuse, promoting partnerships and strengthening the marketplace.

**Eligible Applicants:**

State, local and tribal governments; general purpose units of local government, land clearance authorities or other quasi-governmental entities; regional council or redevelopment agencies; state or legislatures; or non-profit organizations. Other

stipulations apply.

**Available Funds:**

Up to \$200,000 per site; no entity may apply for funding cleanup activities at more than five sites. Cleanup Grants require 20 percent cost share, which may be in the form of a contribution of money, labor, material or services, and must be for eligible and allowable costs.

**Contact:**

[www.epa.gov/brownfields/cleanup\\_grants.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/cleanup_grants.htm)

28. **Department of State: Brownfield Opportunity Area Program**

**Overview:**

Program provides financial and technical assistance to municipalities and community based organizations for development and implementation of a community based program for brownfield revitalization.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Municipalities and community based organizations or a partnership of municipalities and community based organizations

**Available Funds:**

Up to 90 percent of the total eligible project costs

**Contact:**

[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8447.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8447.html)

29. **U.S. Department of Environment Controls: Environmental Restoration Program**

**Overview:**

This program provides funds to municipalities for brownfield site investigation or remediation measures. Upon successful completion of the program, the municipality and future owners are released from liability for contaminants on the property prior to obtaining ownership.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Municipalities or municipalities working in cooperation with a community based organization. The municipality must own the property and must not have caused the contamination. The property cannot be listed as Class 1 or 2 on the New York State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites.

**Available Funds:**

Provides municipalities with up to 90 percent of on-site and 100 percent of off-site costs associated with cleanup.

**Contact:**

[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8444.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8444.html)

30. **U.S. Department of Environment Conservation: Brownfield Cleanup Program**

**Overview:**

This program aims to encourage private sector cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. BCP established a system of state funding and tax credits for cleanup of brownfields.

**Eligible Applicants:**

An applicant who requests to participate and has been accepted by NYSDEC and who may or may not have been the owner or operator of the site at the time of disposal of contaminants or who is otherwise responsible for the contamination. Exempt sites include sites listed as Class 1 or 2 in the Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites; sites listed on the USEPA National Priorities List; Hazardous waste treatment, storage or disposal facilities; sites subject to cleanup order or stipulation under Article 12 of the Navigation Law; or sites subject to any on-going state or federal enforcement actions regarding solid/hazardous waste or petroleum.

**Available Funds:**

Tax credits ranging from 22 to 50% depending on site track. BCP includes additional incentives for sites who comply with the goals of the BOA in which the site is located.

**Contact:**

[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8450.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8450.html)

31. **New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program**

**Overview:**

This tax credit is used in conjunction with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program. Property owners can take advantage of both state and federal income taxes.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Any commercial, office, industrial or rental residential building if it is listed on the state or national register of historic places either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district or eligible for inclusion on the registers, or has an approved federal tax credit part I certification. For the state credit, the commercial property must also be located in a federal census tract identified as a Qualified Census Tract, having a median family income at or below the State Family Median Income level.

**Available Funds:**

20% tax credit for Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures; coupled with federal program can cover as much as 40% of eligible project costs.

**Contact:**

[nysparks.com/shpo/tax-credit-programs/](http://nysparks.com/shpo/tax-credit-programs/)



## 4.11 Marketing the South Buffalo BOA



Image 46: Proposed development model in the South Buffalo BOA

The South Buffalo BOA has undergone extensive market analysis during the Nomination Study to understand the local, regional, national, and bi-national contexts. Although the South Buffalo BOA's history is steeped in heavy industry, the market projections developed during the Nomination Study suggest that the study area should advance beyond historic uses to reach its full potential. The Implementation Strategy employed a place-based method to prioritize sites. The planning team identified business owners who would benefit from more in depth analysis specific to their sites. This process was conducted with multiple in-person meetings to discuss opportunities for revitalizing their property, gather current land use information and review prior planning efforts. Preliminary development concepts, specific to their property, as well as possible techniques to further the vision for the South Buffalo BOA were presented and explained to each business owner (Image 46: Proposed development model in the South Buffalo BOA).

To understand the recent chronology of the marketing process the following ideas are expanded upon:

2009 – The Nomination Study describes area-wide market trends that take into consideration the complex land base and community concerns to fundamentally shape the master plan. A Smart Growth approach was developed that balances the study area's need for economic development with the need to preserve the built environment and poise vacant properties for future development. The Nomination Study also established ten principles to guide economic development and decision-making within the BOA. The ten principles are listed below and more information can be found in the Nomination Study Document, Section 4.2.

1. Leverage Existing Assets
2. Diversify the Economic Base
3. Enhance and Leverage the Natural Environment as a Key Asset
4. Create a Strong Market Brand
5. Prioritize Investment in the Public Realm





Image 47: Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, Ship Canal Commons

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1. Leverage Existing Assets
2. Diversify the Economic Base
3. Enhance and Leverage the Natural Environment as a Key Asset
4. Create a Strong Market Brand
5. Prioritize Investment in the Public Realm
6. Promote High Quality Urban Design and Place Making



Image 48: South Buffalo BOA Land Use

7. Foster Collaboration and Partnerships
8. Provide Benefits to Neighboring Communities
9. Plan for the Long Term
10. Establish a Range of Implementation Activities

2011 – The RiverBend Master Plan, a 260 acre subarea located in the northeast portion of the South Buffalo BOA, is intended to provide a flexible framework to guide development of RiverBend. Implementation projects have been strategically prioritized to promote incremental improvements of the public realm. A key strategy in the RiverBend plan includes overarching design principles to allow adaptation as the market demands change over time. The Master Plan provided the framework for development of the Buffalo High-Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend, a \$1.5 Billion public private partnership recently announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. This project will create an economic ripple effect throughout the South Buffalo BOA and would not have been made possible without the principles illustrated in the master plan (Image 48: South Buffalo BOA land use).

#### **4.11.1 Step 3 Marketing Strategy**

The South Buffalo BOA has witnessed extraordinary investment announcements in 2013 and is positioned to continue the upward trajectory of development in the near future. These investments benefit from the focus on development that the BOA program provides in addition to the expansive shovel-ready lands within South Buffalo BOA. Market research performed by Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE), Empire State Development and the Billion for Buffalo defines target industry clusters for the city of Buffalo. To achieve the goals defined in the Implementation Strategy, specific target industries must be pursued regionally, nationally, bi-nationally and internationally. Ongoing focused marketing efforts by BNE and its partners at the City and State government on the South Buffalo BOA and its target industries will lead to further development.

The diversity and availability of land throughout the South Buffalo BOA provide an array of development opportunities. The area offers a variety of property sizes for investment, from a shovel ready 20 acre site in Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park to less than one acre sites on Reading Street. In addition to the variety of lot sizes, the area also includes a variety of neighborhood scales from a mixed use condition on Hopkins Street to larger manufacturing character on Rittling Drive. These characteristics were taken into consideration when developing the future land uses in the South Buffalo BOA Master Plan and draft Green Code. The proposed land uses include light industry, manufacturing/warehouse/distribution, business services, R&D and mixed use. This selection of land uses provides the most appropriate uses for the area while meeting the needs of its target industry goals. The target industries that are best suited for the South Buffalo BOA are: Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics/Distribution, Advanced Business Services and Life Sciences.

To advance development opportunities in the South Buffalo BOA, a strategic marketing effort is required that aligns with the ongoing efforts by BNE and its partners in City and State government. These strategies include:

- Market Buffalo Niagara as a regional asset in our targeted industry clusters (Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics/Distribution, Advanced Business Services and Life Sciences)
- Leverage and promote the Billion for Buffalo investments in our regional infrastructure
- Focused, one on one approach with attraction project, such as the High Tech Manufacturing Innovation Hub at RiverBend and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park (Image 65: Buffalo Niagara Partnership Marketing Brochures)
- Unite the collective power of our region to get businesses to expand in or relocate to the City of Buffalo
- Implement marketing campaigns to improve South Buffalo BOA brand awareness
- Increase Foreign Direct Investment initiative and continue market focus on Canada
- Target Canadian manufacturers that were identified through BNE industrial gap analysis
- Match companies' needs with incentive programs to encourage relocation or expansion

Targeting the appropriate market areas for this strategy requires ongoing analysis by BNE and its partners. The target audience for the marketing strategy includes investors, private sector companies and brokers. The ongoing Canadian strategy has produced significant success and created a road map for greater outreach. While Canada remains a key focus additional national and international efforts is required using an industry-focused approach.

A marketing strategy requires multiple formats to reach potential investors. A strong web presence with industry and site specific content is an important avenue for pursuing a

broad based target audience. BNE, Buffalo Urban Development (BUDC) and Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) websites currently maintain a strong web presence that supports the South Buffalo BOA. Incorporating the marketing material developed as part of the Implementation Strategy on these websites and proactively promoting them provides an avenue for reaching the target audience. Using electronic communication tools BUDC and BNE can maintain contact with key targets, stakeholders and media to promote positive news and foster awareness for the region. Other broad forms of outreach include trade shows, industry specific news journals, e-mail blasts, blogs and direct mailers. BNE recently hosted several journalists from various target industry publications to introduce them to the region, the business community and regional assets. Using this creative approach to marketing the South Buffalo BOA would be beneficial to introducing new audiences to this exciting area.

As part of the early Implementation Strategy, outreach opportunities in Southern Ontario were reviewed because of their close proximity to the US and the need to increase Canadian market access. At that time it was determined that a workshop session in Southern Ontario would be beneficial and should include BNE staff, local Buffalo developers and the South Buffalo BOA team. BNE has found that the majority of companies that are looking to relocate or have a facility in the Buffalo area seek turn-key, move-in ready facilities. Owners are not interested in the complexity of building a new structure and dealing with potential issues associated with new construction. A majority of BNE successes have been companies that lease existing building spaces. In addition to these needs the market research performed by BNE has determined that the majority of companies looking to locate in the Buffalo market are looking for smaller capacity space to start their introduction to the area. Larger companies like Welded Tube may have interest but are harder to entice. The inclusion of local developers provides an opportunity to share their experiences, promote potential partnering opportunities and create awareness of the requirements of interested companies to local developers.

To support this effort detailed marketing materials were created as part of the Implementation Strategy. This includes marketing brochures, strategic site profiles and supportive graphics. The brochure will serve as a marketing and promotional piece to build public and private support for the revitalization of the South Buffalo BOA. The areas that were selected for the marketing brochures include the Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park, RiverBend and the overall South Buffalo BOA. These areas include the highest concentration of development opportunities along with numerous ongoing and planned projects.

In addition to the brochures listed above for strategic marketing, a brochure was created for the Hopkins Street Community in response to the public outreach effort. This brochure was developed to assist community members with realizing the South Buffalo BOA Community Vision (Image 52: Hopkins Street Area Brochure). These strategies include:



Image 49: Complete Street Strategy



Image 50: Build-out Plan Concept



Image 51: Precinct-wide Strategy Integration





Image 52: Hopkins Street Area Brochure

Creating enjoyable streets for everyone, integrating community trails for public access, and Harnessing nature's economic and social potential. To support these strategies a list of potential public, private and community organizations along with their contact information is included on the brochure. The brochure is to be distributed to the Hopkins Street Community as part of the South Buffalo BOA marketing strategy in collaboration with BNE and BUDC.

The Implementation Strategy expands on previous planning efforts for the South Buffalo BOA and provides recommendations for strategic sites on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Numerous sites throughout the BOA are owned by the City of Buffalo and have sufficient environmental information regarding existing conditions for prospective buyers. However the majority of properties in the Hopkins Street Neighborhood are privately owned. This area includes a number of strategic sites. As part of the Implementation Strategy these owners were engaged to promote planning and implementation initiatives specific to their properties. This effort gave interested landowners the opportunity to apply for Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment funding through the NYSDOS. As part of the marketing strategy descriptive profiles for ten strategic sites were prepared to publicize and market the sites availability for redevelopment (See Strategic Site Profile Real Estate Brochures on following pages). The profiles are designed to be used for real estate portfolios, marketing brochures and all forms of digital media.

To convey the information about the strategic sites and areas of interest throughout the South Buffalo BOA, graphic representations, such as section drawings, plans, and perspective views were created. These resources can be used to better inform municipal leaders, community organizations, residents, and potential investors of proposed implementation strategies (Image 50: Complete Street Strategy)(Image 51: Build-out Plan Concept)(Image 52: Precint-wide Strategy Integration). Additional advantages include use within the news media, for advertisements, or for real estate agents looking to further market properties.

## 5: COMPLIANCE WITH SEQRA



## **5.1 Overview of the SEQRA Process and Procedural Compliance**

### Introduction

The South Buffalo BOA (SBBOA) Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for the Nomination Study (Step 2) and Implementation Strategy (Step 3) phases of the BOA Program. Together, these represent the SBBOA Plan. It is anticipated that the adoption and implementation of the SBBOA Plan will result in future redevelopment of several brownfield, abandoned and/or vacant sites, enhanced parkland (including improvements at Tifft Nature Preserve and South Park), new commercial, recreational and mixed-use opportunities, and access/connectivity improvements.

This section includes a description of how, during the course of preparing the SBBOA Plan, the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) (Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR Part 617 of the implementing regulations) have been fulfilled, including the SBBOA Plan's consistency with New York State Coastal Management Program's Coastal Policies, its consistency with any applicable Heritage Area Management Plans, and specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQRA compliance. This includes thresholds and criteria for supplemental EIS's to reflect site-specific impacts that are not adequately addressed in the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). This section also includes a reference table that describes how the DGEIS content requirements were satisfied and specifically where in the body of the SBBOA Plan (or other supporting documents) those content requirements are located and can be found.

The following sections provide an overview of the SBBOA process beginning with the Step 2 Nomination Phase and its integration with a larger effort under the Buffalo Consolidated Framework, more particularly described below.

### SBBOA: Early SEQRA Procedural Steps

Prior to commencing the environmental impact review process for the SBBOA under Step 2, the City of Buffalo conducted a series of procedural steps in accordance with SEQRA and its implementing regulations.

The City completed Part 1 of the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and classified the SBBOA adoption and implementation as a Type 1 action under SEQRA. The Project was considered a Type 1 action because it would involve adoption of the SBBOA Plan with prescribed land use components; the physical alteration of 10 acres of land or more; and certain Unlisted actions conducted within South Park, listed on the National Register of

Historic Places, and Tiff Nature Preserve, a publicly-owned recreation area and designated open space. Other Type 1 activities were also assumed to apply to the Project given the number and type of projects that could be implemented in accordance with the SBBOA Plan.

Upon completion of Part 1 of the EAF and classification of the project as a Type 1 action, the City passed a resolution on February 5, 2008 proposing to seek SEQRA lead agency status for the adoption and implementation of the SBBOA Plan, and indicated its intent to conduct a coordinated review by requesting the consent from the other potentially involved agencies to act as SEQRA lead agency.

On March 18, 2008, upon receiving consent from potentially involved agencies, the City's Common Council passed a resolution resolving that it would act as lead agency for the Project and issued a Positive Declaration indicating that the adoption and implementation of the BOA Plan may have a significant impact on the environment and that a DGEIS would be prepared.

The City determined that a GEIS rather than a project-specific conventional EIS was particularly well suited for the SBBOA because the SBBOA Plan:

- Represented a number of separate actions within the BOA study area, which if considered singly, may have minor impacts, but when considered together may have significant impacts; and
- Is an entire program or plan having wide application that may have new or significant changes to affecting the range of future policies, projects and changes to land use, zoning or development plans.

#### Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework

Since 2008, the City of Buffalo embarked on a significant number of planning initiatives including preparation of a new land use plan and zoning ordinance, a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and three additional BOA Nomination Studies. Based on the number and scope of these initiatives, the City decided that a consolidated environmental impact review process, through preparation of a GEIS, would be an appropriate vehicle for SEQRA compliance. As such, the City of Buffalo initiated a comprehensive SEQRA review which included the aforementioned planning initiatives including the SBBOA Plan, all under the auspices of the Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework (BCDF). The BCDF is the culmination of years of planning work that aims to support and encourage redevelopment within the City of Buffalo. This transformative effort consists of the following planning initiatives:

- A Future Land Use Plan which accommodates appropriate uses and forms and

reinforces the existing character of the City;

- Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), including new form based zoning provisions, revised subdivision and sign ordinances and standards for street design and reconstruction;
- A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program that will guide development along the City's coastal areas;
- Urban Renewal Plans Disposition to obtain recommendations on the removal, replacement or modification of these plans to better reflect the City's community and economic development needs; and
- South Buffalo, Buffalo River Corridor, Buffalo Harbor, and Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Areas Master Plans, including the RiverBend Commerce Park Master Plan.

As part of the BCDF effort, it was determined that while certain elements of the Step 2 Nomination Study met the SEQRA GEIS content requirements (i.e., Project Description and Boundary, Community Participation and Analysis of the BOA), the remaining elements necessary to satisfy SEQRA compliance requirements including analysis of the SBBOA's potential adverse environmental impacts, description of mitigation measures, description of the range of reasonable alternatives to the action, conditions for future actions, and GEIS references, would be addressed in the broader DGEIS prepared for the BCDF. The following provides an overview of the BCDF procedural steps taken under SEQRA which, in part, satisfy the DGEIS requirements for the SBBOA Plan.

#### Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework: SEQRA Procedural Steps

On May 29, 2012, Common Council received a Full Environmental Assessment Form prepared on its behalf by the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) for the BCDF. The Common Council determined pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.4 (b) (1) that the adoption of the components of the BCDF, was a Type 1 Action under SEQRA. On May 30, 2012, the Common Council circulated a letter to other involved agencies and interested agencies stating its intent to act as Lead Agency. Since no objections were raised, on July 10, 2012 the Common Council assumed the role of SEQRA Lead Agency.

Pursuant to 6 NYCCR § 617.7, the Common Council determined that the adoption and implementation of the BCDF may have an adverse impact on the environment and that a DGEIS must be prepared. A Positive Declaration was subsequently issued on \_\_\_\_\_, 2012. The Common Council also determined that scoping for the DGEIS would be appropriate. Scoping, as established in 6 NYCCR § 617.8, is a process by which the Lead Agency, with input from the public, involved and interested agencies, identifies potentially adverse impacts that should be evaluated in the DGEIS and eliminates consideration of those impacts that are irrelevant or non-significant.



The Lead Agency determined on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014 that the DGEIS was complete and adequate for public review, with the public comment period commencing on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014 and ending on \_\_\_\_\_, 2014. Once the Lead Agency made this determination, a public comment period commenced. During the public comment period, the public and interested and involved agencies submitted comments regarding the evaluation and conclusions summarized in the DGEIS. Following the comment period, the Common Council, as Lead Agency, assembled the comments and subsequently determined the appropriate procedural steps to complete the SEQRA review .

The following table provides a summary of the procedural steps taken by the Lead Agency which demonstrates compliance with SEQRA regarding completion of the SBBOA Plan:

## 5.2 Fulfillment of DGEIS Content Requirements

In general accordance with the BOA Program Guidance, the DGEIS is partially incorporated

SEQRA Procedural Steps	Regulatory Citation	Date Completed/Issued	GEIS Reference Section/Appendix	Comments
EAF Part 1	6 NYCRR §617.6(a)(2)	May 29, 2012	BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	
Lead Agency Status Established	6 NYCRR §617.6(b)	July 10, 2012	BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	
EAF Part 2 and 3	6 NYCRR §617.6(a)(2)		BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	
Positive Declaration	6 NYCRR §617.12(a)(2)(ii)		BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	
Draft Scoping Document	6 NYCRR §617.8(b)		NA	Draft Scoping Document incorporated into Final Scoping Document
DGEIS	6 NYCRR §617.12(a)(2)(iii)		NA	DGEIS incorporated into FGEIS
Public Comment Period/Hearing	6 NYCRR §617.12(a)(2)(iii)		BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	Includes hearing transcript. Rigorous community input is also documented in Section 2 of the SBBOA Plan
FGEIS	6 NYCRR §617.12(a)(2)(iii)		BCDF DGEIS Appendix__	DGEIS incorporated into FGEIS
Findings Statement	6 NYCRR §617.11		NA	

Table 11: Environmental Recommendations for Strategic Sites

into the body of the SBBOA Plan (i.e., Project Description and Boundary, Community Participation and Analysis of the BOA). The remainder of the DGEIS content requirements (i.e., analysis of the SBBOA's potential adverse environmental impacts, description of mitigation measures, description of the range of reasonable alternatives to the action, GEIS references, and conditions for future actions) are included in the BCDF DGEIS. Fulfillment of the DGEIS content requirements are summarized in the table presented at the end of this section (2.f.).

The DGEIS has been prepared in general accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.10, and as such presents a more general set of analyses than a conventional, project-specific EIS. The DGEIS describes the proposed action, and includes assessments of specific anticipated impacts commensurate to the level of detail available. The analysis is based on conceptual information due to the comprehensive and prospective nature of the SBBOA Plan and other elements addressed therein.

The following provides a brief summary of the SBBOA Plan elements and their relationship to the DGEIS content requirements.

#### Description of Project and Boundary

The description of the proposed action and boundary justification was prepared as part of the Nomination Study and updated accordingly in the Implementation Strategy. The project description and boundary justification satisfies both the SEQRA and BOA Program requirements. Section 1 of the SBBOA Plan includes a concise description of the Project and its purpose, public need and benefits, including social and economic considerations. The project description ties the relationship of the study area to the community and region, acreage in the study area, and the number and size of brownfield sites and other abandoned, vacant, or partially developed sites located in the BOA. This section also includes a description of the BOA's potential in terms of opportunities for: new uses and businesses; creating new employment and generating additional revenues; new public amenities or recreational opportunities; and restoring environmental quality. A Community Context Map that shows the location of the SBBOA in relation to the municipality, county and region and a Study Area Context Map that shows the location of the SBBOA in relation to the entire City of Buffalo is also included in Section 1 of the SBBOA Plan.

#### Community Participation

Section 2 of the SBBOA Plan includes a description of the extensive community participation program implemented as part of the SBBOA Plan development. Section 2 summarizes the partners that have been consulted about the SBBOA Plan, the consultation methods and techniques used to inform project partners about the project's status and progress and to enlist their assistance in the process. This section also includes a description of public information meetings and other techniques that have occurred or been employed at appropriate and key stages during the SBBOA Plan process. In addition to the community

participation process summarized in Section 2, Section 2.0 of the BCDF DGEIS provides an overview of the community participation process conducted for all of the planning initiatives and the associated SEQRA public scoping effort, comment period and hearing processes. These extensive community participation processes satisfy both the SEQRA and BOA Program requirements.

#### Environmental Setting

Section 3 of the SBBOA Plan (i.e., Existing Conditions Analysis and Opportunities) includes a concise description of the environmental setting of the SBBOA in conformance with both SEARA and the BOA Program requirements. It includes a description of the community and regional setting, existing land use and zoning, brownfield, abandoned and vacant sites, strategic or priority brownfield sites, land ownership patterns, parks and open space, a building inventory, historic and archeologically significant areas, transportation systems, infrastructure and utilities, natural resources and environmental features and economic and market trends.

#### Impacts, Mitigation and Alternatives

Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of the DGEIS prepared for the BCDF includes an analysis of potential adverse environmental impacts, mitigation measures, where applicable and appropriate, and an analysis of alternatives. Included in this discussion is an analysis of the BCDF's consistency with the New York State Coastal Management Program Coastal Policies (addressed as part of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and included in Section 3.0 of the DGEIS) and Heritage Area Management Plans, as applicable. References are included in Section \_\_\_ of the BCDF DGEIS. Combined, these sections satisfy both the SEQRA and BOA Program requirements.

#### Thresholds and Criteria for Future Actions

Section 10.0 of the DGEIS identifies and establishes thresholds and criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQRA review. Future SEQRA review of projects is limited to topics that were not evaluated in the DGEIS or are site-specific and therefore were not fully evaluated in this DGEIS. SBBOA-specific thresholds are included in Section 10.0. Section 10.0 of the DGEIS satisfies the SEQRA and BOA Program requirements.

#### Summary of Fulfillment of DGEIS Content Requirements

The following reference table describes how the DGEIS content requirements were satisfied and specifically where in the body of the SBBOA Plan (or other supporting documents) those content requirements are located and can be found.

SBBOA Plan Elements	SBBOA Plan Reference Section	GEIS Content Requirements	GEIS Content Requirements Met?	Comments
Description of Project and Boundary	SBBOA Plan, Section 1	Description of Proposed Action	Yes	The project description is addressed in Section 1 of the SBBOA Plan and Section 1.0 of the BCDF DGEIS.
Community Participation	SBBOA Plan, Section 2	SEQRA public hearing is conducted simultaneously with a public hearing on the BOA Plan	Yes	Community Participation efforts are addressed in Section 2 of the SBBOA Plan and Section 2.0 of the BCDF DGEIS.
Analysis of the BOA	SBBOA Plan, Section 3	Description of Environmental Setting	Yes	Inventory and Analysis of the SBBOA, addressed in Section 3, meets the Environmental Setting Content Requirements of SEQRA.
Implementation Strategy	SBBOA Plan, Section 4	Potential Significant Adverse Impacts  Description of Mitigation Measures  Description of Range of Reasonable Alternatives to the Proposed Action	Yes	Addressed in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of BCDF DGEIS.
Compliance with SEQRA	SBBOA Plan, Section 5	Consistency with New York State Coastal Management Program Coastal Policies  Consistency with Heritage Area  GEIS References  Conditions for Future Actions	Yes	Summary of SEQRA Compliance included as Section 5 of SBBOA Plan. GEIS references and Thresholds and Criteria for Future Actions are included in Sections _ and 10.0, respectively.

Table 12: Environmental Recommendations for Strategic Sites

**SOUTH BUFFALO**  
**Brownfield Opportunity Area**  
**Step 3 Implementation Strategy**

