Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan

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1.0

WHAT IS THE PLAN ABOUT

The Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan is an investmentment strategy to help guide public investments in new street and public realm infrastructure and ensure that new infrastructure:

1. Is coordinated to strengthen the relationship between key destinations within downtown and establish an integrated network of attractive streets and open spaces; and
2. Is targeted to support and leverage additional private sector investment in downtown and make the most of limited resources.

The plan provides an overview of the existing conditions and goals and objectives for new infrastructure in downtown. A long term framework for investment in infrastructure is identified for key streets and public spaces, and a series of four priority areas are identified for targeted near term infrastructure investment. The plan concludes with a series of implementation strategies describing how to operationalize the plan.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Buffalo's 2003 Queen City Hub Plan developed a new policy framework and vision for downtown Buffalo as a regional center for entertainment, culture, education, health care and life sciences research. Guided by this award winning plan, downtown Buffalo has been experiencing an upswing in redevelopment and investment with nearly $5 billion of new public and private sector investment over the last few years. This reinvestment is being supported by $100 million in scheduled and recently completed streetscape and infrastructure projects.

Despite renewed interest and investment in downtown, Buffalo is experiencing challenges to reaching its full potential, including identifying innovative solutions to encourage and support ongoing downtown reinvestment. The 2012 Buffalo Building Reuse Project (BBRP) was a response to an oversupply of office space in downtown, much of which is in class B and C buildings whose potential is limited by small floor plates, outdated building systems, environmental concerns, and surrounding public infrastructure that is in need of improvement.

One of the key recommendations emerging from the BBRP was the development of "a downtown master plan for public infrastructure and amenities, which is context sensitive and captures the unique attributes of each downtown district". Funded by National Grid and National Fuel, this Master Plan has been developed under the guidance of the BBRP project team, including the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC) and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

1.2 PLAN PURPOSE & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan establishes a framework to coordinate and prioritize infrastructure investments in downtown. It does this by analyzing the existing conditions and making recommendations for what infrastructure investments should be aiming to achieve for key streets and public spaces.

To assist in the prioritization of investments, the plan identifies four priority areas for new investment and a list of more specific priority projects in each area. This is supported by a series of decision-making criteria to assist in the evaluation of infrastructure proposals and a series of general design guidelines to ensure that new infrastructure is designed to meet the needs of the evolving downtown.

The plan sets out a framework for the City of Buffalo to make strategic infrastructure investment in the near term that will incrementally work towards the plan's long term vision framework, helping to fuel development, bolster tourism, enhance downtown's image, and attract investment that supports downtown's renewal.

1.3 THE STUDY AREA

The plan's study area extends beyond the traditional central business district to include adjacent mixed use areas, residential neighborhoods and important areas of existing investment including the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Canalside and the Larkin District. The plan is extensive and covers a significant portion of the entire City, containing a number of unique park, public and civic spaces as well as an extensive and diverse hierarchy of streets. Engaging with an area of this magnitude has allowed for a robust consideration of existing conditions, and the development of a comprehensive long term vision framework that works to improve the functional relationship between the core downtown and important surrounding areas.

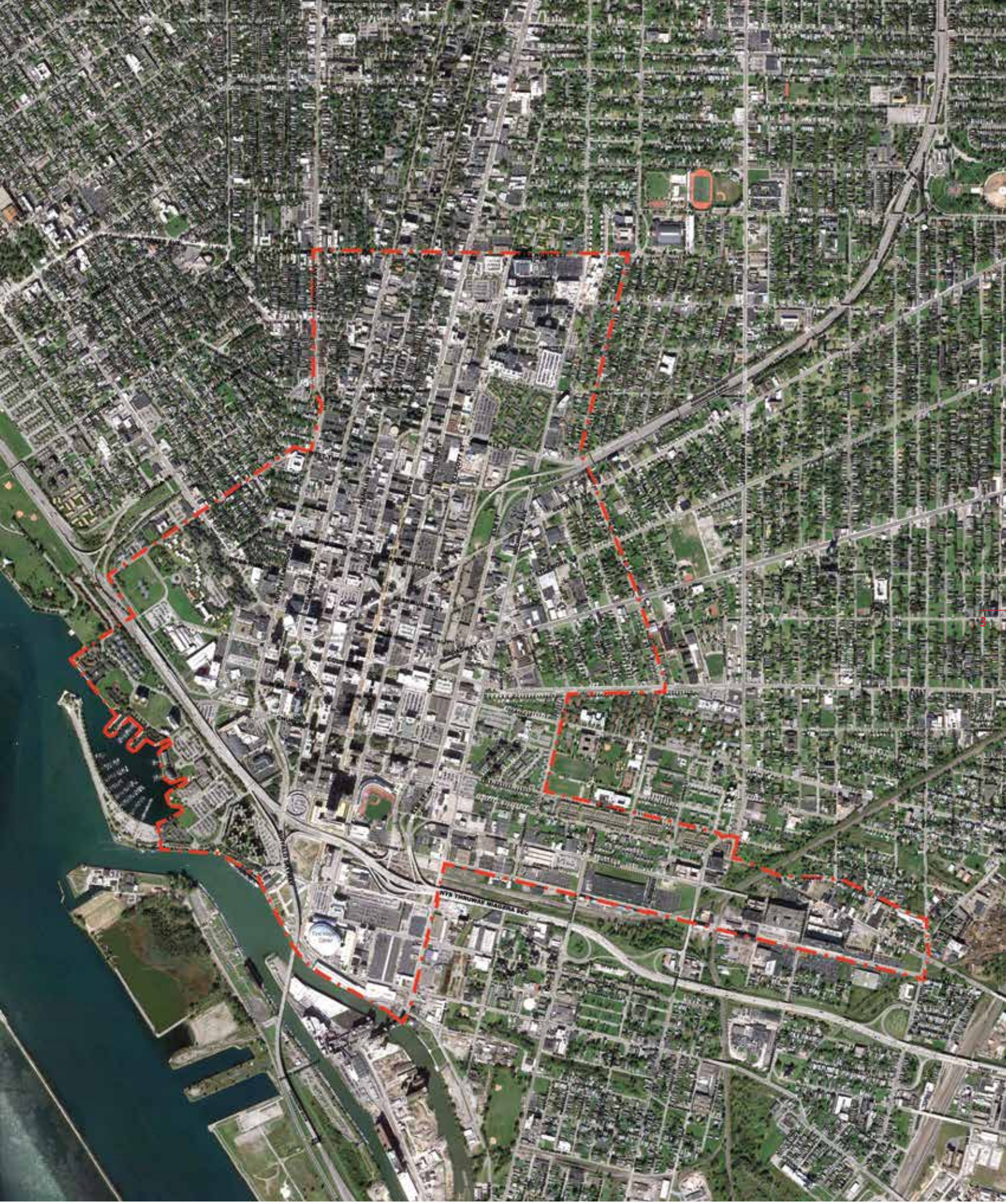


Figure 1-1 Study Area: *The Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan covers downtown, Larkin District, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and adjacent neighborhoods.*

1.4 HOW TO READ THE PLAN

The plan's analysis and recommendations have been organized into the following key sections:

Section 2.0 What are the Key Issues & Objectives

This section contains an analysis of existing conditions in downtown, as well as a summary of what was heard through the public consultation process. The existing conditions analysis is structured under four key systems: Urban Structure, Mobility, Public Realm and Downtown Investment. Analysis of each system is concluded with overarching goals and specific objectives for public realm infrastructure.

Section 3.0 What Should You Do

This section describes the long-term road map for investment in the downtown public realm and related infrastructure. It does this through a series of area-wide recommendations and the identification of a public realm and infrastructure Vision Framework which highlights objectives for key elements of the Framework.

Section 4.0 Prioritizing Downtown Investment

This section identifies four priority investment areas with a series of project recommendations in each area to focus investment and best capture additional private sector interest and development activities in each investment area.

Section 5.0 How Should You Get There

This section identifies a series of implementation strategies in support of the Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan.

The document concludes with a series of appendices which provide additional detail related to the analysis of existing conditions, the design of potential projects, and a set of decision making criteria to assist in the selection of projects for future funding and execution.

Appendix A: Infrastructure Design Guidelines

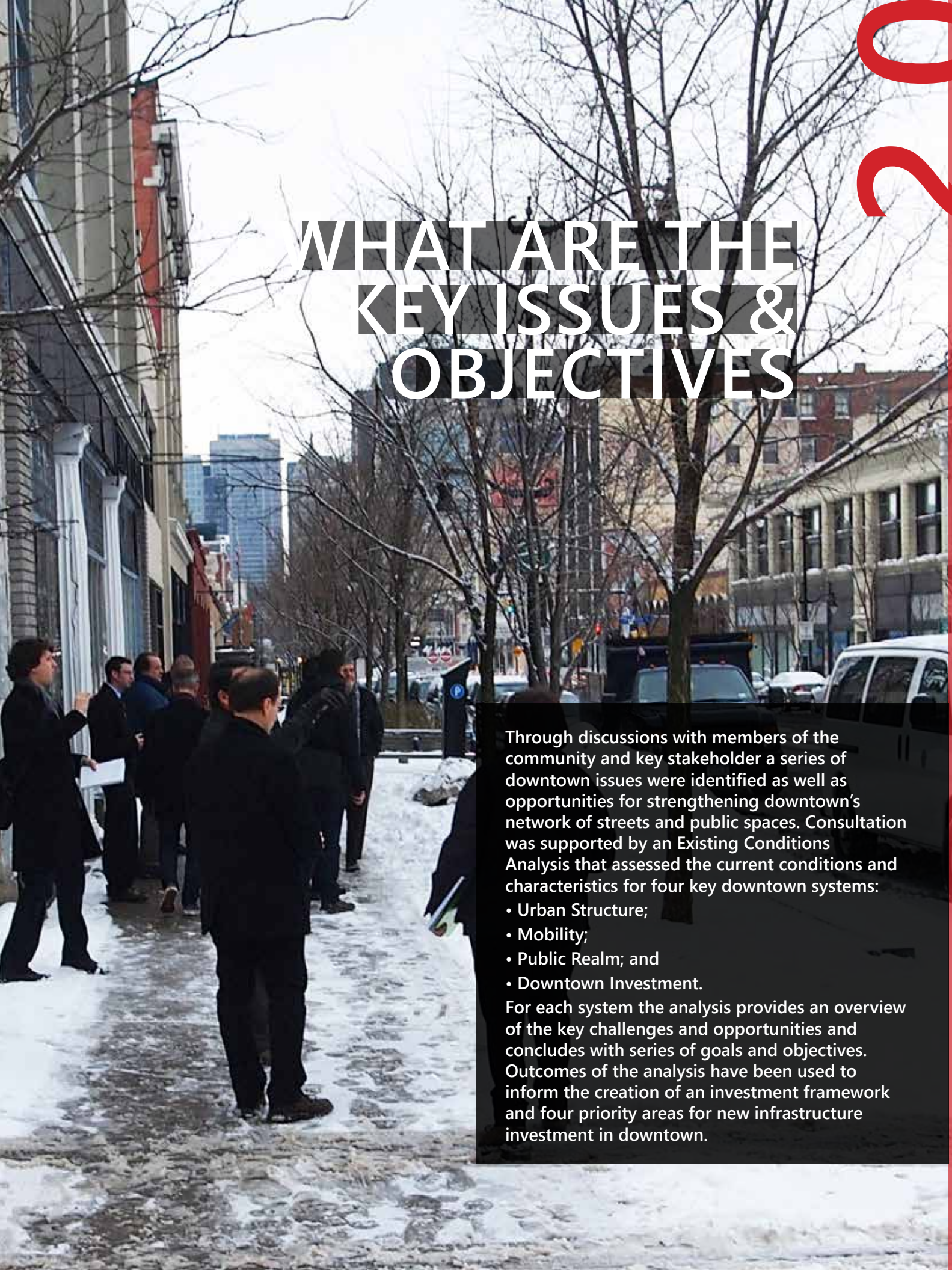
This section contains a series of design guidelines that build upon the directions of the green code to ensure that investment in public realm and related infrastructure helps to achieve the overarching goal of creating a vibrant, enticing and livable downtown.

Appendix B: Character Area Descriptions

This section provides a summary of downtown's numerous character areas. It identifies each area's role and function within downtown, summarizes existing character, and provides a list of the types of infrastructure and public realm projects that would help to enhance each area's setting, supporting the objectives of the plan.

2.0

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES & OBJECTIVES



Through discussions with members of the community and key stakeholder a series of downtown issues were identified as well as opportunities for strengthening downtown's network of streets and public spaces. Consultation was supported by an Existing Conditions Analysis that assessed the current conditions and characteristics for four key downtown systems:

- Urban Structure;
- Mobility;
- Public Realm; and
- Downtown Investment.

For each system the analysis provides an overview of the key challenges and opportunities and concludes with series of goals and objectives. Outcomes of the analysis have been used to inform the creation of an investment framework and four priority areas for new infrastructure investment in downtown.

2.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There were a number of key events and opportunities for stakeholder input that helped to inform the summary of key issues and opportunities. These included:

2.1.1 Summary of Key Events

There were a number of key events and opportunities for stakeholder input that helped to inform the summary of key issues and opportunities. These included:

The 2012 Buffalo Building Reuse Project (BBRP) Infrastructure Working Group

An infrastructure working group was created as part of the BBRP, bringing together key stakeholders with an interest in Infrastructure in downtown.

In addition to engaging with the general public, the Master Plan's consultation process continued to engage extensively with this group, which includes a wide variety of interests:

- National Grid & National Fuel
- City of Buffalo Departments of Parks, Public Works, Strategic Planning and Parking
- Buffalo Sewer Authority
- Buffalo Place
- Local business associations and business owners
- Developers, land owners, and real estate companies
- Construction companies
- Local engineering, planning, design, and other relevant consultants
- Major employers
- Seneca Nation of Indians
- Car and bikeshare companies and active transportation advocacy groups
- Educational institutions, including Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, University at Buffalo, and Erie Community College
- Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation
- New York Department of Transportation
- Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
- Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
- Michigan Avenue Heritage Corridor
- Just Buffalo Literary Center

Infrastructure Working Group Project Initiation Presentation, January 17th

This session provided an opportunity to introduce the Infrastructure Working Group to the Master Plan process and schedule of key activities, confirming future consultation dates and facilitating initial dialogue on key considerations, sensitivities, opportunities and challenges.

Infrastructure Working Group Interviews & Focus Groups, February 12th & 13th

As a critical part of the Master Plan's existing conditions analysis, a series of 35 key stakeholder focus groups were held with nearly 80 members of the BBRP Infrastructure Working Group over these two days. This process helped ground the Master Plan, providing an understanding of important stakeholders in downtown along with their different perspectives, priorities and activities.

Infrastructure Working Group & Public Visioning Workshops, April 7th

Following the completion of Existing Conditions Analysis, two visioning workshops were held to share this work and solicit feedback. An invited Key Stakeholder Visioning session was held from 1-4 p.m. with members of the Infrastructure Working Group, and an open invitation Public Open House was held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. to engage the general public. The intent of these sessions was to capture high level feedback surrounding the Master Plan's emerging vision and objectives, and to help identify and confirm infrastructure and public realm investment priorities that best support downtown community's objectives. Using a presentation, facilitated discussion, and a workbook to record participant feedback, the sessions identified a range of objectives and investment priorities.

2.1.2 What We Heard

Through the course of the consultation process a number of key challenges and opportunities for downtown were identified by the community and key stakeholders.

Challenges

There is too much surface parking in downtown and much of it is unsightly

There is not enough wayfinding to help people get to where they want to go

The mix of street furnishings and lighting is unsightly

There is a need for more multi modal infrastructure such as bike and car sharing

Elm/Oak form a barrier that must be addressed

There is a lack of East/ West Connections

There is a need for more inviting public spaces

Parking is critical to addressing office vacancy

A lack of pedestrian activated crossings makes it difficult for people to cross the street

Connections to the waterfront are poor and uninviting for people

There is a need for a strategy to deal with maintenance and replacement of infrastructure

There is a lack of amenities for residents downtown

Areas of surface parking disconnect downtown and create real or perceived safety concerns

The highway feeders and off ramps are creating real barriers

Connections to the waterfront are poor and uninviting

There is too much surface parking in downtown

There is a need for a strategy to deal with maintenance

Large highway feeder streets are creating barriers

Opportunities

Adaptive reuse is possible due to tax credits/exemptions

People were worried about the Delaware changes but not anymore

Public art should be integrated into the design of new infrastructure

There is interest in new residential development but the economics seem to support high-end products

Cars on Main is attracting new investment and should be continued

Investment in downtown over the last three years has exceeded investment over the entire previous decade

There is a slowly emerging mixed-use neighborhood between Michigan/Main and Goodell/N Division, resulting from small-scale adaptive reuse projects

There is an interest in growing existing Bikeshare and carshare programs

Road diets and one-way to two-way conversions have been largely successful

New infrastructure projects create opportunities to 'green' streets and coordinate streetscapes

Cars on Main is attracting new investment

New infrastructure projects create opportunities to green streets

Adaptive reuse is supported by tax credits

There is a growing interest in Bikeshare

Building on the key issues and opportunities, presentations to key stakeholders and the broader public at the Infrastructure Working Group & Public Visioning Workshop helped to identify the following broad objectives and priorities for investment in new infrastructure in downtown.

Community Objectives for New Infrastructure

1. Reduce car priority by:
   - *Slowing traffic;*
   - *Reducing areas dedicated to cars and parking within downtown; and*
   - *Enhancing east/west connectivity to enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity from adjacent neighborhoods.*
2. Support public transportation.
3. Improve conditions and provide facilities to support active transportation by:
   - *Reducing barriers associated with car priority;*
   - *Improving crosswalks, pedestrian signals; and*
   - *Connecting fragmented cycling routes (particularly east/west connectivity).*
4. Enhance downtown living by:
   - *Encouraging services such as grocery stores, family oriented public spaces, retail and the development of new residential development; and*
   - *Improving safety at all times of the day.*
5. Reinforce neighborhood character.
6. Improve the public realm through:
   - *Consistent use of materials and improved wayfinding; and*
   - *The incorporation of public art.*
7. Ensure long-term maintainability through high quality design and materiality.
8. Expand access to the waterfront and strengthen connections between waterfront destinations and the rest of downtown.

Community Priorities for Infrastructure Investment

1. Improve coordination of transit services and incentivize transit use by rebalancing the fare structure between transit and parking.
2. Calm the Elm/Oak corridor.
3. Continue Cars Sharing Main Street.
4. Enhance the Erie Street connection to the waterfront.
5. Address the impacts of highways and underpasses on walkability.
6. Calm the North/South Division & Church corridor to support higher levels of pedestrian activity.
7. Improve Downtown wayfinding.
8. Enhance the Fireman's Park/NFTA Terminal/ECC district.
9. Improve the character of Michigan Avenue and strengthen it as a waterfront connection.
10. Enhance the character of Chippewa through streetscape improvements.
11. Calm Goodell so that it is not a barrier to the BNMC.
12. Enhance Seneca Street to strengthen the connection between downtown and Larkin District.
13. Extend the LRT to the airport to improve accessibility.

2.2 URBAN STRUCTURE

A city's urban structure is comprised of its places and their connections; the neighborhoods, focal points and districts which act as destinations within the city and the streets, corridors and open space networks that organize them. Understanding the parts that make up a city's urban structure can help to identify opportunities where infrastructure can be used to help to reinforce the positive characteristics of important places, enhance access, strengthen connections, and create a setting for new investment. The following section reviews existing planning directions, patterns of built form and land use, and key places within downtown.

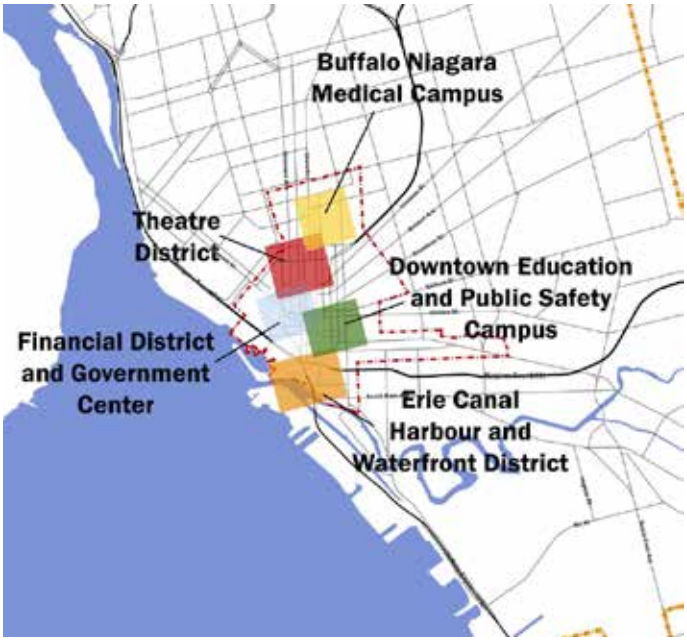


Figure 2-1 Queen City Hub Strategic Investment Areas

2.2.1 Key Directions of the Queen City Hub

The Queen City Hub established an action plan for downtown by identifying priorities for new growth and investment which will effect and strengthen downtown's urban structure. The Master Plan aligns with and builds upon this framework and its vision, which is centered upon five key themes and five strategic areas of reinvestment illustrated below.

Five key Queen City Hub Vision's themes:

1. **Downtown as a regional center:** a hub for key regional economics.
2. **Downtown as the neighborhood of neighborhoods:** stabilize and continue investment in the inner ring of neighborhoods.
3. **Downtown is for everyone:** grow downtown residential population and expand related services; highlight rich historic and cultural heritage, and bring the full diversity of the City and Region to downtown.
4. **Downtown is where the Ellicott Plan, The Olmsted Park and Parkway System, and the waterfront converge:** these historic plans are the backbone of the vision.
5. **Downtown builds on decades of progress:** use investment in BNMC and the waterfront as 'bookends' for broader downtown investment.

2.2.2 Existing Land Use

Downtown Buffalo is defined by its traditional central business district consisting of historic buildings structured within a radial/grid network of streets centered on the civic precinct at Niagara Square.

Commercial and retail uses extend out from the CBD along two primary corridors; Main Street and Delaware Avenue. Downtown is flanked by a number of traditional neighborhoods which developed along the City's historic street car radials; Niagara Street and Elmwood to the west, Main Street and Delaware Avenue, and Genesee, Sycamore, Broadway, William and Clinton to the east. Despite downtown's connected street network, access is served primarily by three highways superimposed over the historic street grid; the Kensington Expressway (replaced Olmsted's historic Humboldt parkway), I-190 (along the original alignment of the Erie Canal) and the Skyway (NYS Route 5). These highways have helped to support a working population of approximately 58,000 people in downtown, despite its relatively small residential population of approximately 8,280 residents.

As downtown continues to adapt and change over time, new infrastructure and public realm investment should work to support downtown as a livable urban place by encouraging the development of a larger residential population. Part of this transformation must focus on enhancements to downtown's radial streets, which act as important neighborhood connectors into and out of downtown. Successfully attracting new residents will also be tied to the creation of a more welcoming, safer and animated public realm with amenities for people of all ages and a greater diversity of retail and commercial uses that thrive outside of office hours.

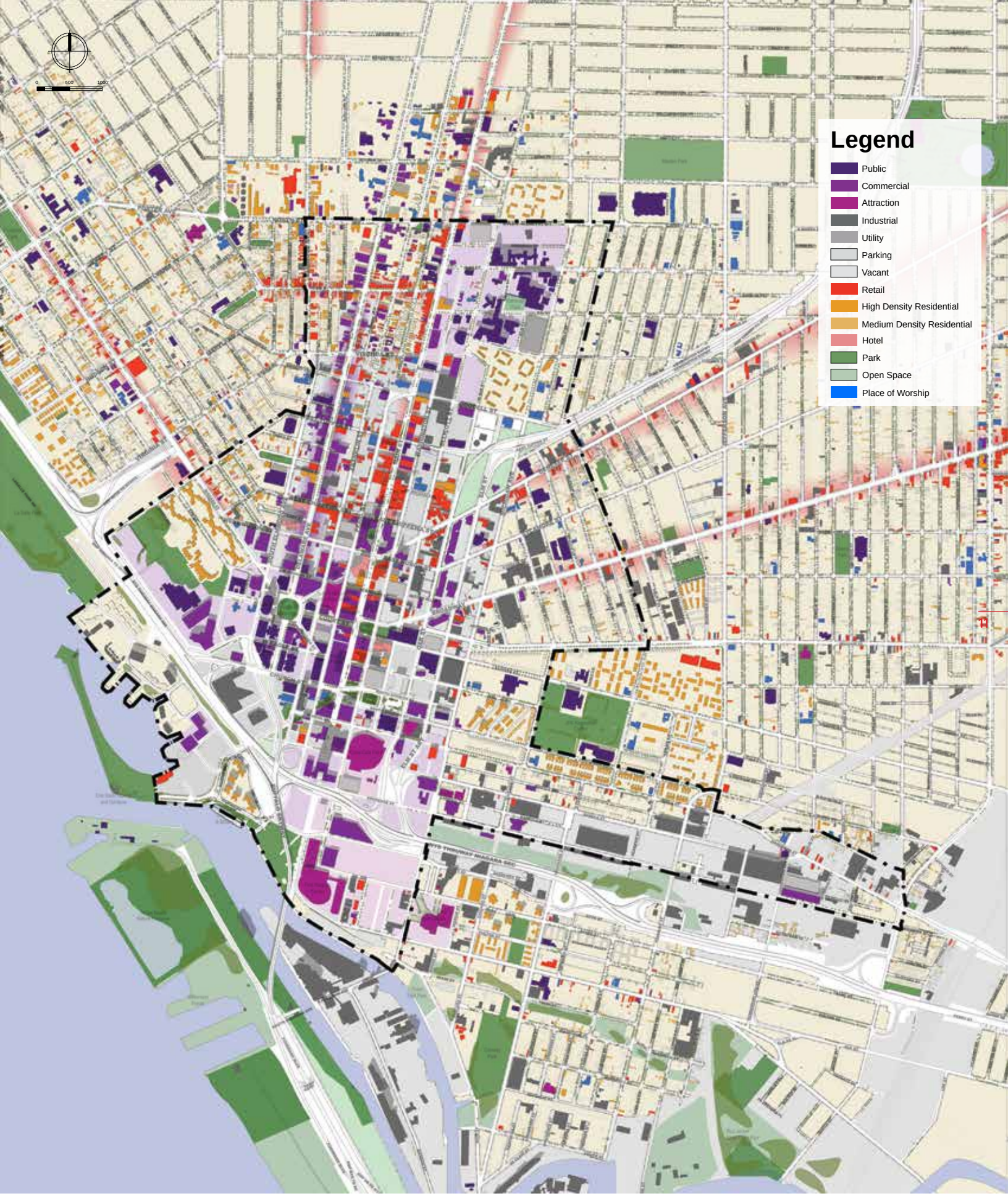


Figure 2-2 Existing Land Use Pattern: *Downtown Buffalo is defined by its traditional central business district consisting of historic buildings structured within a radial/grid network of streets centered on the civic precinct at Niagara Square and extending out into the neighborhoods*

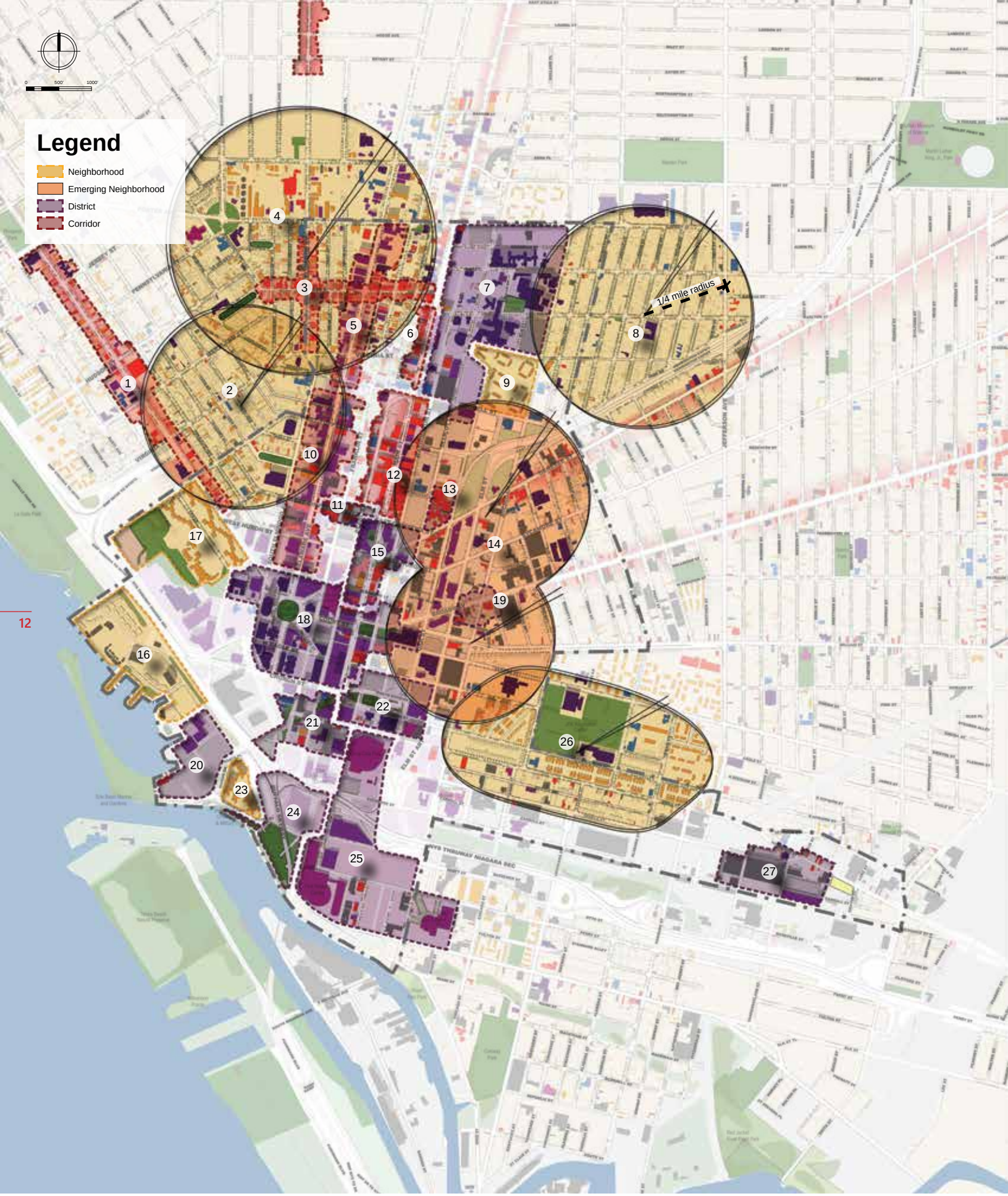


Figure 2-3 Downtown Character Areas: *Downtown Buffalo is comprised of a variety of distinct places, each with their own unique characteristics and functions*

2.2.3 Character Areas

Downtown Buffalo is comprised of a variety of distinct places, each with their own unique characteristics and functions.

An understanding of these distinct places is important to ensure that infrastructure and streetscape improvements help to respond to the issues and challenges that are identified, while supporting the functions and characteristics that should be preserved and reinforced. The character areas can be divided into districts, corridors, neighborhoods and emerging neighborhoods.

Districts are areas with consistent or similar patterns of land use, built form and primary functions that are distinct from other places in downtown.

Corridors are segments of a street which may connect several districts, and which have a consistent pattern of land use and built form. For example, Main Street and Delaware Avenue are primary North/South Corridors that connect and give structure to other districts, corridors and neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods are predominantly residential areas that are often bounded by non-residential or mixed-use areas; they are distinguished by similar architecture, housing stock, and demographic characteristics. Some neighborhoods like Allentown are well established with a distinct identity and character, while others like the Fruitbelt are transitioning as the areas around them change.

Emerging Neighborhoods are the result of adaptive reuse projects that typically take place in historic building stock in areas that do not have an established pattern of land use or built form. Whereas established or transitioning neighborhoods are characterized in part by a distinct pattern of architecture, land use and built form, emerging neighborhoods are areas of transition that have not yet developed a distinct character but are beginning to attract mixed use residential development.

One of the key challenges that the unique character areas within downtown face is fragmentation and isolation resulting from large areas of surface parking and vacant lots that occupy the spaces in between many of downtown Buffalo's districts, neighborhoods and corridors. Over time, infrastructure and public realm investments should work to stimulate growth that recognizes and reinforces the unique character of these areas, and that encourages new linkages and appropriate private sector development that helps tie them together.

Each of the identified character areas are described in more detail in **Appendix B: Character Area Descriptions.**

1. Niagara Street Corridor
2. West Village Neighborhood
3. Allen Street Corridor
4. Allentown Neighborhood
5. North Delaware Avenue
6. 800 Block
7. Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
8. Fruitbelt Neighborhood
9. McCarley Gardens
10. South Delaware Corridor
11. Chippewa District
12. Theatre / Upper Main District
13. Flower District
14. East Downtown
15. Roosevelt Plaza / 500 Block Precinct
16. Waterfront Village Neighborhood
17. Shoreline Apartments Neighborhood
18. Civic Center
19. Michigan Avenue Heritage District
20. Erie Basin Marina
21. Erie Street Connection / Joseph Ellicott Precinct
22. ECC / Fireman's Park Precinct
23. Marina Drive
24. Canalside
25. Sports & Entertainment District
26. Ellicott Neighborhood
27. Larkin District

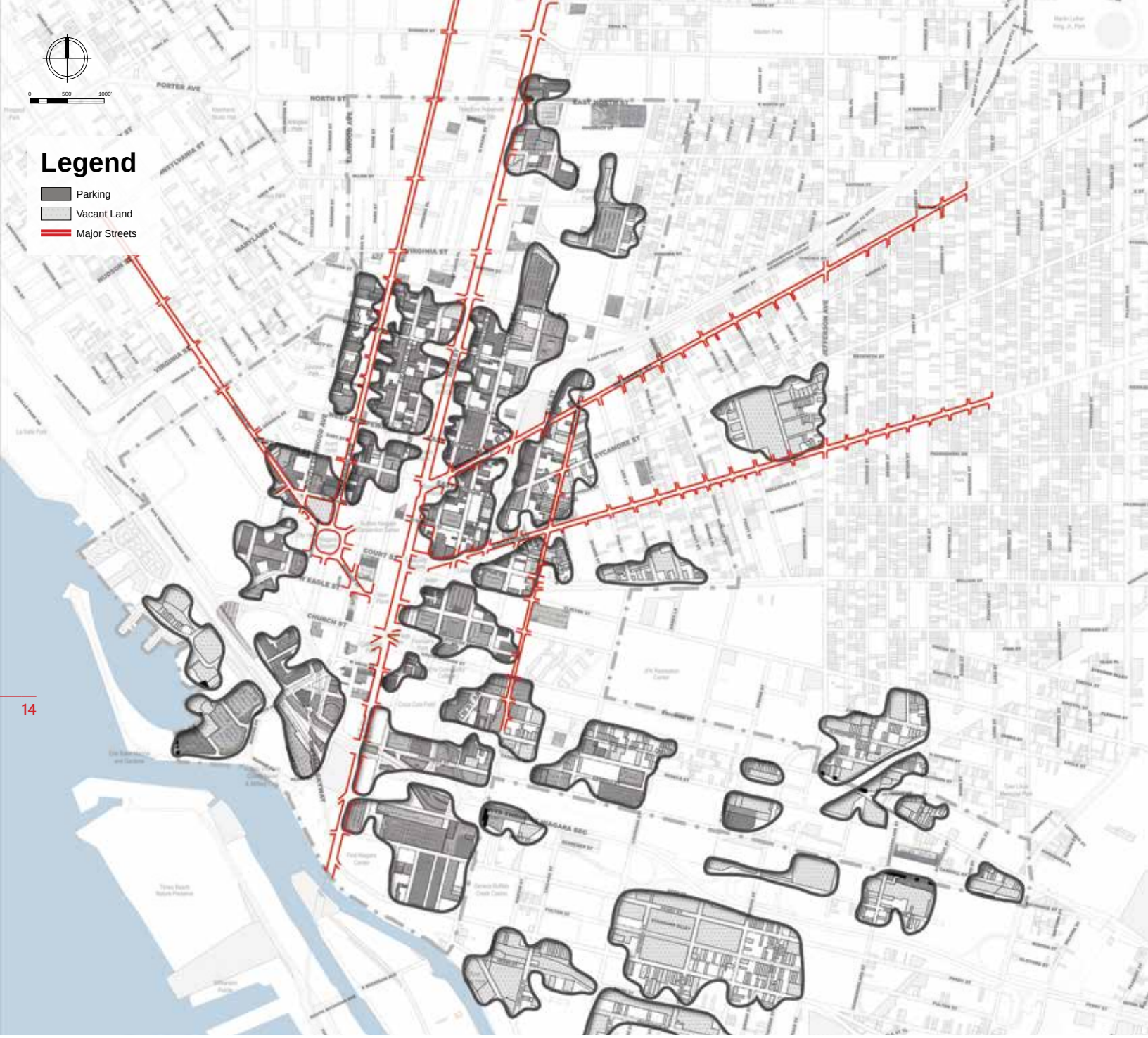


Figure 2-4 Holes in the Fabric: *Vacant lots and extensive areas of surface parking create large voids within downtown*

2.2.4 Holes in the Fabric

Vacant lots and extensive areas of surface parking create large voids within downtown.

These areas occur between existing corridors of activity, along the edges of downtown, and bordering major infrastructural barriers. While many areas of downtown are now experiencing significant reinvestment and new vibrancy, barriers and holes in the fabric separate these pockets into isolated areas of activity surrounded by large areas of surface parking and vacant lots. This discourages pedestrian activity between areas of redevelopment due to the absence of the built environment, alongside real or perceived safety concerns that result from the experience of being in a void. The Green Code has helped to acknowledge and address this.

Over time, streetscape improvements should be pursued between areas of activity to encourage reinvestment that bridges the gap created by these large areas of surface parking and vacant lots.

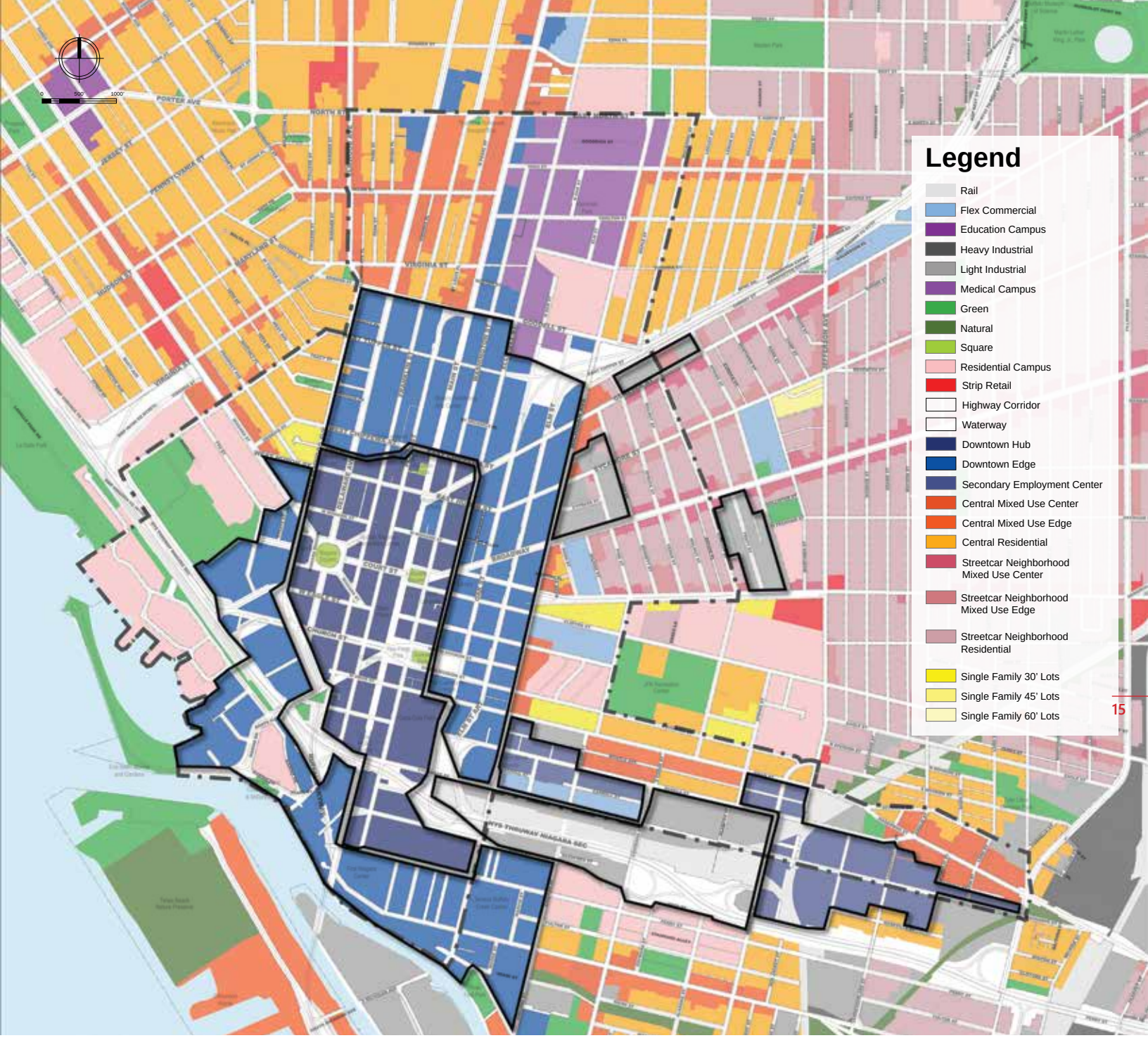


Figure 2-5 The Green Code: *The Green Code reinforces a downtown employment core edged by mixed commercial and residential uses*

2.2.5 Green Code

Buffalo has begun a revision of its land use policies to create a new Green Code that will guide the City's physical development over the next 20 years.

The Green Code is a two-step process beginning with a new land use plan, which will then inform the creation of a new form-based zoning ordinance that works to advance the four objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Queen City in the 21st Century:

- Fix the basics;
- Build on assets;
- Implement smart growth; and
- Embrace sustainability.

The Green Code reinforces a downtown employment core edged by mixed commercial and residential uses. Pedestrian priority areas are established for downtown to strategically guide infrastructure improvements. Downtown is to be surrounded by mixed-use neighborhoods centered along the City's historic street car radials. The Larkin District is designated as a secondary employment cluster and is separated from downtown by light industrial employment and smaller neighborhoods. Transitioning neighborhoods to the east of downtown are also separated from downtown core by a cluster of light industrial uses. These remnant industrial uses present a challenge to improving connections between these areas and downtown core.

2.2.6 Key Urban Structure Goals & Objectives

Downtown Buffalo's urban structure is built upon a solid foundation of functioning districts, neighborhoods and corridors that serve distinct functions within downtown. However, holes in the urban fabric have eroded the urban structure, resulting in extensive voids that detract from the distinct character areas that they separate. The Master Plan must build on the framework created by the Queen City Hub and new Green Code, working to strengthen these character areas by repairing holes in the urban fabric.

Goal: Reinforce and strengthen downtown's urban structure

Objectives:

- Support strategic investment areas of the Queen City Hub by clustering infrastructure and public realm investments in these areas;
- Strengthen and reinforce unique character areas with sensitive infrastructure and public realm improvements that serve and respond to adjacent land uses;
- Encourage the development of a larger residential population in downtown by focusing resident-oriented infrastructure and public realm investment adjacent to clusters of existing, planned, and/or potential residential development;
- Enhance the radials and key east/west streets to support their function as important connections between neighborhoods and the downtown core; and
- Use infrastructure and public realm investment to encourage redevelopment of holes in the urban fabric and/or mitigate these holes through sensitive programming, animation, plantings and/or other strategic interventions.

2.3 MOBILITY

Urban mobility systems are made up of the infrastructure that supports all modes of transportation, including walking, cycling and public transportation, as well as traditional use of cars. Balancing these constituent mobility systems to ensure that they efficiently work together supports the ability of visitors, residents and employees to move between the places where they live, work and play. Facilitating this movement and creating a strong interface between the mobility systems and a downtown's neighborhoods, employment districts, retail/commercial areas and special cultural and civic spaces is also integral to the successful functioning of these different uses. The following section explores issues related to mobility within downtown, the existing conditions, key challenges and opportunities to create a more balanced mobility network.

2.3.1 Street Network

Buffalo has an excellent street network to build upon, but the highways that provide access to downtown and the network of one-way streets created to feed them have become visual and physical barriers for pedestrians and cyclists.

With 58,000 downtown workers and only 8,280 residents, numerous downtown streets have been restructured over time to facilitate extensive commuter traffic through a network highways and one-way 'feeders' that work solely to move cars into and out of downtown. The resulting street network prioritizes cars over other modes of transportation, disrupting local connectivity and mobility. This street organization framework is not only a mobility challenge; it presents a hostile environment for pedestrians and adjacent land uses that effectively acts as a barrier to investment and redevelopment. This highlights a disconnect between the desire to create a vibrant livable downtown organized around a network of complete streets, and the desire to minimize car traffic by efficiently moving a large number of commuters into and out of downtown.

Over time, new infrastructure and public realm investments should work to establish a network of complete streets that prioritize local mobility and public transportation and that reduce the barriers created by one way feeders and highway infrastructure. This can be accomplished through road diets, underpass improvements, improved crossings, and restoration of two-way street traffic on one way feeders, as well as traffic calming on residential streets that are impacted by commuters entering and exiting downtown.

Figure 2-6 Street Network: *Buffalo has an excellent street network to build upon, but the highways that provide access to downtown and the network of one-way streets created to feed them have become visual and physical barriers for pedestrians and cyclists.*

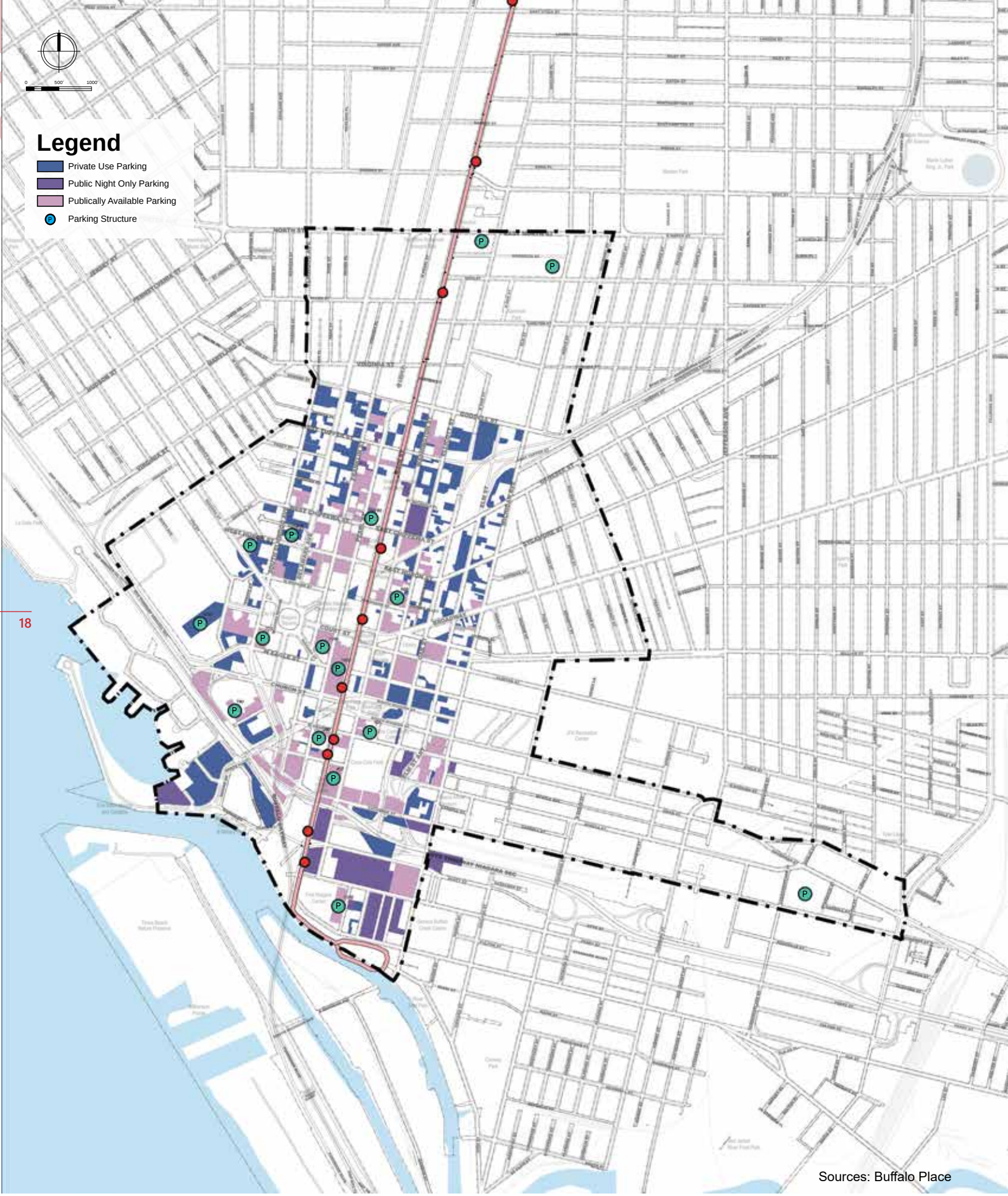


Figure 2-7 Parking Supply: *Buffalo has an abundance of parking in the Downtown core but supply is not coordinated with areas of demand and current pricing creates a disincentive to taking transit.*

2.3.2 Parking Supply

There are more parking spaces than needed in downtown, but supply is not coordinated with areas of demand and current pricing creates a disincentive to taking transit.

According to the Comprehensive Parking Assessment: Downtown Buffalo, 2008, there are 32,700 parking spaces within downtown, and only 74% of these are occupied during the peak 9-5 period.

The location of the parking supply is broken down accordingly:

- 8% Located on Street
- 56% in Publicly Available Off-Street Facilities
- 36% in Private Off-Street Facilities

74% of all parking is occupied during the peak period, which leaves a surplus of 5,200 spaces or approximately 35 acres (26 football fields) of parking.

Buffalo Place has updated some of this information through their 2013 analysis of Downtown Buffalo Parking, which indicates that the off-street parking supply has actually increased from approximately 30,100 in 2008 to 32,200 in 2013. Peak period utilization is essentially unchanged, reported at 73%.

While some of this parking will be lost to new development, any concerns over a shortage of parking appear to be a result of where parking is located; for example Buffalo Place's 2013 analysis illustrated below identifies that the 'Retail Core' is at 86% - 100%, while the directly adjacent 'Lower East' area is between 38% - 55%.

Also of note, the daily and monthly costs of parking at BCAR ramps is comparable to the costs of daily and monthly NFTA passes:

Parking

Daily cost of parking at BCAR ramps
- $5.00 -$7.00 Day

Monthly cost of BCAR parking
- $68 -$75 Month

Private monthly parking costs
- $30-$135 depending on lot location

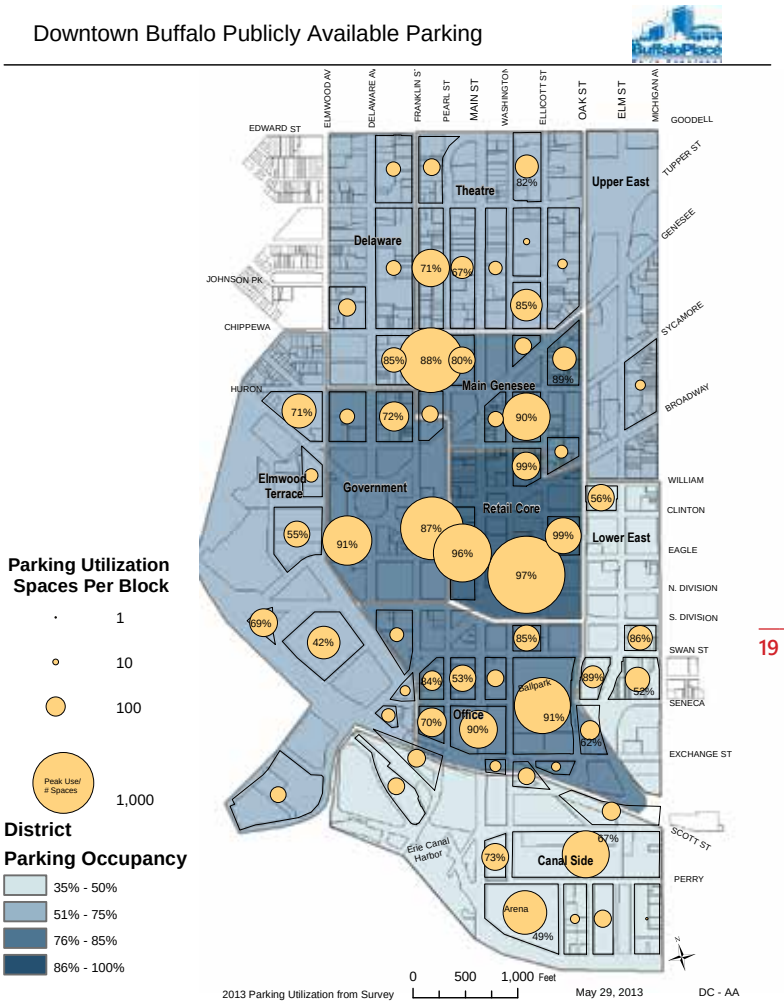


Figure 2-8 Downtown Publicly Available Parking Utilization (2013)

Transit

Cost of NFTA day pass
- $5.00 Day

Cost of monthly NFTA pass
- $75.00 Month

The current cost structure and abundant supply of downtown parking has the potential to encourage car use over transit, as an easier and similarly priced option. It may be worthwile to reconsider the cost structure of municipal parking and the transit fare structure. Other cities have encouraged transit use through this approach. Over time car use, traffic and the need for extensive parking in the downtown core may decrease.

Figure 2-9 Transit Network: *Buffalo's radial transit network directly connects outlying areas with downtown, but channels high volumes of bus traffic onto a few select streets in the downtown core.*

2.3.3 Transit Network

Buffalo's radial transit network directly connects outlying areas with downtown, but channels high volumes of bus traffic onto a few select streets in the downtown core.

While this affords these streets with frequent transit service, the volume of bus traffic can have a negative impact on surrounding streets and public spaces, including bus idling, related pollution, noise, and also confusion that can result from the convergence of numerous bus routes. Buses terminating their routes within downtown also results in the need for lay-over space for waiting buses, resulting in further street and public realm impacts. For example, the site of the downtown bus terminal and bus layover space is located adjacent to Fireman's Park, which acts as a barrier between Fireman's Park and Erie Community College. The terminal is also located several blocks from the City's downtown train station and LRT, complicating transfers between bus, rail and rapid transit services.

Over time, the challenges created by the radial transit network can be addressed by exploring new routing options that reduce the number of buses terminating in downtown while still maintaining the same or higher levels of service. This would require improved intermodal connectivity between bus, rail and rapid transit service that should seek to drive higher ridership along the Main Street LRT. Strategies to better integrate bus traffic on downtown streets and public spaces could also improve existing conditions, including improved wayfinding for transit service, improved pedestrian connections to and from the bus terminal, and the exploration of opportunities to better facilitate bus lay-overs in downtown.

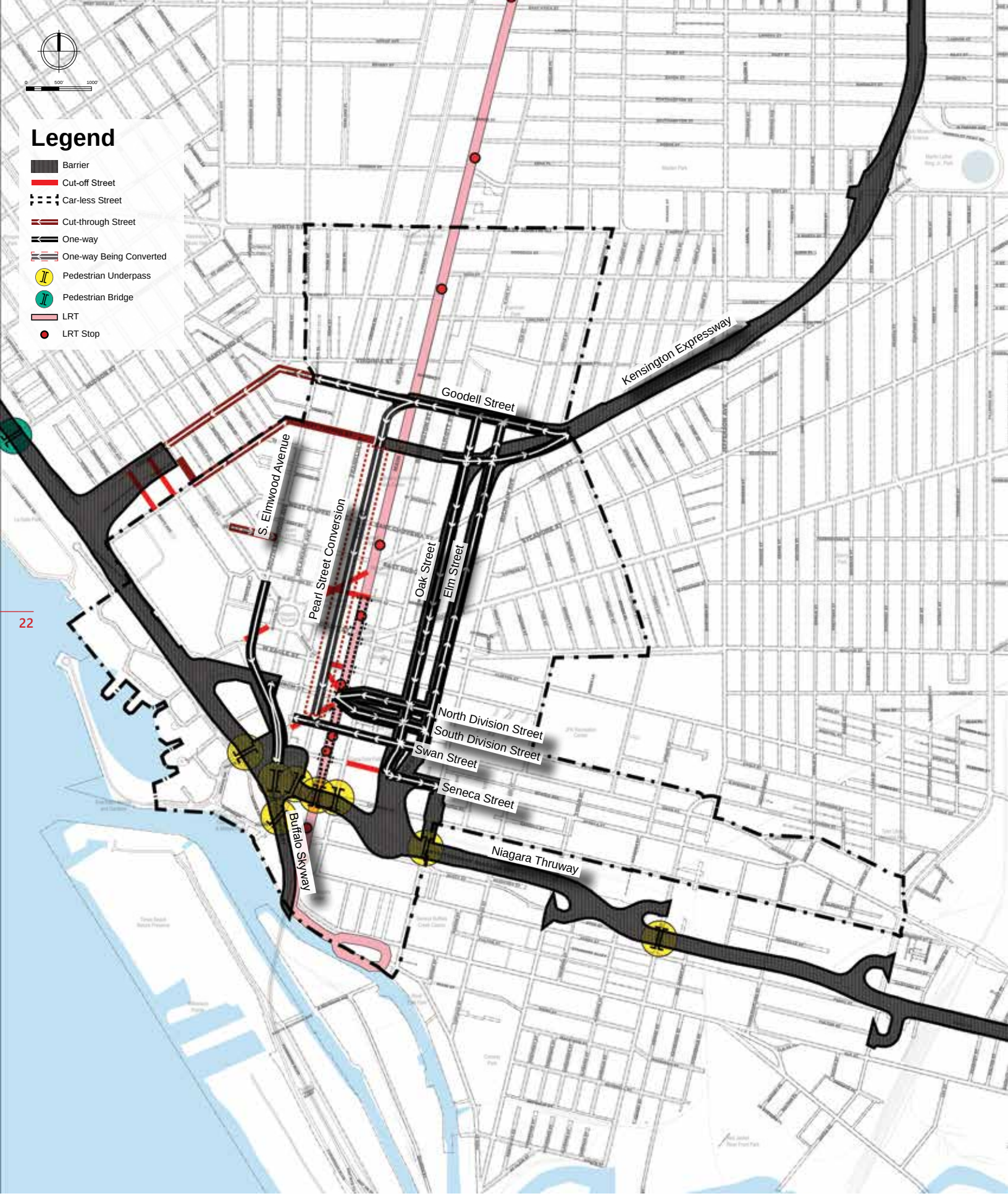


Figure 2-10 Barriers & Challenging Street Conditions: *There are a number of challenging street conditions which negatively impact downtown connectivity and mobility*

2.3.4 Barriers & Challenging Street Conditions

Downtown is characterized by a number of challenging street conditions which negatively impact downtown connectivity and mobility.

These conditions can be grouped into six different categories as follows:

Underpasses and Ramps: Buffalo's raised highways and on/off ramps create a significant barrier between downtown, waterfront and surrounding neighborhoods.

Underpasses create dark and uninviting conditions

Feeders: wide one-way streets with fast moving traffic that work to efficiently move cars in and out of downtown result in unfriendly and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

One-way feeders create barriers across downtown

Lost Radial Segments/Cut-off Streets: in the downtown core, sections of historic radial streets have been interrupted and replaced by new buildings and land uses that disrupt efficient movement of people and car.

Interrupted sections of the street grid disrupt connectivity

Neighborhood 'Cut-Throughs': the orientation and location of highway on/off ramps results in undesirable rush hour traffic along otherwise quiet residential streets, as commuters try to find the shortest routes into and out of downtown.

Neighborhood "cut-throughs" disrupt residential streets

Through-Buildings: A few buildings have been built with important streets running directly beneath the building, creating unfriendly pedestrian and public realm conditions along these streets.

Through-building streets result in dark uninviting voids

Car-less Streets: the historic removal of cars from Main Street has resulted in a number of challenges for this important corridor, which are now being addressed by the 'Cars Sharing Main Street' program. Cars have also been removed from portions of Mohawk and Erie Streets, disrupting the historic street network.

Car-less streets disrupt traffic and lack animation

Infrastructure and public realm investments should work to address these challenges over time, using strategies that focus on the transformation of large car-focused barriers into complete streets. Improving the condition of highway underpasses and restoring the historic street grid can help to improve downtown mobility, as can strategies that tame one-way feeders and neighborhood cut-throughs, using a combination of traffic calming measures, road diets, improved streetscaping, cycling infrastructure and improved pedestrian crossings. Improvements to the conditions of streets beneath buildings should also be pursued, including the renovation of existing structures, public art, and improved lighting and sidewalk conditions. Finally, the transformation of Main Street into a complete street with bi-directional traffic is particularly important to revitalizing this central downtown corridor.

2.3.5 Cycling Network

The City of Buffalo's growing cycling network is playing an increasingly important role in connecting neighborhoods around downtown to key destinations.

While new bike lanes on large streets like Delaware are a significant improvement, they are generally fragmented and do not cater to less experienced cyclists who may be less comfortable on busy streets. There is also a need for secondary bike routes on quieter streets and new east-west routes through downtown to connect neighborhoods and destinations on both sides of the City. Despite significant investments in new waterfront trails along Fuhrmann Boulevard and at the Erie Canal Harbor, cycling connections between downtown and these destinations are lacking.

Over time ongoing investment in the cycling network should continue to work towards the creation of a comprehensive and interconnected cycling network that serves the needs of people of all ages and cycling ability. This should include improved east-west connectivity through downtown, a secondary network of quiet cycling streets for less experienced cyclists, and improved connectivity between downtown and the waterfront.

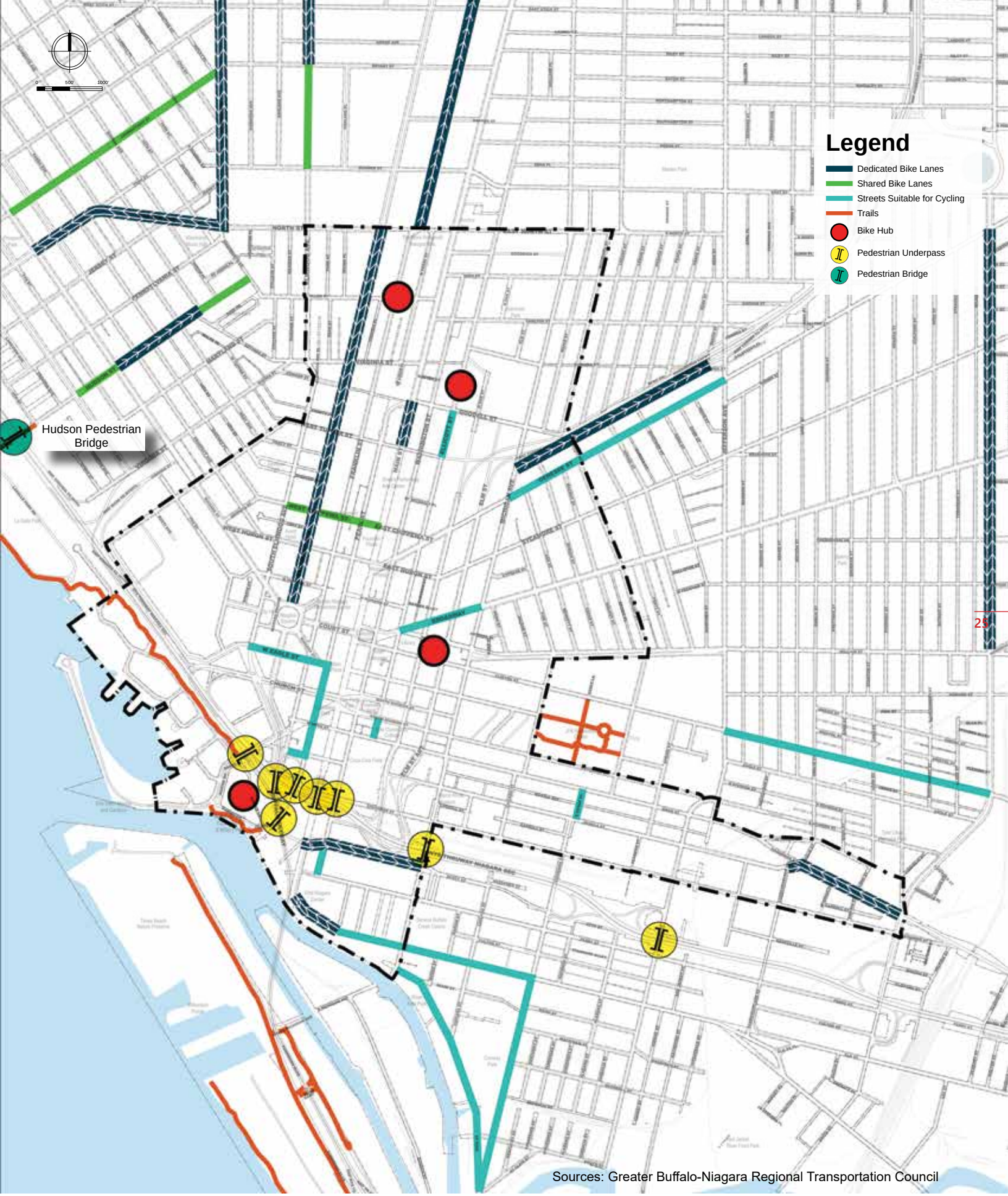


Figure 2-11 Cycling Network: *While the City of Buffalo's growing cycling network is playing an increasingly important role in connecting key destinations there are significant gaps in the network*

2.3.6 Key Mobility Goals & Objectives

Downtown Buffalo's street network, established by the historic Joseph Ellicott radial grid pattern, provides a strong foundation for downtown's mobility systems. Despite these solid 'bones', current downtown mobility systems are struggling with a number of challenges. Prioritization of the car over other modes of transportation has compromised the historic street grid and resulted in a number of challenging street conditions that disrupt local pedestrian and cyclist activity. Parking and public transportation fair structures also favor driving, as does the lack of integration between different modes of public transportation.

Goal: Improve and expand mobility options and downtown connectivity

Objectives:

- Tame one way feeders by calming traffic, improving pedestrian crossings, making space for cyclists, and reviewing signal priority and timing;
- Support complete streets by balancing the needs and providing enough space for cars, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Mitigate the impacts of highway underpasses and on/off ramps to enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists through a combination of improved lighting, more generous sidewalks, dedicated cycling lanes/sharrows, and the inclusion of public art and wayfinding;
- Enhance connectivity both to and along the waterfront by building new connections or improving the conditions of existing connections and access points, including consistent application of wayfinding, street furnishings and public art;
- Improve conditions for cyclists in downtown by creating a comprehensive network of sharrows and dedicated bike lanes, with adequate bike parking at key destinations;
- Encourage walking through sensitive streetscape and public realm improvements, including consistent pedestrian scale lighting, street trees and other plantings, benches, and waste receptacles;
- Consider the cost structure and supply of parking in relation to the cost of public transportation to discourage driving, and encourage transit use, cycling and walking;
- Encourage transit use by:
- Incentivizing transit use through TDM strategies such as those implemented by the BNMC;
- Incorporating more sensitive opportunities to facilitate bus lay-overs in downtown;
- Improving pedestrian connections to and from primary and secondary transit transfer hubs and high use transit stops;
- Exploring new bus routing options that reduce the number of buses terminating in downtown; and
- Improving inter-modal connectivity between bus, rail and rapid transit services.

2.4 PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is made up of the places that people traverse, visit and use as part of their everyday life. This system of parks, plazas, private open spaces and streetscapes collectively form the civic spaces in which people live. As a whole, the public realm is a central component of a community's image that speaks volumes about community values and the quality of civic life. The following section reviews downtown Buffalo's historic public realm framework of streets, parks and open spaces, downtown's special places and some of the key challenges that new infrastructure can help to address.

2.4.1 Historic Ellicott, Olmsted & Erie Canal Waterfront

Buffalo benefits from a strong urban structure established by the historic Joseph Ellicott radial grid street network and Frederick Law Olmsted's network of parks.

The Ellicott Plan circa 1804 supported downtown connectivity, establishing a network of important linear corridors and radials that connect in and out of the City, all converging around the Niagara Square. Aligning with the Ellicott Plan, Olmsted's system of public space assets worked to connect outlying areas to the waterfront through downtown. Over the years the original vision and function of these plans has been eroded to accommodate high volumes of cars traveling into and out of downtown. In some places the radial street network has also been disrupted or replaced by new buildings and structures. While increased vehicular mobility has assisted residents living in the suburbs it has come at the expense of

Figure 2-12 Historic Public Realm Structure: *Buffalo benefits from a strong historic public realm structure but it has been slowly eroded in places over the years and should be restored where possible*

downtown's historic public realm legacy. In particular, the loss of important street connections between downtown and waterfront has negatively impacted the Buffalo's relationship with its waterfront.

Wherever possible, future infrastructure and public realm investments should seek to maintain and rebuild lost pieces of downtown's historic network of streets and public spaces. Restoring the historic Ellicott connections between downtown and waterfront visually and/or physically is of particular importance to augmenting Buffalo's historic public realm legacy.

Figure 2-13 Parks and Public Space Assets: *There are a variety of public parks and gathering spaces within downtown but also a number of areas that are lacking parks and public space assets*

2.4.2 Parks & Public Space Assets

Despite the variety of public parks and gathering spaces in downtown, these spaces are often poorly connected and are not oriented towards attracting a stronger residential population.

While the historic street pattern has established a number of classically oriented civic spaces, large volumes of traffic create barriers between these spaces and adjacent uses. As a result these spaces are often difficult to get to, underutilized and lack a distinct identity. Despite the numerous park and plaza spaces clustered around the civic precinct, parts of downtown lack significant public space assets that serve the needs of families or residential users. This is most notable in the emerging residential neighborhood along the eastern edge of downtown.

Over time, infrastructure and public realm improvements should seek to create a well-defined and interconnected network of parks and green spaces within downtown. This should include landscape improvements that support active programing and that enhance and capitalize on downtown's existing civic park space. The integration of public art and community cultural contributions can also create important opportunities to enliven and enrich these spaces. Placing a strong emphasis on the use of sustainable infrastructure, including longevity and permanence of materials, can help to reduce the burden of maintenance. Establishing a consistent palette of streetscape furnishings and wayfinding can further help to strengthen the connections and street interface between parks and civic spaces, reducing street clutter and strengthening a sense of place in downtown. Finally, establishing new family-oriented downtown park spaces will be integral to attracting and serving the needs of a growing residential community.

Figure 2-14 Special Urban Places: *There are many unique civic and cultural assets that add to the vitality, richness and quality of the downtown experience*

2.4.3 Special Urban Places

Downtown Buffalo contains many unique civic and cultural assets that add to the vitality, richness and quality of the downtown experience.

These include extensive built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and parks, public squares, public art and civic sculptures, and emerging special event and entertainment districts. In addition to celebrating the distinct identity and cultural heritage of downtown, these special urban places have the potential to play an important role in helping to attract new visitors to downtown and encouraging downtown workers to stay and linger after hours.

Infrastructure and public realm investments should celebrate, reinforce and expand Buffalo's special urban places using sensitive streetscape and public realm improvements that restore, maintain and build upon downtown's historic network of streets and public spaces. Opportunities for landscape improvements that support active programing should also be explored to enhance existing assets. Over time, identifying opportunities for new civic renewal projects should also be considered. These special projects will require a high level of design resolution and execution in order to enhance and connect downtown's special urban places, encouraging residents and visitors to downtown to explore all that the City has to offer.

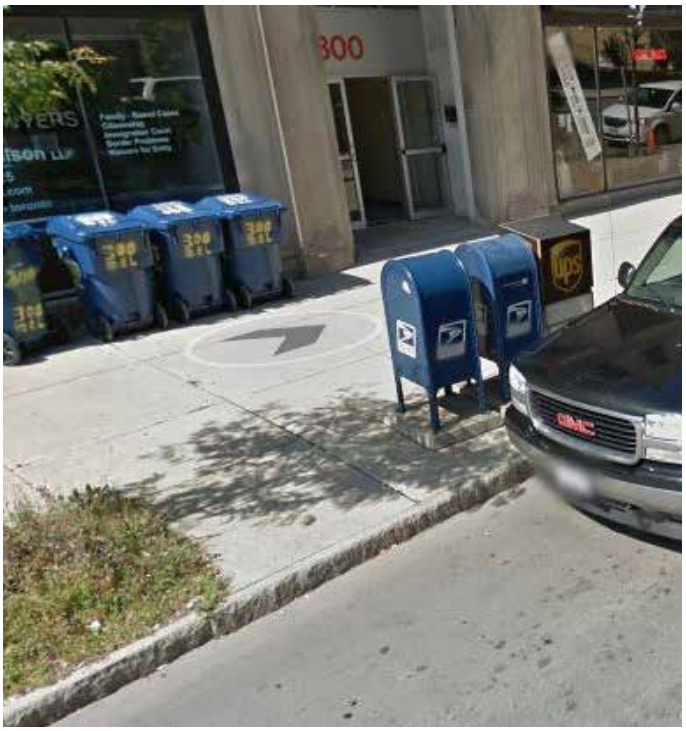
2.4.4 Public Realm & Infrastructure Concerns

A wide range of street furnishings, lighting and public realm treatments result in a cluttered appearance and complicate wayfinding.

Inconsistent Wayfinding

There is an inconsistent application of wayfinding throughout downtown

Street Clutter



Clutter detracts from the character of key corridors

Poor Maintenance

Maintenance and replacement issues in prominent places detract from downtown's image

Inconsistent Street Furnishings




Inconsistent street furnishings that make it difficult to identify districts and important connections

Changing Streetscapes

New Cars Sharing Main Street improvements should be replicated elsewhere

Continued infrastructure and public realm investment should strive for consistency, continuity, and legibility by establishing a consistent palette of streetscape furnishings that reduce street clutter and help to strengthen sense of place and legibility within downtown.

2.4.5 Key Public Realm Goals & Objectives

Downtown Buffalo has a strong legacy associated with the historic Ellicott, Olmsted & Erie Canal Waterfront plans. Due to the significant loss of population across the City as a whole, and the movement of downtown residents to suburban areas, a number of factors have led to the erosion of downtown's public realm assets as described above. In other cases, these historic plans did not anticipate the contemporary needs of the type of vibrant downtown residential population that Buffalo would like to attract. New Infrastructure should work to repair, enhance and reconnect existing assets and develop new assets that can enhance the attractiveness of downtown to potential residents, employers, skilled workers and visitors.

Goal: Enhance, Connect & Diversify the Public Realm

Objectives:

- Restore, maintain and build upon the historic Ellicott and Olmsted networks of streets and public spaces;
- Establish a consistent palette of streetscape furnishings and wayfinding to reduce clutter and help create a sense of place within downtown;
- Create a diverse network of streets and parks that meet a variety of constituent needs and make downtown living more attractive;
- Strengthen, reinforce and expand downtown Buffalo's key civic, institutional and cultural destinations through sensitive streetscape and public realm improvements that respond to the needs of these destinations and nearby land uses; and
- Enhance connectivity between proximate key civic, institutional and cultural destinations, and also between these destinations and proximate clusters of investment and redevelopment activity.

2.5 DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT

Investment in new infrastructure should help to support and stimulate private sector investment. This is a fundamental concept that is being implemented in cities across North America where investment in infrastructure and the public realm is recognized as an important signal and potential catalyst for private sector investment. The following section reviews the areas of current investment, the places where new infrastructure is currently being directed and opportunities to strengthen the relationship between new infrastructure and private investment.

2.5.1 Private Sector Development & Investment Nodes

Development and investment in downtown Buffalo have accelerated significantly over the last three years, surpassing the total investment that took place over the previous decade.

Inventory and analysis of recent and planned development and investment activity reveals several clusters of reinvestment in downtown. In some areas like the Medical Campus, areas of Main Street where Cars Sharing Main Street is being implemented, and the Sports and Entertainment District there are large and significant changes taking place. In other places such as the eastern edge of downtown, numerous smaller investments are leading to incremental change.

Over time, efforts should be made to support large and small areas of redevelopment through strategic investments in new streetscapes and public realm amenities that compliment and serve the needs of these areas of change.

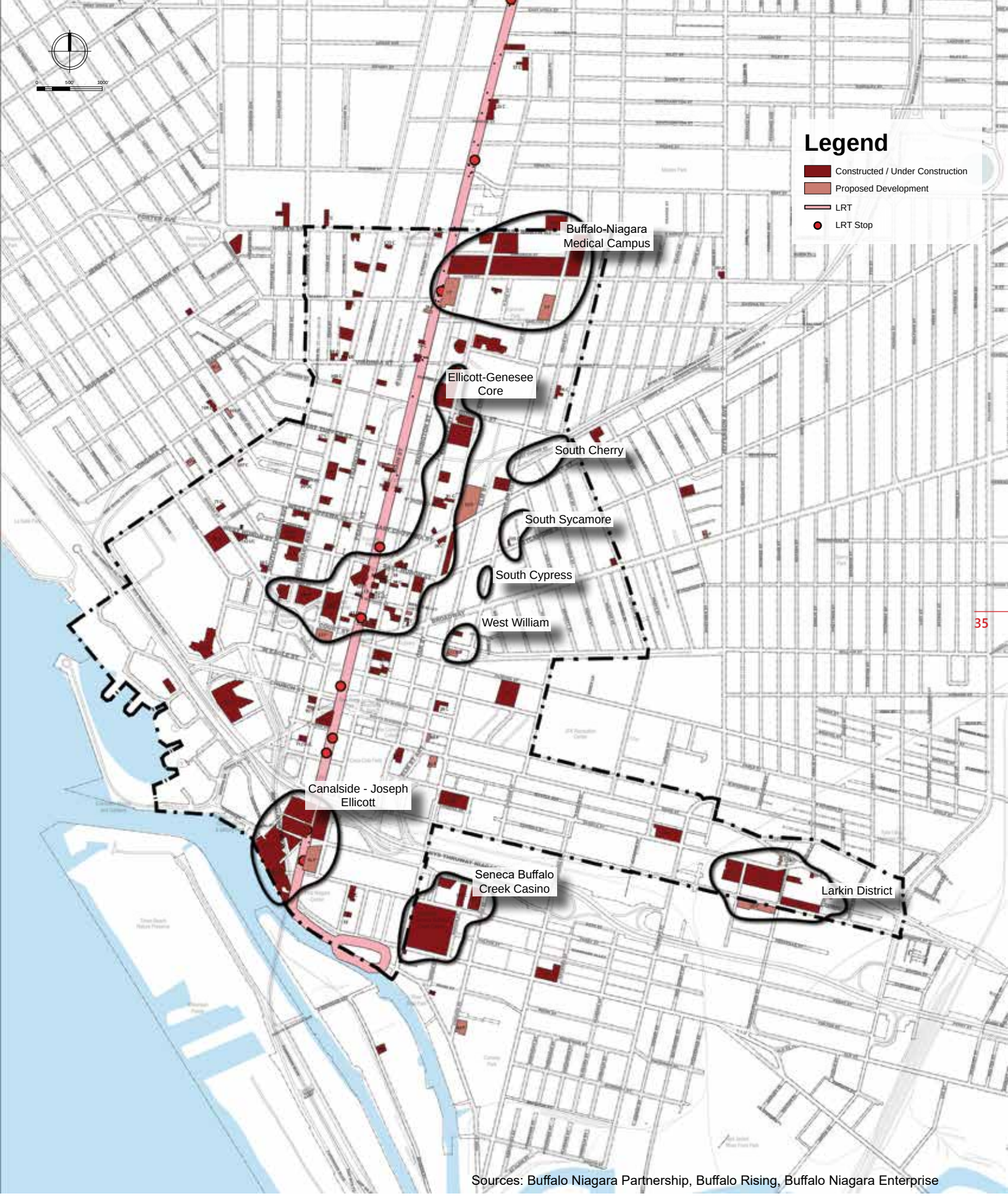


Figure 2-15 Downtown Investment: *Development and investment have accelerated over the last three years with significant clusters occurring at Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Canalside, Larkin District and along the Main Street corridor*

Figure 2-16 Infrastructure & Planned Capital Works: *There are a number of recent and planned infrastructure investments that create an opportunity to improve sense of place, reinforce existing areas of redevelopment, and attract new private sector investment*

2.5.2 Infrastructure & Planned Capital Works

Recent and planned capital works projects create an opportunity to reinforce existing areas of redevelopment and attract new private sector investment.

Buffalo has a large number of diverse public, arms-length and private agencies that are pursuing new infrastructure and capital works projects. This signifies the dedication of significant resources and interest in improving downtown. An opportunity exists to coordinate these efforts to support reinvestment and make the most of available resources.

Improved coordination of significant new infrastructure and public realm investment will involve prioritizing design, feasibility, scoping and installation of projects to targeted areas of significant reinvestment and redevelopment activity. These efforts should develop a clustered set of projects that first reinforce existing areas of investment, and then over time extend and link nearby investment areas together. In the long term, the focus of public realm and infrastructure investments should eventually shift from areas of existing investment towards identifying new unique projects that can catalyze future areas of investment.

Figure 2-17 Potential Linkages: *Targeting the gaps between new infrastructure and planned capital works projects would help to improve downtown connectivity*

2.5.3 Potential Linkages

A number of planned capital works projects dovetail with important downtown connectors, indicating progress towards increased downtown connectivity.

This conceptual diagram identifies future potential linkages through downtown that should be considered in the long term. It reveals that current planned investments are already working to better connect downtown, and begins to speak to a long term vision for downtown connectivity that is not necessarily grounded by constraints such as time and money.

As investment in downtown continues, efforts should be made to ensure that ongoing new capital works continue to build on these potential linkages, helping to increase downtown connectivity and linkages between areas of reinvestment and vibrancy.

2.5.4 Key Downtown Investment Goals & Objectives

Given the size of the study area and limited public resources there is a need to strategically cluster infrastructure and public realm improvements where they can have the greatest impact on improving place and generating investment. Large scale private sector development at the BNMC and Canalside are bookending the Main Street corridor with privately funded infrastructure and public realm improvement. There is significant investment interest and numerous opportunities for new and adaptive reuse developments along the Main Street Corridor between these bookends. Investment in new infrastructure here would help to connect these two bookends and build upon new Main Street enhancements to create a setting for investment in the many smaller scale investment opportunities along this corridor.

Goal: **Strategically cluster & focus infrastructure and public realm investments to direct and catalyze private sector investment**

Objectives:

- Support special urban places and key destinations through infrastructure and public realm improvements, encouraging private sector investment near these important nodes;
- Cluster infrastructure and public realm investment along the Main Street Corridor to support and capitalize on higher order transit, reducing car dependency in downtown;
- Encourage smaller scale private sector investment to fill the gaps between the existing bookends formed by large scale private sector investment at Canalside and BNMC to strengthen and unify the Main Street corridor;
- Support opportunities for infrastructure and public realm projects to include uses or mechanisms that generate revenue that can support long term maintenance and operation; and
- Prioritize projects that develop productive partnerships between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to garner support and resources, assist with risk management, and support long term maintenance and operation.

3.0

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO

The existing conditions analysis and feedback from the community consultation have been utilized to develop a vision framework for public realm and infrastructure enhancements along key streets and public spaces in and around downtown. The vision framework identified the location and nature of public realm and infrastructure investment over the long-term, which may take several decades. Priorities for near term investment within this overarching framework have been identified in Section 4 of the report.

Source Flickr: Zen Skillicorn

Figure 3-1 Vision Framework: *The Vision Framework identifies 11 categories of public realm and infrastructure enhancements to create an interconnected network of streets, parks and public spaces, improve mobility and establish a renewed setting for reinvestment*

3.1 VISION FRAMEWORK

Over the course of the existing conditions analysis and stakeholder consultation, an understanding of the most important downtown streets, open spaces, linkages and special places emerged both within and beyond the study boundary. These elements represent the most highly visible and trafficked places. They are the places that speak volumes about the character and health of downtown and as such are the places where infrastructure investments should be focused over the long term, benefiting the users and businesses in the downtown and serving to capture and encourage continued private sector investment. The Vision Framework provides an illustration of public realm and infrastructure enhancements to key streets, public spaces and special places, and provides high level performance objectives for each of these elements.

The Vision Framework identifies 11 categories of public realm and infrastructure enhancements. The long term goal is to create an interconnected network of streets, parks and public spaces that result in improved downtown mobility, strengthen downtown's connections to surrounding neighborhoods and establish a renewed setting for reinvestment. The Framework seeks to reclaim and build upon Buffalo's historic layers associated with the Joseph Ellicott radial street grid pattern and Olmsted system of parks and parkways to enhance connections between key destinations and support areas of existing or potential future investment.

The Vision Framework provides an indication of the range of potential public realm and infrastructure enhancements that can be overtaken over many years. It is supported by a recommended set of priority investment areas (Section 4) to strategically focus short term investment within concentrated areas that have potential to generate continued private sector investment and activity. These in turn are supported by a series of design guidelines (Appendix A) that speak to the character and quality of investment that is desired.

3.1.1 Special Urban Places

These are key civic, commercial or institutional destinations that act as drivers of activity in downtown. They include public destinations such as City Hall, the library and school sites, and private destinations such as First Niagara Center and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (see section 2.3.3 Special Urban Places).

Investments in infrastructure surrounding Special Urban Places should:

- Strengthen special urban places as distinct and important places within downtown, improving street and open space connections within these places and between them to strengthen and highlight downtown assets; and
- Prioritize projects to better link special urban places within downtown to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to access these locations.

New infrastructure should help to reinforce and connect special urban places

3.1.2 Key Park Spaces

These are important public green spaces and plazas within downtown that help to reinforce the City's historic street and block pattern and/or act as a focus for people, activity and reinvestment. They include historic spaces such as Niagara and Lafayette Squares and new spaces such as Kaminski Park & Gardens which are being used to structure new investment.

Investments in Key Park Spaces should:

- Reinforce the historic Olmsted park system or Ellicott radial grid by reflecting the historic landscape of spaces that form part of these networks;
- Improve the entire public realm setting on and around Key Park Spaces by extending enhancements to these spaces through complimentary sidewalk, crossing and streetscape enhancements that improve connections between the public space and adjacent development;
- Utilize high quality materials and include plantings and/or elements that are low maintenance and easy to maintain; and
- Be developed with a unique program or range of amenities, determined through close consultation with surrounding communities to support the functions of the local context and meet the needs of intended local users (civic, neighborhood, commercial) (see design guidelines A2.2 and A2.3).

3.1.3 New Park Spaces

Throughout downtown there are a number of opportunities for the provision of new public spaces that can help to provide amenity for downtown's growing residential population. These have been identified within the Vision Framework and should be acquired over time as opportunities emerge. Opportunities for new park spaces include along Franklin Street to provide structure and focus for the redevelopment of the surface parking lots, and within the Flower District to help to strengthen the relationship between the district and Main Street to the west.

Investments in New Park Spaces should:

- Be designed to provide amenity for a broad downtown demographic and attract private sector investment;
- Be coordinated with the design and development of adjacent areas and in consultation with the surrounding community so that the design of the public space helps to meet the needs of local users, as described above in Section 3.1.2 (also see design guidelines A2.2 and A2.3); and
- Utilize high quality materials and include plantings and/or elements that are durable and easy to maintain.

Improvements to existing park spaces can help to ensure that they act as a focus for activity and reinvestment

New Park Spaces can help to create a setting for new investment and support downtown's growing residential population

3.1.4 Retail and Commercial-Oriented Streets / Districts

These are important streets or areas within downtown where the ground floor of adjacent development is intended to be primarily retail or commercial in nature with uses that actively address the street. These streets and the uses that front onto them have great potential to be attractors of activity, and infrastructure should seek to reinforce the legibility and viability of these streets. They include existing retail and commercial streets such as Main Street, Delaware and Allen and emerging places such as the Flower District. Completing the Cars Sharing Main Street Project is identified as a top priority in this Plan.

Investments in Retail and Commercial-Oriented Streets / Districts should:

- Be designed to support higher levels of pedestrian activity through the provision of wider sidewalks, bump outs, enhanced and more frequent crossings, and pedestrian supportive street furnishings and lighting;
- Be designed to support pedestrians and cyclists through the use of reduced turning radii, elimination or avoidance of right-turn channels and turning lanes, and clear markings to alert drivers;
- Include street parking to support retail activity, where it will not detract from the scale of adjacent sidewalk space; and
- Include street planting in areas where there is limited space that is designed to support higher levels of pedestrian activity through the use of tree grates or other approaches that maximize walkable space.

3.1.5 Complete Green Streets

These are key connections linking downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods that are important to better support access for the many residents living to the east and west of the downtown core. Investment in infrastructure should strive to green these street and create a more complete street that balances the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles. Complete Green Streets include streets that will strengthen connections to the West Village and Allentown such as West Chippewa and North Street and streets that will strengthen connections to Ellicott and east side neighborhoods such as Seneca and Broadway.

Investments on Complete Green Streets should:

- Involve a comprehensive process that identifies and balances the needs of different users including pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles;
- Be designed to support pedestrians and cyclists through the use of reduced turning radii, bump outs, elimination or avoidance of right-turn channels and turning lanes, and clear markings to alert drivers;
- Locate and design on-street parking facilities to minimize impacts on cyclists;
- Be designed to provide adequate space for street planting that can help to enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and reinforce a positive image of downtown; and
- Explore opportunities for the integration of green infrastructure as a component of the planning process.

Infrastructure along retail and commercial oriented streets should support higher levels of pedestrian activity

Complete Green Streets should be designed to support the needs of a range of users to improve connectivity between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

3.1.6 Cycling / Pedestrian-Oriented Connections

These are important pedestrian/cycling connections that should be implemented to create a complete mobility network. In some cases these may be along streets with limited ROW or they may be pathways that help to overcome existing barriers. They include streets such as Allen which will link the BNMC to residents and businesses in Allentown and pathways such as the proposed route connecting Georgia Street to the waterfront.

Investments in infrastructure along Cycling / Pedestrian-Oriented Connections should:

- Explore opportunities to enhance access for cyclists through the provision of signed cycling routes supported by bike lanes or sharrows to raise the awareness of drivers; and
- Preserve space for the establishment of a pedestrian and cycling connection over time through the design, orientation or retrofit of development.

Preserving space for pedestrian and cycling connections in new development or retrofitting existing development can help to create a more complete mobility network

The provision of sharrows can help to raise driver awareness and support cyclists on streets with limited ROW

The use of bump-outs and clearly marked crossing points on streets for calming can help to slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety

3.1.7 Streets for Calming

These are streets that are currently acting as conduits for traffic in downtown that in many cases function as barriers to mobility and new investment. Investments in new infrastructure along these streets should help to calm traffic and rebalance the street to better meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. These streets include busy thoroughfares such as Elm and Oak Street that cut through downtown and neighborhood cut-throughs such as Virginia.

Investments on Streets for Calming should:

- Include intersection improvements designed to support pedestrians and cyclists through the use of reduced turning radii, bump outs, elimination or avoidance of right-turn channels and turning lanes, and clear markings to alert drivers; and
- Be designed to minimize the impacts of through-traffic by encouraging a reduction in vehicle speeds through a range of potential measures including:
  - Reduction of lane widths;
  - Reduction in the number of lanes to reduce street widths and provide more space for pedestrians, cyclists and streetscaping;
  - Provision of on street parking; and
  - Converting one way streets into two-way streets.

Distinct patterning at intersections in residential areas can reinforce slower speed limits

3.1.8 Intersection Improvements

These are intersections along important pedestrian and cycling routes that should be improved to enhance safety and comfort of users. In many instances large turning radii and dedicated turning lanes encourage high speeds that prioritize automobiles over pedestrian traffic. In some instances poorly marked crossings and lack of pedestrian signals make it difficult for pedestrians to safely cross the street. These intersections are located on streets such as North and South Division where improvements could help to strengthen the surrounding district, and streets such as Clinton and Broadway where improvements could help to enhance neighborhood connectivity.

Investments at these intersections and on streets around these intersections should:

- Create intersections that are designed to support pedestrians and cyclists through the use of reduced turning radii, bump outs, elimination or avoidance of right-turn channels and turning lanes, activated signals, countdown timers, and clear markings to alert drivers;
- Consider the use of a pedestrian priority phase (scramble) in areas of high pedestrian traffic to facilitate crossings in all directions; and
- Maintain clear sightlines at intersections so that pedestrians and cyclists can see approaching traffic.

Clear markings and reduced turning radii can enhance pedestrian safety at intersections

3.1.9 Underpass Improvements

These are areas beneath the highways where improvements can enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and improve connections between downtown and waterfront. They include places such as the Main Street, Erie Street, and Michigan Avenue I-190 underpasses.

Investments in Underpass Improvement areas should:

- Consider a range of techniques to enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists including:
  - Provision of a higher level of lighting and/or pedestrian oriented lighting to improve visibility;
  - Provision of more generous sidewalks and dedicated cycling facilities such as bike lanes;
  - Incorporation of public art that can help to enliven the space and support wayfinding and a visual connection between the water/riverfront and downtown; and
- Include improvements to tie into streetscape investments on either side of the underpass so that they help to reduce the barrier effect of the highways.

Public art can help to enliven space beneath the highways and improve wayfinding

A consistent pallet of street furnishings can reinforce the continuity of the waterfront connection in areas where it needs to divert away from the waterfront

Generous landscaping and a program of integrated public art can help to reinforce connectivity

3.1.10 Green Waterfront Connections

These are important street and path connections along Buffalo's waterfront that together will help to establish a continuous waterfront trail network and reinforce a series of linked destinations for the enjoyment of residents and visitors to downtown. They include on street connections such as Lakefront Blvd., which will connect Canalside to La Salle Park, and pathway enhancements such as at the rear of the DL&W terminal.

Investments along Green Waterfront Connections should:

- Develop a consistent palette of wayfinding signage that can be incorporated along the length of the waterfront to enhance legibility;
- Support wayfinding through the incorporation of a consistent palette of street furnishings such as pedestrian oriented lighting, signage and benches that reinforce the continuity of the system;
- Identify and establish a minimum multi-use path standard along the length of the waterfront trail to ensure a consistent level of access along its length;
- Provide a higher level of pedestrian and cycling amenity at intersections where the waterfront trail crosses the street through the provision of:
  - Pedestrian and cyclist activated crossings;
  - Highly visible striping or incorporation of materials that reinforce driver awareness of crossing points; and
  - Reduced turning radii, bump-outs or other treatments that minimize crossing distances;
- Provide more generous landscape treatments and street planting that reinforce the continuity of the system through areas where the trail is forced to deviate from the waterfront; and
- Explore a program of public art that helps to reinforce the pattern of linked destinations along the route.

3.1.11 Transit Transfer Zones

These are the areas in downtown where the bus and LRT network converge, where there should be an increased emphasis on infrastructure enhancements that enhance connectivity between the two systems. They include the area around the bus terminal near ECC / Fireman's Park and along the Court Street Corridor.

Infrastructure investments in the Station Transfer Zones should:

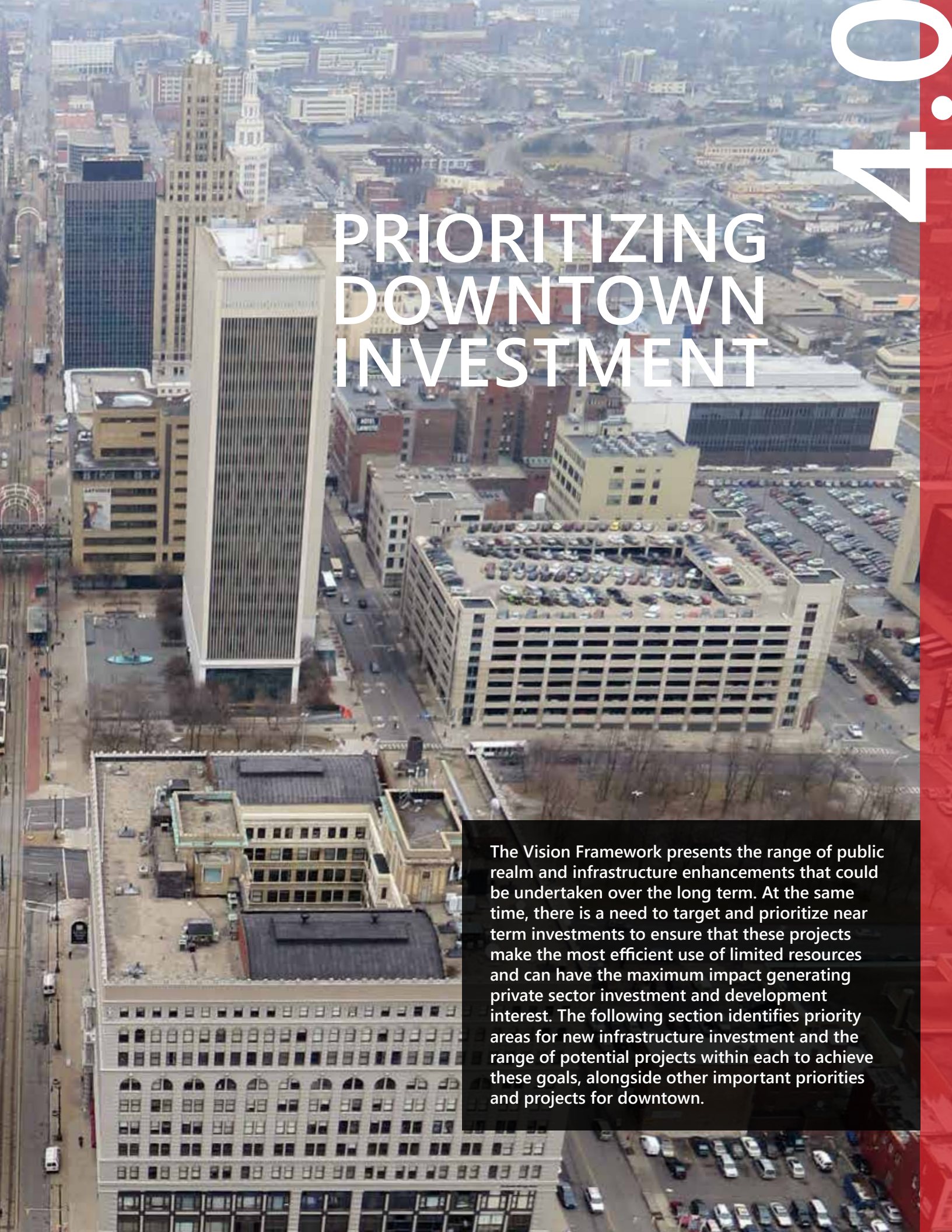
- Support transfers between bus and LRT services by providing more generous sidewalks, pedestrian lighting and enhanced pedestrian amenities such as seating and waste receptacles along key connecting east-west routes;
- Incorporate higher levels of wayfinding to guide passengers, and real-time arrival and departure information at either end so that transferring passengers are informed of their time constraints; and
- Provide a higher level of pedestrian and cycling amenity at intersections along routes connecting LRT and bus services through the provision of elements such as:
  - Pedestrian activated crossings;
  - Highly visible striping or paving materials that reinforce driver awareness of crossing points; and
  - Reduced turning radii, bump-outs or other treatments that minimize crossing distances.

Higher levels of lighting, wider sidewalks and amenities such as seating shelters and real-time signage can help to support transfers between LRT and bus services

Source: Flickr, Daniel Lobo

4.0

PRIORITIZING DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT



The Vision Framework presents the range of public realm and infrastructure enhancements that could be undertaken over the long term. At the same time, there is a need to target and prioritize near term investments to ensure that these projects make the most efficient use of limited resources and can have the maximum impact generating private sector investment and development interest. The following section identifies priority areas for new infrastructure investment and the range of potential projects within each to achieve these goals, alongside other important priorities and projects for downtown.

4.1 IMPLEMENT A UNIFIED STREETSCAPE PALETTE IN DOWNTOWN

Throughout the course of the consultation and public realm/infrastructure analysis undertaken through this plan, several important themes emerged. One of the most prominent of these related to the lack of consistent application of a palette of public realm materials in downtown. Inconsistent application of streetscape materials, furnishings and wayfinding has resulted in poor legibility, clutter and lack of a sense of place within downtown, described in more detail in section 2.3.4 Public Realm & Infrastructure Concerns.

The Cars Sharing Main Street project has implemented an attractive, functional and legible palette of materials and furnishings that should be used as the standard for new streetscapes throughout downtown. Unified wayfinding signage should also be consistently implemented, utilizing the design of new wayfinding used on Main. There is a need to intentionally select and coordinate a more consistent family of streetscape materials to better unify and distinguish downtown and its special places. A coordinated family or pallet of streetscape materials will help to reinforce a specific, legible identity for downtown, while maintaining flexibility to respond to unique places and circumstances to surprise and delight the downtown user.

Recommendation: Wherever streetscape maintenance, improvements or replacements are made in downtown, utilize the following design vocabulary of the new Main Street streetscape:

- Exposed aggregate sidewalks
- Granite curbs
- Black lighting fixtures with pedestrian and traffic scale lighting, hanging plantings in baskets, and space for hanging banners
- Black waste receptacles
- Black bike parking fixtures
- Street trees and plantings (in open planting beds where space permits; in black tree grates where spatial constraints exist)
- Black metal benches with wood slats
- Wayfinding signage
- Parking pay stations

In addition, green infrastructure should be utilized wherever possible to reduce sidewalk run off.

The Cars Sharing Main Street project has implemented an attractive, functional and legible palette of materials and furnishings that should be used as the standard for new streetscapes throughout downtown

High quality materials, black street furnishings and trees with good growing conditions create a streetscape palette that will age well

This streetscape palette allows for a degree of flexibility that can allow distinct districts to be treated somewhat differently, while still providing a high degree of design consistency, clarity and legibility across downtown. Unique banners can be used within the Main Street lighting fixtures. Unique street trees within the standardized tree grates and open planting beds, and unique plantings within the standardized baskets can also be used. The use of public art, such as statuary, murals, and sidewalk inlays provide further opportunities to help distinguish unique districts. In some specific areas, unique constraints may require a degree of deviation from this unified palette, such as narrow street conditions that do not provide adequate space for street trees or the presence of vaults. In these circumstances, efforts should be made to utilize as many of the elements of the unified palette as possible, and any deviation should still ensure that it upholds the intent of the unified palette in providing consistency across downtown. There are some unique districts in downtown where distinguishing features should be permitted, as outlined in section A3.2 Furnishings of the design guidelines in Appendix A.

4.2 PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS

The Vision Framework identifies downtown's most important streets, parks and special urban places which can be enhanced over the next several decades. These improvements could amount to significant investment over many years. The current funding for public realm and infrastructure improvements totals approximately $2 million annually and is drawn from the City of Buffalo Capital Budget, DASNY Funds, and the National Grid Urban Center/Commercial District Revitalization Program. To make the most efficient use of these funding sources, there is a need to identify priority investment areas which can strategically cluster and maximize the impact of near term infrastructure and public realm investments, to best catalyze private sector development, and make incremental progress towards the longer term Vision Framework.

Four priority investment areas, one corridor and three nodes, have been identified within downtown. These are the:

1. Main Street Priority Investment Corridor

2. Entertainment District Priority Investment Node

3. Civic & Employment Priority Investment Node

4. Shelton Square/Erie Priority Investment Node

These areas represent the places where public realm and infrastructure investment have the greatest potential to transform the image of downtown, connect places and key destinations within and between investment areas, and attract continued private sector interest in development downtown. The Main Street investment corridor links the significant areas of reinvestment already occurring at the BNMC, Canalside, and the Sports and Entertainment District, which form the north and south bookends of the corridor. The three priority investment nodes each have an east-west orientation, and investment in these nodes will help to fill the gaps along the Main Street investment corridor, creating an investment spine linking activity at BNMC to Canalside. This structure positions Main Street as the top priority, while encouraging enhanced east-west connectivity and an outward spread of investment activity from Main Street. The clustering of investment activities and projects in these areas will help to fuel continued private sector interest in downtown, while at the same time capitalizing on and driving LRT ridership, enhancing and connecting special urban places along Main Street, and delivering concentrated positive change within the corridor.

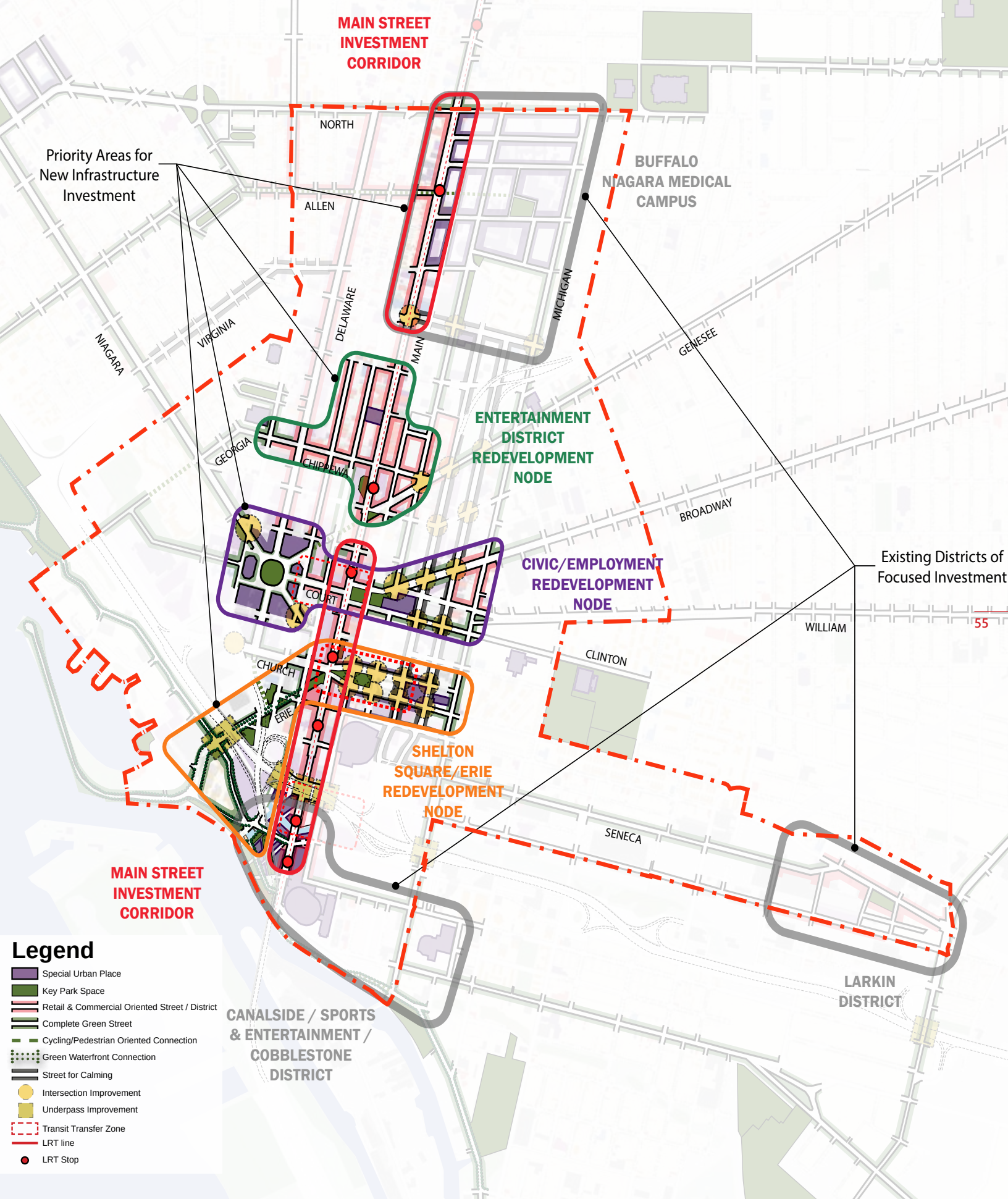


Figure 4-1 Priority Investment Areas: *Four Priority Investment Areas, one corridor and three nodes, have been identified within downtown to strategically cluster and maximize the impact of near term infrastructure and public realm investments.*

The following four considerations contributed to the identification of the four Priority Investment Areas:

Investment in public realm and infrastructure projects should reinforce special urban places within downtown.

Special urban places (Section 2.4.3) are important civic, commercial and/or heritage destinations that contribute to the vitality, richness and quality of the downtown experience. They are key drivers of the downtown tourism economy and are intrinsically tied to downtown's ability to attract residents, employers and a skilled work force. The look, feel and condition of these special urban places speak volumes about the City and can either detract from or bolster downtown's sense of place and identity. The majority of these special urban places within downtown are clustered along or within close proximity to the Main Street corridor.

Investment in public realm and infrastructure projects should be directed to those areas where there is significant potential to catalyze new private sector investment.

Downtown Buffalo is characterized by a number of "holes" in its urban fabric, (described in section 2.2.4). These holes include surface parking lots and vacant or underutilized lots, which, alongside adaptive reuse opportunities, have the potential for reinvestment. Targeted public realm and infrastructure investments in these areas can help to catalyze new private sector investment and raise development interest and activity, resulting in developments that fill in these voids and begin to knit downtown together. The four priority investment areas all have significant redevelopment potential which could be leveraged through strategic public sector investment.

Source: Flickr, Mark Hogan

New infrastructure should help to reinforce downtown's special urban places

Source: Flickr, Daniel Lobo

Places with greater potential for change and reinvestment should be targeted for infrastructure investments

Investment in public realm and infrastructure projects should be directed to create new investment areas to best complement existing investment areas.

BNMC, Canalside, the Sports & Entertainment District and the Larkin District are successfully attracting extensive private sector investments, which are resulting in new infrastructure and public realm improvements within these areas. As public and private sector development is already occurring in these areas, they do not represent strategic priorities for infrastructure and public realm improvements associated with this plan. The goal is to create new investment areas that can complement existing areas of investment. These include Chippewa Street, the Flower District, and the Erie Community College District. These areas are attracting smaller scale reinvestment projects and development interest. Targeted public realm and infrastructure projects in these areas could bolster redevelopment activities and better assist these areas to reach their potential.

Some areas are already attracting investment on their own. Investment in new infrastructure should help to support new areas of investment while complimenting existing ones

New infrastructure should be clustered and linked to maximize its impact and benefits.

The Main Street Corridor acts as a central spine that is attracting significant investment through the Cars Sharing Main Street project, and can connect other areas of active or potential investment in downtown. The clustering of a number of nodes of investment along this corridor presents a clear opportunity to sequentially target a number of public realm and infrastructure projects to fuel investment with key nodes along the main street corridor. Clustering investment will help to strengthen the Main Street corridor and will help create a strong rationale to continue to attract funding dollars to undertake ongoing and future improvements to Main Street, while undertaking projects that can see investment dollars spread outward from this corridor over the medium and long term. While investment in more distant or disconnected areas will ultimately be important for downtown, in the short term infrastructure and public realm investment should be clustered within strategic areas in the downtown core to avoid diluting and fragmenting investment impacts.

Clustering investments in infrastructure in nodes or along a corridor can help to maximize its impacts and benefits

4.3 MAIN STREET PRIORITY INVESTMENT CORRIDOR

Main Street is a Retail and Commercial-Oriented Street and is the primary north south corridor at the heart of downtown. It was historically a key location for retail and office uses. A number of special urban places are located on or near the Main Street corridor, including the BNMC, Theatre District, Flower District, Chippewa District, Lafayette Square/Public Library, the Historic Ellicott District, ECC, Coca Cola Field, the One Seneca Tower, First Niagara Center, and Canalside.

Cars were removed between Tupper and the southern terminus of Main in the 1980s to create a pedestrian-transit mall and free-fare zone for the new Metro Rail LRT. Removing cars from Main resulted in a marked decline in retail occupancy and development, particularly for first floor retail. Since 2008, about $30 million has been invested in the Cars Sharing Main Street project, resulting in ongoing streetscape improvements and the return of cars to the 700, 600 and part of the 500 block of Main Street (under construction at the time of writing)[1]. This reinvestment has reportedly encouraged more than $70 million in private sector development along funded segments of the corridor[2].

Continuing and accelerating the Cars Sharing Main Street project along unfunded segments is the top priority of the Master Plan, as it can encourage continued private sector development along the entire corridor, as well as linking these priority investment nodes to one another and to other active areas of investment including BNMC and Canalside. The City's request for $28 million from the 2014 TIGER grant, involving improvements between Perry Street and Exchange Street, and between Mohawk Avenue and Court Street, was recently denied. As this project appears to align with TIGER objectives, this request should be submitted again in future years in hopes of securing necessary funding.

In addition to completing the Cars Sharing Main Street project, improvements are also recommended for north Main Street. Because cars were never removed on Main Street between Goodell Avenue and North Street, this important block has not been updated to reflect recent improvements to the 700 block. Continuing the implementation of unified improvements is integral to the successful functioning of the corridor as a whole and will connect the waterfront and Canalside to BNMC, as well as connecting numerous special urban places.

Key Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified for the Main Street Corridor and are described in greater detail below.

- Complete the next phase of Cars Sharing Main Street (Perry to Exchange and Mohawk to Court)
- Continue Cars Sharing Main Street between Exchange and Court Streets
- North Main streetscape improvements

Cars Sharing Main Street improvements are leading to new investments in downtown

[1] https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Public_Works_Parks_Streets/CarsSharingMainStreet
[2] http://buffalorising.com/2013/09/next-phase-of-main-street-retraffic-work-begins/

4.3.1 Extend Cars Sharing Main Street (Perry to Exchange and Mohawk to Court)

Implement the next planned phase of the Cars Sharing Main Street project. The design, cost, and potential funding sources for these segments of Main have already been identified by the City. Given the success of other sections of the project and the extent of planning that has been completed for these segments, the Master Plan supports this phase of the project as planned. Efforts to secure funding should continue, with a particular focus on the TIGER grant program, which appears to be a good fit for this project despite the refusal of the City's 2014 TIGER grant application.

In addition to extending the Cars Sharing Main Street enhancements, the following infrastructure investments will help to strengthen connectivity to the waterfront and enhance access for pedestrians and cyclists between the corridor and key destinations.

i. Pursue underpass improvements for Main Street below 190 and beneath One Seneca Tower, including higher levels of pedestrian oriented lighting, generous sidewalks, dedicated cycling facilities, and public art that can add visual interest and enliven these places (reference Design Guidelines, A.8 Underpass Improvements). Lighting should be left on throughout the day to address perceived issues of safety. Lighting can be augmented by the strategic placement of mirrors or other reflective surfaces on the bottom of the underpass to enliven and brighten the space. Below 190 the pedestrian realm should be better defined using a screen or wall to separate pedestrians from adjacent areas of surface parking. This could also be accomplished through the implementation of temporary container pop-up stores that can help to activate the space and provide additional amenity for area residents and workers who use this connection.

ii. Transform the 190 underpass into a more active place and improve connections between the train station and LRT. Parking beneath 190 between Exchange Street Station and Main should be removed to allow for the creation of new underpass park space. The space should include more active uses such as a skateboard park and basketball courts and be designed to create a more safe and legible walking connection between the train station and LRT. In the short term, creating active public space beneath the highway would enhance safety and reduce the barrier effect of the underpass, while supporting desirable mixed use redevelopment within One Seneca Tower.

Extending the Cars Sharing Main Street improvements will help to link key downtown destinations

In the long term explore opportunities to fill the space beneath the highway with a relocated bus terminal that could consolidate rail, bus and LRT services.

iii. Ensure that the LRT for the southern portion of Main Street continues to occupy the existing right-of-way, providing a truly complete street and efficient use of valuable waterfront land. Shifting the LRT to a separate right of way would create a wide infrastructure corridor that would act as a barrier, discouraging pedestrian activity and waterfront access from surrounding areas.

Extending the Main Streetscape Improvements to North Street would help to improve access between Allen Town and BNMC

4.3.2 Cars Sharing Main Street (Exchange to Court)

Continue the implementation of the Cars Sharing Main Street project to the remaining segments of Main. These segments should continue to utilize the streetscape design that has been developed for other segments of Main Street, requiring a process to confirm the design and apply it to this segment. Cost estimates should then be developed and funding sources confirmed. The TIGER grant program appears to be the best fit to access necessary amounts of capital; the City and State should continue to pledge funding in support of this project to help leverage Federal funding and to fill any gaps between the maximum $35 million available through TIGER and actual project budgets. While completing the design, funding, and construction of this entire stretch of Main in one segment would be desirable, availability of funding may require dividing this project into two segments. Should this be necessary, the northern section should be prioritized to help link the three Priority Investment Nodes.

In addition to extending the Cars Sharing Main Street enhancements along this section of Main, potential solutions to improve grade conditions associated with privately-owned 'public' spaces at One Seneca Tower and the M & T Center should be explored with these landowners. These areas could function as better public spaces but are currently isolated from the pedestrian realm due to challenging grade changes. Solutions should work to improve the interface between an improved Main Street and these important public realm assets, and must be the result of collaborative study and negotiation with the private landowners, including consideration of underground services, utilities, parking and/or structural elements of the associated buildings that could inform the feasibility of different design solutions to existing grade conditions. The City should be prepared to contribute support and/or resources to the study, design, and implementation of solutions to these privately owned spaces to help leverage mutually beneficial improvements.

4.3.3 North Main Streetscape Improvements (Goodell to North)

Extend improvements made to the 700 block from Goodell Avenue to North Street. This block is characterized by a wide right of way, with four lanes of dedicated car traffic and an additional two lanes for street parking. While retail is beginning to return to the west side of the street primarily in response to growing demand from BNMC, access between BNMC and the west side of the street is complicated by fast moving traffic, long crossing distances and few crossings. Extending the 700 block streetscape improvements to North Street has the potential to improve the relationship of the BNMC to Allentown and help to encourage activity generated by the medical campus to translate into new investment and pedestrian activity along Main.

The unified streetscape palette developed for the rest of the Main Street corridor should be utilized, extending the 700 block design northwards, including:

i. **Two lanes of traffic with a planted median/left turn lanes**, street parking and bulb-outs at pedestrian crossings to shorten crossing distances (this must be supported by detailed transportation studies). In the near term, lane reductions can be piloted through restriping, allowing for transportation impacts to be studied prior to pursuing more permanent lane reductions.

ii. **The Introduce of bike lanes** on both sides of the street.

iii. **Designated pedestrian crossings** at Carlton Street, Allen Street, High Street, and Goodrich Street. These should include pedestrian activated signals and high visibility striping.

4.4 ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT PRIORITY INVESTMENT NODE

The Entertainment District Priority Investment Node encompasses the Chippewa Entertainment District, Theatre District, and Flower District. The majority of the node is identified as a Retail and Commercial Oriented District, where the ground floor of adjacent development is intended to be primarily retail or commercial in nature with uses that actively address the street.

This area represents a key east west connection across Main, and an area of existing investment interest that should be supported with infrastructure and public realm improvements. While the Theater District and Chippewa are important downtown destinations, lack of public realm amenities, inconsistent lighting fixtures and a lack of plantings detract from the district's image and sense of place. While this is being partially addressed through streetscape enhancements on Main Street, the rest of the district is characterized by a lack of street trees, plantings, pedestrian amenities, and parks and public spaces. This node offers significant short and longer term redevelopment potential through adaptive reuse and the redevelopment of surface parking lots.

Infrastructure and public realm investment can help to encourage redevelopment of parking lots and infill sites to knit the district together. Redevelopment activity should also present opportunities to create appropriate park spaces to serve new residents, employees and visitors.

Key Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified for the Theatre District node and are described in greater detail below.

- Chippewa streetscape improvements and planting strategy
- Chippewa intersection improvements
- Chippewa catenary lighting
- Chippewa seasonal animation strategies
- Chippewa public art strategy
- Theatre district mid-block connections
- Pearl streetscape improvements
- New park space creation
- Flower district concept plan

4.4.1. Chippewa Streetscape Improvements & Planting Strategy

Implement new streetscaping to enhance the image of the street and establish a distinct look and feel that speaks to Chippewa's entertainment uses and supports an expansion of activity to the east. While distinguishing features should be permitted, core elements of the new Main Street streetscape should be used to provide continuity, including sidewalk and curb treatments and lighting fixtures.

Streetscape and planting improvements along Chippewa should help to establish a distinct look and feel for the street

Temporary patio spaces on street parking spaces can help to animate the street during warmer summer months

Improvements should include the following:

i. **Repave Chippewa and replace all sidewalks from Genesee to Georgia**. Sidewalk treatment should utilize the same exposed aggregate treatment used on Main Street, and the street itself should be repaved. In the long-term the district should consider a unique paving strategy, such as cobblestones or unit pavers, to calm traffic and distinguish the district as a place for significant pedestrian activity. This could be accompanied by a rolled curb and removable bollards to support street closures for pedestrian-oriented festivals and events.

ii. **Apply consistent lighting standards from Genesee to Georgia**, utilizing the same lighting standards as Main Street for continuity.

iii. **Implement a vertical planting strategy from Delaware to Washington in the near term and along the entire corridor in the medium to long term**. Due to narrow sidewalk conditions and concerns with regard to late night vandalism, past efforts to implement street trees on Chippewa have had a poor success rate, requiring a more innovative planting strategy. Vertical plantings in baskets hung from light standards can be an attractive alternative to green and soften the street. The City should also work in partnership with local businesses and landowners to select consistent planters and plantings that can be placed at the base and edge of buildings outside of the pedestrian throughway, utilizing junipers, yews or other coniferous plantings that can provide year-round greening in a vertical planting format.

Special lighting can be used to create a unique feature of the street and distinguish it as a place of entertainment

4.4.2.Chippewa Intersection Improvements

As Chippewa is an important pedestrian and cycling route, key intersections should be improved to enhance the safety and comfort of users. Intersection improvements should focus on Delaware, Franklin, Pearl and Main in the near term and the entire Chippewa corridor in the medium to long term (refer to Design Guidelines, A.7 Intersection Improvements).

Improvements should include the following:

- **Pedestrian activated signals**, countdown timers, and bump outs;
- **High visibility striping** in the short term, and a band of special paving such as cobblestones or unit pavers in the long term to alert drivers and slow traffic;
- **Left turn bike boxes** to provide adequate space for cyclists to make safe left turns.

These improvements should be coordinated with the recommended Chippewa streetscape improvements.

4.4.3.Chippewa Catenary Lighting

Implement a catenary lighting strategy from Delaware to Main that spans the street to form a lit ceiling, distinguishing the district and supporting its primary entertainment uses. This project should be pursued through a partnership between the City, local businesses and landowners to develop, fund and implement a feasible and mutually agreeable design. Ideally, this design would complement existing lighting standards attaching to and utilizing power from buildings on both sides of the street. The lights may be suspended from a consistent height along the building front below the top of the building to create a uniform height ceiling at a pedestrian scale. This project is dependent upon agreement and collaboration between private landowners and the City, and specific details must ultimately result from a detailed design process.

4.4.4. Chippewa Seasonal Animation Strategies

During the warmer months, additional efforts should be made to pilot projects that can enhance animation along Chippewa, supporting its vibrant food and entertainment uses.

Potential projects could include the following:

i. **Voluntary seasonal removal of street parking** outside of interested restaurants, bars and cafes from Delaware to Pearl to create temporary patio space, utilizing attractive, easy to install and low cost materials such as raised wooden 'patio slats' or interlocking decking to create an outdoor dining area. These areas should be fenced from the street and can be outfitted with additional landscaping and planter boxes.

ii. **Temporary street closures** from Delaware to Main featuring pedestrian-oriented local food and entertainment. Existing businesses should be given priority in proposing appropriate uses that can animate the street, such as live music, special food offerings and outdoor dining to ensure that festivals help to profile and increase revenue for local business. To begin, temporary street closures should be undertaken on a pilot project basis, on a Saturday or Sunday, day and evening on 3 to 4 occasions between the months of May through September. The businesses and the city should work to establish a set of evaluation criteria for street closure events to improve the overall organization, logistics coordination and event management over time. Impacts to businesses such as increased or decreased sales should be part of the evaluation criteria.

iii. **Temporary installations to activate surface parking lots** such as at the northwest corner of Pearl and Chippewa. These could include food trucks or shipping container-based pop-up retail, food and entertainment, providing a simple leasing opportunity to the land owner. These types of uses can help to fill gaps in Chippewa's urban fabric in the short term, helping the district to expand its presence and attract additional foot traffic.

4.4.5.Chippewa Public Art Strategy

Implement a multi-faceted public art strategy along the Chippewa corridor, focusing on Delaware to Main in the near term and the entire corridor in the medium to long term. To contrast Chippewa from other areas of downtown with a more historic character, public art along this corridor should be contemporary, hip and distinguished.

Potential projects could include the following:

i. **Twin sculptures on the west side of Main at Chippewa** to signal the entrance to the district, ideally distinguishing the area from Main through the use of unique, visionary lighting;

ii. **A sculpture or statue at the intersection of Genesee, Chippewa and Ellicott**, which should be included in the current work that is being completed to improve this intersection;

iii. **Introduction of murals on blank building faces**, including the east and west building faces of the 'Root Building' on the south side of Chippewa just east of Franklin, the west building face of 70 Chippewa (4 Play Night Club), and the south face of the building that covers the majority of the north side of the main-to-pearl block; and

iv. **Development of distinct banners** for application on the lighting standards.

BUDC, the City and local business and landowners should work in partnership with local artists and a landscape architect to identify an appropriate public art strategy and key objectives for the art, confirm locations for public art along the corridor and work with the arts community to provide mutually beneficial opportunities for the community to showcase its talent.

Mid-block connections can help to improve permeability and enhance access to the district

New park spaces can help to attract private sector investment and create a focus for new development

4.4.6. Theatre District Mid-Block Connections

Improve mid-block Pedestrian Oriented Connections between Main Street and shoulder areas on Pearl and Washington to improve permeability and encourage the spread of investment from Main to the east and west. This should include enhancing existing connections at Theatre Place, the Market Arcade Building, and the two respective connections near Alleyway Theatre and the Youth Hostel utilizing improved wayfinding, pedestrian oriented lighting, public art, and special pavement treatments where appropriate.

4.4.7. Pearl Streetscape Improvements

Implement the unified streetscape along Pearl Street in conjunction with two-way traffic conversion. Pearl's sidewalks are relatively narrow and may be widened over time to accommodate increased pedestrian activity to support Pearl as a Commercial and Retail Oriented Street, in conjunction with future development opportunities. The street edge and furnishing zones should mirror Main Street's dimensions to leave adequate space for plantings and other furnishings. The pedestrian throughway should be widened to a minimum of 7 feet with an additional 6 foot frontage zone to accommodate significant pedestrian activity and outdoor seating, consistent with section 10.2.2 of the Green Code's Unified Development Ordinance. In the near term there may not be the resources to move curbs. Near term improvements could include the provision of bumpouts at key crossing points such as at Shea's and limiting traffic to one lane in each direction with street parking. Unused roadway space could be used for the provision of bike share facilities and or temporary spillout and café space similar to recommendations made for Chippewa (above).

4.4.8. New Park Space Creation

While there is significant potential for private sector residential/mixed-use adaptive reuse developments both within and surrounding the node, the area lacks park and gathering space. Provision of New Park Space will be integral to attracting private sector development as well as a greater residential population to downtown. The implementation of new parks should be pursued in partnership with the private sector, should be designed by a landscape architect, and must include significant community engagement to determine and address community needs. Strategies for new park space creation are discussed in the Section 5 Implementation Strategy.

Seek to acquire new park space at the following locations:

i. Along Franklin north of Chippewa to catalyze surrounding redevelopment of the surface parking lots.

ii. On the M&T Parking Lots. The two M&T parking lots located between Washington and Ellicott have strong redevelopment potential and adequate space to accommodate a new park space that could help to provide structure for medium to high density development. This location presents an opportunity for a linear park to extend the 617 Main Street Market Arcade mid-block connection through to the Flower District, helping to connect these two special urban places. The role and function for this new linear open space connection will best serve to strengthen and connect various destinations within the node.

A development plan to transform the Flower District into a neighbourhood of mid to high density housing should be developed

4.4.9.Flower District Concept Plan

The Flower District is an important area in downtown that is attracting new residential development. This is due in part to numerous opportunities for residential adaptive reuse projects in historic building stock, and also the district's proximity to reinvestment on Main Street and Chippewa to the west, and BNMC to the north. As an emerging mixed use residential, Retail and Commercial Oriented District, the area is currently separated from the downtown core by extensive surface parking, including the M&T surface parking lot. While large areas of parking are currently acting as a barrier, they have strong redevelopment potential that should respond to investment in the surrounding areas. In particular, the M&T parking lot presents a unique opportunity to address the current void and growing demand for downtown neighborhood amenities, including new park space creation and a grocery store, which were raised numerous times by downtown residents during community consultations.

The key to improving this district and developing a very specific and tasteful public realm enhancement strategy is to work with the largest private landowner in the area, M&T, to encourage the redevelopment of the two large parking lots in the center of the district. Infrastructure and public realm improvements must be designed in conjunction with the redevelopment of this large scale site. This calls for a collaborative detailed design project to articulate a preferred redevelopment scheme and associated supportive public realm and infrastructure improvements. Consideration of infrastructure and public realm improvements in advance of this design project would be premature.

A conceptual development plan for the redevelopment of the area should be developed in partnership between M&T, BUDC, and the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with a consultant team that offers land use planning, urban design, and transportation, engineering and landscape architecture expertise.

Develop a detailed conceptual development plan for the flower district that includes the following elements:

i. **Medium to high density mixed-use residential development.** Inclusion of a mix of medium to high density residential units, ground floor retail that should include a grocery store and other commercial neighborhood amenities would be particularly catalytic, helping to attract other residents and residential development to the area.

ii. **Structured parking** to continue to meet the needs of the area, including M&T employees, on a much smaller footprint. Ideally some of this should be located underground, helping to set a new precedent for downtown's parking supply. Any above ground structured parking should be lined with buildings with active uses that interface with the street, ensuring that structured parking is not visible from the street and does not create dead space in the pedestrian realm.

iii. **New park space**. A new linear park, approximately 65 – 100 feet across should be created, extending from the 617 Main Street Market Arcade mid-block connection through to the Flower District. This park should include amenities such as a water feature, coniferous plantings that provide year round greening, and moveable tables and chairs that provide amenity to users. Active retail uses that can spill into and help animate this space should also be considered, such as cafés, bars, and retail.

iv. **Surrounding streetscape improvements**. The unified streetscape palette should be implemented here, including extensive tree planting, benches, and widened sidewalks to support this area as Commercial and Retail Oriented District.

v. **A phasing strategy** should be developed to support phased development of the site over time. This strategy should consider anticipated absorption rates, traffic impacts, services and underground utilities and the timing of infrastructure improvements to develop a logical sequencing of development activities. It is important to ensure that public realm improvements are not damaged by adjacent development activities and that these improvements are completed in conjunction with new development to support new land uses.

Parking structures with active uses at street level can help to free up land for new development without compromising parking supply

The development plan should be comprehensive, including directions for new buildings, uses, parks, and open spaces, as well as a strategy for phasing over time

Streetscape and public realm improvements to the square and traffic circle should strengthen the relationship between destinations surrounding the square, calm traffic, and support access to the interior of the square

4.5 CIVIC & EMPLOYMENT PRIORITY INVESTMENT NODE

The Civic & Employment Priority Investment Node contains Key Destinations and Key Park Spaces, as well as the seat of municipal government and one of the core office employment areas in downtown. The node is anchored by City Hall and Niagara Square at the west end, and Lafayette Square and the Public Library at the east, representing some of the most iconic civic and public realm assets in downtown. Niagara Square is also the focal node at the terminus of the City's important radial streets, which act as mixed use, commercial spokes that radiate outwards from the Square.

This is a high profile area and a key east west linkage across the downtown core, which can be strengthened through infrastructure and public realm improvements. The formal, axial composition of Niagara Square and its relationship to Lafayette Square and the public library create a signature downtown space. Currently, the arrangement of Niagara Square, which is a circular park with traffic flowing around it within a square space, creates large areas of unused asphalt at the corners. Here, painted triangles direct car movements, but create long pedestrian crossing distances and result in poor legibility of pedestrian crossings. The extent of asphalt, poor definition of traffic lanes, and lack of comfortable pedestrian refuge areas associated with the painted triangles represent key challenges to the enjoyment of this public realm asset, and its strength as a special urban place.

Court Street provides an important connection between Niagara and Lafayette Squares; planned improvements should work to strengthen this formal composition and linkage between these special urban places. Lafayette Square's redesign a few decades back introduced widened roadways between the square and library, which, along with poor visibility and a lack of paths into the Square, have resulted in a poor interface and connectivity between these adjacent assets. Lafayette Square has become overgrown with large trees and lacks smaller landscaped areas and seating that could enhance enjoyment of this important space. The newer, more contemporary treatment of the library plaza and its harsh grade conditions further contribute to the troubled interface between the more historic Lafayette Square and indicate a need to strengthen, unify and connect these two adjacent spaces through consistent improvements.

Infrastructure and public realm investment here has great potential to shift the image of the City by creating a more attractive, generous and green public realm that results in places where people feel comfortable and safe. These improvements support the tourist economy, and could help to encourage additional office employment in the area.

Key Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified for the Civic and Employment Investment Node and are described in greater detail below.

- Niagara Square streetscape & public realm improvements
- Niagara Square radial streetscape improvements
- Court Street streetscape improvements
- Public Library Plaza & Lafayette Square improvements
- Ellicott through-Library improvements
- New park space creation & public realm improvements at the north face of the Public Library
- Broadway Streetscape & Intersection Improvements
- Clinton Streetscape & Intersection Improvements

4.5.1 Niagara Square Streetscape and Public Realm Improvements

Implement streetscape and public realm improvements to the square and traffic circle to strengthen the relationship between the Key Destinations surrounding the square, to calm traffic, and to encourage pedestrian enjoyment and access to the interior Key Park Space and monument. A number of improvements are recommended, which could be undertaken as a single project or a series of smaller projects. These projects will help to soften and green the space, reduce the speed of cars using the roadway, and strengthen this important special urban place. Ultimately these improvements may help Niagara Square perform a variety of new uses. These could include civic events like mayoral speeches, ribbon cutting ceremonies, and award ceremonies, or temporary programming such as 'art in the square', small downtown concerts that would not compete with Canalside, or farmer's market type uses, among others. Recommended improvements include:

i. **Replace all sidewalks**, implementing the unified streetscape palette developed for Main Street.

ii. **Introduce landscaped islands to reclaim areas of unused asphalt at the four corners of the square**. These areas are created by the juxtaposition of the traffic circle within a square block and result in unused asphalt areas that are currently striped where the radials enter the square. These areas should be used for pedestrian refuge and should incorporate seasonal plantings such as salt tolerant shrubs, street trees, grass and pedestrian walkways to create greater pedestrian legibility while greening the street. These islands could incorporate green infrastructure such as bioswales to help improve stormwater management.

iii. **Introduce clearly striped and signalized radial pedestrian crossings** at the four crossings that are on axis and perpendicular to the city hall to shorten crossing distances and improve permeability into the square, as well as legibility and safety for pedestrians accessing the central public space. These crossings should utilize pedestrian activated signals and countdown timers to improve safety.

iv. **Reduce the traffic circle to two lanes of vehicle traffic and widen the sidewalk around the interior circular space accommodating the monument**. Widened sidewalks should include regular street tree plantings within a green boulevard to separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic and should utilize the unified streetscape palette. In the near term, a pilot lane reduction could be achieved through striping, allowing the transportation impacts of the lane reductions to be monitored prior to a more permanent lane reduction and sidewalk widening.

v. **Reinforce radial pedestrian street crossings by deploying a decorative black wrought iron bollard and chain system** to define the edges of the Niagara Square public space and define safe pedestrian street crossings, enclose the space and separate users from fast-moving traffic.

vi. **Reinforce the circular edge of the McKinley Monument through large street tree plantings**, utilizing species with the ability to have a significant scale and visual impact over time.

vii. **Outfit the circular McKinley Monument space with movable chairs and small round tables** to reinforce the civic nature of the space. Chairs and tables should be red to create a dramatic visual contrast to green plantings and the building context.

viii. **Develop a building foundation landscape strategy** to soften and green the interface where the buildings that surround the square meet the public realm. This should include a low hedge and seasonal plantings to provide year-round greening.

ix. **Implement clear wayfinding that identifies nearby districts, special urban places and waterfront connections**, including the Chippewa Entertainment District, Lafayette Square and the Public Library, Five Flags/Fireman's Park, the Historic Joseph Ellicott District, Canalside and the Hudson and Erie pedestrian waterfront connections. Wayfinding should reflect the unified streetscape palette used on Main.

4.5.2 Niagara Square Radial Streetscape Improvements & Greening Strategy

Implement a green center median on each of the radial streets, extending out one block from Niagara Square. Genesee currently includes a planted center median that houses a number of mature street trees, characteristic of the historic Ellicott style. Implementation of this center median on each of the radials should consider green infrastructure features, and/or should be planted with coniferous low-growing shrubs and street trees for one block to provide year round greening. This should also be supported by regular street tree planting on the pedestrian boulevards on either side of the street to help green the entire area. These improvements, including the planted center median, should utilize the Main Street unified streetscape palette. Center medians should fan out and integrate with pedestrian crossings and the landscaped medians recommended in 4.5.1.ii/iii above.

4.5.3 Court Street Streetscape Improvements

Implement the currently planned streetscape improvements for Court Street to help to strengthen the relationship between the Key Destinations along it and support its function as a Retail and Commercial Street. These improvements should utilize the unified streetscape palette, and the planted center median discussed above (4.4.2) to create a grand pedestrian boulevard that strengthens the civic composition and connection between Niagara Square and City Hall to the west, and Lafayette Square and the Public Library to the east. The system of wrought iron bollards and chains recommended in 4.5.1.v. could be used to line street tree pits along court to distinguish this district and create a unified design vocabulary between Niagara Square, Court Street, and Lafayette Square.

One of the key considerations for the Court Street Streetscape Improvements is the street's function as Station Transfer Zone between LRT and bus services. Application of the unified streetscape standard should include provision for additional seating, pedestrian transit shelters and a higher level of pedestrian oriented lighting to support passengers waiting for busses. Shelters should be designed to integrate discretely into the streetscape so that they contribute to but do not obstruct or detract from the unified streetscape treatment. In order to minimize transfer distances between bus and LRT, bus stops and shelters should be focused towards the eastern end of Court Street as near as possible to Main Street and the Lafeyette LRT Station.

Streetscape improvements on Court Street can help to strengthen the relationship between Key Destinations

4.5.4 Public Library Plaza & Lafayette Square Improvements

Undertake and develop a detailed design concept to coordinate unified public realm improvements and enhanced connectivity between the plaza in front of the Public Library and the adjacent Lafayette Square, working to unify and strengthen these Key Park Spaces and Key Destinations. This process should work to improve accessibility, strengthen sense of place to create a more contemporary destination, consider the potential for public art and civic features such as a water feature or monument, and should include a robust consultation program with the surrounding community to determine the needs of local users. The resulting detailed design concept should consider the following elements:

i. **Remove and replace trees and other plantings in front of the library** that are resulting in a visual barrier. New plantings should mirror the landscape treatment utilized in Lafayette Square to unify the design expression and visually connect the two spaces.

ii. **Introduce new paths into Lafayette Square and limb up trees** to improve visibility and pedestrian permeability into the Square. Currently, Lafayette Square is oriented towards City Hall to the west, with its 'back' and overgrown trees facing the Library. Consider lining Lafayette Square with the system of wrought iron bollards and chains recommended in 4.5.1.v., leaving openings for dedicated paths into the park, helping to define the space and create a distinct design vocabulary between Niagara Square, Court Street and Lafayette Square.

iii. **Create smaller areas of landscaping and moveable seating within Lafayette Square and the Library Plaza** to invite and encourage users to linger and enjoy the space. The same red tables and chairs recommended in 4.5.1.vii. should be used to unify the treatments of Lafayette and Niagara Squares.

iv. **Improve crossing points at Washington and Clinton/Broadway** utilizing high visibility striping or a special pavement treatment and pedestrian activated crossing signals. In the medium to long term, consider extension of new landscape treatments across Washington to create a continuous public space. This could include a raised cobblestone or unit paver traffic table and planted center median, slowing traffic and elevating pedestrian priority. This strategy should also consider widening sidewalks on Washington by removing the northbound right hand turning lane and southbound street parking to shorten crossing distances, slow traffic, and eliminate the barrier formed by parked cars.

v. **Re-grade the plaza in front of the Library** to improve the transition between the entrance and the surrounding street level and reduce the extent of retaining walls that are currently acting as a barrier to the space. Current grading conditions have resulted in a number of retaining walls that block visual connections to the library plaza; a more gradual and gentler gesture would help to open and invite users into the space.

vi. **Implement consistent pedestrian scale lighting for the Library Plaza and Lafayette Square** based on the unified streetscape palette.

Smaller landscaped areas and movable seating can help to encourage users to linger and enjoy the space

Source: Plaza Euskadi by Balmori Associates

In the medium to long term a new park could be created at the north face of the library by acquiring the gas station located at William and Oak, and shifting the terminus of William east to Oak

4.5.5 Ellicott Through-Library Improvements

Improve the underpass-like condition on Ellicott where it extends beneath the library. Improvements should include the installation of higher levels of pedestrian oriented lighting that cast a white light and public art that can add visual interest and enliven the space. Lighting should be left on at all times of day, and should be augmented by the strategic placement of mirrors or other reflective surfaces to brighten the space. Over time, opportunities to open up the lower level of the library to the street should be encouraged to help to activate the space.

4.5.6 Broadway and William Intersection Improvements

Implement intersection improvements at Broadway and William to expand the public realm and address the abundance of unnecessary infrastructure (also see Design Guidelines, Section A.7 Intersection Improvements). These improvements should include:

i. **Reduce William to two lanes of vehicle traffic with two lanes of street parking** to accommodate wider sidewalks and streetscape planting areas. In the short term lane reductions can be piloted through restriping, allowing transportation impacts to be studied prior to engaging in more permanent lane removal and sidewalk widening.

ii. **Reduce eastbound Broadway to one lane of traffic with street parking** to accommodate sidewalk widening and street tree planting. In the short term lane reductions can be piloted through restriping, allowing transportation impacts to be studied prior to engaging in more permanent lane removal and sidewalk widening.

iii. **Extend the triangular median at Broadway and William** as far west as possible to clearly define the pedestrian realm, create expanded pedestrian refuge, and shorten crossing distances.

iv. **Improve the Ellicott Broadway/William pedestrian crossing** utilizing high visibility striping and a two phase pedestrian activated crossing signal, allowing slower pedestrian's to seek refuge on the extended triangular median between Broadway and William.

v. **Introduce extensive street tree planting to green Broadway and William** including the extended triangular median.

vi. **Commission a mural or other public art piece(s) for the north and south faces of the library** to add visual interest at the pedestrian scale and enliven the existing blank walls.

Implementing street diets and cycling improvements on Broadway and Clinton will help to improve connections between downtown and neighborhoods to the east

vii. **In the medium to long term, create new park space at the north face of the library** by acquiring the gas station located at William and Oak, and shifting the terminus of William east to Oak. This would eliminate redundant infrastructure in the area, and create an opportunity to create significant new resident-oriented park space on the north side of the library. In combination with improvements to Court Street (4.5.3), this park space would create an extended green corridor from Oak Street through to Niagara Square.

4.5.7 Broadway Streetscape & Intersection Improvements

Broadway is a Complete Green Street connecting downtown with neighborhoods to the east, and also to the Michigan Avenue Heritage district. Streetscape and intersection improvements along Broadway will help to better connect this important cultural distrct and neighbourhoods to the east to the downtown core. Extend the street diet and cycling improvements implemented on Broadway to the east of Fillmore west to Ellicott and implement the unified Main streetscape palette from Main Street to Michigan Avenue, including:

i. **Reduce vehicle lanes to allow for wider sidewalks and bike lanes**. Lane reductions should consider and respond to spatial constraints that exist for respective sections of Broadway, as follows:

- Three lanes of vehicle traffic (one lane in each direction and a turning lane) from Ellicott to Michigan with street parking on both sides of the street (two way traffic);
- Two lanes of vehicle traffic from Ellicott to Washington, with no street parking (two way traffic); and
- One lane of one way traffic From Washington to Main, with street parking on the north side of the street.

In the near term, lane reductions can be piloted through restriping, allowing for transportation impacts to be monitored prior to pursuing more permanent lane reductions and sidewalk widening in the medium or long term.

ii. **Improved intersections at Ellicott, Oak, Elm and Michigan** including the use of high visibility crossings, pedestrian activated crossing signals, and reduced turning radii. Where street parking is permitted, bulb outs can also be used to expand the pedestrian realm and reduce crossing distances (also reference Design Guidelines, A.7 Intersection Improvements).

4.5.8 Clinton Streetscape & Intersection Improvements

Clinton is a complete Green Street connecting downtown with neighborhoods and schools to the east. Implement the unified Main streetscape palette on Clinton from Main Street to Michigan Avenue, including:

i. **Reduce vehicle lanes to allow for wider sidewalks with street trees and bike lanes/sharrows**. Lane reductions should consider and respond to spatial constraints that exist for respective sections of Clinton, as follows:
   - Two lanes of vehicle traffic from Washington to Michigan with no street sparking (two way traffic); and
   - One lane of one way traffic From Washington to Main, with street parking on the south side of the street.

   In the near term, lane reductions can be achieved through restriping, allowing for transportation impacts to be monitored prior to pursuing more permanent lane reductions and sidewalk widening in the medium or long term.

ii. **Implement dedicated bike lanes** from Michigan to Ellicott, with sharrows from Ellicott to Main.

iii. **Improve intersections at Ellicott, Oak, Elm and Michigan** including the use of high visibility crossings, pedestrian activated crossing signals, and reduced turning radii east (also reference Design Guidelines, A.7 Intersection Improvements). Where street parking is permitted, bulb outs can also be used to expand the pedestrian realm and reduce crossing distances.

Crossing enhancements will help to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the busy feeders

4.6 SHELTON SQUARE/ERIE PRIORITY INVESTMENT NODE

The Shelton Square/Erie Priority Investment Node is an important east west corridor that links the ECC campus and Historic Joseph Ellicott District Key Destinations to the waterfront. The node contains a Station Transfer Zone around the NFTA bus terminal, which functions as the primary terminus of the City's transit network and as such, it is an important point of transfer. A series of adjacent Key Park Spaces are clustered between North and South Division and along the former Erie Street right of way, leading into one of downtown's only Pedestrian Oriented Connections to the waterfront.

While Erie Street once provided an important historic link to the waterfront, it has been compromised by poor public realm design, the realignment of the street which has eliminated the direct waterfront link, and multiple highway overpasses which block and compress an important visual connection to the waterfront. The location of the NFTA bus terminal has resulted in the utilization of park space as a bus layover space compromising what otherwise could be an important and attractive public park adjacent to the ECC campus. Idling and congestion detracts from the area, and physically separate ECC campus and Fireman's Park. Despite the importance of ECC as a signature downtown institution with enrollment of approximately 13,000 students, the campus setting and arrival experience are very poor due to the conditions outlined above.

Infrastructure and public realm investment in this node should work to improve the connection to the waterfront, create stronger linkages between adjacent park spaces, create new student-oriented park space, and improve the public setting surrounding ECC to encourage private sector redevelopment that addresses student and residential needs, including restaurants, bars and entertainment.

Key Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified for the Shelton Square/Erie node and are described in greater detail below.

- Erie Street pedestrian connection
- Two-way street conversions for Franklin, Swan, Pearl & Seneca & Franklin/Erie/Swan Intersection Improvements
- Erie Street waterfront connection & underpass improvements
- Church streetscape improvements
- North & South Division streetscape and intersection improvements
- Five Flags & Fireman's Park revitalization
- New student-oriented park creation

4.6.1 Erie Street Pedestrian Connection

Undertake a detailed design study for a linear public space that includes a shared, multi-use active transportation connection integrated into the total landscape along the historic Erie Street right of way between Main and Franklin. This should be accomplished by consolidating and reconfiguring existing fragmented public spaces to create a singular public space gesture that reinforces the connection from downtown to the waterfront. This space should remain closed to cars, but should utilize subtle bike cues and/or pavement changes to direct different users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and other active transportation users. This space should also include public realm amenities such as seating and public art to invite users to stay and linger. Due to the complexity of the project a study will need to be undertaken to explore and evaluate the feasibility of different design options and route configurations; this study must consider the detailed design and character of this space, including transportation impacts and road (re)alignments and crossings, underground services and utilities, lighting, landscaping, pavement treatments, furnishings and public art, among others. This detailed design study should also include a significant public consultation component, allowing the community to provide input and feedback on the direction of this important connection and public space.

Source: Photo - Jean-François Vézina, Designer - Claude Cormier et Associés et Groupe Cardinal Hardy

Establishing a clear linear public space along the Erie Street corridor will help to connect investments and activity in downtown to the waterfront

This study should consider the following elements:

i. **Implement a shared multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists** that is fully integrated as part of the total landscape treatment (as opposed to a path next to a landscape). This path should connect to the existing pedestrian waterfront connection at Franklin.

ii. **Explore the reconfiguration of Swan Street west of Pearl** to reduce the number of street crossings and or align crossing points to support the Erie Street pedestrian connection. Options could include the closure of Swan Street west of Pearl Street or the realignment of the street south so that it merges with Erie Street and extends the alignment. These alterations should be supported by the two-way conversion of streets throughout the area (see 4.6.2).

iii. **Unify the overall design expression and link existing park spaces** including the implementation of linear tree plantings and light standards that preserve straight site lines, providing clarity, organization and a legible pedestrian experience. The design should consider utilizing a unique, large street tree species that can provide definition for the space, as well as seasonal plantings that can provide year round greening. A unique lighting scheme should also be employed, potentially including acrylic 'light box' seating, embedded in-floor lighting, and/or other distinct contemporary lighting fixtures that complement the overall design and distinguish this area.

iv. **Incorporate a distinct streetscape treatment along the entire Erie Street corridor** to emphasize the waterfront connection within the network of downtown streets and public spaces. The distinct pallet should be developed alongside the design of Erie Street corridor improvements and could emerge through the course of the detailed design study. Unique pavement treatments, lighting, seating, and landscape elements should be explored.

v. **Introduce new public art installations** that punctuate and animate the path and help to imply the visual connection to the waterfront that has been lost due to underpasses and realignment of Erie Street to the south west. Art should be located toward the edges of the multi-use pedestrian and cycling path to ensure the space is not cluttered. Exploring the potential for rotating, temporary installations could help to activate the space as a popular destination that encourages regular visits as installations change.

4.6.2 Two-way Street Conversions for Franklin, Swan, Pearl & Seneca, & Franklin/Erie/Swan Intersection Improvements

Reintroduce two-way traffic to Franklin, Swan, Pearl & Seneca to improve connectivity and mobility in the area. In the near term, this can be piloted through restriping. In the medium to long term, these streets should be improved utilizing the unified Main streetscape palette. With the introduction of two way traffic, the intersection of Erie and Franklin could be moved south, allowing Erie to follow its historic right of way. This should include the removal of the median that has been introduced between Erie and Franklin where Erie has been extended north to connect to Swan.

4.6.3 Erie Street Waterfront Connection & Underpass Improvements

Design and implement an improved waterfront connection along the Erie Street right of way by straightening and enhancing the existing meandering pedestrian path, extending the streetscape pallet of the proposed Erie Street Pedestrian Connection (see 4.6.1) and incorporating underpass improvements below the Skyway and 190 (also reference Design Guidelines, A.8 Underpass Improvements). These improvements should:

i. **Create a multi-use path within the Erie right of way**, extending the Pedestrian/Cyclist Oriented Connection from the Erie Street Pedestrian Connection to the waterfront. In conjunction with the Erie and Franklin intersection improvements recommended in 4.6.2, a pedestrian and cyclist crossing with activated signals should be provided to cross Franklin. To promote continuity along the length of the Erie Street corridor, the path and associated lighting and amenities should incorporate the same streetscape pallet as the Erie Street Pedestrian Connection.

ii. **Implement underpass improvements below the Skyway and 190**, including higher levels of pedestrian oriented lighting, generous sidewalks, dedicated cycling facilities, and public art that can add visual interest and enliven the space. Lighting should be left on at all times of day, and should be augmented by the strategic placement of mirrors or reflective surfaces to brighten the space. The pedestrian realm should be better defined using a screen or wall device to separate pedestrians from adjacent areas of parking/ open space under the

Achieving a clear pedestrian connection will require changes to the local street network including intersection improvements, one way conversions to balance traffic operations and the potential reconfiguration of Erie Street; these should be supported by underpass improvements below the skyway and 190 corridors

highways; this visual barrier could also be used to display public art. In the medium to long term, introduce new land uses on either side of Erie underneath the highways, such as new park space, pop-up shipping container restaurants or retail or more permanent pavilion restaurant and retail uses. These uses would provide additional activity along the corridor, enhancing safety and contributing to an improved sense of place. Improvements to Bingham street should also be considered which would help to address pedestrian safety concerns for people walking between Erie Street and West Genesee.

4.6.4 Church Streetscape Improvements

Implement the unified Main streetscape palette on Church between Lower Terrace and Main, including accommodating a wider center median with regular street trees. Introduce bike lanes from Delaware to Main, feeding into recommended bike lanes between North and South Division discussed in 4.6.5.ii.

4.6.5 North & South Division Streetscape and Intersection Improvements

Implement the unified Main streetscape palette on North and South Division between Main and Michigan Avenue, and pursue Intersection Improvements at Washington, Ellicott, Elm and Oak.

i. **Reduce North and South Division to three lanes of vehicle traffic between Main and Elm**. The New York DOT is pursuing a project in this area to pilot street parking and bump outs. This should be pursued alongside Five Flags/Fireman's Park to remove the adjacent lanes from traffic and allow these lanes to be fully removed and sidewalks to be introduced alongside the parks. In the medium to long-term, these streets should be studied to determine the feasibility of introducing two way traffic, and/or limiting these streets to two lanes of traffic, with street parking permitted on the south side of South Division and North side of North Division at off-peak times, allowing these parking lanes to function as a third lane for vehicles during rush hour.

ii. **Utilize lane reductions to introduce bike lanes between Main and Michigan**; these lanes would help to link Michigan and ECC to the Erie Street Pedestrian Connection (4.6.1) and contribute to the creation of the broader cycling network and improved east-west connectivity to the waterfront.

iii. **Improve intersections at Washington, Ellicott, Oak, Elm and Michigan** through the use of high visibility crossings, pedestrian activated crossing signals, and reduced turning radii (Also reference Design Guidelines, A.7 Intersection Improvements).

iv. **In the medium to long term, introduce raised traffic tables between Five Flag's Park, Fireman's Park and the NFTA bus layover space** to calm traffic and strengthen the connection between these adjacent spaces. Traffic tables should feature high visibility pedestrian crossings with activated signals, and should utilize cobblestones or unit pavers to slow traffic and elevate pedestrian priority.

4.6.6 Five Flags & Fireman's Park Detailed Design Study

Undertake a detailed design study to unify and strengthen Five Flag's and Fireman's Park to improve the legibility and interface between these two Key Park Spaces. Given the importance of these parks to ECC, this

study should include a robust community consultation program that addresses the parks role in relation to the college and other adjacent user groups. ECC and other surrounding community stakeholders should play an important role in determining the design and related programming of this important space as it relates to community needs and long term ECC goals. Redesign of these spaces should consider removal or replacement of the decommissioned fountain structure in Fireman's Park, introduction of pathways through Five Flags Park, and a unique lighting strategy to improve perception of safety and encourage use of the space after dark. Opportunities for programming that activate the space and encourage its year-round use should be explored. A unified palette of plantings and public realm furnishings that are utilized within both parks should be employed, and improvements should also include the creation of smaller landscaped spaces and the introduction of moveable tables and chairs (consider using the same red tables and chairs as recommended in 4.5.1.vii.). Inclusion of a flexible, rentable structure or space should also be considered, which could assist with various programming options and could be used to generate revenue to help maintain the park. These improvements should be considered and pursued alongside the introduction of sidewalks along the north and south sides of the parks (4.6.5.i). Similarly, this project should include the creation of a new student-oriented park in the adjacent NFTA bus layover space (4.6.7), or should anticipate and consider the potential for new park space to be created in that space in the future.

4.6.7 New Student-Oriented Park

Undertake a detailed design study to create a student-oriented New Park Space on the NFTA bus layover space. This would necessitate the relocation of the bus layover space to a less prominent location, and/or the relocation of the NFTA terminal to a location that can improve intermodal connectivity such as the space beneath 190 between the train station and rail terminal. The new park should be designed in close consultation with ECC and surrounding residents and business owners to meet their needs, and should reflect the detailed design palette developed for Five Flags & Fireman's Park, including landscaping treatments, lighting, and public realm furnishings to effectively create a single and clearly legible corridor of park space. Responding to the needs and long term goals of the ECC community is particularly important in this space, including contemplation of creating spaces for social interaction, programming for all four seasons, seating, and inclusion of appropriate public art. Inclusion of a flexible, rentable structure or space should also be considered, which could assist with various programming options and could be used to generate revenue to help maintain the park. Ideally, this project should be pursued as part of the recommended detailed design study for Five Flags and Fireman's Park (4.6.6.).

An integrated parking and transit strategy is needed to improve the overall transit network enhance intermodal connectivity, minimize the impacts of bus layovers, spur transit oriented development, and reduce the need for large areas of surface parking.

4.7 OTHER PROJECTS

While the priority investment areas provide a strategic framework to prioritize investment in downtown to maximize the impact of limited resources, a number of other important projects were identified over the course of the project that support Master Plan objectives. These projects either pertain to the entire study area or otherwise fall outside of the priority investment areas and may be undertaken as funds become available. Of particular importance, it was noted that as more people and jobs move back into downtown, there is a need and desire to rebalance the city's streets in favor of pedestrians and cyclists. This will require an integrated approach including traffic calming and potential roadway narrowing, and an examination of how transit and parking are used and priced such that there is greater impetus and incentive to utilize more active forms of transportation, including walking, cycling and public transportation use. The related downtown-wide recommendation to develop an integrated transit and parking strategy should be pursued immediately as it is tied to the success of a number of other near term recommendations within the priority investment areas. Other projects that fall outside of the priority investment areas, while still important, should likely be pursued in the medium to long term once significant progress has been completed within the priority investment areas.

4.7.1 Develop an Integrated Transit & Parking Strategy

Downtown Buffalo's radial transit network funnels high volumes of bus traffic onto a few specific streets in downtown where transit transfer zones are located. While this is necessary, idling, related pollution, noise, and the need for layover space have negative impacts on many downtown streets, surrounding public spaces, and retail viability. These conditions can reduce enjoyment of these places, discourage pedestrian and bike activity, and can also act as a barrier to investment.

Higher order transit on Main Street is a particularly important downtown asset that can help to catalyze nearby private sector investment. However, poor connectivity between downtown's bus system and LRT is resulting in under-utilization of the LRT. Improving and encouraging simplified, free transfers between the bus and LRT systems is integral to driving transit ridership, reducing auto-dependency, and encouraging transit oriented development along the Main Street corridor.

The abundant supply and low cost of parking is also acting as a disincentive to using transit. As a result, large areas of surface parking remain throughout downtown. Concentrations of surface parking function as voids in the urban fabric that fragment downtown and create places where not much is happening and where pedestrians may feel isolated and vulnerable. Incentivizing transit ridership by examining transit and parking pricing and working to reduce the extent of inexpensive parking over the long term will both help to support the redevelopment of surface parking lots to eliminate voids in the fabric, and to better connect downtown districts, neighborhoods and special urban places.

Recommendation: Develop an integrated transit and parking strategy for downtown with a focus on improving the overall transit network to enhance connectivity, encourage intermodal connectivity and transfers, minimize the impacts of bus layovers and concentration in key areas, encourage higher levels of transit ridership to spur transit oriented development, and reduce the need for large areas of surface parking.

The project should fully explore the following components:

- Develop a fare and parking structure that incentivizes transit use;
- Anticipate changing market conditions and demand for surface and structured parking over the short, medium and long term;
- Improve transit-related way finding to encourage transit use;
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the relationship between differing modes of public transportation:
  - Develop a bus routing strategy that integrates bus routes with the LRT, driving LRT ridership and reducing the concentration of busses in specific areas (including the Fireman's Park/ECC Precinct);
  - Undertake a feasibility study to determine the viability of relocating or redesigning the NFTA transit terminal and bus layover space, removing buss layover from Fireman's Square Park and improving connectivity between bus, LRT and rail services; and
- Explore opportunities for transit oriented development, particularly along Main Street.

Bus routing should maximize connectivity between bus and LRT services and decrease concentrations of bus stops and layovers in any one place

Dynamic parking strategies such as those used in San Francisco can help to balance parking demand across downtown

Improve transit-related wayfinding to encourage transit use

4.7.2 Elm/Oak Corridor Pilot Two-Way Traffic Conversion

The Elm and Corridor is currently designed to funnel traffic to and from the Kensington Expressway and I-190. Wide four lane right of ways, fast-moving one way traffic, and signalization that favors car movement disrupts east/west movement between the Downtown core and neighboring areas and discourages pedestrian and cyclist activity on these streets. These conditions have ultimately created a street environment that is hostile for commercial, retail and/or residential uses. This corridor is also acting as a strong disincentive to investment and redevelopment, and poses significant local mobility challenges to pedestrians and cyclists.

This project should be led by the led by NYDOT, partnered with the City of Buffalo, and should assess and implement a pilot two way street conversion of the Elm/Oak Corridor to calm traffic, enhance east/west connectivity across the corridor, and as a result improve the setting for investment and redevelopment.

The project should fully explore the following phased components:

- **Phase I:** Undertake a transportation and engineering feasibility study to assess potential for conversion to two way traffic, including the nature and duration of potential short term pilot improvements to test impacts.
  - Improvements should work within existing street allocation and may include the use of restriping, on-street parking (potentially removed at peak hours), signalization, improved pedestrian crossings and public realm amenities such as street trees, benches and waste receptacles.
  - This study may reveal that conversion to two-way traffic may not be feasible without a bigger move to relocate the terminus of the Kensington Expressway to the north east to begin dispersing Expressway traffic further from downtown.
- **Phase II:** Implement the results of the feasibility study and monitor success of short term pilot improvements.
- **Phase III:** Potentially undertake long-term, more permanent streetscape improvements, such as roadway narrowing and relocation of curbs and sidewalks, based on the relative success of less permanent pilot improvements. Long term consideration of relocating the terminus of the Kensington Expressway to the north east should also be considered to support traffic calming on Elm and Oak.

A pilot two-way conversion of Elm and Oak Streets could help to test the impacts of reducing the barrier effect of these one-way feeders

4.7.3 Goodell On-Street Parking & Road Diet

Goodell Street is currently an off ramp of the Kensington Expressway designed to funnel traffic into downtown. It is also an increasingly important edge and significant point of arrival and access to BNMC. Goodell has been widened many times; currently its four lane right of way and fast-moving one way traffic results in narrow sidewalks with no space for street trees, creating a threatening environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The street acts as a movement barrier between BNMC and areas to south, and results in a street environment that is hostile for commercial, retail and/or residential uses and reinvestment.

This project should be led by NYDOT, partnered with the City of Buffalo, and should assess and implement a pilot road diet and on-street parking to calm traffic, create conditions to better support area businesses, and to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians.

The project should fully explore the following phased components:

- **Phase I:** Undertake a transportation and engineering feasibility study for a reduction in travel lanes and the introduction of off-peak, on-street parking. This study may reveal that conversion to two-way traffic may not be feasible without a bigger move to relocate the terminus of the Kensington Expressway to the north east to begin dispersing Expressway traffic further from downtown.
- **Phase II:** If feasible, implement lane reductions, off-peak on-street parking, and streetscape improvements including new street trees and improved pedestrian crossings.
- **Phase III:** Long term study and implementation of relocating the terminus of the Kensington Expressway to the north east should also be considered to support traffic calming on Goodell, if feasible.

A road diet on Goddell street could be used to help to provide space for new streetscape improvements and landscaping

4.7.4 Michigan Corridor Improvements

Michigan Ave is an important downtown street that currently defines the eastern extent of downtown as it transitions from commercial, employment and parking uses into surrounding neighborhoods. The street is currently characterized by a wide four lane right of way and fast moving traffic, challenging under and overpass conditions, and numerous surface parking lots, vacant lots and vacant buildings, which poorly define the street. These conditions combine to create a hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists, presenting a barrier to reinvestment and enjoyment of this street as one of downtown's few connections to its waterfront. As a continuous north/south street that runs from the waterfront north to the BNMC and beyond, Michigan is a particularly important opportunity to connect a number of precincts and neighborhoods, including the Fruitbelt neighborhood, the emerging East Downtown neighborhood, the Michigan Avenue Heritage District, the ECC campus, and the Sports and Entertainment precinct.

The Elm/Oak corridor currently acts as a barrier that separates Michigan Ave from the Downtown core; this project should be completed after improvements to the Elm/Oak corridor have been made so that any catalytic affects associated with this project are not hindered by the current conditions associated with Elm and Oak.

This project should be led by the City of Buffalo, in consultation with key stakeholders including the Michigan Avenue Heritage District and ECC. It should work to extend recent streetscape improvements made between Genesee and Broadway to enhance Michigan Avenue between BNMC and the waterfront, calm traffic, and improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The project should fully explore the following phased components:

- Phase I: Identify and implement short-term measures to improve streetscape consistency and enhance its use as an important linking corridor. These components should include:
  - Extend consistent street tree plantings and pedestrian scale lighting north and south of the recent Genesee to Broadway improvements from the Waterfront to BNMC to unify the corridor;
  - Improve east/west pedestrian crossings to improve safety;
  - Plant a continuous coniferous hedge in streetscape segments that are predominately lined with surface parking to improve the pedestrian experience and visual quality of the street;
  - Introduce off-peak on-street parking and sharrows to calm traffic and encourage the routes use as an important cycling connection;
  - Introduce wayfinding and public art that celebrate the cultural heritage of the avenue.
- Phase II: Undertake transportation and engineering feasibility study to consider lane reductions, expanding the sidewalk and pedestrian realm, and introducing bike lanes to help Michigan Ave transition towards a complete street.

Over time Michigan should be transformed into a complete street connecting BNMC with the waterfront

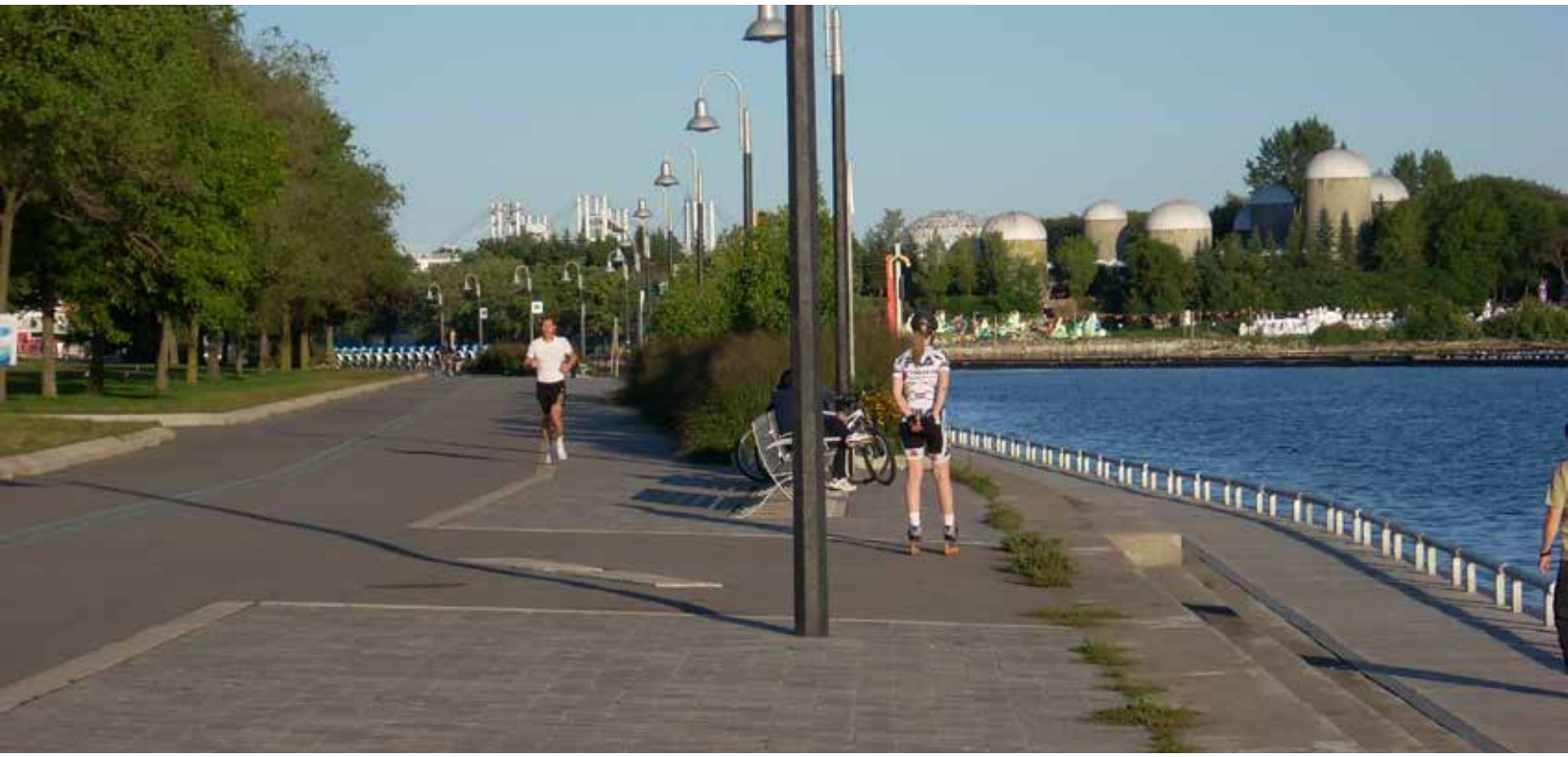
4.7.5 Complete the Waterfront Trail

Significant bike and pedestrian paths extend northwest and southeast along the waterfront from the downtown core, offering a degree of amenity to the neighborhoods surrounding downtown. However, these paths fail to connect through the downtown core, disrupting continuous access along the waterfront and creating gaps between the trails and areas of waterfront reinvestment such as Canalside. Creating a continuous and more legible active transportation route from La Salle Park in the northwest through Canalside to River Fest Park and along Ohio Street to the outer harbor would improve access and unite the waterfront, encourage active transportation and helping to support reinvestment.

This project should be led by BUDC, partnered with City of Buffalo, GO Bike Buffalo and other active transportation stakeholder groups. It should work to connect existing active transportation routes in the northwest and southeast through the Downtown to create a continuous, highly legible waterfront trail that connects Canalside to surrounding waterfront public spaces, destinations and neighborhoods.

The project should fully explore the following components:

- Opportunities to establish a legible route between Canalside and La Salle Park along lakefront Boulevard and Marine Drive;
- Opportunities to establish a legible route between Canalside and Ohio Street;
- The selection of a consistent palette of materials to be implemented along the entire route; and
- The design and application of consistent wayfinding to identify the trail, signal key destinations and distances between them, and to encourage access to the trail from surrounding neighborhoods and districts.



Establishment of a continuous waterfront trail to connect the various waterfront destinations should utilize a consistent pallet of lighting and street furnishings

5: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Vision Framework and Priority Investment Areas provide a range of infrastructure enhancements, and direction on strategic areas of focus for the near term. The following section provides guidance on how to implement the Master Plan, including the division of roles and responsibilities between related agencies, consideration of funding opportunities, and a suggested phasing strategy to provide additional guidance on how to logically sequence projects within the Priority Investment Areas to maximize their impact.

5.1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Downtown Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan process was organized by a Steering Committee led by BUDC, with representation from the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning and Department of Public Works, Parks and Streets, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, and Buffalo Place. Maintaining an ongoing working group is recommended to ensure the successful implementation of the Master Plan and to reinforce the culture of continued collaboration aimed at strengthening the draw and success of downtown. A similar working group should include continued involvement of key Steering Committee members from BUDC, the City, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and Buffalo Place. This working group should be responsible for the following important implementation activities.

Delivery of Infrastructure & Public Realm Projects

The working group should work to confirm funding priorities and projects for each capital year, including the appropriate allocation of available resources to various funding requests to assure that the funding of new projects aligns with Master Plan recommendations and priorities.

Monitoring & Annual Reporting

The working group should monitor the status and progress of funded projects and other downtown initiatives related to the Master Plan and its priorities. This information should be used to create an annual report describing completion status of all funded projects, whether these projects are on schedule/on budget, and any issues encountered. It should also report on operation and maintenance needs and opportunities associated with downtown infrastructure and public realm assets.

Communication Strategy

The working group should establish a communication strategy that may include the creation of a Master Plan website, social media presence, blog, newsletters, and/or e-mail blasts among others. These tools can be used to communicate annual funding priorities, funding announcements, project status updates, and other opportunities related to the Master Plan. Moving forward, it is of the utmost importance that the working group develops clear messaging outlining and solidly committing itself to specific Master Plan priority projects. This is necessary to give the private sector confidence that they can invest in an area without these priorities changing or being abandoned over time.

Grant & Funding Applications

The working group should lead grant writing and fund raising activities for Master Plan projects, and/or provide a high level of support and input to respective agencies (e.g. The City) to identify funding opportunities and assist in the preparation of grant and funding applications.

Updating the Master Plan

Within the five to ten year planning horizon it will be necessary to revisit and update the Master Plan. The working group should lead a process to update the Master Plan, reflecting progress completed on recommended projects and revisiting Master Plan priorities, recommendations and next steps in light of this progress.

5.2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying creative opportunities to fund recommended projects is integral to the successful implementation of the Master Plan. The effort and success of the working group in securing funding for new infrastructure and public realm projects will be directly correlated to the pace of implementation of the Master Plan. The following existing and potential funding sources have been identified to date.

Existing Funding Sources

- City of Buffalo Capital Budget: this currently includes the Mayor's commitment of $750,000 a year, with 2015 as the final year for this commitment.
- DASNY Funds: this includes the Mayor's commitment of $3 millionfor downtown infrastructure through the BBRP, as part of a larger grant from DASNY to the City.
- National Grid: the Urban Center/Commercial District Revitalization Program provides matching grants of up to $250,000 per municipality per year.

Other Funding Sources & Opportunities

- National Fuel Area Development Program
- Surface Transportation Program
- TIGER Grants
- WNY Regional Economic Development Council
- Highway Safety Improvement Program
- NYSERDA
- Niagara River Greenways
- New York Power Authority/WNY Power Proceeds Fund
- Downtown Parking Revenue (Board of Parking/BCAR)
- NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Green Innovation Grant Program
- Buffalo Sewer Authority Long-term Control Plan Green Infrastructure Funding
- John Oishei Foundation
- Wendt Foundation
- Economic Development Administration
  - Economic Development Assistance Program
  - Planning Program & Local Technical Assistance Program
- Voter Approved Transportation Spending/Sales Tax
- Private Advertising in the Public Right-of-Way
- Fine Based Mechanisms
- Tax Increment Financing
- Road Pricing
- Fuel/Gas Tax Revenue

Strategic Considerations

It is important to recognize that one of the key goals of the Master Plan is to utilize public realm improvements to create an enhanced setting to attract private sector development and new residents to downtown. Generally speaking, the development of funding strategies that that increase the costs of downtown development to the developer, and/or place additional financial burdens on potential future residents should not be pursued in the near to medium term. In the near term, public sector funding sources will be needed to bring forward infrastructure and public realm improvements in downtown. Tools that encourage downtown living and desirable changes in behavior could also be considered, including road pricing and parking revenue tools, which can generate revenue for infrastructure improvements while also discouraging driving, reducing the demand for downtown parking, and encouraging the use of public and active transportation. If pursued, revenue from these potential tools could be directly channeled into infrastructure investments that improve public transportation service, support active mobility, and improve public realm amenities in support of downtown living.

Economics are currently challenging for developers who are interested in investing downtown. The City should therefore seek to attract a critical mass of private sector development and significant residential demand for downtown prior to seeking significant contributions from the private sector. Once a critical mass of downtown residents exists and downtown development economics can generate significant interest, the use of alternative funding tools may become more realistic. These could include drawing on neighborhood groups, parks conservancies, and local business organizations to assist with the maintenance and operation of infrastructure and/or innovative revenue generating tools such as land value capture, transportation utility fees, sidewalk tax districts, business parking levies, and development fees.

At the same time, there are a few near-term opportunities to work with the private sector to achieve Master Plan objectives. For major projects such as the recommended Public Library Plaza/Lafayette Square Improvements and Five Flags/Fireman's Park Revitalization projects, opportunities for corporate sponsorship in exchange for naming rights could be explored. The City should also work collaboratively with private land owners to create new park space that directly supports private sector development interests, and strengthens the draw of downtown to young professionals, seniors and families.

This could include agreements where the private sector donates a portion of a development site to the City, allowing the City to develop a new park on the site with the developer accepting responsibility for maintenance of the park (e.g. as part of the redevelopment of the M&T parking lots in the Flower District). In areas where the public sector owns desirable land that should be used for new park space creation, (e.g. the NFTA bus layover space adjacent to Fireman's Square), land ownership could be transferred to a private developer under a conditional agreement to design, build and maintain a new park. This would require inclusion of a revenue-generating use within the park to create value for the developer, who ideally would also benefit from improved land values surrounding the new park space. Seeking to leverage park space creation solely at the expense of a developer as part of a new development project is not recommended, as this would be perceived as a disincentive for development. Rather, partnerships could be developed which explore cost sharing and resource contributions between the public and private sectors to achieve a mutually beneficial outcomes.

5.3 PROJECT PHASING STRATEGY

The Priority Investment Areas described in Section 4 of the Master Plan provide a framework of focused investment nodes and corridors, which identify a number of recommended projects for each area. Many of these projects are less capital intensive and can be pursued in the near term, providing immediate benefits to surrounding areas. Others require additional work including further technical study, design, and/or financial support. Similarly, some of these projects have a greater potential to meet Master Plan objectives, such as attracting private sector investment, improving the image of downtown, and encouraging downtown living. Recommendations on how to strategically phase key downtown infrastructure and public realm projects are included below. These recommendations should be refined by the Working group as outlined in section 5.1 Roles and Responsibilities.

As indicated above in the Communications Strategy section (5.1 Roles and Responsibilities), the Master Plan working group must firmly commit to a series of phased priorities, which must in turn be clearly communicated to stakeholders and the private sector to inspire confidence that these priorities are generally fixed and will not change prior to their completion. Changing priorities will not give the private sector the confidence needed to bring about desired private sector investment in downtown.

The following phasing strategy is recommended for Priority Investment Nodes and Corridors.

The Top Priority: Cars Sharing Main Street

Accelerating and completing the Cars Sharing Main Street project is the top priority identified by the Master Plan. Main Street provides a central linkage between the existing areas of active investment at Canalside and BNMC, and it connects the three Priority Investment Nodes identified within the Master Plan, as well as the majority of downtown's special urban places and key destinations. Completing unified streetscape improvements and reintroducing cars where they have been removed from Main Street should be completed as soon as possible to strengthen the connection between key downtown areas and assets, and to encourage reinvestment along the entire corridor. As the Cars Sharing Main Street project is dependent on securing large funding commitments, it may ultimately take a number of years to bring this project to completion. In the meantime, it will be important to pursue less capital intensive quick-win projects that can still result in meaningful impacts.

Quick Wins: Chippewa & Niagara Square Improvements

A series of small, modest capital projects are recommended for Chippewa Street (4.4.1 through 4.4.5), including streetscape improvements and planting strategies, intersection improvements, a catenary lighting strategy, seasonal animation strategies, and a public art strategy. Most of these projects do not require detailed design, but do require coordination and organization between the working group, the City, and in some case local business owners. These strategies can be pursued immediately to strengthen and build upon the success of this district. Improving the image, functionality and amenity offered by this successful area can help continue to build momentum in attracting downtown residents and visitors, and over time should have spillover effects on surrounding areas.

Similarly, a number of complementary smaller scale improvements are recommended for Niagara Square (4.5.1), many of which can be undertaken in the near term with modest capital investment. As downtown's most iconic public space, ongoing improvements to this asset would help to send a clear message to private sector investors, visitors, and residents alike, signaling downtown renewal and investment. This space speaks volumes about the condition and image of downtown, and pursuing improvement projects in this space will have a broader symbolic impact above and beyond the immediate impact of improvements on the ground.

These projects generally do not require additional detailed design, but do require the agreement and collaboration of various city departments such as Public Works, Parks & Streets and the Office of Strategic Planning to implement the public realm recommendations.

Big Moves: the Flower District Concept Plan, Erie Street Pedestrian Connection, & Five Flags/Fireman's Park Detailed Design Study

The Master Plan identifies some important big moves that should result in transformative effects that extend beyond these recommended projects to catalyze broader improvements and change in surrounding areas. These include the Flower District Concept Plan (4.4.9), the Erie Street Pedestrian Connection (4.6.1), and the Five Flags/ Fireman's Park Detailed Design Study (4.6.6). These three big moves all represent multi-phase projects that should be guided by additional detailed design in consultation with private landowners and key stakeholders to determine the full scope, nature and character of the desired outcome. Additional detailed design and study should be pursued as a top near term priority.

Private sector developers and potential downtown residents need to see a clear commitment to implementing these projects and assurance that these projects will achieve high quality design resolution that can act as a catalyst for surrounding areas. Stakeholders should be involved in the process, and kept regularly informed of ongoing progress and milestones to build awareness and excitement surrounding these projects. Just as Cars Sharing Main Street has resulted in private investment prior to its completion, starting the initial study, consultation and design work that is necessary to successfully implement these projects can build momentum and investment interest in the near term. Initiating a rigorous design study and consultation program now can communicate to the private sector and potential downtown residents where change will be occurring and what it will look like, even if completion of these initiatives ultimately occurs beyond the five to ten year time horizon.

5.4 CONCLUSION

For the Master Plan to be a success, a cooperative implementation effort and firm commitment to established priorities are needed. The Master Plan should operate on many levels. It should convey the goals and objectives of public realm improvements in downtown, communicate the range of enhancements that can meet these goals and objectives, and should identify and reinforce its top project priorities to give the private sector confidence that their investment in the downtown will occur in conjunction with public sector investment. At the same time, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination is needed to implement the Plan, and to complement various partner contributions in support of the Plan's priorities and objectives. A high level of involvement, cooperation and communication between all parties is required for downtown stakeholders to understand the benefits of and the commitment to achieving the Plan's near term priorities. Revising and refining the Master Plan after a five to ten year time horizon will ensure that strategic near term priorities continue to respond to implementation progress and new opportunities as they arise. Over time, working towards the realization of the long-term vision framework will benefit not only downtown stakeholders but also residents and businesses throughout the City.

APPENDIX A: DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City of Buffalo has a rich urban fabric and architectural building style. Downtown developed along the radial street pattern established by Joseph Ellicott, radiating from Niagara Square. As industry and economic activity within the City grew, the transportation networks that served to mobilize people and goods expanded in tandem. However, since the 1960's, population decline has resulted in a transportation network that is overdesigned for the automobile and includes underutilized space in the roadway network.

Today there is a growing movement to reclaim the urban street network and celebrate it as a vital component of the public realm. There is the sense that the City's streetscapes and open spaces should respect the City's unique historic and cultural heritage while accommodating contemporary and future needs and uses. Where streets were once expanded to primarily serve the needs of the automobile an opportunity exists to re-shape these spaces as places where people can walk, use transit or ride bicycles as alternatives to driving vehicles.

The following broad guidelines are intended to complement the City's Green Code and support the recommendations made within the Vision Framework and Priority Investment Areas to guide the character and function of future infrastructure projects within downtown.

The guidelines have been organized into two broad categories; Downtown-Wide which provides guidance on elements that should be consistently dealt with throughout downtown and Framework-Specific which provide guidance on some of the specific categories of public realm and infrastructure enhancements identified within the Vision Framework. They are intended to be used as a resource when assessing development projects or preparing plans for new infrastructure to ensure that each new project includes and adheres to the basic elements that will help achieve the overarching goal of a more vibrant, enticing, and livable downtown.

A.1 DOWNTOWN-WIDE GUIDELINES

Good streetscape and open space design should restore, maintain and build upon the City's historic network of streets and public spaces and foster downtown as a desirable place to live and work. The following apply to all streets and public spaces:

Guidelines: Downtown-Wide

A1.1. **Safety** – Downtown spaces should feel safe. Conduct a pedestrian safety audit to identify safety concerns and potential solutions. Elements that contribute to a feeling of public safety include:

- Adequate lighting;
- Clear sight lines;
- Well-maintained spaces;
- Sidewalks that are wide enough to keep pedestrians from feeling pushed into the street;
- Clearly marked pedestrian crossings;
- Curb ramps;
- Elimination of tripping and other hazards;
- Dedicated bike lanes;
- Tree lawns;
- On-street parking between sidewalks and vehicular travel lanes; and
- Lower vehicular speeds.

A1.2. **Accessibility** – Ensure that pedestrian routes comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) continuously throughout downtown to facilitate ease of movement for everyone. While the most rigorous requirements of the ADA apply to people in wheelchairs, accessible design also accommodates individuals with other impairments such as limited mobility or sight impairments. Elements such as curb ramps are also family-friendly and facilitate access for parents with strollers and children on tricycles or bicycles. Place detectable warnings at the foot of curb ramps to indicate the transition between the pedestrian routes and vehicular street traffic. Ensure good drainage at curb ramps so that puddles do not collect at the foot of the ramps.

Elements that contribute to the creation of safe streets include clear sight lines, clearly marked pedestrian crossings, dedicated bike lanes, on street parking and street trees

The use of high quality materials such as those found in the recently completed Main Street improvements can reduce the need for maintenance and repairs, and contribute to the image of downtown

A1.3. **Maintenance and Repair** – Keep downtown public spaces well maintained. Empty trash cans regularly, pick up litter, and remove graffiti. Repair cracks or holes in paved areas immediately to eliminate tripping hazards. Infrastructure improvement projects should incorporate adequate funding and staff to support long term maintenance.

A1.4. **Durability** – Encourage use of materials with long-term durability, such as granite curbing and high quality paving, to reduce the need for frequent repairs.

A1.5. **Way-finding Signage** – Establish and adhere to way-finding sign standards that include consistent type and font sizes, colors, sign locations, and dimensions. Well executed signage will blend unobtrusively into the landscape and serve a support role to the urban infrastructure.

A1.6. **Furnishings** – Prioritize site furnishings in the following areas:

- Streets with high pedestrian activity;
- Streets where pedestrians may linger in the public realm, such as the downtown core, the waterfront, or commercial or mixed-use areas, and
- Streets with a recreational or ceremonial role, such as parkways, boulevards and park edges.
- Less active streets should incorporate furnishings at corners and busier blocks, or in areas warranted by adjacent land use and pedestrian activity.

Table 10C of the UDO identifies the appropriate location for street furnishings.

Well executed signage will blend unobtrusively into its surroundings

The lighting standard developed for the Car Sharing Main Street projects has the flexibility to respond to various environments throughout downtown

A1.7. **Lighting** – Establish lighting standards to be used consistently throughout downtown, according to the context in which they are located.

- Ensure that light fixtures are spaced to conform to light level and uniformity requirements per the American National Standard Practice for Roadway Lighting (RP-8) published by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).
- Add pedestrian fixtures to vehicular light poles where feasible.
- Mitigate glare by selecting proper lamp wattage and mounting fixtures at the appropriate height.
- Mount pedestrian lights 12 feet high in areas where there is a high amount of pedestrian activity and 15 feet high in less active areas.
- Mount vehicular lights 30 feet high.
- Use LED and dark-sky friendly (full cut-off or sharp cut-off) light fixtures.
- Use dark colored (preferably black) poles and fixtures.

Additional standards for street lighting can be found in Section 7.4 of the UDO.

Infrastructure projects are a great opportunity for the seamless integration of public art

Public art can be used to help define the character of a place

A1.8. **Public Art** – Encourage a vibrant public art program downtown. Integrate the public art into the overall streetscape. Art can take many forms ranging from three-dimensional statuary and sculpture to two-dimensional murals and paving decorations. Public art also can be reflected in unique designs for utilitarian objects such as benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, street signs and light poles. Ensure that there is adequate space for the type of public art that is being installed. Ensure that art installations do not jeopardize public safety. Art installations should not create tripping hazards or block pedestrian or motorist views.

Streets should be designed to be perceived as an extension of the public realm, not disconnected conduits for traffic

The downtown transportation network should contribute to an enjoyable experience for all users. Successful street design facilitates balanced and sustainable circulation patterns, and is executed with consideration to adjacent land uses to identify the appropriate treatments. In general, the following guidelines apply to all streets:

A1.9. **Streets as Public Spaces** – Streets should be designed so that they are perceived to be part of and not disconnected from the public realm. The objective of urban streets should not be solely as a conduit for traffic. Rather, streets should provide civic definition, on-street parking where appropriate, well thought-out pedestrian crossings, and well maintained curbs. When practical, the City should consider and continue to support temporary and planned street closures to encourage street rights-of-way to be utilized as public space. Temporary street closures additionally promote pedestrian activity, as observed during the numerous public events and festivals held throughout the summer. Section 6.3 Temporary Uses of the UDO outlines temporary uses that require permits and an authorization process from the Commissioner of Public Works, Parks and Streets.

A1.10. **Street Safety** – Streets should be designed to promote the safety of intended users, regardless of whether functioning as a complete street or an arterial intended primarily for automobile traffic. In areas primarily intended for pedestrian and cyclist mobility, streets should be designed to minimize vehicular speeds and volumes. This can be accomplished through traffic calming measures that may include road diets, one-way to two-way street conversions, inclusion of on-street parking, provision of pedestrian safety islands, or incorporating medians in wider street designs. Clear sight lines should be established to avoid potential user conflicts. This may be accomplished by preventing obstacles too close to intersections (e.g., parked cars, street trees, etc.), in accordance with Section 7.5 Corner Visibility of the UDO.

Strategies to promote environmental sustainability such as the incorporation of bio-swales, pervious paving and incorporation of street trees should be pursued wherever possible, and should be designed to help integrate the street with adjacent development

Streets designed for economic activity should contain features such as plantings benches and canopies to support user comfort

A1.11. **Economic Activity** – Streets should be well-designed to support vibrancy and promote economic activity. Streets, particularly those flanked by active businesses, should be designed with lower design speeds to better capture potential consumers and support foot traffic. In addition, careful consideration should be given to the aesthetic and physical quality of such areas to enhance user comfort (e.g., incorporation of street trees, planted medians, appropriately placed crosswalks).

A1.12. **Environmental Sustainability** – Streets should also function to help address environmental issues, such as mitigating stormwater runoff and the urban heat island effect. Strategies that should be considered include incorporation of pervious pavement, bioswales, rain gardens and street trees. Street design that incorporates natural features positively contributes to the long-term health of the City, and interfaces the built and natural environments.

A1.13. **Flexibility** – Streets should be designed so that they can be reconfigured in the future as user needs and street function change. Redesign work may include moving curbs, daylighting intersections and corners, accommodating new public transit, or redirecting traffic. However, streets should not be expanded or redesigned strictly for automobile use. Interim measures should be considered where high-level investments are not feasible or there is uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of implementing such measures. A phased approach to major redesigns should utilize interim materials (e.g., striping, portable islands, and low cost materials).

A.2 KEY PARK AND NEW PARK SPACES

Parks and open spaces are vitally important in successful, attractive cities. Well kept, high quality parks and public spaces attract economic investment and urban revitalization. Moreover, as famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. noted more than a century ago, parks are the "lungs of the city." Trees and other vegetation in parks help improve a city's air and water quality, and access to parks encourages physical activity. The following guidelines are intended to guide the enhancement of existing parks and new parks in downtown that are attractive, comfortable for residents to walk to, and provide adequate spaces for a variety of purposes. These may include public gathering and outdoor public entertainment to passive recreation and quiet contemplation. Additional standards for open space design can be found in Sections 4.8,4.9 and 4.10 of the UDO.

Guidelines: Key Park and New Park Spaces

A2.1. **Location** – The Vision Framework (Section 3.2) identifies existing parks and opportunities for new park spaces within downtown.

A2.2. **Character** – Existing and new park spaces should vary in size and character throughout downtown. Each space should have a unique "sense of place" to enhance choices and quality of life for downtown residents. Size, paving materials, furnishing styles, public art and plantings all contribute to variability. Provide a mix of passive and active recreation areas.

A2.3. **Identity** – Differentiate public spaces within downtown to respond to their distinct context and relationship to the Vision Framework. Any improvements to existing parks or creation of new park spaces should be completed in close consultation with the surrounding community to ensure that these spaces respond to identified needs of their intended users.

- Public spaces in the Civic Center should announce civic pride and accommodate public gatherings with features such as formal site design, fountains, memorials, civic statues, and landscape areas that allow seating in sun and shade.
- Public spaces in core employment areas should accommodate lunchtime and outdoor respite areas for office workers and include pocket parks, public art, landscaped areas for sitting in sun or shade, spaces for street vendors and other food venues, and gathering spaces for activities such as music and other lunchtime or after-work entertainment.

Residential neighborhoods should include family friendly parks and open spaces

- Public spaces in retail and commercial oriented districts should include features that accommodate activities such as queuing, meeting and waiting out of the flow of traffic for other members of the party to congregate, outdoor performances, and seating for shoppers and theater-goers to take a break.
- Residential neighborhoods should include family-friendly parks that reflect the neighborhood character and foster a sense of safety and outdoor activity. The neighborhood parks should include features such as playgrounds, landscaped areas that allow sitting in sun and shade, community gardens, farmers markets, and dog parks. In particular, dog parks and family oriented park spaces with features such as playgrounds should not be pursued until a significant community of surrounding users exists to provide input on the provision and use of these features.

A2.4. **Property Acquisition** – Acquire property for public park space, particularly downtown and in emerging live/work neighborhoods where possible. Use property acquisitions to create an interconnected network of safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle routes as a high priority.

A.3 RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL ORIENTED STREETS

Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street in downtown commercial/retail districts to accommodate high pedestrian volumes and attract people to the public realm and encourage them to linger. Sidewalks should incorporate street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, and substantial pedestrian amenities. Sidewalks should contain the following zones as included in the City's Green Code. Refer to the Green Code for widths of each zone and streetscape elements that are appropriate to each zone.

1. Building Frontage Zone
2. Throughway Zone
3. Furnishings Zone
4. Edge Zone
5. Parking Extension Zone

Guidelines: Retail and Commercial Oriented Streets

A3.1. **Paving** – Use paving materials to differentiate the pedestrian throughway zone from the furnishings zone and to visually enhance the streetscape. Consider use of porous unit paving to provide moisture for street trees.

A3.2. **Furnishings** – Provide benches, bike racks, and other furnishings that encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to linger. Street furnishings provide visual interest and detail and should be user-friendly. The furnishings palette recently selected for the 700 Block of Main Street should be used throughout downtown, except in the following districts: Entertainment District (Chippewa Avenue), the Buffalo/Niagara Medical District, the Larkin District, and Waterfront District, where distinguishing features should be permitted to reinforce these distinct districts within downtown. While distinguishing features should be permitted, core elements of the new Main Street streetscape should be used to provide continuity, including sidewalk and curb treatments and in most cases, lighting fixtures.

A3.3. **Street Trees** – Plant street trees in the sidewalk furnishing zone. Use structural soil and/or continuous planting beds as much as possible to accommodate healthy tree growth. Locate street trees to maintain safe views for pedestrians and motorists and limb up trees to a minimum height of eight feet. Coordinate tree and light fixture placement so tree canopies do not block street lighting. A formal street tree assessment and replacement program will ensure that the urban forest remains viable.

A3.4. **Visual Clutter** – Reduce visual clutter by burying overhead utility lines, consolidating and clustering mail, package and newspaper boxes, combining signage and hanging signs on light poles when possible, and encouraging attractive and creative building-mounted signage. The use of sandwich board signage should not be permitted in downtown.

A3.5. **Screening and Buffering** – Establish buffers between sidewalks and parking lots or other open lots to define the street edge and give pedestrians and motorists a sense of enclosure. Refer to the Green Code for screening and buffering requirements. Avoid solid, blank fences and walls. Use vegetation or public art to mitigate the stark appearance of blank, unarticulated walls and fences.

Trim trees above eight feet to preserve sight lines

Provide benches, bike racks and other furnishings to encourage people to linger. The street furnishing pallet established recently on the 700 block of main should be used throughout most of downtown

Differentiate pedestrian throughzones from the furnishings zone through different paving treatments

Buffer surface parking lots from streets and use elements to help to define the street

A.4 COMPLETE GREEN STREETS

New, retrofitted, or fully reconstructed roadways should be designed as complete streets in accordance with the City of Buffalo's adopted Complete Streets Ordinance. Depending on the existing roadway dimensions, a road may be designed to include separate or shared rights-of-way among different modes of transportation, such as by inclusion of sharrows, dedicated bike lanes, or dedicated bus lanes.

Complete Green Streets are key connections linking downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods. Investments in infrastructure along these streets should employ a complete streets planning process with an emphasis on supporting transit and other more active modes of transportation such as walking and cycling into and out of downtown.

Guidelines: Complete Green Streets

In accordance with Section 10.2 Rights-Of-Way in the UDO, specific guidelines include (note that some of these are addressed in the preceding sections above):

A4.1. **Pedestrians** – Complete Green Streets and other highly trafficked pedestrian streets should be designed in a manner that enhances pedestrian safety and mobility while supporting other modes of transportation. Design features, such as crosswalks, curb extensions, and wider sidewalks enhance pedestrian comfort. Intersection design, as discussed in section 4.3 above, should be implemented in consideration of cyclists, pedestrians, transit, and motorists. Specific considerations to enhance pedestrian safety include:

- Limiting the crossing distances, which can be completed using curb extensions, medians, and pedestrian safety islands;
- Lowering the design speed of roads intended to accommodate heavy foot traffic to enhance pedestrian safety; and
- Introducing on-street parking through conversion of a travel lane can serve to effectively shrink the right-of-way, making it easier for pedestrians to cross traffic lanes while simultaneously slowing traffic.

A4.2. **Cyclists** – Complete Green Streets should prioritize a separate right-of-way for bicycle and vehicular traffic where feasible. Road diets should be completed where possible and streets retrofitted to accommodate bicycle traffic in the context of the larger interconnected bicycle network. Where adequate road width is available, the motor vehicle parking lane should be designed to buffer the bicycle travel lane from the vehicle travel lane. To expand the bicycle network and expand bicycle facilities, consideration should be given to the following:

a. Bike Lanes – Establish appropriate bike lane widths to better balance all modes of travel and enhance safety (see A4.2 above). Buffered bike lanes should be the preferred treatment, and incorporated onto major and minor streets that are part of a larger bicycle network. Contraflow bike lanes should be implemented on one-way motor vehicle roads where two-way bicycle traffic needs to be accommodated.

b. Bike Boxes – Where complete green streets with bike facilities intersect with crossing bike routes use bike boxes to improve the safety for cyclists making left hand turns onto those connecting routes.

c. Road markings – Colored road markings should be implemented on cycle tracks and bike lanes where appropriate to raise awareness of cyclist activity and denote the cyclist's right-of-way.

d. Cycle tracks – Provide raised cycle tracks or parking buffered cycle tracks along street curb lines where feasible to provide a safe environment for cyclists. Cycle tracks should be 6 feet wide per travel lane, and buffer areas striped with dashed lines should be 3 feet wide.

e. Bicycle facilities – Bicycle facilities (i.e. bike corrals, bike racks, bike lockers, and repair stations) should be installed at destinations and along bicycle routes. Installation should be based on bicycle volumes. Bicycle facilities should additionally be considered at transit stop locations to facilitate multi-modal travel.

Retrofitted streets should be designed as complete streets that balance a range of users

Limiting the crossing distances and introducing on street parking can help to reduce vehicular speeds and support pedestrian safety

Cycling amenities such as bike racks, pumps and repair stations installed at key destinations along cycling routes can help to support greater levels of ridership

Additional strategies for Complete Green Streets, in accordance with Section 10.2 Rights-Of-Way in the UDO, include:

A4.3. **Street Widths** – As part of a full reconstruction, consider widening sidewalks, especially when they have been previously narrowed in favor of additional travel lanes. Street widths will vary depending on street type and the modes of travel to be accommodated and should be considered in the overall assemblage of the street. Travel, bike, bus and/or parking lane widths will typically dictate the appropriate street width (see A6.1 to A6.3).

A4.4. **Lane Widths** – Establish appropriate travel, bike and parking lane widths to better balance all modes of travel and enhance safety (see A6.1).

A4.5. **Curb Extensions and Landscaped Medians** – Install curb extensions and landscaped medians where appropriate (see A6.4, A6.5).

A4.6. **Speed Control Measures** – Implement speed control mechanisms and install vertical speed control devices where applicable and appropriate (see A6.6 above).

A4.7. **One-Way to Two-Way Conversions** – Convert one-way streets to two-way operation whenever possible to calm traffic and improve mobility for all modes of travel.

A4.8. **Crosswalks** – Install conventional crosswalks at intersections and mid-block crosswalks where applicable and appropriate to improve pedestrian connectivity between key destinations (see A7.1).

A4.9. **Pedestrian Safety Islands for Long Crossing Distances** – Install pedestrian safety islands in areas where pedestrians are required to cross three or more lanes of traffic (see A7.3).

A4.10. **Corner Radii** – Reduce curb radii at intersections where appropriate (see A7.4).

A4.11. **Visibility and Sight Distance** – Enhance visibility and increase sight distances at intersections (see A7.5 below).

Narrow lane widths and curb extensions can help to support additional street facilities such as bike lanes or on street parking

Bump-outs and reduced corner radii shorten crossing distances and create additional sidewalk space for pedestrian and cycling amenities

A.5 CYCLING AND PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED CONNECTIONS

Cycling and Pedestrian Oriented Connections are important points of linkage within the broader pedestrian and cycling network connecting people to key destinations in downtown across blocks where it may not be possible to introduce new street connections.

Guidelines: Cycling and Pedestrian Oriented Connections

A5.1. **Durability** – Construct cycling and pedestrian oriented connections with durable materials such as concrete or asphalt that are smooth and easy to maintain. Connections should be maintained clear throughout the year if possible through regular maintenance and snow clearing.

A5.2. **Width** – Pedestrian and Cycling Connections should have a minimum 10'-wide travel way with 2'-wide shoulders on each side.

A5.3. **Sightlines** – Ensure clear sightlines to enable pedestrians and cyclists to observe other users and ideally see from one end of the connection to the other. Bridges should also be designed to enable users to see from one end to the other.

A5.4. **Directness** – Connections should be designed to provide the shortest route possible between destinations and ideally extend the alignment of the street or pathway leading to and from the connection. Where ramps are required they should be integrated into the bridge structure and be designed to provide direct connections to the pathway with minimal diversions.

A5.5. **Safety** – Connections should be visible from adjacent uses and illuminated at night to enhance personal safety. Blank walls or elements that hinder views of the connection should be avoided. Where plantings are incorporated they should be trimmed high to preserve visibility and located where they will not negatively impact on pathway lighting.

Cycling and pedestrian oriented connections should be constructed with durable materials, designed to maintain sight lines, and oriented so that they are clearly visible from adjacent uses

Streets designed solely for the automobile should be calmed so that they support a broader spectrum of users and can contribute to the amenity of the city.

A.6 STREETS FOR CALMING

Many of Buffalo's streets, particular those in the downtown core, are overdesigned or were previously widened to accommodate higher volumes of traffic when the population was significantly larger. These street modifications, grounded in highway design principles, ultimately led to higher vehicular speeds which have become particularly problematic in areas intended to function as commercial or residential corridors with high levels of pedestrian and cyclist activity. Streets should be prioritized based on their intended user, and mobility priority streets should connect light rail and bus lines to the downtown employment district. Pedestrian and bicycle user areas should be prioritized in areas characterized by heavy foot and cycle traffic, and areas targeted for significant infrastructure investment (e.g., Ohio Street, Genesee Gateway, etc.).

Downtown Street Types

- **Downtown One-Way Streets** – In the mid-20th century, cities throughout the country converted two-way streets to one-way to streamline traffic into and out of the city and provide enhanced vehicular access to newly constructed highways. In Buffalo, many of these one-way streets are operating below capacity and the city is incrementally converting them back to two-way, where feasible (e.g., Washington Street, Ellicott Street, Pearl Street). The UDO recommends that one-way designed streets should be limited to those experiencing less than 2,500 vehicles per day (VPD). In addition, higher volume one-way streets (e.g. Goodell Street, Elm/Oak arterial) should be addressed through a range of potential traffic calming measures until conversion to accommodate two-way traffic can be completed.
- **Downtown Two-Way Streets** – Two-way streets in downtown that are designed to accommodate a high volume of vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist traffic can be difficult to navigate, and exhibit wider street rights-of-way. Generally, streets with more than three travel lanes (e.g., Main Street) require a two-phase pedestrian crossing. Section 10.2.4.E Pedestrian Signals timing must comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards and a pedestrian clearance time based on a walking speed of 0.5 ft per second. Retrofit considerations may include road diets, addition of conventional bike lanes, cycle tracks, or bump outs that serve to reduce the vehicular right-of-way and slow traffic.
  - Downtown Thoroughfare – As identified in the UDO, downtown thoroughfares include the Mixed-Use Avenue, Residential Boulevard, Mixed-Use Boulevard, and Multi-way Boulevard. An example of a downtown thoroughfare is Main Street (currently

a Mixed-Use Boulevard and also a candidate for a road diet), particularly north of Goodell Street. These generally have larger curb-to-curb distances and accommodate higher volumes of traffic.

- Downtown Neighborhood Streets – Downtown Neighborhood Streets, as identified in the UDO, include Alley, Lane, Residential Street, Mixed-Use Street, and Residential Avenue. Downtown neighborhood streets (e.g., Carolina Street, Virginia Street) are being utilized as cut-through streets and would benefit from traffic calming measures that distinguish them as residential areas and discourage through traffic.

Guidelines: Streets for Calming

A6.1. **Travel Lanes** – Establish travel lane widths that are 10 to 11 feet wide. Lanes that are 10 feet wide generally provide adequate circulation safety in urban settings while also discouraging high speeds. In areas characterized by truck traffic or primary bus routes, 11-foot lanes may be considered. Lane widths in excess of 11 feet should not be used. A reduction in the number of travel lanes should be considered to provide more space for pedestrians and cyclists.

A6.2. **Bike Lanes** – Establish bike lanes that are 6 feet wide. Buffer areas striped with dashed lines should be 3 feet wide and utilized where feasible. Consider bike lanes in the context of an interconnected network to promote connectivity, efficiency and safety. Bike lanes must be designed in accordance with: a) MUTCD, b) New York State Supplement to MUTCD, and c) NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide.

a. Incorporation of bicycle facilities on the left side of a one-way street should be considered. For example, a raised cycle track or buffered cycle track will promote cyclist safety and encourage cycling on roads appropriate for a mix of users, while also creating a lower design speed. Bicycle facilities should be considered in the context of a larger system-wide bicycle network.

A6.3. **Parking Lanes** – Establish parking lanes that are 7 to 9 feet wide, 7-8 feet is generally recommended except in loading areas which should be 9 feet and clearly demarcated to alert drivers. Loading areas may serve multiple functions including providing interim space for cyclists. Provide opportunities for on-street parking where appropriate to further calm traffic.

Integration of street parking can help to shrink the perceived width of the street, particularly when integrated into sidewalk treatments

A6.4. **Curb Extensions** – Curb extensions visually and physically narrow streets to create safer pedestrian environments (e.g., shorter crossing distances) while increasing space for streetscape amenities. In addition, they are used to signify a change in speed, particularly to denote a transition from an area of high-volume traffic to lower volume, such as in a residential area. The following curb extension types should be considered to calm traffic and promote pedestrian and cyclist safety in downtown:

a. Gateway – Gateway curb extensions are typically applied at the mouth of an intersection. According to the UDO's Section 10.2.4.C Curb Extensions, curb extensions must be no greater than one foot less than width of the parking lane. A curb extension must be at least 15 feet in length or, in the case of a curb extension designed to accommodate transit, long enough to encompass the front and rear doors of the transit vehicle.

b. Pinchpoints – Pinchpoints are curb extensions that are applied mid-block and serve to cue traffic to slower speeds. They are typically utilized on lower volume streets and the design should incorporate public realm amenities (e.g. street trees, bike racks, and furniture), utilize vertical elements to alert drivers and snow plow operators, and take underground utilities into consideration. Public realm amenities must not impede pedestrian flow, obstruct clear path, or interfere with corner visibility where they are located, as established in Section 10.2.4 of the UDO. Where pinchpoints are installed, they should be no greater than one foot less than the width of the parking lane, as identified in the UDO.

A6.5. **Landscaped Medians** – Landscaped medians can be utilized on wider streets and provide a pedestrian safety island while calming traffic. These islands should be 6 to 10 feet wide, curbed and landscaped (see Section 10.2.4 of the UDO for guidelines on Pedestrian Safety Islands) according to Table 10B: Median Dimensions of the UDO.

A6.6. **Speed Control** – Use speed control mechanisms to influence behavior, lower speeds, and reduce injuries and fatalities.

a. Target speed – Streets in downtown should be designed for a maximum target speed of 30 mph or less. Target speeds of 10 to 25 mph should be considered in residential areas, particularly where "cut-through" traffic is problematic (e.g., Virginia Street).

b. Vertical speed control – Vertical speed control elements such as speed humps, tables and cushions are typically applied on low-volume streets in locations where other traffic calming measures cannot be applied, but which are characterized by high operating speeds. These traffic calming measures are intended to reduce speeds to 20 mph or less and are most appropriate in residential areas. Vertical speed control elements are subject to approval by the Commissioner of Public Works, Parks and Streets and must be designed in accordance with the Institute for Transportation Engineers' Traffic Calming: State of the Practice.

- Speed humps are vertical traffic calming devices typically between 3-4 inches high and 12-14 feet in length, with a ramp length of 3-6 feet, depending on target speed. Speed tables are mid-block traffic calming devices and are longer than speed humps and flat-topped, with a height of 3 to 3.5 inches and a length of 22 feet. Speed cushions are either speed humps or speed tables that include wheel cutouts to allow large vehicles to pass unaffected, while reducing passenger car speeds. These vertical speed control devices should include the following:
  1. Signage warning drivers of vertical traffic calming device.
  2. Slopes should not exceed 1:10 or be less steep than 1:25.
  3. Side slopes on tapers should be no greater than 1:6.
  4. The vertical lip should be no more than ¼ inch high.
  5. Locate where there is sufficient visibility and available lighting.
  6. Speed humps should be placed no more than a maximum of 500 feet apart. Speed humps may be applied on one-way and two-way streets.
  7. Speed tables should not be applied on streets wider than 50 feet. On two-way streets, speed tables may be applied in both directions.

A6.7. **Conversion** – Convert one-way streets to two-way operation whenever possible to calm traffic and improve mobility for all modes of travel.

Landscaped medians can help to calm traffic and provide additional safety for pedestrians crossing the street

Speed humps, traffic tables and changes in materiality can heighten driver awareness in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity

A.7 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Intersection design should focus on minimizing conflicts among motorists, pedestrians and cyclists to encourage safe mobility. Intersections are a focal point of the streetscape, serving as shared spaces among users. Intersections should include features that enhance user awareness of other users and facilitate pedestrian crossings. Designing compact intersections visually cues traffic to slow down while minimizing the pedestrian crossing distance at major intersections characterized by wider and numerous travel lanes.

Guidelines: Intersections Improvements

A7.1. **Conventional Crosswalks** – Incorporate crosswalks into intersections with higher foot traffic or that serve destinations such as schools, parks, plazas, transit stops and other public services. Design should take into consideration crossing demand (existing and projected), as well as surrounding land uses, speed, and historic crash information. In general:

- High visibility striping should be used to increase motorist awareness of pedestrian space and approaching crosswalks. Mark crosswalks with high-visibility ladder, zebra or continental type markings, with continental crosswalks the preferred treatment. Where continental striping is used, painted strips should NOT align with roadway areas that are most commonly in contact with automobile tires in order to reduce maintenance costs of repainting and repairing striping. Locate stop bars at least 8 feet in front of the crosswalk and perpendicular to the travel lane to reinforce motorists to yield to pedestrians.
- Stripe crosswalks as wide as or wider than the connecting walkway. At a minimum crosswalks should align with curb ramps and be at least 6 feet in width.
- Where streets contain on street parking consider bump-outs at intersections to decrease crossing distances.
- Align crosswalks as closely as possible with the pedestrian through zone to create a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Provide pedestrian activated signals and countdown timers to improve signalization.
- Provide accessible curb ramps as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Streets with lower speeds, less than 20mph, and traffic volumes less than 2,000 ADT, may not require incorporation of marked sidewalks.

High visibility striping should be used for crosswalks to increase motorists awareness of pedestrians

A7.2. **Midblock Crosswalks** – Provide midblock crosswalks where there is a strong pedestrian desire such as midblock bus stops, passages, parks, plazas, etc., Midblock crosswalks should be designed with the following characteristics:

- Increase visibility in advance of the crosswalk by restricting parking and/or installing curb extensions to make pedestrians more visible to motorists and cars more visible to pedestrians.
- Set back stop bars at least 20-50 feet back from the crossing.
- Mark crosswalks with high-visibility ladder, zebra or continental type markings.
- Consider raised crossings to reduce speeds and increase crosswalk visibility.

A7.3. **Pedestrian Safety Islands** – Consider pedestrian safety islands in areas where pedestrians are required to cross three or more lanes of traffic. In general:

- Safety islands should be a minimum of 6 feet wide, with an optimal width of 8 to 10 feet and 40 feet in length.
- Curbs or bollards may be integrated into the design to buffer pedestrians during two phase crossings.

Set back parking and street trees from intersections to maintain visibility for pedestrians and motorists

- The pedestrian crosswalk, where applicable, should cut through the center median. Where the median is wider than 17 feet, ramps should be incorporated and designed based on a 6-inch high curb and a 5-foot wide level landing in the center.
- Include an ADA compliant channel of a minimum of five feet in width and six feet in depth. A channel of six feet in width and eight feet in depth is preferred.

A7.4. **Corner Radii** – Minimize the size of corner radii to slow vehicle turning speeds and create safer pedestrian crossings. Turning speeds should be limited to 15 mph or less. In general:

- Maximum curb radii should be 15 feet. Smaller curb radii are preferred (less than 10 feet).
- To accommodate larger vehicles while restricting the turning speeds of smaller vehicles, utilize stop bar setbacks and restrict parking near the corner intersection.

A7.5. **Visibility and Sight Distance** – Incorporate strategies to enhance visibility at intersections. All design strategies must comply with Section 7.5 Corner Visibility of the UDO, which defines the corner visibility area as the triangular area formed by projecting the lines of intersecting curbs or of street paving edges where there are no curbs, and a line joining these points 20 feet from their point of intersection. No structure, including signs and fences, may be erected and no plant foliage may be maintained between heights of three and one-half feet and ten feet above the curb level in this area. Design considerations to enhance visibility and increase sight distance include:

- Remove parking from within 20-25 feet of the intersection.
- Set back street trees a minimum of 5 feet from the intersection, with appropriate foliage maintenance as required in Section 7.5 of the UDO.
- Incorporate lighting at major intersections and at pedestrian refuge areas, such as on safety islands.
- Incorporate signage to supplement geometric design strategies intended to improve motorist and pedestrian activity.

A.8 UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS

Highway underpasses are numerous and located in proximity to the downtown core. Underpasses generally restrict access to the City's waterfront and inhibit pedestrian and cyclist movement. Land area beneath highway underpasses is typically characterized by surface parking, poor visual quality and poor lighting. Enhancing underpasses and improving pedestrian and cycling access will strengthen connectivity from the downtown core to the City's waterfront.

Guidelines: Underpass Improvements

A8.1. **Mobility** – Retrofits or redesign should consider the needs of all users accessing underpass locations. Areas appropriate for pedestrian and/or bike refuge should be identified and considered to promote multi-modal access in these areas.

A8.2. **Continuity** –Design of sidewalks, streets or pathways beneath underpasses should reinforce continuity from one side of the underpass to the other through the extension of street furnishings such as lighting, waste receptacles and signage.

A8.3. **Clarity** – Incorporate vertical elements along the outer edges of sidewalks, pathways and streets beneath underpasses to provide spatial definition to these connections and minimize the sense of void beneath the highway space. These elements could take the form of unique lighting or public art and should be designed to support the principles of CPTED so that they do not result in unsafe spaces or places where it may be possible to hide from view.

A8.4. **Animation** – Provide elements to animate and enhance the character of underpasses. These could include works of public art on the surrounding walls or roof of the underpass or the implementation of temporary or permanent uses on either side of the underpass connection to increase activity levels. The establishment of small shop spaces can provide cheap retail space for tenants while extending the continuity of street activity beneath the underpass. The incorporation of lighting in public artwork or highlighting the structure of the underpass should be encouraged to provide additional animation while helping to mitigate lower light levels beneath the structure.

A8.5. **Safety** – In addition to the continuity of street lighting beneath the underpasses, provide additional pedestrian oriented lighting to increase levels of luminosity throughout the day and evening and promote a sense of safety.

Improvements to the underpasses should help to create clarity for users while providing a sense of animation

A.9 GREEN WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

The waterfront is an integral part of Buffalo's heritage and should be integrated into the downtown street network to provide residents and visitors a series of recreational opportunities unique to the community.

Guidelines: Green Waterfront Connections

A9.1. **Trail Dimensions** – Establish a connected network of multi-use trails along the waterfront that have a minimum 10'-wide travel way with 2'-wide shoulders on each side.

A9.2. **Trail Materials** – Generally pave the multi-use trails with asphalt. Specialty paving, such as scored concrete or unit paving may be used at plazas and other destination areas. Well-compacted stone dust may be acceptable in low-use areas.

A9.3. **Furnishings and Way-Finding Signage** – Establish a palette of furnishings, directional and informational signage to be used consistently along the trail network. The furnishings and signage should be durable, visually coherent and reinforce the marine or waterfront setting. Furnishings should be metal and should be a dark color (preferably black) to blend unobtrusively into the landscape. Unique furnishings may be used at some plazas to create unique identities at these locations.

A9.4. **Plazas and Destination Areas** – Create a series of plazas or other destination areas along the waterfront trail. Plazas should occur where the waterfront network trails meet the downtown street network, and where trails intersect. Plazas also may be established at points of interest. At a minimum, plazas should include benches, bike racks and informational and directional signage. Larger plazas may include public art, concession areas, interpretive signage, landscaping and lighting.

A9.5. **Screening** – Install visual buffers between the trail and inconsistent land uses such as parking lots, boat yards, and vacant lots. Use vegetated screening as much as possible. Avoid solid, blank fences and walls. Use vegetation or public art to mitigate the stark appearance of blank, unarticulated walls and fences.

The waterfront trail should be paved with asphalt and should utilize a consistent pallet of furnishings to reinforce the continuity of the trail, reserving special treatments for key destinations along the route

A.10 TRANSIT TRANSFER ZONES

Supporting transfers between different modes of public transport such as LRT and bus services is important to making the most of the City's transit system, improving mobility for transit users and capitalizing on the substantial embedded investment already made in LRT. Improved integration between bus and LRT services is also an important strategy towards minimizing the need for substantial bus layover space in downtown which results from the City's current radial bus network. The transit transfer zones are important places of transfer within the public transit system where investment in new infrastructure should help to strengthen the connection for passengers between bus and LRT services.

Guidelines: Transit Transfer Zones

A10.1. Public Transit Access – Effective delivery of transit service should be coupled with route selection, compatible land use patterns and well-designed amenities to create a comfortable and interesting transit environment. When creating complete streets, consideration should be given to the following:

a. Dedicated bus lanes – Consider opportunities to add dedicated bus lanes along arterial and radial streets, particularly on roads that may be overdesigned and function as primary transit routes and on designated bus routes. Where dedicated bus lanes are considered, travel lane widths should be 11-feet wide.

Dedicated bus lanes on arterials can help to support transit access from the neighborhoods into downtown

b. Transit stops – Transit stops should be prioritized along well-traveled multi-user routes, should provide the greatest visibility and access for users, and should be designed for comfort.

- Provide bus shelters for stops on routes with high boarding numbers. A system and/or route map and street furniture such as seating should be provided. Design should use weather proof materials that also allow for maximum visibility.
- A transit stop should provide basic information to riders including visual markers, station name, route map and schedule. Transit stops and stations should be designed with universal design considerations, which permit individuals of any age and capabilities to access the system.
- Provide adequate lighting around bus stops and shelters to promote safety and security.
- Bus stops should co-locate with light rail station locations where feasible.

c. Bus Stop Locations – Intersections should be designed to enhance visibility and increase access to public transportation opportunities, such as bus stops or light rail. In general, bus stops should be located on the near or far side of intersections, based on the road context. Bus stops located on the far side of an intersection reduce conflicts with turning vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Bus stops should be located on the near side in cases where:

- The near side location better interfaces with public services (i.e. schools, employment, recreational opportunities);
- The bus route is located on a 1-way street with one traffic lane and passing is not a possibility;
- Traffic calming features or street design prohibit stopping on the far side; and
- Driveways, alleys, or other ingress/egress conditions complicate a far-side stopping location.

d. Bus Bulbs – Consider bus bulbs in areas where offset bus lanes are provided. For a route with frequent services, bus bulbs should be the equivalent of two articulated buses (140 feet long). On routes with less frequent service, bus bulbs should be at least 40 feet long. Bus bulb widths should be at least 6 feet wide but preferably 8-10 feet wide, with a return angle of 45 degrees.

Waiting areas should be well lit, highly visible, constructed of high quality materials, and should provide amenities such as waste receptacles, ticketing information, seating and wayfinding signage

A10.2. Waiting Areas – Create waiting areas at stations and transit stops that are comfortable and easy to use by ensuring that they are:

- Well lit and highly visible from surrounding areas;
- Devoid of clutter and overly designed transit shelters that impede visibility to surrounding streets, shops and destinations;
- Constructed of high quality materials such as concrete which are durable and easy to maintain;
- Provided with waste receptacles for passenger convenience and to minimize litter which detracts from the image of the system; and
- Maintained year round to support access during periods of heavy snowfall.

A10.3. Adjacent Development – Encourage the integration of waiting areas in development adjacent to the stop/station such as generous overhangs that can provide shelter for waiting passengers or internal waiting areas that are highly visible and can provide warmth during cold winter months. Where feasible new development should orient front lobbies and ground floor areas of circulation where they support access for transit users.

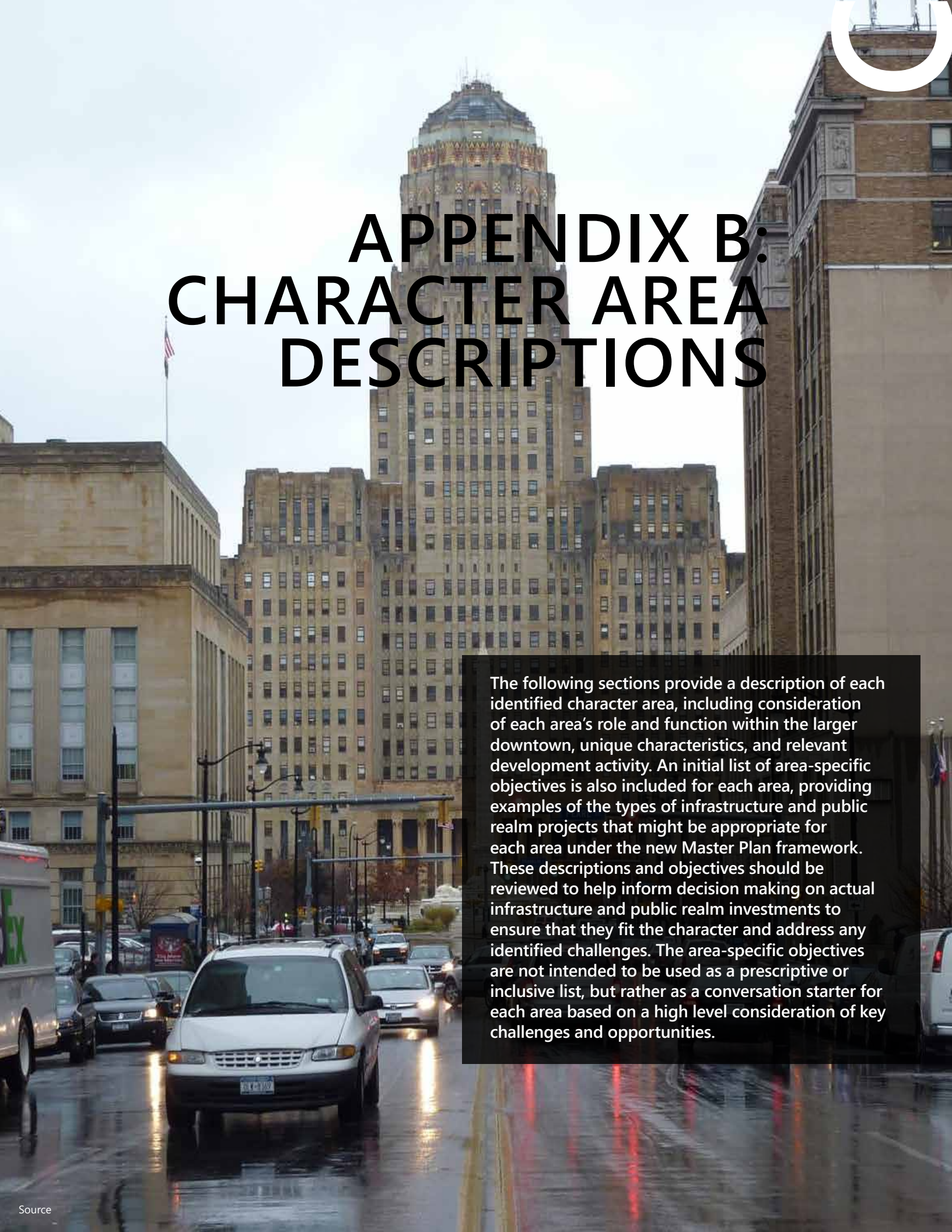
Encourage the integration of waiting areas into adjacent development, such as extensive overhangs or internal waiting areas for colder winter months

Design Transit Transfer Zones to support convenient transfer between bus and LRT service by utilizing elements such as tactile paving, a higher degree of wayfinding, real time signage, pedestrian oriented lighting and passenger amenities

A10.4. **Transfers** – Design Transit Transfer Zones to support the safe and convenient transfer between bus and LRT and other movement systems by:

- Incorporating a higher degree of pedestrian lighting throughout the transfer zone;
- Utilizing elements such as tactile paving to support the visually impaired;
- Providing facilities for cyclists such as sheltered bike racks, and bike share facilities to support multi-modal transfers;
- Incorporating a higher degree of wayfinding to support transferring passengers and connect departing passengers to area destinations; and
- Incorporating real-time signage at both LRT and bus stop locations so that passengers know how much time they have to travel between different routes or transit services.

APPENDIX B: CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS



The following sections provide a description of each identified character area, including consideration of each area's role and function within the larger downtown, unique characteristics, and relevant development activity. An initial list of area-specific objectives is also included for each area, providing examples of the types of infrastructure and public realm projects that might be appropriate for each area under the new Master Plan framework. These descriptions and objectives should be reviewed to help inform decision making on actual infrastructure and public realm investments to ensure that they fit the character and address any identified challenges. The area-specific objectives are not intended to be used as a prescriptive or inclusive list, but rather as a conversation starter for each area based on a high level consideration of key challenges and opportunities.

Source

1) NIAGARA STREET CORRIDOR

Role & Function: The Niagara Street Corridor is an important point of access into downtown for people entering Buffalo from the north including those entering from Canada via the Peace Bridge. It is also one of the most highly traveled bus corridors within the City.

Character: Niagara Street was formerly an important mixed use corridor containing commercial and residential uses. The commercial function and built character has eroded over time due to a decline in adjacent neighborhoods and the retail market, and also to a transition to auto-oriented uses. Today the corridor is comprised of older two and three story mixed use structures, smaller residential buildings and auto-oriented retail that has compromised the traditional character of the area. Vacant lots, empty storefronts and poorly maintained buildings are also prevalent along the corridor. The wide street with four lanes of traffic encourages rapid traffic movement and diminishes pedestrian comfort. The current character establishes a poor image of downtown for residents and visitors passing through the area.

Status: Area of change. The Niagara Street Gateway project is planned for Niagara Street between Niagara Square and Porter Avenue, with a planned construction start in the spring of 2014. The project includes minor pavement widening, milling/asphalt overlay, street lighting, traffic signal replacements, a new landscape feature, new signage, and pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. Bus facility improvements are also planned for the corridor.

Objectives:

1.1) Support the implementation of the Niagara Street Gateway project with coordinated street amenities to change the image of the corridor for people entering and exiting downtown, to improve the experience of pedestrians and cyclists, and to create a renewed setting for reinvestment.

1.2) Confirm that the Niagara Street Gateway project includes a generous program of tree planting to provide structure for the corridor in the absence of redevelopment.

1.3) Ensure that planned transit investments, including new bus shelters and the implementation of next bus technology, are fully coordinated with streetscape investments.

2) WEST VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The West Village Neighborhood is a residential area with an eclectic mix of single-family homes sandwiched between downtown and the Niagara Street Corridor. While the area has gone through periods of decline, the neighborhood is now seeing a resurgence as a result of its convenient access to downtown jobs and the renewed interest in downtown living. The West Village is also a locally-designated historic district which has contributed to its resurgence, along with the affordability of housing. It should be noted that prices are now increasing as the neighborhood becomes more desirable.

Character: The neighborhood is defined by its historic housing stock and interconnected network of streets. Despite close proximity to downtown, poor east west connections to the West Village complicate access to important downtown amenities for pedestrians and cyclists. The orientation of highway access ramps also results in significant rush-hour through-traffic along Virginia and Carolina, negatively impacting residents.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

2.1) Implement traffic calming measures along Virginia and Carolina, including sidewalk bump-outs at intersections and additional 4-way stop signs to discourage through traffic.

2.2) Improve east/west connections from the neighborhood through downtown by implementing sharrows, sidewalk and streetscape enhancements along Whitney and Prospect, feeding into Chippewa and W Huron.

2.3) Plant additional street trees where space permits to support and enhance the growth of a mature tree canopy.

2.4) Assess street lighting in the area to identify if improvements are necessary to improve public safety.

2.5) Encourage the City of Buffalo to develop strategies to minimize transient parking on residential streets. Policies may include a residential parking permit system with appropriate enforcement mechanisms.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

3) ALLEN STREET CORRIDOR

Role & Function: The Allen Street Corridor is a commercial/retail area that serves the West Village and Allentown Neighborhoods. The majority of the corridor is occupied by small independent businesses that offer services to the surrounding neighborhoods and area employees, including cafes, restaurants, bars, art galleries, and general retail shops including grocery, hardware, furniture and bike shops.

Character: Allen Street and surrounding neighborhoods are part of one of the largest historic districts in the United States, with local and National Register designations. The Allen Street Corridor is made up of a mix of historic 2-3 story mixed use buildings and single family homes that have been converted to commercial and retail uses. Compared to other areas in downtown, there are very few vacant lots or surface parking lots. While pavement and sidewalks are generally in poor condition, the street benefits from a consistent pattern of period street lights and mature street trees set in brick pavers. The intact blocks with buildings addressing the street and streetscape support and encourage pedestrian activity. Most storefronts are occupied and a significant portion of the businesses along the corridor display new or recently upgraded storefronts, signaling interest and reinvestment in the area.

Status: Area of incremental change. The Allen Street Extension project is planned for Allen Street between Wadsworth and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The project is currently in the early design stage and will include pedestrian/bicycle connections east of Main Street and streetscape enhancements along the corridor.

Objectives:

3.1) Support the implementation of the Allen Street Extension project to improve connectivity east of Main Street to the large employment population located at the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus, including a connection through to Kaminski Park within the BNMC.

3.2) Ensure that the Allen Street Expansion project includes:

- 3.2.1) Striping and crossing enhancements at Delaware and Main to improve east-west connectivity;
- 3.2.2) Additional wayfinding signage and the extension of a pedestrian path with pedestrian oriented lighting and amenities east from the NFTA station;
- 3.2.3) Additional pedestrian and bike infrastructure including bike parking, benches and trash receptacles;
- 3.2.4) The replacement of missing street trees in empty tree pits; and
- 3.2.5) Consideration of on- and off-street parking conditions alongside typical delivery conditions.

3.3) Provide a bike share facility at the western end of Allen Street by Days Park to support visitors traveling from the BNMC to the east.

4) ALLENTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The Allentown Neighborhood is a well-established residential area located west of the BNMC and north of the West Village Neighborhood. The neighborhood benefits from its attractive stock of historic housing and proximity to BNMC, Elmwood, Delaware and Main Street Corridors, which help to make the area a very desirable place to live for residents who work nearby in downtown.

Character: The area is characterized by an extensive mature tree canopy, eclectic and well-maintained single family homes on compact streets, and its historic stock of multi-family mid-rise residential and mixed-use buildings on major streets and intersections.

Status: Stable area.

Objectives:

4.1) Reinforce the Neighborhood's character by introducing a series of plaques to highlight important historical and cultural assets in the area.

4.2) Improve east-west connectivity by implementing sharrows along Main, and striping crosswalks along North Street at Elmwood, Delware and Main.

4.3) Inventory and assess the condition of neighborhood trees and ensure a program of pruning, fertilizing and expanding root zones where necessary to maintain the health of the tree canopy.

4.4) Encourage the City of Buffalo to develop strategies to minimize transient parking on residential streets. Policies may include a residential parking permit system with appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

5) NORTH DELAWARE CORRIDOR

Role & Function: North Delaware is a mixed use commercial, employment and residential corridor extending between North and Edward Streets. Due to the removal of cars from Main Street when the LRT was completed in the 1980's, Delaware Avenue has become a 'de facto' main street, attracting commercial, employment and residential uses that might have otherwise located on Main.

Character: The Corridor's streetscape was recently upgraded to calm traffic and accommodate bike lanes. Four lanes of car traffic have been reduced down to 2 lanes with a center turning lane, bike lanes and street parking. In contrast to areas of Delaware to the south, the North Delaware Corridor is characterized by a mix of residential and smaller commercial buildings that are low and midrise in scale. This stretch of Delaware also has a number of mature street trees. Despite recent upgrades, street furnishings and lighting standards do not match recent improvements on Main, contributing to issues of legibility and inconsistency across downtown.

Status: Area of change, including recent improvements to the Delaware Avenue streetscape.

Objectives:

5.1) Reinforce the distinct residential character of this portion of Delaware through the re-establishment of a green tree lawn where possible between the sidewalk and street curb.

5.2) Work with local land owners to ensure that areas of surface parking are landscaped and screened from the street so that they do not overly detract from the image of the street.

5.3) Overtime, introduce new furnishings, light standards and sidewalk treatments that reflect the recommended unified Main Street streetscape.

6) 800 BLOCK CORRIDOR

Role & Function: The 800 Block of Main Street extending from Goodell Street to North Street is a mixed use commercial and retail corridor. This portion of the Main Street Corridor benefits from its proximity to the BNMC, with reinvestment in the area increasingly geared towards providing services to staff, visitors and users of the BNMC.

Character: This section of Main has a wide right-of-way with four lanes of car traffic and two parking lanes. Active commercial and retail uses are focused on the west side of the street, generally in 2-3 story historic buildings. Recent reinvestment in the form of adaptive reuse projects along this side of the street is responding to a growing demand for neighborhood commercial and retail services associated with the BNMC community. The east side of the street exhibits significant larger scale reinvestment in newer buildings that tend to be out of character for the corridor. The newer buildings along the east side of the street have long expanses of blank facades and few windows with no ground floor retail or commercial uses, detracting from the pedestrian experience. Inconsistent planting of street trees and the wide right-of-way result in a poorly framed street that is difficult for pedestrians to cross.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

6.1) Extend the new streetscape treatment from the 700 Block of Main Street north to North Street, including a reduction from four to two lanes of car traffic with a center turning lane/planted median, street parking and new bike lanes.

6.2) Install clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks at intersections.

6.3) Expedite streetscape and landscape improvements at the front of the NFTA's Allen Street station to enhance connectivity with the Allen Street Corridor.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

7) BUFFALO NIAGARA MEDICAL CAMPUS

Role & Function: The BNMC is a cluster of healthcare, life science research facilities, and medical education institutions that is experiencing significant growth and investment. BNMC is a primary employment center in Buffalo, and the influx of investment is acting as a catalyst for surrounding neighborhoods and commercial/retail corridors.

Character: The Campus is characterized by large low and mid-rise institutional buildings with large surface parking lots. Kaminski Park is located near the center of the campus and offers an important public realm amenity. Ellicott Street acts a major north/south spine which provides organization through the Campus. Recent streetscape enhancements have created a new linear park along this important corridor that improves the public realm and encourages pedestrian activity within the Campus. The Campus is largely oriented inwards and is not well connected to surrounding neighborhoods, districts and corridors. Growth and development within the Campus are beginning to change traffic patterns in the area, with Best Street becoming a major access corridor due to the location of a parking structure on the north side of the Campus.

Status: Area of change, including the new Ellicott Street Linear Park, BNMC Master Plan and Comprehensive Signage and Wayfinding Program, and a current GBNRTC CBD North Transportation Study that will include transportation and land use recommendations for BNMC and surrounding areas.

Objectives:

7.1) Green the boundaries of the Campus to better define its boundaries within downtown.

7.2) Improve multi-modal access to the campus by extending the Ellicott Linear Park south beyond Goodell.

7.3) Ensure that the Allen Street Extension project includes the extension of a pedestrian connection from Allen Street through the Medical Campus station east to Kaminski Park.

7.4) Confirm that the BNMC Master Plan includes the provision of pedestrian-oriented lighting along key pedestrian routes within the Campus, including the proposed path between the station and Kaminski Park, Carleton Street and High Street.

7.5) Calm Goodell through a demonstration project that introduces street parking and improves crossings for pedestrians. In the long term, conversion to two-way traffic accompanied by a relocation of the terminus of the Kensington Expressway to the north-east should be considered.

7.6) Implement the forthcoming recommendations of the CBD North Transportation Study to support multi-modal options for mobility.

8) FRUITBELT NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The Fruitbelt Neighborhood is a residential area east of the BNMC and north of the Kensington Expressway. This area is transitioning as older 'shotgun' housing is being replaced with newer builds to accommodate new residents who work or study on the Medical Campus. As BNMC continues to expand, some uses are being pushed across Michigan Avenue into the neighborhood, including parking and new buildings.

Character: The neighborhood is primarily made up of single-family residential houses, with some multi-family residences located along the edges of the neighborhood. This low density area has a number of vacant and underutilized lots that are beginning to be redeveloped. With increasing traffic to and from the BNMC, significant traffic from the Kensington Expressway is now exiting on Best Street and cutting through the Neighborhood to access the campus. Similar neighborhood cut-throughs are also occurring on High Street and Carlton Street. The neighborhood is separated from downtown by the BNMC to the west and the Kensington Expressway to the south.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

8.1) Plant new street trees along Best Street to improve the image of the area for visitors exiting the Kensington Expressway, and introduce traffic calming measures to control Neighborhood through-traffic.

8.2) Improve pedestrian access between the Neighborhood, the BNMC and Main Street by implementing high visibility crosswalks along Carlton and High Streets.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

9) MCCARLEY GARDENS

Role & Function: McCarley Gardens is a residential development at the southwest corner of the BNMC, providing affordable subsidized housing since the 1970s. The current owner, Oak-Michigan Development Corp. executed a contract to sell the property to the University at Buffalo in 2010, and the sale is anticipated to be finalized after 2017 once the owner has satisfied due diligence requirements related to providing new housing for current residents.

Character: The existing townhouse development is insular and oriented inwards. Houses are oriented in clusters around a series of dead-end streets that connect to a curvilinear spine that provides access into the neighborhood. Large areas of surface parking and townhouse buildings set back from the street create a distinct suburban character that is out of place and poorly connected to the surrounding downtown urban fabric.

Status: Area of change, with University at Buffalo's contract to purchase the land and associated plans to redevelop the area into new educational facilities.

Objectives:

9.1) Redevelopment should reestablish a pattern of streets and blocks that connect with the surrounding street grid.

9.2) Redevelopment should include a new public park that is accessible and well connected to other public realm amenities on the Medical Campus. The park should be developed in close consultation with the surrounding community to ensure that it meets the needs of nearby residents and the University at Buffalo community.

10) SOUTH DELAWARE CORRIDOR

Role & Function: South Delaware is a mixed use commercial and employment corridor extending from Niagara Square to Edward Street. Since removal of cars from Main Street in the early 1980's, South Delaware has become a 'de facto' main street, attracting commercial and employment uses that might have otherwise located on Main.

Character: The corridor's streetscape was recently upgraded to calm traffic and accommodate bike lanes. Four lanes of car traffic have been reduced down to 2 lanes with a center turning lane, bike lanes and street parking. The area is made up of old and new buildings with no defined character or height regime. Numerous surface parking areas also detract from the character of the street.

Status: Area of change, including recent upgrades to the streetscape.

Objectives:

10.1) Reinforce the new streetscape with a planting program for large street trees that will better define the corridor as it transitions into Niagara Square.

10.2) Incorporate contemporary streetscape furnishings including benches, trash receptacles, bike parking and lighting standards to complement recent ROW enhancements and support increased numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. These improvements should mirror the recommended unified streetscape palette developed for Main Street as part of the Cars Sharing Main Street project.

10.3) Work with parking lot owners to establish landscape buffers between the edges of large areas of surface parking and the street.

Source: Mark Hogan, flickr

11) CHIPPEWA ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Role & Function: This entertainment district has seen extensive private sector investment that has created a successful collection of bars and restaurants mostly housed in historic building stock. Chippewa provides one of the few consistently active nightlife spots within downtown Buffalo that attracts residents from outside downtown.

Character: The Chippewa right-of-way is fairly narrow, and is well framed by 2-6 story mixed-use buildings that have ground floor restaurants with commercial/ offices above. Sparse street trees, a lack of public realm amenities (benches and trash receptacles), and inconsistent lighting fixtures between the east and west ends of the area detract from the image of the Precinct.

Status: Area of change.

Objectives:

See section **4.2 Entertainment Priority Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for Chippewa Entertainment District.

12) THEATRE/UPPER MAIN DISTRICT

Role & Function: The Theatre and Upper Main District is a mixed-use area in the downtown core characterized by a number of historic theatres interspersed with other retail and commercial uses. Main Street was closed to vehicular traffic decades ago to create a pedestrian mall traversed by the LRT. This section of Main is part of the Cars Sharing Main Street project, which is reintroducing cars to create a contemporary 'complete street'. While retail along this historic Main Street declined when cars were removed, the reintroduction of cars in the 700 Block has resulted in significant reinvestment and new vibrancy marked by the resurgence of retail.

Character: The area is characterized by a number of low and midrise buildings with ground floor retail and office, hotel or residential uses above. While there are some vacant buildings, the urban fabric is largely intact and the area is seeing rapid reinvestment in response to the Cars Sharing Main Street project. The new streetscape will restore two-way car traffic by allowing cars to share the LRT track. New bump outs provide traffic calming while still allowing on-street parking. New tree planting, benches, waste receptacles and bike racks will be installed throughout the area. Long blocks with few east/west connections seem to be preventing new activity on Main from spreading east and west to Pearl and Washington Streets, which currently act as the 'shoulders' to the Main Corridor.

Status: Area of change, including the Cars Sharing Main Street project currently under construction.

Objectives:

See section **4.2 Entertainment Priority Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for the Theatre/Upper Main District.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

13) FLOWER DISTRICT

Role & Function: This small mixed-use retail and residential district is housed in a pocket of historic buildings on the eastern edge of the downtown core. The area functions as an isolated node of reinvestment and activity that is cut off from the downtown core by the extensive M&T Bank Parking lots to its west.

Character: The district is characterized by 2-3 story historic buildings with ground floor retail and residences above. The eastern edge of the district is defined by Oak Street, a highway feeder funneling traffic into and out of downtown. To the west, the district is separated from the Theatre/Upper Main District and Chippewa Entertainment Precinct by an extensive M&T surface parking lot. While the large areas of surface parking and barrier posed by the Oak Street corridor have isolated the district from downtown, recent investment on Main Street has resulted in renewed investment interest in the area.

Status: Area of change, including recent and planned safety improvements to the Elm/Oak corridor under the Safe Routes to School grant.

Objectives:

See section **4.2 Entertainment Priority Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for the Flower District.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

14) EAST DOWNTOWN

Role & Function: This large area on the eastern edge of downtown is characterized by extensive areas of surface parking with some isolated areas of historic urban fabric. This area currently functions largely as parking support for the eastern portion of the downtown core. A number of residential conversions in historic buildings are beginning to signal the emergence of a residential population in the area

Character: This area is characterized by large holes in the urban fabric where historic buildings have been removed and replaced with surface parking. Remaining historic buildings are now being purchased and either used for adaptive reuse projects or held for future conversion. Empty lots, vacant buildings, and surface parking present prime reinvestment opportunities as the area continues to benefit from its proximity to the BNMC to the north, a revitalizing Main Street to the west, and Erie Community College to the south. While adaptive reuse residential projects are incrementally taking place within the area, there are a number of barriers to reinvestment including a lack of retail and neighborhood services, a lack of public realm amenities and parks to support the growing residential population, and the presence of the wide Elm/Oak feeders that move high speed, one way vehicular traffic through the neighborhood between the Kensington Expressway and 190.

Status: Area of incremental change, including recent and planned safety improvements to the Elm/Oak corridor under the Safe Routes to School grant.

Objectives:

Portions of East Downtown are captured within section **4.2 Entertainment Priority Investment Node** and section **4.3 Civic & Employment Priority Investment Node**, which include detailed recommendations. In addition, the following objects should be considered for this area:

14.1) Introduce bike lanes, bump outs, street parking, and other measures to calm vehicular traffic on Elm, Oak and Goodell in the near term, and consider conversion to two-traffic in the medium to long term. Two way conversion may require the completion of objective 14.2).

14.2) In the medium to long term, push the terminus of the Kensington Expressway further north and east to disperse and slow traffic further from the downtown core, supporting objective 14.1).

14.3) Create new parks and public spaces that cater to residents of all ages, supporting further residential investment in the area. Potential locations for new park space are included within the Vision Framework in section 3.2; creation of additional neighborhood-style 'parkettes' should be considered to support significant residential development projects to ensure adequate green space amenities for new residents.

14.4) Extend recent streetscape enhancements between Broadway and Goodell on Michigan Avenue south to Ohio Street, and complement the enhancements with new cycling infrastructure to facilitate multi-modal connectivity between the BNMC, Erie Canal Harbor and Outer Harbor via Ohio Street. This improvements should reflect the recommended unified streetscape palette development for Main Street as part of the Cars Sharing Main Street project.

14.5) Extend streetscape and cycling improvements on Broadway west of Fillmore into downtown, reflecting the recommended unified streetscape palette development for Main Street.

15) ROOSEVELT PLAZA/500 BLOCK PRECINCT

Role & Function: The 500 Block of Main is an important emerging mixed-use neighborhood, with new residential uses supplementing new and existing retail uses. The area is returning to its former status as a central retail precinct in downtown in response to the next phase of the Cars Sharing Main Street project, which is scheduled for this area. This section of Main includes Fountain Plaza, one of downtown Buffalo's most used public spaces. Roosevelt Plaza is also an important cultural landmark within downtown serving various functions, including New Year's Eve festivities. With the return of cars to Main Street, this area will increasingly play an important function as a prime retail location serving area employees and new downtown residents.

Character: The urban fabric of the 500 Block of Main is largely intact, including a mix of historic building stock set mostly in mid-rise buildings with some low and high rise as well. The Cars Sharing Main Program will transform the existing LRT right-of-way into a complete street, extending the design and treatment of the 600 Block southward. On either side of Main Street are Pearl and Washington. The character of these streets has been eroded over time by a number of surface parking uses and parking structures put in place to serve the businesses on Main. The historic street pattern in this area was reconfigured a number of years ago to support the removal of cars on Main and accommodate new development in downtown. Genesee's historic terminus at Niagara Square has been pushed north and east to Huron to provide space for the Hyatt Hotel atrium and convention center complex, and Mohawk was dead-ended on both sides of Main.

Status: Area of change, including the Cars Sharing Main Street project, plans to extend Mohawk west and conversion of Pearl from one-way traffic back to a two-way street.

Objectives:

15.1) Complete the implementation of the Cars Sharing Main Street project, including planned improvements to Roosevelt Plaza.

15.2) Continue the implementation and current construction project that will reopen Mohawk to car traffic between Washington and Pearl Street. Streetscape improvements should mirror the unified Main Street streetscape palette.

15.3) Implement the plan to convert Pearl street back to two-way traffic, and extend this treatment south beyond the current plans to improve conditions associated with the wide right-of-way and narrow sidewalks. Streetscape improvements should mirror the unified Main Street streetscape palette.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

16) WATERFRONT VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The Waterfront Village Neighborhood is a residential area on the downtown waterfront. The neighborhood provides a distinct residential enclave built in the early 1980s for residents who wish to live in a waterfront setting near but outside the downtown core.

Character: The neighborhood is made up of a mix of townhouse and mid- to high-rise residential buildings separated by large areas of un-programmed green space and surface parking. The neighborhood is separated from the downtown core by the New York State Thruway and a rail line, resulting in a lack of essential services such as a grocery store and gas station. While the neighborhood sits adjacent to La Salle Park, access between the two areas is poorly signed and is restricted to pedestrians and cyclists.

Status: Stable area with the potential for some infill development.

Objectives:

16.1) Implement a system of tree planting on Lakefront Blvd to improve the connection between Canalside and La Salle Park.

16.2) Improve the trail connection through the neighborhood into Lasalle Park, including a more formal entrance into the Park and interpretive signage that depicts the trail's route.

16.3) Enhance the connection between downtown and the neighborhood, including underpass improvements at Erie Street and 190, and a new pedestrian connection between Lakefront Blvd and Village Ct.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

17) SHORELINE APARTMENTS NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The Shoreline Apartments is a residential housing complex on the west side of downtown, located between Niagara Street and the New York State Thruway. The Shoreline Apartments complex and Pine Harbor Apartments complex provide rental housing options in close proximity to the downtown core for low to moderate income households.

Character: These two housing complexes are each made up of a series of 3 and 4 story townhouse units intermingled with mid-rise apartment buildings. These complexes have large setbacks with extensive areas of surface parking and a strip of landscaping with mature street trees separating them from respective frontage on Niagara Street and 7th Street. A large open space is located at the west corner of the neighborhood.

Status: Area of change, including the Niagara Gateway Project and proposed construction of 8 new buildings containing 48 new units within the Shoreline Apartments complex.

Objectives:

17.1) Consider redevelopment of the vacant lands to the west of the Neighborhood as an opportunity to introduce a new pattern of streets and blocks and provide new housing that can help to enhance the relationship of the existing open space to its surroundings.

17.2) Preserve the right-of-way and encourage the extension of Georgia Street west to 4th Street/ Village Court over time, including a pedestrian connection to the Waterfront Village Neighborhood (Objective 16.3).

17.3) Improve the character of streets and provide spatial definition in areas where there is no development by planting street trees at regular intervals along all streets within the neighborhood.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

18) CIVIC CENTER

Role & Function: The Civic Center is the heart of downtown Buffalo's CBD. Major civic uses including City Hall are clustered around Niagara Square, and along the system of radial streets that extend outward from the Square. Niagara Square and City Hall are the defining historic landmarks for the City of Buffalo and act as the anchor for a number of other civic and employment uses. Niagara Square itself is an important public space amenity for visitors to the City and people working in the surrounding area, and is a key point of orientation within the City.

Character: Niagara Square is an iconic park space set within a large square and surrounded by a busy traffic circle. The square is located at the heart of the City's radial street network and is connected to Lafayette Square to the east via Court Street. The arrangement of City Hall anchoring the western edge of the Square, and Court Street, Lafayette Square and the Central Library anchoring the eastern view terminus establishes a classic civic composition of spaces within the City. The arrangement of a traffic circle within a square block creates large areas of unused asphalt at each of the Square's four corners. The traffic circle right-of-way includes three lanes of traffic with additional turning lanes. Pedestrian access to the Square is complicated by the wide right-of-way, significant volumes of vehicular traffic and only two signalized crossing points.

Status: Stable area, with plans in the 2014 capital budget for pavement, sidewalk, and landscape improvements to Court Street.

Objectives:

See section **4.3 Civic & Employment Priority Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for the Civic Center.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

19) MICHIGAN AVENUE HERITAGE DISTRICT

Role & Function: This area is an important cultural node for African American heritage within the City. The core district is comprised of a cluster of culturally relevant buildings and organizations located at the intersection of Broadway and Michigan; the full district includes a larger corridor extending both north and south along Michigan. Michigan is also the primary street connecting the BNMC to the river and waterfront destinations to the south.

Character: Despite the clustering of several culturally significant buildings and recent implementation of some new streetscape improvements along Michigan, large areas of surface parking and vacant lands result in a street that is devoid of character. While the district is only four blocks from the downtown core, wide rights-of-way and fast one-way traffic on the Elm and Oak highway feeders presents a challenging street condition that discourages pedestrian activity.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

19.1) Extend planned improvements to Broadway from Fillmore to Ellicott, including lane reductions, bike lanes and a tree planting program to improve the district's connectivity to Lafayette Square and surrounding downtown Areas.

19.2) Introduce bike lanes along Michigan and reduce the number of traffic lanes to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, and strengthen the relationship of the district to the BNMC and waterfront.

19.3) Initiate a program of cultural wayfinding to communicate the historic significance of the area to visitors.

19.4) Explore the potential for the creation of a temporary outdoor gathering space that can be used to host events that are culturally relevant to the district and can help to generate interest in the area.

19.5) Implement intersection improvements at Elm/Oak and Broadway to strengthen the relationship between the district and downtown.

20) ERIE BASIN MARINA

Role & Function: Located on the waterfront along Erie St, this waterfront district is comprised primarily of employment uses as well as some residential units. This area largely serves as a secondary employment district set in more of a business park setting, and separated from the core CBD by the New York State Thruway.

Character: Employment uses are set in large low-rise buildings, with residential uses housed in multi-unit mid-rise buildings. Access is provided by curvilinear streets, giving the area a distinct suburban feel. The area is dominated by extensive areas of surface parking.

Status: Stable area.

Objectives:

20.1) Reestablish and green the historic right-of-way for Erie Street to provide improved access to the waterfront from the downtown core.

20.2) Introduce a logical street grid through existing surface parking areas to create redevelopment opportunities that can capitalize on the amenity offered by the waterfront.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

21) ERIE STREET CONNECTION/ JOSEPH ELLICOTT DISTRICT

Role & Function: The district is primarily an employment area centered along the former diagonal Erie Street right-of-way. This area contains a significant cluster of historic commercial and cultural structures and is an important point of connection between downtown and the waterfront.

Character: This area includes some of downtown Buffalo's most significant heritage structures, including St. Joseph's Cathedral, St Paul's Cathedral, and the Dun Building. While the area is an important link between downtown and waterfront, the closure of Erie Street to traffic and development of the Niagara Thruway and Buffalo Skyway along its southern edge has created a significant barrier for pedestrians who must negotiate off ramps and areas of highway underpasses. Proximity of the district to these highways has also meant that the area is served by a disproportionate number of one-way streets compared to other areas within downtown. These streets result in higher traffic speeds and diminish pedestrian safety and comfort. Despite these challenges the Erie Street right-of-way remains an important pedestrian corridor, linking a series of public open spaces and providing a pedestrian crossing underneath the Skyway and 190 to link the waterfront trail to downtown.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

See section **4.4 ECC/Historic Joseph Ellicott Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for this is area.

Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

22) ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE/ FIREMAN'S PARK PRECINCT

Role & Function: This district is home to Erie Community College, one of downtown Buffalo's important educational institutions, the NFTA transit terminal and Fireman's Park. This urban college campus is an increasingly important destination within the City, drawing students from across the region. As the primary terminus of the City's transit network the district is also an important point of transfer, connecting transit users to destinations throughout the City. In addition to student residences, new residential development around the Lafayette Hotel including the AM&A Warehouse Lofts are resulting in a growing residential presence in the area, indicating the emergence of a new mixed use neighborhood centered around the ECC urban college campus.

Character: Fireman's Park is the central organizing element of the district. Despite this prominent position its setting is eroded by buildings such as the Robert Adam parking ramp which creates a dead edge along the Park's northern edge, and low-rise developments such as the NFTA terminal, college and fire station, which poorly define the space. This condition surrounding the park is exacerbated by the wide, fast flowing 4 lane streets that surround it and a large parking lot to the west of the park used for bus lay-overs. As a result, the park has become an orphaned space, underused by the many students, residents and visitors to the area. Holes in the urban fabric and infrastructure barriers, namely the North/

South Division and Elm/Oak highway feeders, also result in a poor arrival and lack of a sense of place surrounding ECC. While there is a potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between the NFTA terminal, Fireman's Park, and ECC campus to create a vibrant urban campus, current conditions have resulted in an eroded public realm and poor interface between these important assets.

Status: Area of incremental change.

Objectives:

See section **4.4 ECC/Historic Joseph Ellicott Investment Node** which includes detailed recommendations for this area.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

23) MARINE DRIVE

Role & Function: Marine Drive is an affordable housing development located on the waterfront south and east of the New York State Thruway. This housing complex provides affordable housing options that benefit from close proximity to downtown, Canalside and the waterfront.

Character: The area is defined by a series of seven 12-story apartment buildings surrounded by green space and surface parking. Despite its proximity to Veteran's Park and Canalside the area is largely isolated from its surroundings by large areas of surface parking and the New York Thruway and Skyway.

Status: Stable area.

Objectives:

21.1) Improve cycling connections between Marine Drive and Lakefront Boulevard to strengthen the connection between the waterfront trail and Erie Canal Harbor.

21.2) Extend Lakefront Boulevard along the eastern edge of the neighborhood to connect with Marine Drive and terminate at the Navel and Military Park.

21.3) Enhance pedestrian connections between downtown and the housing complex, including implementation of underpass improvements under 190, particularly at Bingham Street.

24) CANALSIDE

Role & Function: Canalside is a 21-acre Waterfront Revitalization project that is working to reconnect downtown with its waterfront. Canalside provides significant waterfront park space that is regularly used for events that attract visitors and residents to the downtown waterfront.

Character: The area is made up of a series of park spaces, with a pedestrian boulevard along the waterway and a series of paths and a cobblestone streets connecting to Marine Drive to the north and Main Street to the east.

Status: Area of change, including the ECHDC's current Canalside Land Use Improvement Project.

Objectives:

22.1) Support the full implementation of existing Canalside plans.

22.2) Integrate the LRT Special Events Station into the landscape and public realm of the Canalside Plans.

22.3) Improve cycling access to the Outer Harbor by enhancing connections between Canalside and South Park Avenue and adding wayfinding signage indicating routes to the waterfront trail network.

22.4) Provide a bike share facility to enable visitors to explore and quickly reach other areas within downtown, such as the CBD to the north.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

25) SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT/COBBLESTONE DISTRICT

Role & Function: This large district contains four primary uses; Coca-Cola Field to the northwest; First Niagara Center and HarborCenter to the southwest; a cluster of mixed-use adaptive reuse projects along Mississippi St; and the new Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino to east. The historic Cobblestone District is located in the center of these assets. The combined district is defined by these numerous regional entertainment attractions, and is organized to accommodate significant influx of visitors to downtown during special events including large areas of surface parking.

Character: Along Perry, several smaller north/south streets (Illinois, Mississippi, Baltimore and Columbia) are paved with historic cobblestones, resulting in this portion of the district being known as the Cobblestone District. While much of the area is comprised of large single-purpose sports and entertainment structures, a small block of historic warehouse buildings in the Cobblestone District between Mississippi and Illinois have been repurposed and now contain a mix of restaurant, entertainment and office uses. The NYS Thruway bisects the district, separating Coca Cola field from the rest of the district to the south. Perry Street is the primary east west corridor through the area, connecting the casino with the arena to the west. Plans have been developed to enhance Perry with streetscape improvements to improve connectivity through the district. The intent is that new buildings will fill in areas of surface parking around these streets over time. At the western edge of the district, HarborCenter is being constructed on a former parking lot known as the Webster Block. The new complex will house a hockey training facility, sports bar, hotel and parking and is expected to boost levels of weekly activity in the district throughout the year.

Status: Area of change, including proposed improvements to Perry Street and construction of HarborCenter.

Objectives:

23.1) Resolve long term leases on surface parking lots and construct structured parking to meet demand, freeing these areas for redevelopment.

23.2) Introduce a finer-grain network of streets over time to support redevelopment.

23.3) Implement streetscape improvements along Perry Street to connect the Casino with the Erie Canal Harbor and Canalside.

23.4) Initiate streetscape enhancements along South Park, including new street trees, surface improvements to the sidewalks and street, and new cycling lanes to strengthen cycling connections between Canalside and the planned Ohio Street cycling route.

23.5) In the medium to long term, ensure that redevelopment of surface parking areas includes a new public park or gathering space, oriented to the needs of potential new residents and/or workers in the area.


Source: Microsoft Bing Maps

26) ELLICOTT NEIGHBORHOOD

Role & Function: The Ellicott Neighborhood is an established residential area, with housing units provided within a variety of single family units, townhouses and mid-rise apartment buildings. Residential uses are clustered around multiple schools and practice fields located towards the middle of the neighborhood on Clinton and South Division, near Hickory and Pine.

Character: The neighborhood appears to be the result of a number of different housing developments whose character and built form is not well-coordinated to create a sense of place. In many cases these housing developments have interrupted the historic finer-grained street network, restricting mobility and connectivity throughout the neighborhood. The area is well served by a number of education institutions and associated green spaces, and benefits from close proximity to the nearby Sports and Entertainment/Cobblestone District and Erie Community College/Fireman's Park District to the west, and the Larkin District to east.

Status: Stable area.

Objectives:

26.1) Implement intersection improvements along Michigan avenue at William, Clinton, Eagle and S Division to improve the pedestrian experience and connectivity to the downtown core.

26.2) In the long-term, as potential redevelopment takes place in the area, efforts should be made to re-introduce a finer-grain street work that better connects areas within the neighborhood to one another and to adjacent areas.


Source: Google Inc.

27) LARKIN DISTRICT

Role & Function: The Larkin District is a secondary employment district located to the east of the downtown core. The district is centered on Larkin Square, which includes significant public open space amenities, a lunch-time restaurant, and seasonal event programming.

Character: The core district is located between Exchange and Seneca, and includes employment uses set in mid-rise historic building stock. The area is significantly removed from the downtown core, and designated industrial lands located between the district and downtown complicate efforts to improve connectivity with downtown. Larkin Square was recently developed adjacent to the former Larkin Soap Company warehouse buildings. The square includes landscaped and hard-scaped areas, pedestrian walks, tables and seating, and new multi-purpose structures that support successful event programming. The Larkin Filling Station restaurant set in a former gas station provides lunch to employees working in the surrounding buildings and can be rented for special events.

Status: Area of change, including the recent development of Larkin Square, movement of new employment uses to the District, and stakeholder-led plans to improve the Seneca Corridor.

Objectives:

24.1) In the short term, implement public art and wayfinding along Seneca to help tie Larkin to the downtown core.

24.2) In the medium to long term, support the implementation of the proposed Seneca Street Greenway Corridor to support reinvestment between Larkin and the downtown core. This should include reconsideration of the land use designation for the current cluster of industrial lands located between the district and downtown to ensure that streetscape improvements can act as a catalyst for desirable investment and appropriate land uses that can capitalize on this infrastructure investment.