

Buffalo Urban Development Corporation

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BUDC Downtown Committee Wednesday, February 19, 2025 95 Perry Street, 4th Floor 12:00 Noon

Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2025 *(Action)(Enclosure)*
2. Ralph Wilson Park - General Update *(Informational)*
3. Buffalo's Race For Place - COB-BUDC Memorandum of Understanding *(Recommendation)(Handout To Be Distributed)*
4. Buffalo's Race For Place – Downtown and Waterfront Infrastructure Improvements Project & Cost Management Consultant Selection *(Recommendation)(Enclosure)*
5. Queen City Hub Revisited – Marketing and Advocacy Support Services *(Action)(Enclosure)*
6. Buffalo's Race For Place – General Update *(Informational)*
 - a. Black History Month Downtown Dollars Initiative
 - b. Black Business Expo - February 20, 2025
 - c. Waterfront Coordination Updates
7. Partner Updates *(Informational)*
8. Adjournment *(Action)*

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Downtown Committee
of
Buffalo Urban Development Corporation**

**95 Perry Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14203
January 15, 2025
12:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Catherine Amdur
Bryan J. Bollman
Daniel Castle
Darby Fishkin
Nathan Marton
Kimberley A. Minkel
Karen Utz

Committee Members Absent:

Dottie Gallagher
Crystal Morgan

Officers Present:

Brandye Merriweather, President
Rebecca Gandour, Executive Vice President
Mollie Profic, Treasurer
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary
Atiqa Abidi, Assistant Treasurer

Guests Present: Katie Campos, Executive Director, Ralph Wilson Park Conservancy; Alexis M. Florczak, Hurwitz Fine P.C.; Brian Krygier, Director of IT, ECIDA; Sean Najewski, Gilbane Building Company; and Angelo Rhodes II, Northland Project Manager.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Ms. Minkel, who served as chair of the Committee. A quorum of the Committee was present. Ms. Amdur and Mr. Marton joined the meeting during the presentation of item 2.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes of the December 11, 2024 Meeting** – The minutes of the December 11, 2024 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Fishkin made a motion to approve the December 11, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Utz and unanimously carried (5-0-0).
- 2.0 Ralph Wilson Park – General Update** – Mr. Najewski provided an update regarding the Ralph Wilson Park construction project. Grading of the soccer fields is moving forward, and lights for the athletic fields have been installed. Work along the shoreline continues and remains on schedule. Planting along the South Lawn of the Park will continue in the spring. Storm networks on the Park side are nearly complete, and grading of the sled hill has commenced. Ms. Campos then provided an update regarding the Conservancy. While sharing video footage of the Park's progress, she commented on upcoming programming by the Conservancy, including Winter Fest, which will take place on February 22nd. The Winter Fest will serve as a trial run for the Conservancy's operations and partnership with other organizations, including the Olmsted Park Conservancy and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper.

- 3.0 Buffalo's Race for Place – COB-BUDC Memorandum of Understanding** – Ms. Merriweather reported that BUDC has been working with the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning and Department of Public Works to implement public infrastructure improvements in Downtown Buffalo and the Waterfront area. BUDC has developed a draft outline for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to outline each partner's respective roles and responsibilities and memorialize the mechanism for the flow of project funds. The infrastructure improvements will be funded by the Accelerator Fund, which is held by ECIDA and controlled by the City of Buffalo. The Committee discussed the MOU outline, funds currently available in the Accelerator Fund, and selection of a project manager through the BUDC RFP process, which is presently expected to be brought to the Committee for review at its February meeting. Ms. Gandour added that state funds from Empire State Development and federal funds from the City of Buffalo will also be used to support the infrastructure improvements.
- 4.0 Buffalo's Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Buffalo's Race for Place. Waterfront coordination sessions and meetings regarding implementation of infrastructure improvements continue with the Office of Strategic Planning, Department of Public Works, and other partners. Holiday programming for the Queen City Pop Up Downtown Dollars program has wrapped up. BUDC is collaborating with Buffalo Place, The Exchange at Beverly Gray, and the City's Diversity Office on Black History Month programming. BUDC has received ten applications for the open project manager position. Interviews for the position will be scheduled soon.
- 5.0 Queen City Hub Revisited – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Queen City Hub Revisited. Work on this initiative continues. Now that collection and analysis of data from stakeholders has been completed, discussions have turned to an appropriate toolkit to address the identified challenges. A meeting with Leonard Skril is taking place today at Buffalo Place. Ms. Merriweather will be participating on a panel January 16th hosted by the Buffalo Niagara Partnership to discuss Queen City Hub Revisited.
- 6.0 Partner Updates** – None.
- 7.0 Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Mr. Castle, seconded by Ms. Utz and unanimously carried, the January 15, 2025 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary

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Item 4

MEMORANDUM

TO: BUDC Downtown Committee

FROM: Brandye Merriweather, President

SUBJECT: Buffalo's Race For Place - Downtown and Waterfront Infrastructure Improvements Project and Cost Management Consultant Selection

DATE: February 19, 2025

BUDC and the City of Buffalo previously oversaw the coordination of multiple plans, including the Downtown Waterfront Improvements Plan, City of Buffalo Smart Streets Design Plan, Shelton Square—Erie Street Greenway Plan, and Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Master Plan (the "City Infrastructure Improvement Plans"). The City Infrastructure Improvement Plans aim to improve connectivity, accessibility, economic vitality, equity, and safety by enhancing the public realm and creating vibrant places in Downtown Buffalo. This effort looks to accelerate many highly anticipated construction projects that will help to better connect residents, visitors, and adjacent East and West side neighborhoods to Downtown and the Waterfront.

On June 21, 2024, BUDC and the City of Buffalo released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for project, cost, and construction management services to support BUDC and the City of Buffalo in overseeing these infrastructure improvement projects. Twenty-five percent (25%) MBE and five percent (5%) WBE participation goals were included as part of the solicitation.

The selected firm will provide project and cost management services for multiple downtown infrastructure projects as outlined in the City Infrastructure Improvement Plans. The project manager's responsibilities will include:

- Preparation and management of RFPs;
- Ensuring project compliance with BUDC and City of Buffalo procurement policies and requirements through design and construction bids;

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- Reviewing existing City Infrastructure Improvement Plans and materials to ensure alignment with BUDC and City of Buffalo goals and visions;
- Incorporating inclusive street design into every project;
- Creating project schedules and tracking the status of projects;
- Developing a responsibility matrix to be followed by key parties to the projects;
- Assisting with identifying funding opportunities and developing a funding matrix and project budgets;
- Creating a community engagement strategy;
- Organizing project status meetings with BUDC and City of Buffalo departments;
- Creating a risk management strategy; and
- Coordinating and maintaining stakeholder communication.

On August 29, 2024, BUDC received proposals from the following consultant teams:

1. Wendel Companies
2. Buffalo Construction Consultants (BCC)
3. LiRo Engineers
4. Gardiner & Theobald

The proposals were reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee composed of representatives from Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo Department of Public Works and Bisonwing Consulting (the “Selection Committee”). All four consultant teams were interviewed by the Selection Committee and proposals were evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- Experience;
- Local presence;
- Overall approach and methodology, and a demonstrated understanding of the objectives for the project;
- Budget; and
- Equity practices.

After much discussion, the Selection Committee is recommending that BUDC enter into a contract with BCC. Although each team was capable, qualified and presented a sincere interest in improving the Downtown and Waterfront area public realm, the Selection Committee believes that BCC is best suited to complete the entire breadth of the project scope and to coordinate each of the elements of the projects. The BCC team also offered unique approaches to accessibility, opportunities for an elevated level of community engagement and site management.

The expected duration of the project management contract is three (3) years, with the opportunity for the contract to be extended. As part of its proposal, BCC included hourly personnel rates for 2025–2027 and would negotiate fees for specific tasks based on the scope of the projects and available funding. BUDC will pay BCC for its services from funding available through the Accelerator Fund, as previously discussed

in the Downtown Committee item regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Buffalo and BUDC.

ACTION:

I am requesting that the BUDC Downtown Committee recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) authorize BUDC to enter into contract negotiations with Buffalo Construction Consulting for Project and Cost Management Services for Downtown & Waterfront area infrastructure improvements, pending funding authorization as provided in the Accelerator Funding Infrastructure Agreement; and (ii) authorize the President or Executive Vice President to execute the agreement with Buffalo Construction Consulting and take such actions and take such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement this authorization.

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Item 5

MEMORANDUM

TO: BUDC Downtown Committee

FROM: Brandye Merriweather, President

SUBJECT: Queen City Hub Revisited Initiative – Marketing and Advocacy Support Services

DATE: February 19, 2025

The Queen City Hub Revisited initiative (the “QCHR Initiative”) is a strategic partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning, BUDC, Buffalo Place, the University at Buffalo Rudy Bruner Center for Urban Excellence and others to develop a strategy and advocacy to address social and economic changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, including:

- Decreased in-person work schedules, and a decline in office space occupancy;
- Changing consumer behavior resulting in small business challenges and an increase in retail vacancies; and
- A lack of street vibrancy leading to negative public safety perceptions in public spaces.

The QCHR Initiative aims to produce insights from data and observations from a diverse group of downtown stakeholders through a series of engagements and interviews. Over the past several months, the QCHR Initiative has conducted a series of focus group meetings and collected and analyzed data to determine how to respond to challenges presented by remote work and office conversions. In addition, stakeholder meetings have been held to discuss the use of public private-partnerships to advance development in the City of Buffalo.

In furtherance of this initiative, marketing and advocacy services for the QCHR Initiative are needed. BUDC obtained written quotes from a total of three (3) vendors. After reviewing the quotations, BUDC staff is recommending entering into a contract with the University at Buffalo Rudy Bruner Center for Urban Excellence (the “Center for Urban Excellence”). The Center for Urban Excellence, led by its director, Professor Robert Shibley, possesses unique knowledge and expertise regarding the QCHR

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Initiative due to Professor Shibley's initial involvement in the initial Queen City Hub plan released in 2003. Professor Shibley's familiarity with the 2003 plan and involvement as a partner in the QCHR Initiative will be of great benefit to the QCHR Initiative.

The Center for Urban Excellence proposes to complete the following services:

- Creation of a web home for the consortium for dashboard and progress reporting (queencityhubrevisit.org);
- Benchmarking of the QCHR Initiative's progress on post-pandemic challenges to downtown with data-based metrics;
- TOD Stimulus and Public Realm Investments with Marketing Studies/Building Reuse Scoring Systems that address the mix of ground floor, retail, entertainment, and frontage, and sky-level mixed-use opportunity priorities; and
- The development of the QCHR final document and advocacy materials.

The contract amount for these services would not exceed \$20,000.00 and would be funded by through American Rescue Plan funding previously accepted by the BUDC Board of Directors. The Center for Urban Excellence is also seeking additional funding partners in furtherance of these services as well. BUDC will pass through any federal and City obligations to the ARP funding in its agreement with the Center for Urban Excellence. This procurement was completed in accordance with BUDC's procurement procedures applicable to the expenditure of federal funds.

ACTION:

I am requesting that the BUDC Downtown Committee recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) authorize BUDC to enter into a contract with the University at Buffalo Rudy Bruner Center for Urban Excellence for marketing and advocacy support services in connection with the Queen City Hub Revisited Initiative, at a cost not to exceed \$20,000.00; and (ii) authorize the President or Executive Vice President to execute the agreement and take such actions and take such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement this authorization.