

# BLACK ROCK HARBOR - WEST SCAJAQUADA



A Vision by West Scajaquada Coalition

Readying Prime Waterfront Land: New Investment, Regional Recreation Assets & Ecological Restoration

# A VISION FOR BLACK ROCK HARBOR - WEST SCAJAQUADA

## Prepared with and for the West Scajaquada Coalition

---

This project was funded with generous support provided by the Baird Foundation and the City of Buffalo, Council Member Joseph Golombek, Jr., and gained valuable insight and input from the efforts of the Scajaquada Corridor Coalition and the Black Rock Riverside Alliance.

The authors of this report would also like to acknowledge the attendance of community members and institutional stakeholders at a spring 2016 visioning session. While the views and opinions of this report should not be attributed to any one participating organization, the input of these organizations and individuals was invaluable to crafting this community vision:

Believe in Black Rock  
Black Rock Business Association  
Black Rock Riverside Alliance  
Buffalo History Museum  
Buffalo Maritime Center  
Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper  
Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust  
Buffalo Soccer  
Buffalo State College  
Erie County Sewer Authority  
Forest District Civic Association  
GObike Buffalo  
Grant Amherst Business Association  
Olmsted Conservancy  
Preservation Buffalo Niagara  
Rich Products  
Scajaquada Canoe Club  
Scajaquada Corridor Coalition  
Vision Niagara

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Page 3
INTRODUCTION	Page 4
UNTAPPED ASSETS AND UNTOLD BENEFITS	Page 5
DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	Page 12
RE-ENVISIONING OUTDATED LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE	Page 15
DEMOGRAPHICS	Page 17
LOCAL PLANNING PRECEDENTS	Page 18

---

Prepared By:

**make**  
COMMUNITIES

Brad Wales  
architect

Jason Knight, PhD, AICP  
Department of Geography & Planning  
SUNY Buffalo State

# A VISION FOR BLACK ROCK HARBOR - WEST SCAJAQUADA



**Positioned along Scajaquada Creek from Buffalo State College to the Niagara River, Black Rock Harbor and West Scajaquada represent a key element in Buffalo's continued revitalization.**

Creating vibrant, connected neighborhoods and providing access to restored waterways can spark economic, environmental and community regeneration. Greater connectivity between the Buffalo State College's campus and surrounding neighborhoods will revitalize Amherst and Niagara Streets. This transformation envisions Buffalo State College becoming the region's first true waterfront campus while creating a new regional sports and hospitality and present day innovation destination along Tonawanda Street.

This Vision for Black Rock Harbor - Western Scajaquada realizes an enhanced arts, history and innovation corridor, linking to existing and planned historic and cultural assets along Scajaquada Creek, from 200 year old battlefields to the Albright-Knox's \$100 million expansion project.

This plan unlocks nearly one million square feet of private sector and academic-private partnerships in development potential. On campus investment will bring these totals even higher.

Building on the redevelopment and new construction projects already in the pipeline, this would spur hundreds of new residential units and new commercial space with over \$150 million in new private sector investment. Far from being pie-in-the-sky, this level of investment mirrors the type of investment that is being implemented in other former industrial neighborhoods along Buffalo's Belt Line railroad, including Larkinville, Northland and Great Arrow.

Restoring Scajaquada Creek and eliminating the outdated legacy infrastructure of the elevated NYS-198 Expressway will extend the west side and Niagara Street's burgeoning demand and will continue Buffalo State College's ability to contribute to regional economic development and prosperity.

**Buffalo and its residents have aligned themselves around a vision of a thriving, inclusive, livable city and the city's regeneration is in full swing.**

Yet, Buffalo's rebirth is not conditioned on any one project or initiative. Puzzle pieces are coming together in neighborhoods across the city to create the picture of vibrancy we see in our shared vision.

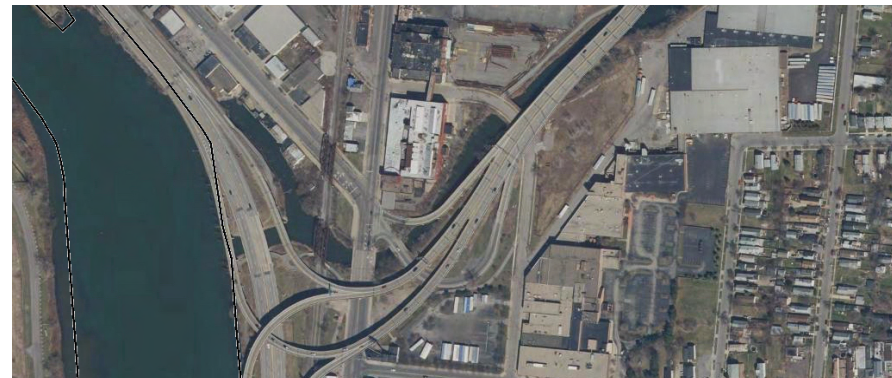
Common themes lay underneath our successes. We are leveraging our existing assets. We are peeling back the mistakes of our 20<sup>th</sup> century decline. We are unleashing the untapped potential of our people, the strength of our communities and of this special place called Buffalo.

Our ingenuity, our ability to think big thoughts and launch big ideas, our strategic location and our natural assets were the reasons this city grew and thrived. And reactivating this same spirit and these same advantages will be how we grow and thrive once more.

The potential of the Inner Harbor and Outer Harbor, as well as our inland waterfront along the Buffalo River, is being realized. New destinations are being created where formerly there was little, if any, activity. Vast latent demand and incredible value has been unlocked. But still untapped is the immense potential of Buffalo's oldest and arguably most internationally significant waterfront, and the waterfront that is most intertwined with neighborhoods and community anchors: Black Rock Harbor and West Scajaquada Creek.



Buffalo's Historic Black Rock Harbor: Currently buried underneath off ramps; the consequence of outdated 20th century legacy infrastructure.



Black Rock Harbor at the mouth of Scajaquada Creek.

Black Rock Harbor sits at the confluence of Scajaquada Creek and the Black Rock Canal. For decades it has been essentially buried by a confusing and overbuilt highway system that has sapped economic vitality and opportunity from the adjoining neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Reclaiming Black Rock Harbor and Scajaquada Creek will ready prime waterfront land for new investment and public access, create unique opportunities within thriving economic sectors, and promote a more resilient region through ecological restoration.

This vision is built on economically sound long-term thinking, strategies which reinvest in our communities and Buffalo's future. Residents and community leaders from across the city are uniting to reverse the harm done by ill conceived 20th century transportation scheme that sacrificed our communities, and our natural assets, to speed and sprawl. As the city has now come together to reimagine a city where mid-century expressways no longer divide our parks and our communities, the restoration of Scajaquada Creek and the removal of the NYS-198 Expressway need to be evaluated by city, regional and state agencies for their ability to spur a new wave of investment and redevelopment in Buffalo.

**This vision for West Scajaquada and Black Rock Harbor is an exciting, action-oriented next step in creating a unique, desirable and economically productive corridor through Buffalo's West Side and waterfront.**

The vision outlined by existing planning work contained in the Tonawanda Street Brownfield Opportunity Area studies, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, the Niagara River Greenway plan, the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Plan for the 21st Century, the Black Rock Community and Grant-Amherst plans and Buffalo State College's Comprehensive Plan offer strong and largely complementary visions of a revitalized community along and adjacent to the Niagara River. Together, these plans give a tangible framework for building the neighborhood as a place to live, work, play and invest.

West Scajaquada's position in Buffalo's development extends far beyond the east-west cut through that it has been relegated to for the past 50 years. West Scajaquada is a vital link to our history and Buffalo's reason for being. Ships of war were built under Commodore Perry's command in Black Rock Harbor, and crucial moments in the War of 1812 happened along the shores of Scajaquada Creek.

West Scajaquada is an immutable link in the story of Buffalo and an as-yet under-developed museum, history and innovation trail stretches along the creek to many of Buffalo's most important and influential institutions, from the History Museum, site of the Pan American Exposition, and Albright-Knox all the way to the terminus of the underground railroad at Broderick Park on Unity Island. West Scajaquada's roles as a place of history, of business, as a gathering spot and as a potential urbanist front door to established residential communities all need to be recognized, celebrated and encouraged.

By cleaning up Scajaquada Creek and removing the outdated legacy infrastructure of the NYS-198 Expressway, the wealth of assets along West Scajaquada and Black Rock Harbor can be activated, economic development can be advanced and environmental and community vitality can be enhanced.

Based on the experiences of cities across the country, around the globe, and our own successes here in Buffalo, a healthy and accessible Scajaquada Creek has enormous potential to spur new investment. Buffalo doesn't need to take risks on unproven practices or attempt to reinvent the wheel, we simply need to focus on what works. Removing the Scajaquada Expressway and creating a grid of local streets to facilitate residential, educational, civic and commercial development will have enormous benefit for the City and the Region.



A concept-level rendering of a restored street grid, regenerated Scajaquada Creek and redevelopment zones.

## A Vision for Black Rock Harbor — West Scajaquada builds on Buffalo's momentum and continues progress reclaiming our waterfront.

*Removing the NYS-198 expressway is about more than a roadway, it is about realizing Buffalo's 21st Century potential. The benefits of unlocking the potential of Scajaquada Creek and Black Rock Harbor include:*

### New Investment

Replicates a proven model of local waterfront development and builds on momentum along Niagara Street. This vision creates 850,000 feet of new private sector development and building rehabilitation, totaling nearly \$150 million in investment.

### Regional Recreation Assets

Fulfills the promise of the Niagara River Greenway by linking the Olmsted Parks System to the riverfront. Integrates with the museum district and supports development of nationally important War of 1812 battlefield sites and waterfront innovation trail. New sports-focused facilities build on Buffalo's burgeoning tourism and amateur recreation infrastructure assets.

### Ecological Restoration

Helps make the Queen City the Green City by restoring prime habitat, increasing eco-tourism and mitigating legacy pollution. Complements ongoing efforts to enhance the Niagara River Corridor as an Internationally Important Bird Area.



Black Rock Harbor and West Scajaquada existing conditions and vision.



**State of the Art Amateur Athletic Complex**  
A new multi-use stadium along Tonawanda Street is the centerpiece of a regional sports complex capitalizing on Buffalo's growing sports tourism industry and provides state of the art facilities for residents, college athletes and visitors.



**Amherst Street Discovered**  
Increased connections with Buffalo State's campus lead to an influx of retail and restaurant establishments on Amherst Street, boosting business and street life.



**Scajaquada Parkway**  
A new two lane roadway with a multi-use trail and at-grade crossings provides safe, enjoyable, multi-modal transportation and access to Scajaquada Creek in the vision of Olmsted.



**The Banks at Buff State**  
A grassy hill slopes up from the water's edge to campus and is a huge hit for lunch time, studying and sunbathing.



**New Residential Development**  
A reconnected street grid helps capture the increasing housing market demand on the West Side. New infill housing flourishes from Forest Avenue to Amherst Street.



**Heritage Trail**  
A fully realized Heritage Trail connects the locally and internationally significant history and culture of the Scajaquada all the way from Black Rock Harbor to Delaware Park.



**Bridges Across Scajaquada Creek**  
A series of multi-modal bridges and bicycle-pedestrian bridges knit together the north and south sides of the creek, integrating neighborhood and campus life.



**Tonawanda Street**  
Removal of legacy off ramps, improved access and new investment in recreation and hospitality amenities leads to restoration of industrial structures and new infill and vitality.



**Rockwell Road**  
Rockwell Road extends all the way to Tonawanda Street, growing Buffalo State's campus across Scajaquada Creek and providing a stunning new western connection and gateway.



**Waterfront Access and Paddle Sport Launch**  
A new kayak launch on Niagara Street gives immediate access to Scajaquada Creek and Black Rock Harbor.



**Parallel Creek Trails**  
Multi-use trails line both the north and south sides of the Scajaquada Creek, creating an unparalleled amenity, enhancing connections to the Inner and Outer harbors and all the way to Lake Ontario along the Niagara River Greenway.



**Black Rock Channel**  
West Scajaquada now opens freely into Black Rock Channel, providing access to unparalleled views of Unity Island and Black Rock Channel.



**Black Rock Harbor**  
The mouth to Scajaquada Creek is restored, transforming historic Black Rock Harbor into the jewel of the Upper Niagara.



**Black Rock Channel Trail**  
A trail along Black Rock Channel unlocks the land fallow since the I-190 Toll Barriers were removed creating a unique waterfront public space.



## Black Rock Harbor - Western Scajaquada

A VISION BY **Western Scajaquada Coalition**



Brad Wales  
architect

make  
COMMUNITY

## College Campus Expansion and Improvement

Buffalo State College is redefining itself a leader in town-gown partnership, by supporting the development of a vital community — expanding upon a long, solid commitment to being a good neighbor to surrounding areas.

Nestled among the growing museum district and the soon-to-be-reopened Olmsted-Richardson Center, the timing for creating a more robust campus and a seamless integration into the fabric of the city is opportune.



A vision for a Buffalo State campus that embraces and integrates Scajaquada Creek.

The College has long envisioned growing its campus westward. With the removal of dated infrastructure, Buffalo State College can become Western New York's only waterfront campus. The expressway currently limits the ability of the campus to fulfill the potential of its location, requiring duplicative on-campus circulation patterns, and dividing the college from the assets and amenities of Black Rock, Grant Amherst, Niagara Street, Riverside and the Niagara River.

Campuses from the University at Rochester to Texas State University in San Marcos and Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts have shown that integrating a collegiate footprint with natural settings and an urban environment provides an enhanced campus life and serves as an additional draw to student attraction.



Colleges across the country promote and celebrate their connections to adjacent waterways.  
Above: Images from Harvard, the University of Rochester and Texas State University at San Marcos.

## National and International Sports Tourism Facilities

Since the World University Games in the 1990s, Buffalo-Niagara has been positioning itself as a leader in amateur sports facilities, drawing regional, national and international tournaments such as the NCAA basket tournament and the IIHF hockey world junior championships. These events draw thousands of participants and spectators, filling hotel rooms and exposing tourists to the wealth of amenities and attractions that Buffalo has to offer.

World class ice rinks and hospitality infrastructure at Harbor Center have helped enhance Buffalo's status as a major amateur sports destination, bringing an

unprecedented number of tournament goers and visitors to the region, while providing much needed recreation space on Buffalo's west side. A major recent economic development study carried out by the City of Buffalo revealed market potential for similar success by providing multi-field facilities to support soccer, football and lacrosse competitions. Freeing up additional land along Scajaquada Creek, and creating an accessible street grid with access to local amenities on the West Side, Black Rock and Elmwood, allows for replicating the success of Harbor Center for these field sports as well.



An new stadium and athletic field complex takes advantage of existing underutilized buildings to provide hospitality related services for games, tournaments and events.

This location along Scajaquada Creek provides an ideal opportunity to pair state-of-the-art facilities for these uses with local need and potential collegiate partnerships, providing for greater utilization and economic sustainability the complex.



Collegiate and amateur sporting facilities throughout Buffalo provide the base of recreational tourism that the proposed complex will complement.

## Private Residential and Commercial Development

As upcoming investments on Niagara Street spark redevelopment of historic buildings and infill construction, the land surrounding Black Rock Harbor and Scajaquada Creek, Buffalo's revitalization edges closer and closer to the shores of Scajaquada Creek, but a wall of outdated infrastructure stands in the way.

Current public investments being made along Niagara Street are sparking nearby development adjacent to Scajaquada Creek and Black Rock Harbor. Projects such as the conversion of former warehouse and industrial properties into high end loft spaces and striking commercial space reveal an enormous potential to continue redevelopment and reuse of our neglected infrastructure.

One need look no further than the multiple construction projects and proposals along Ohio Street to see the impacts of restoring our waterways and reimagining our legacy infrastructure and living into 21<sup>st</sup> century needs and expectations. The pace of development along Ohio Street has ramped up at a pace unimaginable even five years ago, in what was an untested, overlooked market. This stretch of land was previously littered with vacant post-industrial sites, cutting off the Old First Ward and Downtown from the Buffalo River. A commitment by public officials to reclaim Buffalo's waterfront led to the creation of recreational trails and a waterfront appropriate boulevard with one lane of travel in each direction. A partnership with the Valley Community Association led to the opening of a new park, event space and dock along the water. Private investment is now following with the development of multi-story apartment buildings, waterfront restaurants and a boating center.



Appropriate public investment in infrastructure can spur private sector investment leading to a revitalized commercial and residential neighborhood center.

West Scajaquada has even greater potential for investment with an existing stock of several hundred thousand redevelopable square feet mid- and large scale brick industrial buildings to form the basis for new investment. With investment in appropriate public infrastructure, these buildings have the ability to capitalize on both historic and brownfield tax credits to jump start water-centric revitalization. At medium densities and with ample parkland and natural spaces, roughly 1 million square feet of development can be accomplished in the project area.



Ohio Street Redevelopment: Public investment in waterfront appropriate street design and reconstruction has spurred a flurry of new development and a continual stream of visitors.

## Ecological Restoration and Water Focused Recreation

The other success stories of Buffalo's waterfront occur not just in brick and mortar projects and private sector development. Just as surprising to those who have lamented the sorry state of Buffalo's waterfront for more than a century — and perhaps more gratifying to those who have worked for its revitalization — is the reemergence of life along our waterways.

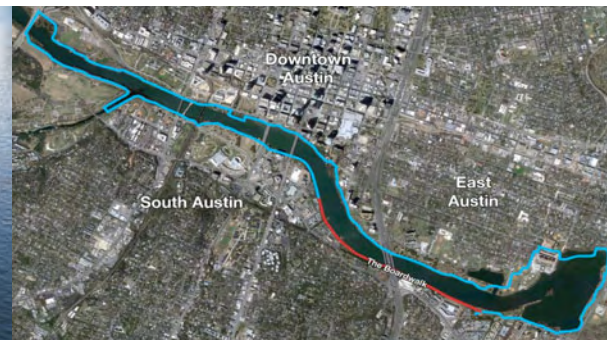
Major environmental cleanups along the Buffalo River, shepherded through Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and government supports, have begun to restore the ecology of our waterways. Our location along an internationally significant birding area — which not only follows the the Niagara River but also includes Scajaquada Creek — means that this restoration holds major implications not just for our environment, but for eco-tourism to further enhance our local economy.



The banks of a restored Scajaquada Creek provide ecologically important habitat and multiple recreation opportunities for active and passive recreation.

But perhaps the most striking signs of life along the water are now the hundreds of thousands of visitors that are rediscovering the shoreline and the city, drawn to Buffalo by its emerging waterfront jewel. By opening up these waterways to active recreation, from kayaking to bicycling, running and walking to fishing and even just people watching, the city is encouraging long time residents and newcomers alike to take a second look at all that it has to offer.

Nowhere in the city is as well positioned to replicate and surpass this success as a restored Scajaquada Creek. The signature project will help make the Queen City the Green City by restoring prime habitat, and increasing eco-tourism along our globally significant natural assets. A world class park along its banks can fulfill the promise of the Niagara River Greenway, linking the Olmsted Parks System to the riverfront. A restored Scajaquada Creek has the ability to support recreational trails and settings along both sides of a newly reconnected waterway and to create easy access to the water for kayaks and canoes from Black Rock Channel to Hoyt Lake.



In Austin, Texas, a city known for its love of the outdoors, the Ann and Roy Butler trail at Lady Bird Lake is most popular recreational area, drawing 10 million visitors per year. Dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridges help link the downtown area to the burgeoning South Congress Street.

**As envisioned in this plan, West Scajaquada and Black Rock Harbor will see a significant influx of infill development and revitalization of existing building stock.**

Removing the imposing and outdated legacy infrastructure of the elevated and at-grade portions of NYS-198 Expressway and restoring historic Scajaquada Creek will provide the impetus for private sector and institutional investment.

Developing this community-integrated waterfront campus creates an environment which will mimic the economic development success of investments in bio-medical fields and life sciences on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The setting's natural linkages to Buffalo State College — and its specializations in ecology, geography, weather analysis and historic restoration — primes the area for innovation and new business start ups.

This vision also adds a focus on Buffalo's growing strategic advantage in sports and recreational tourism, including a new shared-use stadium and athletic fields complex for campus and public usage.

As outlined in the City of Buffalo's Tonawanda Street Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) study, the area is rife with potential for re-connecting divided neighborhoods and reinvigorating formerly industrial and potentially contaminated land. This vision combines elements of development scenarios within the Tonawanda Street BOA: The Employment Diversification Scenario and the Campus Employment and Residential Scenario. Combined, these scenarios were the overwhelming choice of 92% of the public that weighed in on the BOA.

Highlights carried through from the BOA study to this vision include the highest levels of environmental, park, and waterfront access and improvements; as well as a continual emphasis on mixed-use, small-scale retail, live-work and town-gown campus/ community spaces.



City of Buffalo Tonawanda Street BOA: Alternate Development Scenarios, Scajaquada Creek Detail

**This vision projects a long-term build out of roughly 420,000 square feet of existing underutilized historic structures that would be revitalized from Amherst Street to Forest Avenue along Tonawanda and Niagara Streets.**

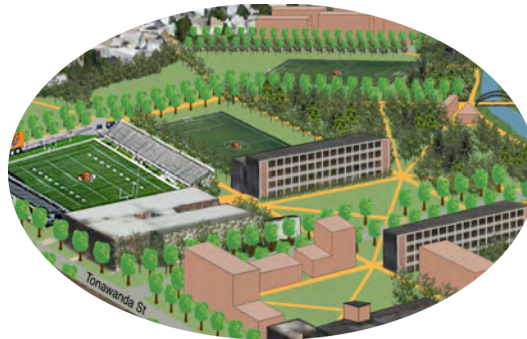
These rehabilitation projects would be supported by the use of historic preservation tax credits and likely brownfield redevelopment tax credits. The industrial buildings that line Tonawanda Street are prime for redevelopment, as other former factories and warehouses around Buffalo's Belt Line railroad have been or are being revitalized from Larkinville to Northland to Great Arrow. With a mix of configurations, the existing stock holds great potential for a vibrant mixed-use destination linking a reemergent Niagara Street, Black Rock, Riverside, Amherst Street and Buffalo State College; and the potential to generate roughly \$70 million in rehabilitation investment.

Key among this vision is the development of a new football, soccer, field hockey and track sports stadium and athletic field complex to support regional economic development, expanding on amateur and collegiate facilities to host meets, tournaments, training camps, exhibitions and local use. Repurposed industrial heritage buildings can supply the needed accompanying services, such as full service hotel and entertainment facilities, and the space to house support for on-field activities. These structures can also provide space for spin-off support services and sports-related technology enterprises, growing an existing regional cluster developing as a result of investments in Harbor Center at Canalside. These buildings and facilities can also support and enhance Buffalo State's existing athletic programming.

In addition the vision provides space for 430,000 square feet of new private sector and joint-venture infill in low- and mid-rise development. This includes roughly 200 new privately developed apartments and condominiums, as well as 25 jointly-developed campus-centered apartments and 60,000 square feet of academic and student centered work/ exhibition and incubation space. In addition, 125,000 feet of commercial space, a boutique hotel and Scajaquada Creek front park facilities would be developed. These new buildings help to reknit the fabric of the communities now fragmented by the NYS-198 Expressway and the post-industrial landscapes along Tonawanda and Dart Streets, creating critical mass for street life and walkable communities. Private sector investment in new construction is estimated in the \$60-80 million range.



Removal of legacy off ramps and new investment in recreational and hospitality amenities leads to restoration of industrial structures and new infill and vitality.



A new multi-use stadium is the centerpiece of a regional sports complex capitalizing on Buffalo's growing sports tourism industry and providing state of the art facilities for residents, amateur athletes and visitors.



A reconnected street grid helps capture the increasing housing market demand on the West Side. New infill housing flourishes from Forest Avenue to Amherst Street.

**This vision includes joint private-public development of campus-related facilities west of Scajaquada Creek.**

These properties would likely be able to take advantage of Brownfield Tax Credits and, therefore, make most sense with a private sector partner involved to be able to leverage these incentives. However, various residential and academic buildings are also included in this vision as hypothetical building massing and locations within Buffalo State College's existing and expanded footprint east of Scajaquada Creek. The square footage estimates and dollar amounts for these in-house campus projects are not included in this vision plan. Building footprint and cost summaries also do not include the ongoing development of large scale housing projects in the vicinity, including One Hundred on Forest, a \$25 million complex on Forest Avenue comprising roughly 200 new units for 600 residents in 200,000 square feet of new construction, or Campus Walk, a roughly 170,000 square foot development on Grant Street south of Rockwell Road.



<i>New building development potential</i>	<i>classification/ use</i>	<i>Investment</i>
West Side of Tonawanda Street	mixed use: residential & commercial	\$9,750,000
Amherst Street Circle	mixed use: residential & commercial	\$8,000,000
Amherst St Mixed Use	mixed use: residential & commercial	\$3,975,000
Rockwell Rd (133 Tonawanda twin)	campus support	\$8,275,000
Rockwell Rd (Tonawanda St Quad infill)	mixed use: residential, commercial, hospitality, campus	\$21,750,000
Park Buildings	recreation	\$550,000
Dart St North	mixed use: residential & commercial	\$16,875,000
Niagara @ Forest	mixed use: residential & commercial	\$3,500,000
New Bengals International Stadium Complex	sports facilities	\$15,000,000
	<b>total investment</b>	<b>\$87,675,000</b>

Tonawanda Street Rehabilitation Potential										
Address	31	57	68	71	117	125	133	Total Sq Ft	costs \$/ Sq. Ft.	total investment
Sq. Ft.	113,631	5,115	29,640	115,000	104,872	10,848	43,250	422,356	\$160	\$67,576,960

**This vision plan recognizes the need to remove the outdated NYS-198 Expressway in order to accomplish this development vision.**

Removing outdated 20th century highway infrastructure has become common practice across the globe. High profile examples like Boston's Big Dig or San Francisco's post-earthquake removal of the Embarcadero Freeway generally dominate the dialogue about major projects that have enlivened and reinvigorated cities. But, San Francisco's lesser known Central Freeway removal contributes to other, lesser known examples of successful projects that reconnected urban centers, cut pollution and spurred investment. These types of projects can be seen across the country from New York to Oregon and from Wisconsin to Tennessee.

In New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo has launched a major initiative to retire legacy urban highways and Buffalo's peer upstate cities of Rochester and Syracuse are both pursuing efforts to tame their dated infrastructure in the name of city vitality and regional prosperity. Rochester has already begun to fill in portions of the Inner Loop sunken expressway, and Syracuse continues to move closer to dismantling the barrier created by Interstate-81.



NYS DOT's failure to adequately consider the full scope of West Scajaquada had led to incongruous, dangerous and unworkable proposed traffic

In Buffalo, NYS DOT's current, limited project scope for NYS-198 Expressway fails to acknowledge the impact that the feeder expressways of I-190 and Route 33 have on inducing demand within the Scajaquada Creek Corridor. In fact, the limited project scope fails to include any consideration of the corridor west of Grant Street or east of Main Street.

This failure to examine the traffic system holistically, and include the impacts on these predominantly low- to moderate-income communities of color, has obvious implications for diminished potential impact and diminished return on creating 21st century transportation network for the city. Given the disparate demographics between the project areas around Delaware Park and those around West Scajaquada (as well as those east of Main Street), there are also obvious and disconcerting implications for issues of environmental and transportation justice.



Construction crews fill in the Rochester Inner Loop. IMAGE: Democrat and Chronicle.



Removal of our outdated legacy infrastructure allows water front access with unparalleled views.

## Expressway removal case studies reveal a number of promising factors for Buffalo to consider.

High-level results show that, upon removal, the number of vehicle miles traveled actually declines, and local streets grids can successfully absorb remaining rerouted traffic at lower speeds. This creates a healthier environment in reduced pollution and safer streets. Case studies also show that design is key and that highway removal must be looked at as part of a larger strategy for revitalization for which it can have a catalytic effect. [Seattle Urban Mobility Plan, Ch. 6: Case Studies in Urban Freeway Removal]



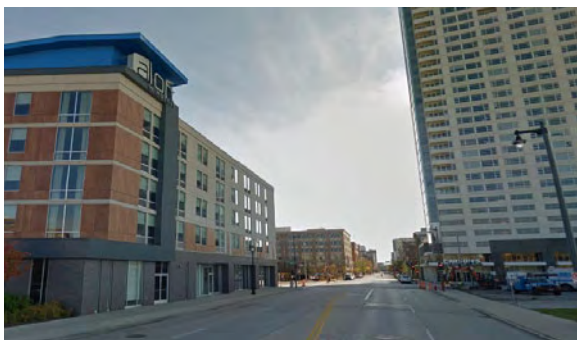
*Chattanooga, TN: Riverfront Parkway*

Removal and conversion of this highway has been credited with helping spur the rebirth of downtown Chattanooga. New connectivity between the city and the river and a new waterfront park created the conditions for major investments in new commercial, hospitality and residential buildings.



*Portland, OR: Harbor Drive*

Portland Oregon is credited with the first intentional U.S. highway removal, dating as far back as 1974. Harbor Drive was removed to reconnect the city to the west bank of the Willamette River. The area is now a vibrant and active stretch that hosts a popular year round weekend market.



*Milwaukee, WI: Park East Freeway*

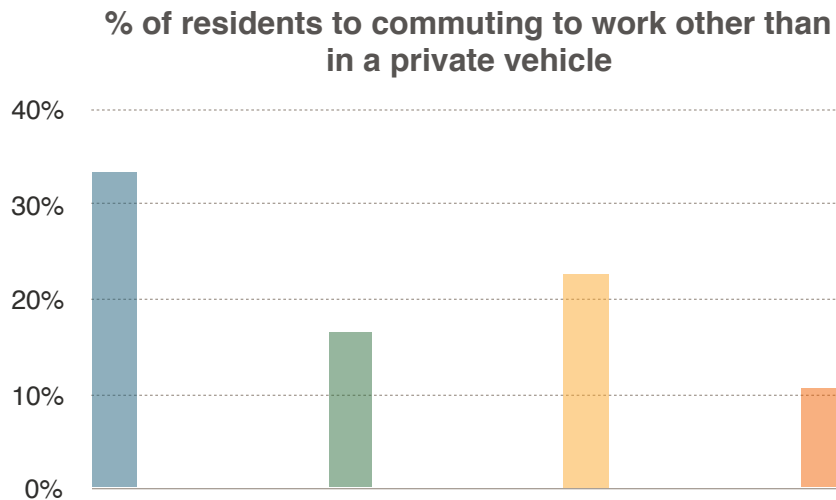
Milwaukee tore down the Park East Freeway which formed a portion of a circular highway around its downtown. It was replaced it with McKinley Avenue and 23 new acres of developable land formerly chewed up by expressway right-of-way, leading to the reconnection of the street grid and a host of new mixed use development projects totaling hundreds of millions of dollars on adjacent blocks.

## West Scajaquada is an incredibly diverse neighborhood.

59% of the residents of the neighborhoods along West Scajaquada are people of color (encompassing census designated races and ethnicities including African American/ Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, two or more races, some other race and Hispanic or Latino). This is a higher percentage than City of Buffalo (54% people of color) and much higher than Erie County (23% people of color). In contrast, residents of the neighborhoods comprising the Delaware Park area Scajaquada neighborhoods are only 21% people of color.

Because of racial inequities that exist nationally and locally, the percentage of persons living in poverty, the percentage of residents with at least some college, and the median family income all show large variations between neighborhoods on the two ends of Scajaquada Creek. In fact for each these statistics, West Scajaquada has outcomes less optimal than the city or the county as a whole while the Delaware Park-adjacent Scajaquada tracks have outcomes consistently outpacing the city and the county as a whole.

	% living in poverty	% with more than high school education (aged 25+)	% under age 18	% speaking a language other than English at home
Erie County	14.7%	61.8%	21.0%	9.9%
City of Buffalo	30.9%	55.3%	22.9%	15.9%
Delaware Park Scajaquada Neighborhoods	13.1%	82.9%	14.2%	9.3%
West Scajaquada Neighborhoods	48.9%	34.5%	27.0%	35.9%



Though residents of Western Scajaquada bear a heavy burden of the negative impacts of the NYS-198 expressway, far fewer of these residents commute by car, with a substantially higher percentage commuting by public transit or other means. The environmental and health consequences of the highway — as well as limited access and mobility within and between neighborhoods disproportionately caused by this outdated legacy infrastructure — pose serious and unaddressed equity implications for residents of this neighborhood.

- West Scajaquada Neighborhoods
- Delaware Park Scajaquada Neighborhoods
- City of Buffalo
- Erie County

The Vision for Black Rock Harbor and Western Scajaquada is built upon input from community stakeholders and a body of local planning documents.

Each of these documents points to the potential of these key assets within the city and the region. From neighborhood focused plans to economic development and recreation planning, the confluence of possibilities and potential acknowledged by these plans reveals, in Black Rock Harbor and West Scajaquada, a generational opportunity to advance the region.



#### *Buffalo Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP)*

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Area encompasses both lake and river adjacent properties as well as in-land waterways — including Scajaquada Creek. The plan emphasizes protecting waterfront economic, social and environmental interest while promoting and safeguarding public access, coastal resilience and building great, vibrant waterfront places. The plan also explicitly calls for minimizing NYS Route 198 and I-190's impact on Scajaquada Creek, while promoting a "Water Enhanced Mixed Use Development Zone with ample open space" along Tonawanda and Niagara Streets and Forest Avenue, connecting development along the Buffalo State Campus all the way to Black Rock Harbor. Though the LWRP identifies the need to address the entire NYS-198 corridor, the scope of the DOT's current project does not consider the focus area of this vision plan from Grant Street to the Niagara River.



#### *The Niagara River Greenway Plan*

The Niagara River Greenway Plan establishes a unified vision for a Lake-to-Lake greenway from the headwaters of Niagara River on Lake Erie to its mouth on the Lake Ontario. The plan also establishes a set of principles for the expenditure of public funds to support this vision; including: excellence, sustainability, accessibility, ecological integrity, public well-being, connectivity, restoration, authenticity, celebration, partnerships, and respecting community based visions and preferences. These principles are overlaid with a set of goals that point toward projects and actions, including: improving access, making connections, protecting and restoring environmental systems, celebrating history and heritage, sparking revitalization and renewal, promoting long term sustainability, and extending Olmsted's legacy.



## TONAWANDA STREET CORRIDOR Brownfield Opportunity Area

### Step 2 Nomination Document

#### *Tonawanda Street Brownfield Opportunity Area*

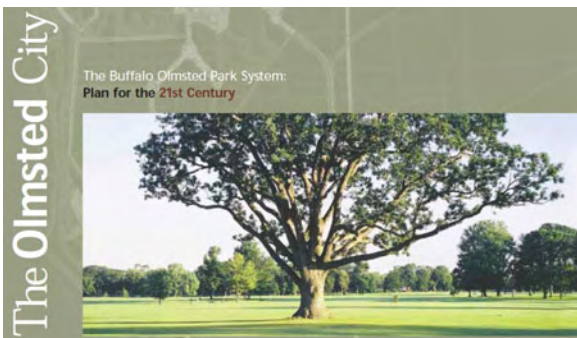
The Tonawanda Street BOA lays out redevelopment scenarios for a swath of land from Scajaquada Creek northward nearly to the city line. This underutilized stretch of formerly industrial land is considered for its strategic location, and the plan acknowledges the “need to generate employment opportunities and tax revenues must be balanced with strengthening neighborhoods, expanding recreational opportunities, preserving industrial heritage, ensuring waterfront access, and improving habitats and watershed ecology”. It further highlights emerging principles to guide redevelopment that focus on strengthening existing neighborhoods, enhancing economic opportunity, improving quality of life — including waterfront connections and recreational opportunities — and leveraging the potential of an enhanced Buffalo State College.



## **Recreational Needs Assessment Study**

#### *Recreational Needs Assessment Study*

This study was performed in 2015 for Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC) and the City of Buffalo as part of a suite of Brownfield Opportunity Area Planning funded by New York State. This study points to a general lack of recreational opportunities on the city’s West Side. A need for diamond and rectangular fields was identified, and this shortage is impacting the operation of youth and adult sports leagues and groups. Not only are existing needs not being met, but the ability to grow travel, development and competitive sports is also hampered. The study examined two sites within the Black Rock - West Scajaquada vision area, and both were found suitable from an acreage perspective. The facility type examined showed a positive economic return as operated by a private sector partner.

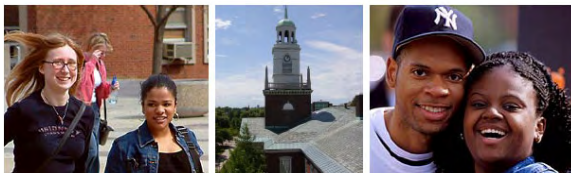


#### *The Olmsted City – Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century*

The master plan for Buffalo’s Olmsted Parks system focuses on restoring the grandeur of the parks as they were conceived and designed. And while the historic nature of these parks takes center stage, the plan also places an emphasis on fulfilling the intent of Olmsted’s creation of a ribbon of parks and parkways to bring nature and recreation to all areas and all residents of the city. The plan also views this strategy of investment as an economic and community development strategy for stronger neighborhoods and a stronger region. It also complements regional efforts by specifically citing the potential to connect to the Niagara River Greenway — a continuous link to Frederick Law Olmsted’s work in Niagara Falls.

## Facilities Master Plan FOR BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

STATE UNIVERSITY CONSTRUCTION FUND  
and BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE



### *Buffalo State College - Facilities Master Plan*

In addition to renewing campus facilities, the pillars of Buffalo State College's campus master plan are to strengthen the quality of the campus experience and engage communities around the campus. Both of these priorities involve significant enhancements to outdoor spaces, including trails gateways and campus edges. The plan specifically calls for enhanced connection to the Black Rock neighborhood through the construction of a pedestrian bridge along Scajaquada Creek. It also lifts up the need for additional pedestrian enhancement and landscape investment, including a new quad and gateways. The college's vision also looks to further connect and expand west of Grant Street, for a variety of uses from academics to campus life and campus housing.

## HISTORIC BLACK ROCK



### *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan*

This community based plan is a neighborhood level plan that grew out of the City of Buffalo's 2006 Queen City in the 21st Century planning process. Like the City's comprehensive plan, this plan is built upon overlapping priorities of community, economy and environment. This community's vision provides a set of complementary strategies including: preserve and strengthening community identity, improving housing, revitalizing the Niagara Street Commercial Area, and developing and marketing the area's positive attributes, enhancing community walkability while leveraging existing transportation advantages, realizing the potential of existing recreational assets (parks, recreation, waterfront) and seizing opportunities for new ones within the neighborhood, making distinctive gateways and street themes, leveraging land development, and improving urban design.



### *2013 Grant-Amherst Community Plan*

This community based plan for enhancing the Grant-Amherst community was developed in cooperation with the City of Buffalo and expands on the Black Rock - Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) 2004 plan. The plan acknowledges the regional and city-wide anchors present in this community including proximity to Buffalo State, Wegmans on Amherst and Tops Markets at Grant and Amherst. Specialty retail and dining and entertainment opens are also held up as assets for this neighborhood. At the same time, this plan identifies NYS-198 Expressway as a "major barrier" and an "extraordinary challenge to neighborhood connectivity as well as enjoyment of Scajaquada Creek for recreational purposes". The plan recommends maximizing "recreational and open space opportunities along Scajaquada Creek" and optimizing transportation infrastructure to create connections to create great, safe streets and gateways to surrounding neighborhoods and institutions, and celebrating the area's rich heritage.