

2013 Grant-Amherst Community Plan

“FEED THE PEOPLE, AND LET THE PEOPLE FEED THE NEIGHBORHOOD”
- MARK GOLDMAN, OWNER OF BLACK ROCK KITCHEN AND BAR, 491 AMHERST ST

Among Buffalo neighborhoods, in Grant Amherst you'll find:

- The Scajaquada Creek biking and walking trail,
- Affordable, attractive housing near Buffalo State College,
- Businesses, from Mom & Pop shops to ethnic restaurants,
- Employment centers for the neighborhood and the region,
- The site of a War of 1812 shipyard, and 19th century architectural charm,
- And lively entertainment venues and cherished local legends like "Scajaquada Jack"! (See Figure 70 on page 46.)

DRAFT DOCUMENT



The Discover Amherst street festival illustrates why Grant Amherst is Buffalo's "Coolest Up & Coming Neighborhood"*

**Artvoice, Best of Buffalo 2011*

DRAFT DOCUMENT

Draft for Discussion Only, 8/4/2013. To share your opinion or get involved in helping the community, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at rich@buffaloreview.com or Mark Kubiniec, President, Grant Amherst Business Association at markubi@hotmail.com. This document was prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and Grant Amherst Business Association in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan.



DEDICATION

Dedicated to all those who bring the positive excitement needed to “keep Grant-Amherst cool.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

~ With appreciation to ~

The Honorable Byron Brown, Mayor City of Buffalo
Joseph Golombek, Jr., Councilman, North Council District
Brendan Mehaffy, Executive Director, Office of Strategic Planning
Keith Lucas, Director of Planning, Office of Strategic Planning
Bill Parke, Community Planner, Office of Strategic Planning

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Warren Glover	Evelyn Vossler, Co-Chair
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Grant Amherst Business
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YOUR COMMENTS

Your opinions regarding the ideas and proposals in this plan are important — It is a “living document.” To share your opinion or get involved in helping the community, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at rich@buffaloreview.com or Mark Kubiniec, President, Grant Amherst Business Association at markubi@hotmail.com. Prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and Grant Amherst Business Association in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*.

Front Cover Images Courtesy of the Dombrowski Family through the Grant Amherst Business Association’s “The Historic Project,” *Artvoice*, and Bill Parke.

Lead Cover Quote Courtesy of Mark Goldman, Black Rock Kitchen and Bar, as it appears in *Buffalo Rising*, April 12, 2010.



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DEAR FRIENDS...

Welcome to the 2013 Grant-Amherst Community Plan! This plan is meant to be a roadmap to the neighborhood and some of the possibilities for the community's future.

First, we recognize that business owners, residents, community leaders, and elected officials like Mayor Brown and North District Council Member Golombek have put the Grant-Amherst neighborhood in a very strong civic position. Its selection as a 2011 "Best of Buffalo" pick in *Artvoice* indicates that for many, that status has already been realized! On top of that excellent local leadership, Grant-Amherst has many of the attributes that typify a great walkable city neighborhood. What are these? Expert city planner Jeff Speck identified 10 of them in his 2012 book, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time*:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Put Cars in Their Place | 7. Shape the Spaces |
| 2. Mix the Uses | 8. Plant Trees |
| 3. Get the Parking Right | 9. Make Friendly and Unique Building Facades |
| 4. Let Transit Work | 10. Pick Your Winners |
| 5. Protect the Pedestrian | |
| 6. Welcome Bikes | |

We can also agree, however, that while many of the 10 attributes above are in place in Grant-Amherst, some need attention, and some need to

be added. This represents much of the work to come. But the fact is that Amherst Street is on its way to being a great walkable neighborhood street. How can we be so sure? Because:

- it was designed with great urbanism more than 100 years ago, and has exhibited strong community ties ever since (see Figure 1),
- thanks to the efforts of community leaders, the factors that create a healthy community related to environment, economy, and social, have been nurtured, despite huge challenges in the past 50 years posed by the industrial decline, automobile, suburbanization, urban renewal, and poverty, to name but a handful,
- new residents and businesses continue to pour into the area, keeping it vibrant and fresh, alongside key, established community anchors.

Simultaneously Grant Street and Elmwood Avenue provide excellent service to auto-centric businesses and shoppers.

Nevertheless, even with their importance, Amherst, Grant, and Elmwood streets don't make up the entire neighborhood. So this plan takes a comprehensive look at the entire community, as reflected in the Table of Contents on the previous page. Ideas from this broad view show the way towards building on assets and dealing with deficiencies in the years to come, to make Grant-Amherst universally great. These ideas are in Chapter 4, with "Seven Prioritized Objectives for 2013-2014" listed in Chapter 5, to get positive change moving right away.

Please share this draft plan, send us your feedback, and use it to join us in the process of making Grant-Amherst great!

— Members of the 2013 Grant-Amherst Community Plan Project Team: Mary Ann Kedron, Mark Kubinieć, Bill Parke, Greg Rohall, and Max Willig, August, 2013.



Figure 1: Elements of what makes Grant-Amherst great today can be found in this postcard from the Grant-Amherst Business Association Photo Project. Clockwise from top right: the Grant-Amherst intersection c1918 — dense and walkable, with mixed uses in buildings with unique facades; a bicyclist; the opening of bus route #32 in 1950; local stores in quality buildings, like this one shown c1910; places that bring the community together, like Polish Cadets Hall shown c1930.



CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

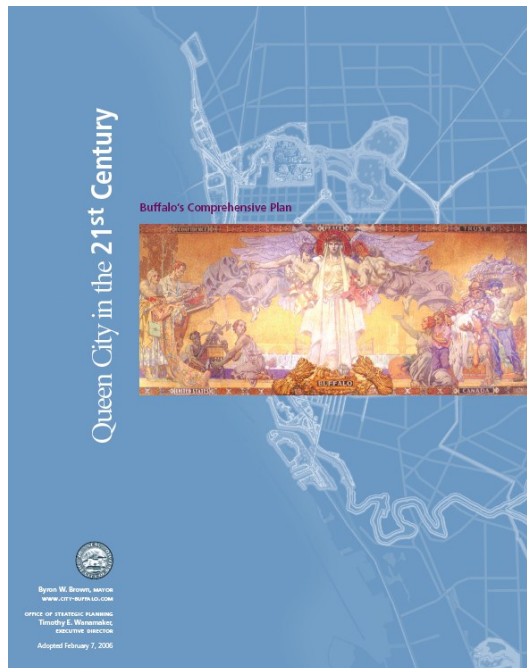


Figure 2: Report cover for *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* (Adopted 2006).

1. Introduction

In 2000, the Mayor of Buffalo created a neighborhood planning process, utilizing participatory neighborhood planning practices, called the “Good Neighbors Planning Alliance,” as part of the initiative to create and implement the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*. As a result, the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (Black Rock-Riverside GNPA) was created, as one of 10 planning alliance areas in the City of Buffalo.

The Black Rock-Riverside GNPA started its plan-creation process in 2004, by first drafting a broad, GNPA-wide draft plan with the help of student interns under the guidance of community planners from the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning. This effort resulted in a final draft in 2007 posted to the City web site. Recognizing the value of planning at a more local, neighborhood-level, the Black Rock -Riverside GNPA began a process with strong Council Member support in 2007 of creating neighborhood plans in partnership with local block

groups and community groups, leading to its first draft plan in 2008, *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan* (Draft 2008 — available at www.city-buffalo.com/plan_black_rock). This was followed by *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* (Draft 2010). The current plan is the third in this ongoing effort.

2. History of Grant-Amherst

The Grant-Amherst community grew up as an outgrowth of the older Black Rock Village neighborhood along the Niagara River.

In the early 1800s, before the streets Grant and Amherst even existed, the area was host to lands along the north shore of Scajaquada Creek, a

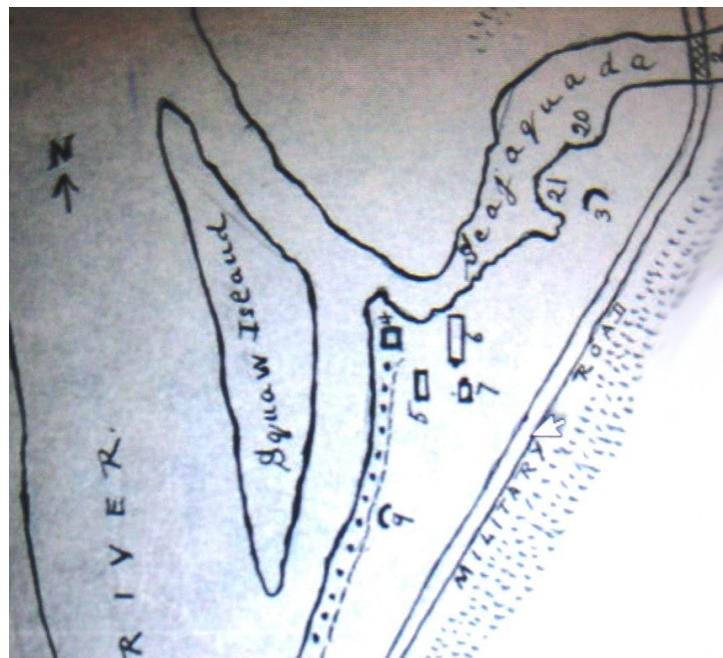


Figure 3: The section of an 1813 map by Peter Porter shows today's Grant-Amherst neighborhood at the intersection of major transportation routes, shortly after the outbreak of the War of 1812. Visible are the waterways of Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek, and the bridge over the creek for Military Road. Sites numbered by Porter on his map include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (2) Bridge over Scajaquada Creek | (20) Whence Perry's Vessels were hauled up to Lake Erie |
| (3) Battery | (21) US Naval Yard where those vessels were made over into gun boats, Winter 1812 |
| (4) Block House | |
| (5) U.S. Store House | |
| (6) Barracks | |
| (7) Officers House | |



CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

bridge to cross it, and Military Road, each representing key links in a transportation network that predated the War of 1812. The creek was much larger at that time, and represented an important navigable inland waterway for travelers heading eastward from the Niagara River. The bridge provided a north-south route across the creek, connecting Military Road with the villages of Black Rock and Buffalo, and the ferry boats to Canada.

Grant-Amherst area was lightly settled when the War of 1812 erupted (see Figure 3), but it was nevertheless a place of major strategic importance and wartime developments, including:

- Site of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's Naval Yard (1812)
- Area of Troop Movements and Tragedies Associated with the Burning of Black Rock and Buffalo (1813)
- Site of the Battle of Scajauada Creek Bridge (1814)

(Find more on these events at: <http://blackrockhistoricalsociety.com/warof1812.html>)

The advent of the railroads in the late 19th century and the industrial growth that accompanied them brought tracks that surround this neighborhood which, through the Belt Line, transported the people who came to work at the industries, and the goods which the industries produced. (see Figure 4) Largely at first a Polish immigrant community, these workers came for jobs to be found at: Pratt and Lambert; Fedders; Buffalo Batt and Felt, and later Curtiss Wright and many others. Grant-Amherst has always been a blue collar neighborhood, and the Polish influence is seen even today in the churches and social clubs. The orientation to markets and small businesses stems from this era. Vestiges of the many bakeries, bars and stores can be seen interwoven within the housing stock of many of these city blocks.

During World War II many of the men in this neighborhood served with distinction, and afterward came home to reap the benefits of Veterans Administration housing plans. This unfortunately meant that many of the families moved to the suburbs and the area faced problems associated with suburban flight typical of the era. Those choosing to remain faced shifting economic and social demographics. Grant-Amherst remains an area where immigrants come to live, but now they are from further away, more recent areas of unrest such as Nepal and Bhutan.

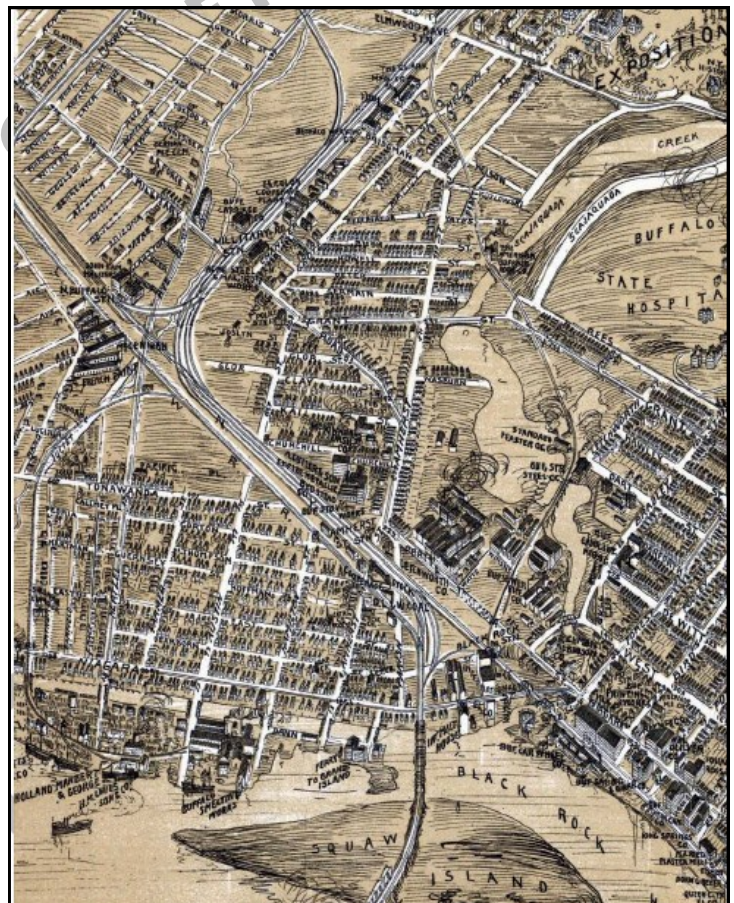


Figure 4: Detail of Lower Black Rock and Grant-Amherst areas, from the Buffalo 1902 *Bird's Eye View* map. This map shows Grant-Amherst in a period of robust growth. Clinton Brown & Company, in the *Multiple Property Documentation Form* they prepared in 2010, commented, "Lower Black Rock and the Erie Canal are located at the bottom of the image, while Grant-Amherst is located towards the upper-center of the map. Note how disconnected the two historic neighborhoods were in the early 1900s, divided by a thick network of rail lines. Also note the significant industrialization along Black Rock coast and at the Scajauada Creek/Tonawanda Street area." Also of interest are the Pan-American Exposition grounds shown in the northern right part of the map.



CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

Overall this community remains a remarkably stable and tolerant neighborhood, with many walkable attractions.

3. Geographic Area

The geographic boundaries of Grant-Amherst are Elmwood Avenue to the east, Tonawanda St and the Railroad to the west, Chandler St and the Railroad to the north, and Scajaquada Creek to the South (both sides of Scajaquada Creek are

included for the purposes of this planning document to allow for more relevant planning, specifically with regard to waterfront access and environmental impacts.)

4. The Broader Context

Buffalo State College to the south, below the Scajaquada Creek, presents the Grant Amherst community with a huge, growing population creating market demand, as well as a need for



Figure 5: Map of Grant-Amherst and Surrounding Areas



CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

student housing. Scajaquada Creek itself, with access to the Niagara River, offers scenic views and canoe recreation opportunities and a historic identity, while the Jesse Kregal Pathway on its northern edge provides top quality biking, walking, and playground amenities.

A Museum District is located to the east and south of Grant-Amherst, beginning with the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society and extending to the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Burchfield Penney, art restoration programs within Buffalo State College, and Richardson Complex. All are within walking distance. To the west is Historic Black Rock, centered by the newly established Market Square National Historic District and on its far western edge, the Niagara River. (See Figure 5.)

The Grant-Amherst community today is known largely for the mixture of businesses that serve the needs of local residents and the surrounding community. Some such as Niemiec Builders Supply have served the community for multiple generations. Typically these businesses serve as the face of Grant-Amherst to the city and suburbs at large. People recognize “Sportsmen’s Tavern” or “Spar’s European Sausage Shop,” or travel to Tops Markets and Wegmans, and will then venture into other areas of the community to be part of the experience.

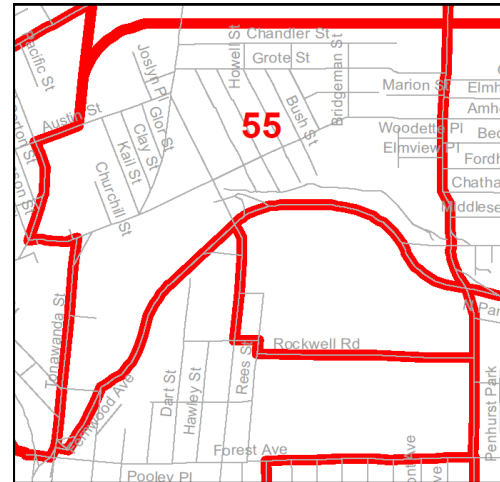


Figure 7: Boundaries of Census Tract 55.

The business corridor along Grant and Amherst Streets is served by the Grant-Amherst Businessmen’s Association, a group which has been the nexus for redevelopment and stabilization in this area. Grant-Amherst residents avail themselves of goods and services in the commercial corridor, and also find themselves traveling outside of it for others, i.e. medical care. The combination of basic and specialty services and their appeal within the community and without, has led to a vibrant and growing business corridor.

Events such as the annual Discover Amherst Street Festival, having recently completed its 16th year, serve to bring the community together, providing greater integration for business and neighbors, while inviting other constituencies to experience all this area has to offer. (See Figure 6.)



Figure 6: Discover Amherst has proven to be a popular festival.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Demographics

Demographic data is available from the U.S. Census, with Census Tract 55 providing the best

boundary for planning purposes. (See Figure 7.) These boundaries have not changed since before 1960. Interpretive comments appear below the data and a color code key is on the next page.

	2010	%	2000	%	1990	%	1980	%	1970	%	1960	%
Total Population	4054	100%	3954	100%	3943	100%	4203	100%	5506	100%	6868	100%
Race												
Total Population	4054	100.0%	3954	100.0%	3943	100.0%	4203	100.0%	5506	100%	6868	100%
White	2515	62.0%	3199	80.9%	3691	93.6%	4122	98.1%	5468	99%	6856	100%
Black	750	18.5%	223	5.6%	63	1.6%	24	0.6%	4	0%	3	0%
American Indian	61	1.5%	147	3.7%	99	2.5%	25	0.6%				
Asian	248	6.1%	93	2.4%	58	1.5%	6	0.1%				
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	Incl		Incl					
Some Other Race	247	6.1%	106	2.7%	32	0.8%	26	0.6%	34	1%	9	0%
Two or More Races	232	5.7%	184	4.7%								
Hispanic or Latino	637	16%	308	8%	115	3%	69	2%				
Not Hispanic or Latino	3417	84%	3646	92%	3828	97%	4134	98%				
Age												
Total Population	4054	100%	3954	100%	3943	100%	4203	100%	5506	100%	6868	100%
19 and Under	1156	29%	1172	30%	963	24%	964	23%	1648	30%	2246	33%
20to24	446	11%	297	8%	383	10%	505	12%	536	10%	451	7%
25to34	684	17%	632	16%	836	21%	614	15%	556	10%	928	14%
35to44	463	11%	643	16%	432	11%	317	8%	544	10%	1096	16%
45to54	541	13%	424	11%	261	7%	441	10%	862	16%	820	12%
55to64	362	9%	246	6%	372	9%	691	16%	678	12%	511	7%
65to74	190	5%	266	7%	454	12%	420	10%	382	7%	643	9%
75+	212	5%	274	7%	242	6%	251	6%	300	5%	173	3%
Native Born via ACS 2006-2010												
Native Born	3627	88%	3514	89%	3618	92%	3693	88%	4730	85%	5435	79%
Foreign Born via ACS 2006-2010												
Foreign Born	483	12%	440	11%	325	8%	510	12%	823	15%	1433	21%
Income via ACS 2006-2010												
Median HH Income	\$21213		\$20957		\$15608		\$11595					
Median Family Income	\$25125		\$23977		\$22206		\$15434		\$8819		\$5874	
Per Capita Income	\$14521		\$13821		\$9581		\$6331					
In Civilian Labor Force	1920	100%	1836	100%	1740	100%	2897	100%	2472	100%	3087	100%
In Labor Force - Employed	1745	91%	1574	86%	1554	89%	2537	88%	2331	94%	2845	92%
In Labor Force - Unemployed	175	9%	262	14%	186	11%	360	12%	141	6%	242	8%
Not in Labor Force	1315		1116		1394		2429		1819		2275	

Figure 8: Since 1960, the U.S. Census shows: An overall trend of decreasing population, but with recent increases; Growing racial diversity, especially with Asians, Blacks, and those of Some Other Race or Two or More Races increasing in proportion; Increasing Hispanic or Latino ethnicity; Broadly stable Age cohorts over the long term; Foreign Born residents increasing, after declining to 325 by 1990, but still at less than historic levels in '60-'80; Relatively flat income trends; Recovering employment levels after a steep drop in '80-'90, but still less than historic levels. Numbers are rounded.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

	2010	%	2000	%	1990	%	1980	%	1970	%	1960	%
Population in HH	4037		3940		3921		4191		5483		6802	
Householder	1759		1750		1865		1898		2072		2183	
Own Child Under 18*	927		972		1110						1964	
Other Relatives	234		197		123		1351		2135		978	
Nonrelatives	387		313		264		168		107		129	
Population per HH	2.30		2.25		2.1		2.21		2.65		3.12	
Households	1759	100%	1750	100%	1865	100%	1898	100%	2072	100%	2183	100%
Households by Type												
Husband-wife family	412	23%	473	27%	949	51%	1097	58%	1169	56%	1543	71%
With Own Children Under 18**	205		228		451		417		568		526	
Female HH, no husband present	344	20%	346	20%								
with own children under 18 years	211		231									
Housing												
Total Housing Units	2083	100.0%	2095	100%	2084	100%	2141	100%	2184	100%	2264	100%
Occupied	1759	84.4%	1750	84%	1865	89%	1898	89%	2184	100%	2183	96%
Occupancy	1759	100.0%	1750	100%	1865	100%	1898	100%	2184	100%	2183	100%
Owner-Occupied	490	27.9%	623	36%	686	37%	772	41%	858	39%	891	41%
Renter-Occupied	1269	72.1%	1127	64%	1179	63%	1126	59%	1214	56%	1292	59%
Vacant	324	15.6%	345	16%	219	11%	243	11%	112	5%	81	4%
Vacancy	324	100.0%	345	100%	219	100%	243	100%	112	100%	81	100%
Vacant For Rent	102	31.5%	141	41%	50	23%	97	40%	55	49%	60	74%
Vacant For Sale Only	3	0.9%	47	14%	4	2%	8	3%	6	5%	7	9%
Calculated Other Vacants***	219	67.6%	157	46%	165	75%	138	57%	51	46%	14	17%

Color Code	100 % data
	Sample Data

*2000 figure includes "Child"; "Own child under 18 years" is 972 and is used here.

**Beginning in 2000 Census, coverage of Household and Families is broken down in more detail than previously; changing composition warrants additional study.

***Shown is a numerical calculation capturing numerous variables about vacancy which are consistent between the U.S. Censuses.

Figure 9: Since 1960, the U.S. Census shows: Decreasing number of households; particularly noticeable are the dramatic decreases in household characteristics typically associated with the immediate or "nuclear" family. Among households those "With Own Child Under 18" has dropped in half from 1960 levels, from 1,964 to 927, and the proportion is repeated in Family Households, from 526 to 205. Husband-Wife Families are less than one-third 1960 levels. Meanwhile Female Households with No Husband Present arrived as a new category in 2000, and remains at 20% of Households. This is notable because research indicates that "Low-income, single and teen parents are more likely to face a range of pressures that challenge their capacity for effective and strong parenting, thus increasing their child's risk of starting out behind. Research shows children growing up in low-income and single-parent households are at greater risk for developing health and behavioral problems as well as cognitive delays.." (*Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Needs Assessment Study*, Spring 2011, page 38)

Housing statistics show a consistent number of housing units, while occupancy levels have decreased through the years, but stabilized recently at 84%. Meanwhile, percent owner occupancy has dropped from the high 30s/low 40s to 28% in 2010, while percent renter occupancy has increased from high 50s/low 60s to 72% in 2010. However, units rented has remained in the 1200 range, while the owner occupied units have almost halved since 1960, from 891 to 490. Vacant units have increased in numerical terms from 81 in 1960 to 324 in 2010, and those in the "Calculated Other Vacants" category have increased numerically from 14 to 219. It is possible that owners living in doubles are more frequently presiding over one vacant unit in the double while they continue to live in the other unit.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Recently, the Census Bureau modified the way it surveys the population. Instead of doing one in-depth survey every 10 years (i.e. on a decennial basis), the census now surveys every year and converts the results into rolling five year estimates, in addition to a more limited decennial census held in 2010. The estimates are called the American Community Survey. The more limited decennial census is the 2010 Census. For planning purposes, we refer to statistics from both programs in this document.

As shown in the preceding tables, since 1960 Grant-Amherst’s social and economic trends are characterized by decreasing population, but with recent increases; growing racial and Hispanic/Latino diversity; stable aging patterns; increasing Foreign Born residents; flat income trends; and recovering employment patterns, but at less than the historic levels of the 1960-1970s.

Household and housing trends show that the composition of households is much different than in the past, with the rise of non-traditional families and lessening in the number of nuclear families. For example, 20% of households are now led by Female Households with No Husband Present. The number of housing units has remained stable,

while occupancy has dropped somewhat; the number of vacant units has increased correspondingly. Units rented have remained stable, while owner occupied units have halved since 1960 (from 858 to 480 units).

Regarding the issue of vacant units, it is possible that owners living in doubles are more frequently presiding over one unit remaining vacant in the double while they continue to live in the other unit.

Residential Neighborhood Characteristics (Micro-Neighborhoods)

So what is it like to live in Grant-Amherst? Let’s look at how people in Grant-Amherst divide the living spaces in their neighborhood.

Three distinct residential micro-neighborhoods are:

1. Military Road,
2. Central Grant-Amherst, and
3. McKinley. (See Figure 10.)

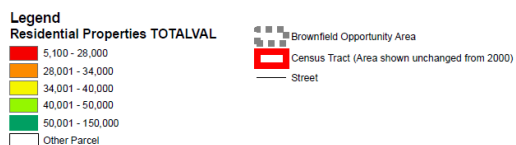


Figure 10: Three distinct micro-neighborhoods in Grant-Amherst are shown with the help of this map of Residential Property Values:

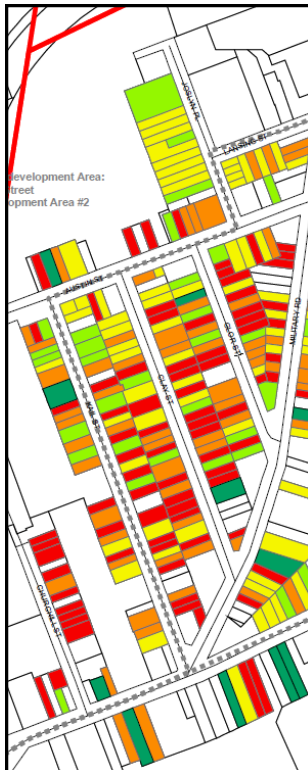
1. Military Road,
2. Central Grant-Amherst, and
3. McKinley.

Notes: Micro-neighborhood boundaries are approximate. The map legend for this map and the maps on the following pages is shown above.





CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY



**Military Road
micro-
neighborhood**

Figure 11: Military Road micro-neighborhood. Legend on

Military Road Micro-Neighborhood

The streets in this micro-neighborhood are: Clay, Kail, Glor, Austin, Churchill, and Joslyn. Boundaries are Railroads to the north and west, Scajaquada to the south and Military Road to the east. (see Figure 11)

Separated from the older Village of Black Rock by the railroad since the late 1800s, this neighborhood has more of the character-istics of the 1800s Village of Black Rock neighborhood than the rest of Grant-Amherst. Here one finds worker’s cottages. A recent Historic Resources survey in this neighborhood

found a number of homes of possible national register historic significance and, in former Police Station 13, a former government buildings of importance for its historic architecture.

Historically the individuals living in this micro-neighborhood would have walked to work to the factories along Tonawanda Street north of the Scajaquada Creek. There were also industrial operations embedded within the micro-neighborhood that provided employment, notably along Churchill and Amherst.

To the east this micro neighborhood has a major street forming its eastern border:

Military Road, which dates from the early 1800s and was established to form a connection between Fort Niagara and the villages of Black Rock and Buffalo and its military installations. It was used for the purposes of troop movement and transporting military supplies.

Central Grant-Amherst Micro-Neighborhood

The streets in this micro-neighborhood are: Grant, Amherst, Grote, Germain, Peter, Howell, Bush and Reservation. Boundaries are Grant St. to the west, Scajaquada Creek to the south, Reservation to the east and the railroad at Chandler to the north. (see Figure 12)

This micro-neighborhood is the center of activity of Grant-Amherst. It provides most of the



**Central Grant-Amherst
micro-neighborhood**

Figure 12: Central Grant-Amherst micro-neighborhood. Legend on p.8.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

commercial and social activity of the neighborhood and the majority of the housing. Central Grant-Amherst:

- hosts many of the businesses in the Grant-Amherst Business Association,
- is the host of most activities associated with the Discover Amherst annual festival, and
- links much of Grant-Amherst to the highway (NY Rte. 198/Scajaguada Expressway) and recreational trail (Jesse Kregal Pathway).

found along Amherst Street, and in side streets accessed from Elmwood Ave. north and south of Amherst Street.

In Figure 13, with darker shading indicates assessed value of residential properties. Evident are a concentration of high values, in a cohesive residential area north of McKinley High School, and similarly highly valued residential properties along Amherst Street, while those along Marion Street are assessed at more modest levels.

Commercial Area

The Grant-Amherst commercial area has built a very positive reputation as being a cool, arts-oriented destination in Buffalo.

Grant-Amherst is now known as a place to visit for live music, art,



Figures 14 & 15: GABA banners promote both the district and businesses like Spar's European Sausage.



McKinley micro-neighborhood

Figure 13: McKinley micro-neighborhood. Legend on p. 7.

The historic commercial and housing stock remains intact here, yet several former industrial sites have been transformed into regional shopping destinations (Tops, Wegmans), or represent available land for new development (especially along Chandler, in the northern part of the area.)

McKinley Micro-Neighborhood

Streets include: Reservation, Chandler, Amherst, Marion, Grote, Elmview, Manton, Bridgeman, Woodette, and Beaumaris. Boundaries are Elmwood on the east, Chandler and the railroad to the north, Scajaguada to the south and Reservation to the west. (see Figure 13)

The McKinley micro-neighborhood is the easternmost part of the Grant-Amherst, and is defined by the influence of Elmwood Ave. to the east. Along Elmwood is a high concentration of commercial buildings. Along Marion and Grote are commercial and light industrial operations. Residential areas can be

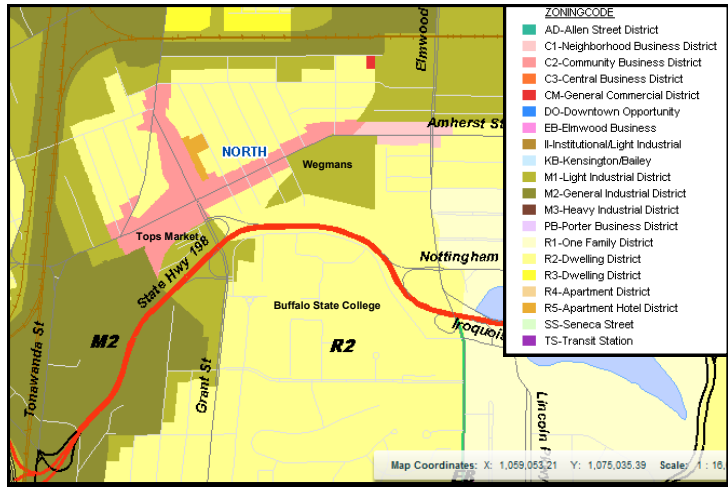


Figure 16: This current City of Buffalo zoning map shows the dimensions of the commercial, manufacturing, and residential areas of Grant-Amherst. Note the strong, walkable C1-Neighborhood Business District designated by the light pink along Amherst and Grant Streets, north of State Highway 198. Regional shopping centers Tops Market and Wegmans are shown as being part of the M1-Light Industrial District designation, while Buffalo State College is shown as an R2-Dwelling District below State Highway 198.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

and events, as well as specialized neighborhood retail as well as the highly regarded regional supermarkets Tops Market and Wegmans and suppliers like Niemiec Builders Supply.

Also noteworthy is that the Grant-Amherst Business Association (GABA) is in a position to further promote development as one of the stronger neighborhood business associations in Buffalo. This status is evidenced by its many festivals, the Historic Photo Project, and its winning status as Buffalo’s “Coolest Up & Coming Neighborhood” in the *Artvoice* Awards for 2011. (See Appendix A.)

Significant Recent Investments. Developer Proposals, and Assets

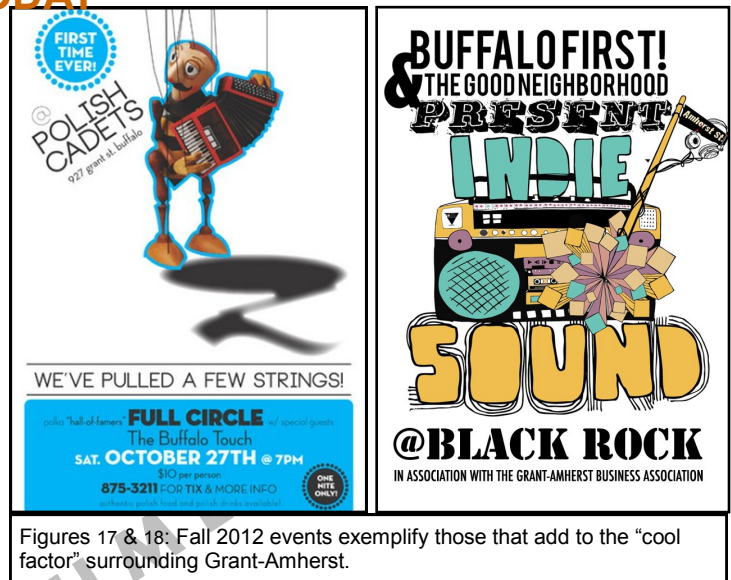
Thanks to GABA and its member businesses, positive media attention is showered on the neighborhood and its significant recent investments and development proposals.

Regional Anchors

- Buffalo State College, on Grant
- Tops Market, on Grant
- Wegmans, on Amherst

Expansion/Redevelopment Proposals/Plans

- Buffalo State College, on Grant
- Weatherpanel, on Chandler
- Niagara Lubricants, on Chandler
- The Phoenix - An American Tavern, 269 Amherst Street
- Sportsmen’s, 326-330 Amherst
- Gambino Liquors, 338-340 Amherst
- Lucy Ethiopian Restaurant and Variety Store, 388 Amherst
- Hook & Ladder 12 Firehouse, 391 Amherst
- Rohall’s Corner, 540 Amherst
- Black Rock Kitchen & Bar, 491 Amherst
- Delish, 414 Amherst
- Tops Market, on Grant
- Wegmans, on Amherst
- Roland Cantazarro Insurance, 434 Amherst
- Artsphere Gallery & Salon Daneen, 447 Amherst



Figures 17 & 18: Fall 2012 events exemplify those that add to the “cool factor” surrounding Grant-Amherst.

- Gallery 464, 464 Amherst
- Maywalt Realty Group, 495 Amherst

New or Improved Infrastructure/Public Spaces

- Grant Street Bridge at Scajaquada Creek
- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy’s Improvements at the Peter Street Playground and along the Jesse Kregal Pathway overall
- Pocket Park and Mural at Grant & Amherst (NE corner)
- Mural on Kneewall along Polish Cadets at Grant & Amherst (SE corner)
- Repaving of Grant & Amherst Intersection

Planning Initiatives

- Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area (BOA)
- Buffalo Green Code
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP)
- Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Neighborhood Planning Effort in Grant-Amherst
- NY Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway Downgrade Project, NYSDOT

Housing Infill Development Proposals

- Housing proposal for 1027-1055 Grant
- Housing proposal for 288 Austin

Cultural Initiatives

- \$105K in Greenway Funds for War of 1812



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

over a century in age, transportation issues are multiple. They include manmade barriers created by the railroads and roadways, which have interrupted the natural flow of people from one neighborhood to another throughout the neighborhood's history. To the west and north are the raised railroad beds that separate the Village of Black Rock, West Hertel and Riverside from Grant-Amherst. Travel under viaducts or over train tracks is necessary, onerous, and blighted, to get from one neighborhood to another. To the south are Scajaquada Creek and Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway. This road effectively separates this neighborhood from the entire campus of Buffalo State College, its resources, and the students and faculty that represent an expanding market. Major roadways experience much volume and speeding vehicles, while side streets are in many cases narrow and parking is congested. Fortunately, there are ways to address many of these issues.

Highway

The southern part of Grant-Amherst includes the NY Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway. While NYS DOT has underway a project to redesign this expressway to bring traffic calming measures to it, those are primarily applicable to east of where the highway becomes elevated near the City Impound. The elevated portion of the highway west of the City Impound remains an extraordinary challenge to neighborhood connectivity as well as enjoyment of Scajaquada Creek for recreational purposes. In short, the expressway represents a major barrier at this time and its impact on the Creek and neighborhood connectivity is illustrated in Figures 20 and 21.

Major Roadways

Major roadways run through this neighborhood. Grant St. and Military Road running north south act as transit ways for trucks carrying goods across the city to the Kenmore and Tonawandas. In some instances this includes international traffic coming across the Peace Bridge from Canada. This transit follows along the rail corridor and has been the point of discussion for re-routing the Thruway away from the waterfront along this corridor. Significant to this neighborhood is the use of these roadways as point to point transit, with little stopping within the neighborhood itself.

Grant St. is a major bus route for this neighborhood. This is significant as many of the social services and health care services available to this community lie along this road in the West Hertel neighborhood. This factor, plus the traffic of 9,864 vehicles on Grant Street north of Amherst St., may point to a need to manage that traffic carefully. (See Figure 19 for traffic counts.)

Grant St. south of Amherst St. and Elmwood Ave. are major shopping corridors for this neighborhood; auto-centric commercial development predominates in this area of Grant St., while Elmwood Ave. also connects with larger



Figure 20 and 21: Aerial images above show the before and after effects of construction of the NY Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway on Scajaquada Creek and the Museum District.

Source: <http://buffalorising.com>.



CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

retail establishments found north and east of the neighborhood.

Amherst St. runs east to west, and is the commercial corridor with the most character in this neighborhood. This street has many of the neighborhood shops and acts as the connector to the neighborhoods east west. Bus travel along this corridor on route 32-Amherst helps to connect individuals to north-south routes such as Elmwood Ave., Grant and Niagara Sts.

Side Streets

Side streets in this neighborhood north and south of Amherst St. tend to be narrow, making street parking a challenge. The 30 foot lots and high density of housing create great pressure for parking, specifically since most of the houses are doubles and likely to have two cars, one for each unit. With little off street parking the streets tend to be congested with cars. This is a major issue in the winter when snow removal is difficult presenting issues for the residents of these side street neighborhoods. The streets north of Amherst St. are relatively long and uni-directional, and congestion in one part of the street creates a major issue for the remainder of the street. This is a direct quality of life aspect of this neighborhood which affects housing purchases and marketability. Ways to alleviate the congestion may include putting in place amenities to



Figure 22: This photo of Germain St. looking north from Amherst St. in May 2011 illustrates the narrow characteristic of side streets off the Amherst street commercial corridor.

The City's *Index of Paved Streets* (1983) lists Germain St. as having a pavement width of 26 feet.



Figure 23: A bicycle corral in Chicago.

Source: <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/The-312/July-2013/Chicagos-Bike-Infrastructure-Is-Good-News-For-Bars/>

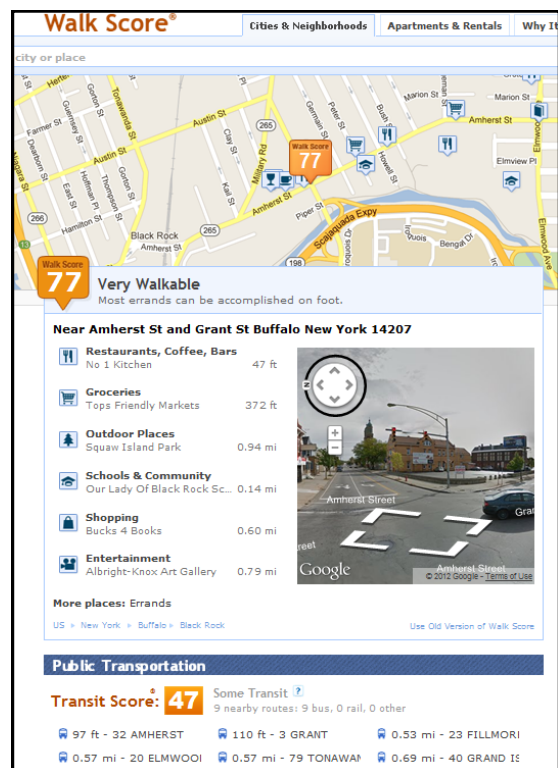


Figure 24: In Oct. 2012, Walkscore.com gave the Grant-Amherst intersection a Walk Score of "77-Very Walkable," saying "most errands can be accomplished on foot."

It received a Transit Score of "47-Some Transit."



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encourage walking and bicycling. For bicyclists, bike racks are an important feature; bringing innovative racks like attractive bicycle corrals, if permitted by local law and policy, may be a way to increase acceptability of bicycling as an alternative to driving in the neighborhood and thereby reduce parking congestion on side streets. (See Figure 23.)

Walkability

Generally, this neighborhood can be considered a very walkable neighborhood. Its size and transecting streets allow for reasonable access from street to street. Figure 24 shows that Walkscore.com gives the Grant-Amherst intersection a Walk Score of “77-Very Walkable,” indicating that “most errands can be accomplished on foot.” The intersection receives a Transit Score of “47-Some Transit,” with 9 bus routes identified nearby (this figure may be dated considering recent route restructuring; see Figure 25 for more information). The condition of the sidewalks and the universal access for wheelchairs and assistive motorized vehicles should be studied. The need for walkable sidewalks and access to grocery stores in the winter is also a consideration.

Biking and Bike Paths

There are no marked or separated bike lanes in this neighborhood. Additionally the narrow streets and major thoroughfares make biking challenging and dangerous at certain times of the day.

The Jessie Kregal Pathway along the north shore of Scajaquada Creek is the only dedicated off-road bike path and it runs along the southern perimeter of the neighborhood east to west. Strategies for increasing recreational trails along the rail corridors and bike ways on connecting east west and north south streets should be considered.

Bus Public Transportation

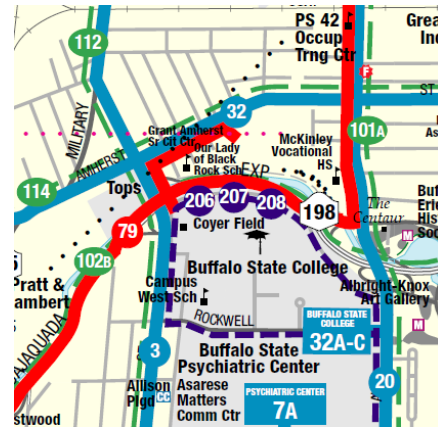


Figure 25: Since this map was published in 2008, NFTA-Metro has undergone a significant restructuring:
- Routes 1001A, 102B, and 112 have been eliminated,
- Service to Buffalo State College has changed,
- 3-Grant and 20-Elmwood have been established as Primary Routes to operate at 15-minute frequency during peak demand,
- 32-Amherst west of Elmwood is a Secondary Route,
- 79 remains an Express Bus to the Tonawandas.



Figure 26: An adult and child wait for the bus at Amherst St. and Elmwood Ave. In a 1-year period from Summer '09 to Spring '10, Grant-Amherst was serviced by two of the top four routes citywide in Average Weekday Bus Ridership: 3-Grant and 20-Elmwood.

Source: Report on file in Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo.



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In October, 2010, the entire route system of the NFTA-Metro public transportation network was restructured. Bus frequencies were increased on the heaviest used routes. See Figure 25 for a discussion of how the restructuring affected Grant-Amherst.

Connections

There are a number of shortcuts “across the tracks” that have been used by members of this neighborhood to get to other neighborhoods for a long time. Over the years the rails have also been a source of blight and danger. An example can be found in conditions along the tracks just south of Skillen Street in May, 2011, in Figure 28. To the left in the image are the active rails, which pose a safety risk to trespassers. To the right is a path atop a former railway. Between them is an earthen berm, with significant vegetative growth. In the far right of the image, visible in the bush, is a vandalized and abandoned automobile. Lawlessness accompanies such unkempt places.

Figure 29 shows the conditions of the railroad viaduct on Amherst Street, also in May, 2011. Crossing the tracks without using established viaducts like the one on Amherst Street is not advocated here, as this creates a hazardous situation on an active train line. However, the presence of shortcut paths and the occurrence of crimes along them indicate an obvious need for better connections between neighborhoods. Part

Figure 27 (below): A trestle in the Cooper-Young neighborhood of Memphis invokes a local streetscape; much like Grant-Amherst, the neighborhood is described in *Planning Magazine* as “eclectic” and “a bustling, vibrant neighborhood.”

Improving viaduct conditions in Grant-Amherst can help with neighborhood connections.

of the answer may be in improving the viaducts themselves. Below in Figure 27 is a picture of a similar viaduct in the Cooper-Young neighborhood of Memphis described in *Planning Magazine* as, “This old railroad trestle, depicting a Cooper-Young streetscape, is a popular landmark.” Other options, transformative in nature, have been advanced as an academic exercise by Buffalo State College student Crystal Surdyk in 2012. They are shown in Appendix B.



Figure 28 (top): Conditions along the rail just south of Skillen Street. A vandalized, abandoned automobile is at far right.

Figure 29 (above): A photo of the railroad viaduct on Amherst Street. A recent visit showed evidence of graffiti, stark conditions, and deteriorated concrete along the retaining walls and traffic median.





CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

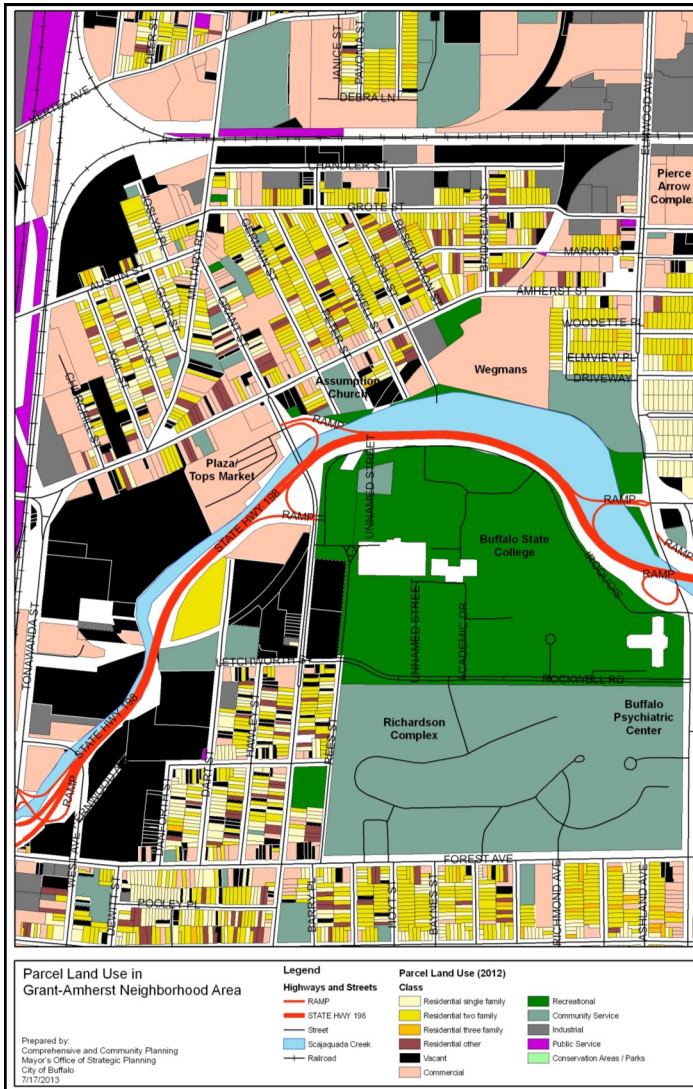


Figure 30: A Parcel Land Use map shows how parcels are being used according to tax assessment records.

Colorizing parcel boundaries reveals past and present neighborhood development patterns and neighborhood activity.

Land Use

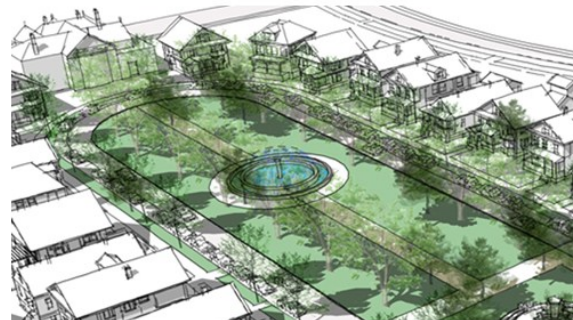
Grant-Amherst, bounded by railways to the west and north, Elmwood Ave. to the east, and Scajaquada Creek, Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway, and the sizable developments of the former Contract Pharmaceuticals complex, Auto Impound, Neimiec Building Supply, and Buffalo State College to the south. Land use patterns indicate that:

- Along rail lines on the periphery of the



Environmental Review Process

July 24, 2012



The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning is starting the environmental review process for the Buffalo Green Code. The draft scope for a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement has been released. This document will review the

following:

- Buffalo's Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), a set of policies and regulations that will guide the physical development of the city
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, a set of development policies for coastal areas in Buffalo and economic development
- Revised Urban Renewal Plans, which will take into account modern-day priorities for community and economic development
- Brownfield Opportunity Areas, a package of brownfield area master plans for South Buffalo, the Tonawanda Street Corridor, Buffalo Harbor, and the Buffalo River, including the RiverBend Commerce Park Master Plan

Figure 31: A 2012 announcement from the Buffalo Green Code project team describes the components of the Environmental Review Process associated with the Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework.

The Buffalo Green Code as well as other initiatives of importance to Grant-Amherst are a part of this Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework

neighborhood there are sizable areas of industrial/vacant land;

- Residential areas stretch northward from Amherst St. and to a lesser extent southward as well (in yellow shades);
- Large commercial areas can be found along an abandoned rail line which used to travel from present-day Pierce Arrow Complex, to Wegmans, to along the Scajaquada. (See map in Appendix C.)
- Small commercial parcels are located along Amherst Street, Grant Street, and Elmwood Avenue north of Woodette.

The Buffalo Green Code project is analyzing land use and arriving at rules for future development; these will help steer the future of Grant-Amherst.



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

This chapter discusses several key planning initiatives underway in Grant-Amherst:


1. Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)
2. Community Planning
3. Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework
4. Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey
5. Infrastructure Assessment for the Buffalo Consolidated Plan

As an historic community in the midst of social,


economic and environmental change, Grant-Amherst is being shaped by active community engagement on all these initiatives. This will form the strategy to achieve optimal outcomes, much in the way that the Grant-Amherst Business Association has improved the current business climate and future prospects of the commercial corridor along Amherst Street.


1. Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)

As depicted in Figure 32, the Tonawanda Street



BUFFALO BOA
Tonawanda Street Corridor











The Tonawanda Street Corridor BOA is comprised of 514 acres of primarily under-utilized industrial brownfields stretching from Scajaquada Creek along the Beltline rail corridor to just south of the Tonawanda municipal boundary. The site is strategically located with access to major highways, bi-national railway access, Niagara River frontage and frontage along the Scajaquada Creek and Jesse Kregel trail system which connects east towards Delaware Park.

The BOA boundary shown to the right was selected to include a number of major heavy industrial and commercial parcels that together represent the City's North Buffalo industrial rail corridor legacy from the turn of the 19th & 20th centuries. It encompasses a number of major industrial areas including the former Black Rock Yard Redevelopment Area, Austin Street Redevelopment Area, Chandler Street Redevelopment Area, and Lower Tonawanda Street Redevelopment Area. The BOA is bound by and partially comprised of a number of former 'walk to work' neighborhoods including the Black Rock, Grant-Ferry, Riverside, West Hertel and Grant and Amherst communities. Across the Scajaquada Creek, the Buffalo State College and Richardson Olmsted Complex are important assets adjacent to the BOA.

Key Opportunities:

- > Tie together the distinct neighborhoods and repair neighborhood edges.
- > Enhance relationship to the Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek.
- > Create a new setting for investment.

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03 **BUFFALO BOA**
Tonawanda Street Corridor

TONAWANDA STREET CORRIDOR BOA STUDY AREA




Figure 32: This poster, copied from the website <http://buffalobrownfieldopportunities.com>, shows both the railways and the boundary of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA), along with its rationale and key opportunities.

Note how the southeast boundary of the BOA extends into the Grant-Amherst neighborhood. As a result, it is clear that the neighborhood has a significant stake in the planning and implementation success of this BOA.



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

Corridor BOA, with over 500 acres of primarily under-utilized industrial brownfields located along the rail corridors from NY Route 198/Scajaquada Expressway to Skillen Street, represents both challenges and opportunities. Environmental issues are at the forefront of concerns of the Grant-Amherst neighborhood. Three areas of environmental influence on the future of the neighborhood are easily identifiable and discussed below:

1. The effects of industry,
2. the condition of Scajaquada Creek, and
3. the impact of transportation on connectivity.

The Effects of Industry

Residual industrial waste presents hazards to this neighborhood, and some current industries, while welcomed for their capacity to generate employment and commerce, are engaged in industrial operations that also require consistent oversight.

The Condition of Scajaquada Creek

Scajaquada Creek remains a major polluted waterway in need of remediation. This has been identified as a major issue by such groups as Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers and presents particular concerns for new immigrants who traditionally have used fishing as a means of sustenance and recreation, as well as those engaged in paddle sports like the Scajaquada Canoe Club.

The Impact of Transportation on Connectivity

Connectivity problems are posed by rail corridors and NYT Rte. 198/Scajaquada Expressway as a transportation barriers. These connectivity difficulties affect the ability of residents to enjoy quality of life assets located “on the other side of the tracks” on a daily basis, and the same with businesses, which experience a hard time accessing markets in other neighborhoods. For more on this issue, see the section on “Connections” in Chapter 2, starting on page 12.



Figure 33: A promotional email touts the May, 2013 “Scajaquada Regatta.”

Also held in May, 2013 was “Stars Along Scajaquada,” a family-friendly event at the foot of Peter Street, to celebrate the creek and the area’s role in hosting the Commodore Perry’s Naval Yard during the War of 1812.

Events like these and annual clean-ups of the creek raise awareness of Scajaquada Creek’s unique natural qualities and open the door to improved creek health and recreation in the future.

Amid These Challenges, an Opportunity Is Presented by the BOA

The designation of these brownfield areas part of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) presents the community with a unique opportunity to voice their opinions over use of the land as it is remediated and reused. Under study currently, the BOA Step 2—Nomination document, which opens the way to Step 3—Implementation activities, will be ready by the end of 2013. (See Figures 34, 35 and 36 for alternative development scenarios shared in the summer of 2012 for public comment.) It is our hope that the information contained in this planning document will be valuable to those studying the needs of this area.

On June 28, 2012, a workshop was held at Riverside High School to solicit feedback on planning concepts for the brownfield areas along the Tonawanda Street rail corridor, which extends along Chandler Street as well. (See map on page 18.) The workshop covering these concepts,



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES



The Big Moves

- New South Scajaquada Industrial Precinct.
- All recycling sites retained.
- Intensification of the Chandler Street as industrial corridor.
- Creation of mixed-use and live/work nodes at the western terminus of Amherst Street, the Niagara Street Corridor and the intersection of Tonawanda Street and Reno.
- Environmental improvements to Creek.
- Community wide public art to celebrate local heritage.
- Improvements to the underpass to enhance safety and better connect areas.
- Residential infill throughout to fill gaps.

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Figure 34: In 2012, the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project team released three alternative development scenarios for public review. This one is described as “A Focus on Industrial expansion and intensification”.



Big Moves

- Intensification of employment opportunities in the Free Trade Zone and Chandler Street Corridor.
- Full redevelopment of recycling parcels to higher value uses.
- Higher density mixed use development in Scajaquada Village and along Churchill.
- The Scajaquada Village hub, potentially supporting a significant institutional presence.
- A generous public river frontage along Scajaquada Creek to accommodate recreational opportunities.
- Creation of a north-south Rail Line Linear Park through the community.
- The extension of pedestrian and cycle trails from the Tonawanda BOA to the Niagara River.
- Improvements to the freeway underpasses linking the community to Buffalo State College.

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Figure 36: This alternative development scenario is called “Scajaquada Creek Campus and a mix of Employment and Residential Uses.”



Big Moves

- Redevelopment of outdoor recycling sites to higher value uses.
- Introduction of mixed-use along Churchill, the west Amherst node and Chandler Street.
- Potential expansion of the Aurubis Playing Fields.
- Creation of the Scajaquada Village Innovation Campus for high-tech and advanced manufacturing.
- Park and trail improvements along the Scajaquada Creek / Jesse Kregal Trail.
- New north-south trail along the rail corridor to connect Jesse Kregal with Shaffer Village Park.
- Expansion of Shaffer Village Park.
- New road connection between Watts Street and Letchworth Street.

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Figure 35: This alternative development scenario is “A Focus on Employment Diversification.”

presented as three alternative development scenarios (see Figures 34, 35, and 36), provided an excellent venue to collect input on local planning issues and the environmental concerns discussed above, including those affecting Grant-Amherst. Other events were held in November, 2011 (Project Launch) and January, 2012 (Visioning Workshop), and they have been insightful as well.

The TC BOA project team is currently analyzing the 2012 workshop comments in relation to the three alternative development scenarios (online at <http://buffalobrownfieldopportunities.com/the-boas/tonawanda-street-corridor-2/>) Nevertheless, preliminary indications are that while there are a variety of opinions on details contained in the three alternative development scenarios, there is broad support for the Emerging Principles that undergird the scenarios shown below.

Emerging Principles for the BOA Planning



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

1. Restore environmental quality and improve community health.

- Foster partnerships between the private and public sectors to clean-up contaminated lands and waterways to restore environmental and community health.
- Incorporate green technology, renewable energy and sustainable design features into new development.

2. Enhance employment opportunities through brownfield redevelopment

- Clean-up and redevelop brownfield sites to expand business and employment opportunities in the area.
- Strengthen existing businesses and encourage a mix of local retail establishments.
- Support small business development through apprenticeship programs, and increased live/work opportunities

3. Improve access and connectivity

- Improve connections across the rail corridors and to destinations within and beyond the BOA.
- Invest in quality streetscape connections and establish an on-street bicycle network to enhance pedestrian and cycle access.

- Expand trail and pedestrian connections to and along Scajaquada Creek, Jesse Kregal Pathway and the Niagara Riverwalk.

4. Celebrate the character and history of the area

- Protect and enhance the stable neighborhood fabric and heritage assets in the area.
- Redevelop vacant and abandoned sites to improve neighborhood image and character.
- Reuse historic buildings to preserve neighborhood character and enhance community vitality.

5. Promote housing revitalization

- Target residential infill development to complement and strengthen existing neighborhoods.
- Strive to improve property maintenance throughout the community.
- Work to reduce crime through the use of environmental design principles and by improving recreational opportunities for youth.

6. Examine opportunities for enhanced recreational amenities

- Enhance the environmental condition and recreational potential of Scajaquada Creek and the Niagara River, restoring ecosystems and natural habitat areas
- Explore opportunities to provide new community parks and recreation facilities.

7. Recognize Buffalo State College as an important neighbor

- Capitalize on the proximity of Buffalo State College as an important community anchor, employer and educator.
- Improve linkages and connections to the college, institutional development and student



Figure 37: Matthew Bucholtz expresses his views during a YNN TV interview on concepts contained in alternative scenarios presented as part of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area planning workshop, held in June 28, 2012.

“I’d love to see a bike path through the Tonawanda Street Corridor extending to the Riverfront bike path.”

— Matthew Bucholtz at the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area planning workshop



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES



Figure 38: As part of Open House #2 for the Tonawanda Street Corridor BOA, participants in one of several breakout session groups review their answers to these five questions:

1. What types of land uses should be located in the BOA? Where should these be located?
2. Prioritize the above land uses by the short, medium or long term prospects,
3. Identify the physical improvements necessary to facilitate new land uses (roads, bridges, utilities, parks space, marinas, community facilities, etc)
4. Locate any special precinct areas or zones that are defined by their unique character or qualities. What activities should take place in these areas?
5. Make a list of the top 5 big moves (projects) that will bring prosperity to the BOA over the next 30 years. This input was used in subsequent BOA planning efforts.

housing.

8. Focus investment and development to optimize benefits

- Utilize the BOA process to plan future growth smartly.
- Plan for long term, incremental growth supported by focused implementation activities within priority development areas to make a big impact. Do not allow short term activities to preclude long term goals.
- Balance brownfield redevelopment opportunities in the Tonawanda Street Corridor with environmental and development priorities in other parts of the city.

(Source: <http://buffalobrownfieldopportunities.com/updates/>; Accessed 10/2012)

2. Community Planning and Public Participation

Two techniques were used to solicit community ideas for this draft neighborhood plan: A community meeting and neighborhood survey.

Community Meeting

On November 29, 2011, the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, under the leadership of Richard Mack and Evelyn Vossler as Co-Chairs, held a meeting dedicated to Grant-Amherst neighborhood planning. (see Figures 39 & 41)

After welcoming remarks by Mark Kubiniec,



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

President of the Grant-Amherst Business Association, Mary Ann Kedron presented a PowerPoint slideshow highlighting the importance of neighborhood planning toward creating resilient, strong communities, and explained the concept of residential micro-neighborhoods. This was followed by Phil Haberstro, Executive Director of The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York, who led an exercise to define community needs. Using the Healthy City/Community model as a framework for discussion, he posed the following questions:

- What level of “Livability” is present in the neighborhood?
- Can we all “play in the sandbox together”?
- Is the community prepared to “give ground” to arrive at a better future?

Mr. Haberstro then created five breakout groups, and suggested that each one pick priority actions that would make Grant-Amherst a better neighborhood by improving the quality of life, and then asked each group to choose their top priority action. Through this process and the resulting discussion (see Appendix D), Three Big Issues were identified:



Figure 40: The Healthy City/Community model used by The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York recognizes that, when measuring community wealth, Human capital is at the intersection of:

1. Environmental,
 2. Social and
 3. Economic well-being.
1. Safety, including infrastructure, pedestrian and personal safety;
 2. Youth, i.e. youth/young adult activities and recreation;
 3. Housing, i.e. stronger quality of housing.

Neighborhood Survey

In addition to the Community Meeting discussed above, as part of the Grant-Amherst Planning activities a neighborhood survey was conducted in late 2011. Two survey distributions occurred: The first was circulated as part of a planning



Figures 39 & 41: On November 29, 2011 at Assumption Church in the Grant-Amherst neighborhood, Mark Kubiniec, President of the Grant-Amherst Business Association, initiated a Black Rock-Riverside GNPA meeting dedicated to Grant-Amherst neighborhood planning.

Mary Ann Kedron, Chair of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA housing committee, then presented the concept of residential micro-neighborhoods (left).

She was followed by Phil Haberstro, Executive Director of The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York, who led an exercise to define community needs (right). North District Council Member Joseph Golombek, Jr., also participated in the meeting.



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meeting of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance. The second was printed as part of the neighborhood paper, the *Riverside Review*. Questions related to citizen involvement and quality of life issues. (see Appendix E) We received approximately 30 survey responses, and Key Issues identified were:

Safety

When asked if people feel safe in the neighborhood, 85% of the respondents said they did not feel safe.

Recommendations:

- Police presence: including foot and park patrols and police on bike path. More police patrols rated first on the list of community priorities.
- Improved lighting
- Drug eradication

Parks and Green Spaces

When the community was asked if there were sufficient parks, 73% said there were not enough parks in the neighborhood. A second question was asked about what improvements would make you want to stay in the neighborhood.

Overwhelmingly these related to green improvements such as street trees, community gardens, and playgrounds. There is no question that there is a lack of recreational space in the neighborhood. When asked where they would like to see such improvements, the suggestions included areas along the Scajaquada Creek and Tonawanda Street. This land is currently within a designated Brownfield Opportunity Area.

Recommendations:

This area should be considered for more greenspace in response to the community's wishes.

- Enhanced green spaces should be developed in each of the micro neighborhoods.
- Tree planting and street scape master plan should be created
- Playground opportunities should be identified within the micro neighborhood and within walking distance for young families

Transportation and Parking

Traffic Issues along Grant Street and Amherst Street

A key issue is the management of traffic on Grant Street and Amherst Street.



Figures 42 & 43: A serious accident scene on Amherst Street on February 26, 2013, is indicative of unsafe driving practices on this busy commercial street.



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Figure 44: Traffic on Amherst Street is of great interest. Is there too much congestion? Speeding? What about bicyclists and pedestrians?

In this photo an intern (far left) assesses the frequency of speeding vehicles.

Initial indicators (see accompanying text and Appendix F) and good planning practice suggest a need to manage traffic issues carefully in order to reduce speeding, manage congestion, preserve business activity and neighborhood character and the safety of all users.

As discussed previously (see Figure 19), Grant Street experiences high traffic volumes north of Amherst St., on a street which is one-lane either direction. This may point to a need to manage that traffic carefully.

On Amherst Street, there is among some a concern about congestion. Others have expressed concern about speeding. A Traffic Speed Evaluation & Analysis was completed with the assistance of interns in the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning for a small section of Amherst Street on June 21, 2013. It arrived at these results, among 50 vehicles observed in a 30 minute timeframe (see Appendix F for a complete report):

- Vehicle Speed Over 30 mph: 23 vehicles, or 46%
- Vehicle Speed Over 35 mph: 10 vehicles, or 20%
- Vehicle Speed Over 40 mph: 1 vehicle, or 2%

In decades past, congestion, speed, and parking would frequently combine to create a call for wider, "more efficient" streets. However, this only results in more traffic and higher speeds, as

drivers use widened routes to take advantage of their efficiency, and their efficiency promotes speeding. A better approach is to value the traffic calming effect of automobile congestion in traditional neighborhood commercial corridors like Amherst Street, as well as the safety benefits that slower speeds offer to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Current planning practice suggests that congestion, speed, and parking can be effectively managed, along with an eye towards assuring the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, and preservation of neighborhood character and business activity. Efforts regarding traffic issues along Grant Street and Amherst Street which follow these enlightened principles of new urbanist planning are encouraged.

Bus transportation

50% of the survey respondents said they utilized bus transportation at least part of the time. The frequency and effectiveness of the bus routes are vitally important to this neighborhood; these routes as well as the bus transportation infrastructure should be maintained and enhanced.

Off Street Parking

Off street parking was also identified as a key issue by 40% of those surveyed. This is likely to be in direct response to the narrow neighborhood streets (see additional discussion of this on Page 14.) and the difficulties experienced during winter with two sided parking.

Recommendations:

- Manage traffic congestion, speed, and parking effectively, along with an eye towards assuring the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, and preservation of neighborhood character and business activity, and in alignment with new urbanist principles.
- Efforts should be made to enhance and improve bus routes and bus transportation infrastructure in the area.



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Figure 45: A billboard on the Kensington Expressway exiting downtown near Jefferson trumpets the neighborhood around Buffalo State College as an asset worth promoting to attract new students.

Photo: 5/13/2011.



Figure 46: Students cross at mid-bridge as they return to the Buffalo State College campus from a shopping trip to the Grant-Amherst business district. One of the challenges to the neighborhood is to provide a shopping, entertainment, and residential experience that encourages more dollars from Buffalo State College to find its way into the community with positive results for all constituencies.

Photo: 5/11/2011.



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Figure 47 and 48: A ceremony to unveil \$2 million in renovations to the Neighborhood Health Center on Lawn Ave., just north of the Grant-Amherst northern boundary, was held in June, 2013.

Source: WNY Health.

- Creative solutions to off street parking should be investigated for each of the micro neighborhoods. Special consideration should be made for the Center Grant-Amherst micro neighborhood due to the long street lengths.

Community Facilities/Social Supports

Approximately 50% of those surveys indicated they were aware of community programs and resources. There was an additional 25% who said

they were unaware of programs and resources. The high level of awareness is a testament to the good work done by the Northwest Buffalo Community Center and their programs.

Recommendation: Transportation availability is essential for continued access to these programs.

Health Care

Despite repeated inquiries, the community did not indicate that it was having issues accessing health care services. While there are no community health care facilities located immediately in this neighborhood, significant ones can be found nearby: Neighborhood Health Center on Lawn Ave. and Louis Lazar Health Center on Elmwood Ave are available.

Neighborhood Health Center has special status as a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b and Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n). Recently, the center completed a \$2 million renovation of the nonprofit's headquarters on Lawn Ave., just north of Grant-Amherst's northern boundary. (See Figures 47 and 48.) Since 1987, it has been providing services to the Buffalo community, and is comprised of physicians, nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, nurses, medical assistants, registered dietitians and dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants. In 2012, it served 18,500 people speaking 41 different languages at its Lawn Ave. center, Mattina site on the West Side, and clinic in Hamburg. (See "In The Field: Serving the Poor Provides Health Care Lessons for All," *Buffalo News*, June 21, 2013.) The center provides ambulatory health care, wellness and related services to anyone, *regardless of ability to pay*, residing in underserved and other designated communities in the Buffalo Niagara region.

Individuals in Grant-Amherst also have access to private physicians.

Shopping Locations



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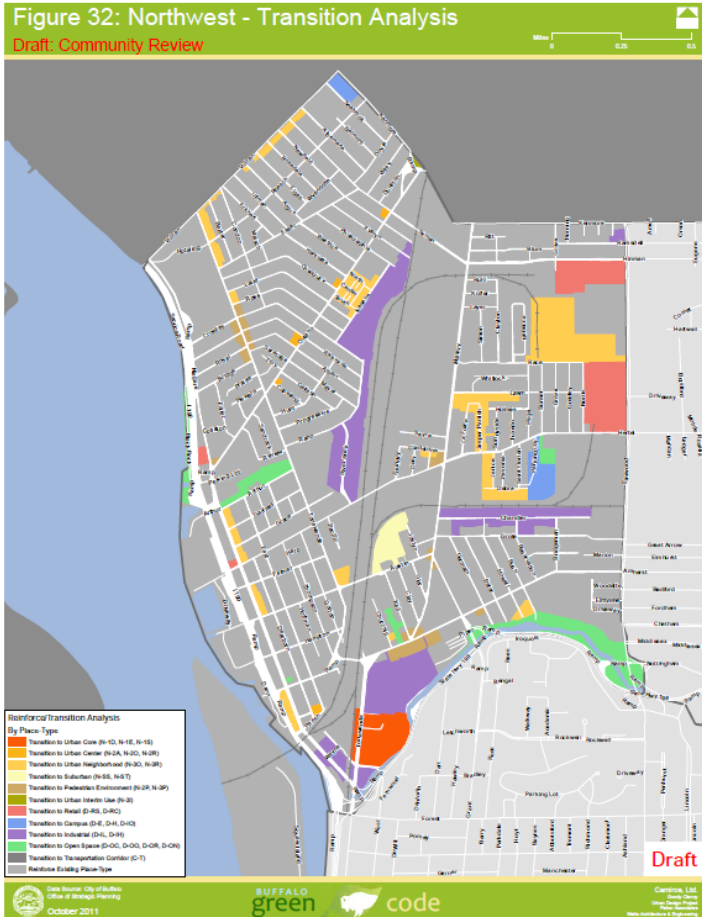


Figure 49: This map, a draft for community review from the Buffalo Green Code Land Use Plan’s “Place-Based Mapping Technical Appendix 1,” identifies “Transition Analysis” areas in Northwest Buffalo, including Grant-Amherst. Large areas along Chandler Street, Austin near Kail, and Tonawanda Street between Amherst and Niagara “in transition” are in evidence, as well as smaller areas.

The Transition Analysis identifies the areas where a new development pattern is recommended.

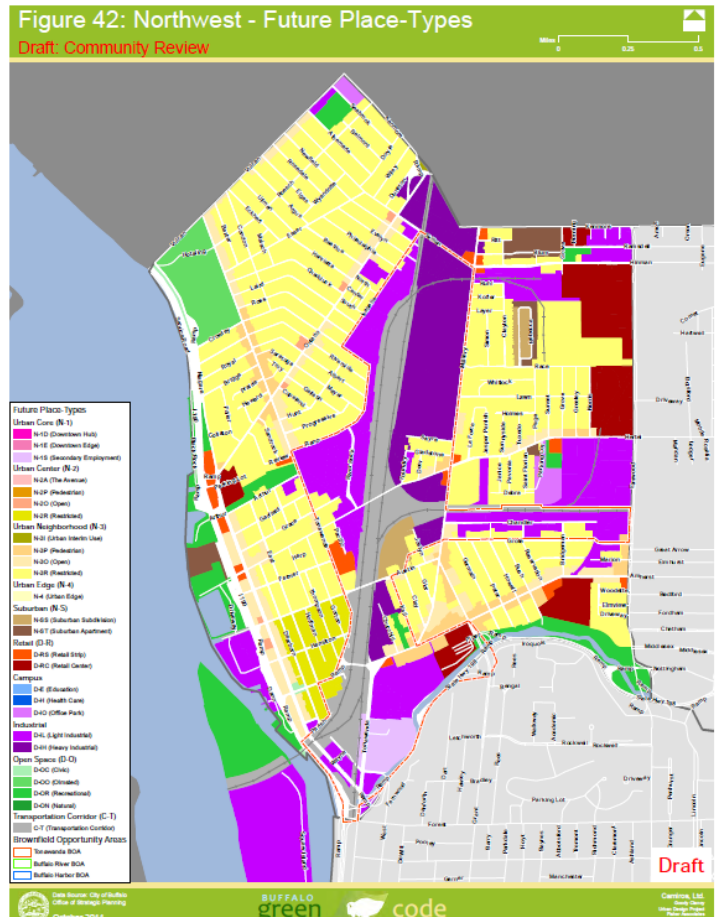


Figure 50: This map, also a draft for community review, shows “Future Place-Types” for Northwest Buffalo.

The Future Place-Types approach to land use planning draws on extensive analysis of existing place types, so that future development fits with neighborhood character and strengthens walkable communities like Grant-Amherst, while also encouraging economic development activities.

The place-based planning approach takes into account the influences that collectively define the character of Buffalo’s current and proposed development patterns: Lot size, Lot coverage, Use mix, Building typology. With Place-based planning... Buffalo’s historic character and strong emphasis on form is conserved... It also allows greater flexibility in use within the prescribed form, increasing the adaptability to changing market conditions.

— Excerpted from the Buffalo Green Code Land Use Plan’s “Place-Based Mapping Technical Appendix 1,” accessed 11/1/2012 from www.buffalogreencode.com



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There are a remarkable number of shopping locations within this neighborhood. For example, an informal windshield survey in mid-May 2011 of 156 parcels along Amherst Street from Tonawanda St. to Elmwood Ave. found 69 commercial enterprises with street frontage, nearly equal to the 72 residential-only structures. (The rest were vacant, residential with a vacant storefront, a parking lot, etc.) Bars and restaurants, specialty shops, local stores and service businesses, and national chains — all are evidence, contributing to neighborhood vitality.

Recommendation: Work with Grant-Amherst Business Association to ensure competitiveness and viability of local shopping destinations, and take advantage of the significant untapped market represented by Buffalo State College. (See Figures 45 and 46.)

Awareness of Local Officials/Block Clubs

Approximately 85% of this neighborhood say they have knowledge of their local officials. About 50% of the individuals say they participate in Block Clubs with another 25% indicating they would like more information.

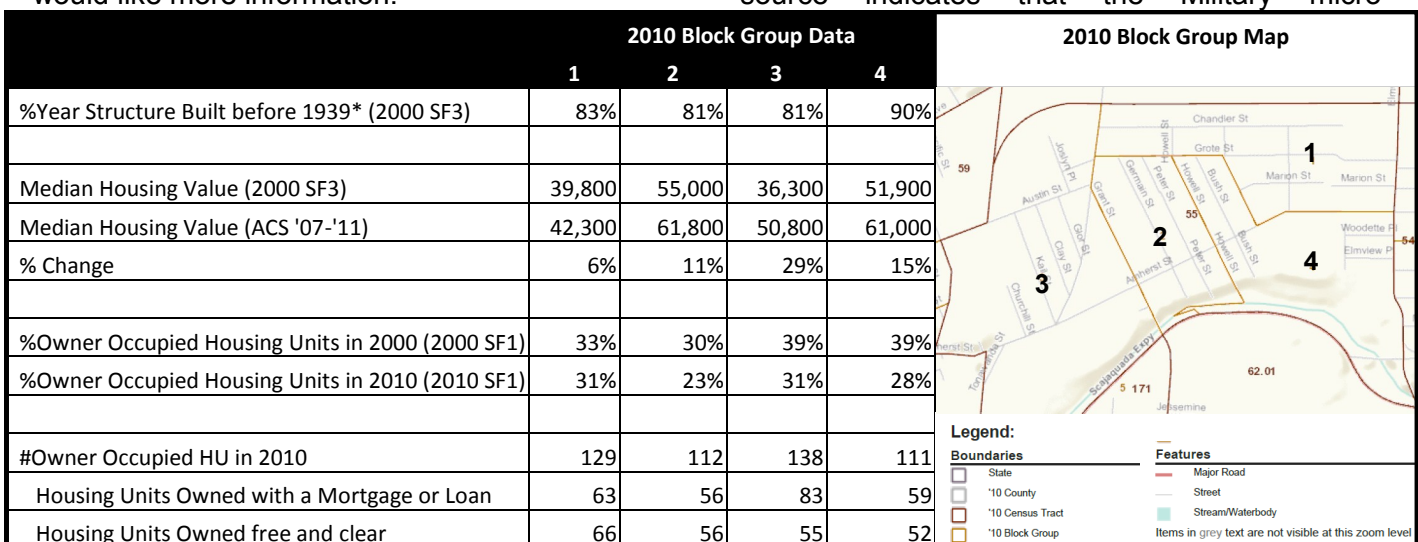
Recommendations:

- Increase knowledge of Block Clubs including how to start them or participate.
- Create Block Clubs in each of the micro neighborhoods.

Housing

Although housing was not identified by survey-takers as a key issue in the survey there has been substantial discussion on this subject at the planning meetings.

As mentioned previously (see Page X), the Grant-Amherst Black Rock neighborhood has 3 distinct micro-neighborhoods, each with their own housing characteristics: the Military Road, Grant-Amherst Center, and McKinley neighborhood. For these areas, City of Buffalo parcel/tax assessor records and U.S. Census data provide information on the housing. As indicated in the map on Page 10, McKinley has the largest proportion of high value residential properties, followed by Central Grant-Amherst, and finally the Military micro-



Figures 51 and 52: The U.S. Census provides a great deal of housing data. Statistics above compare census data for all four block groups which comprise census tract 55, i.e. Grant-Amherst. It also furnishes data over time, to look at housing value changes between 2000 and 2007-2011, and owner occupied housing rates 2000 to 2010.

Good news is that it is historic housing and values have been increasing, but reductions in % owner occupancy is evident and worrisome.



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neighborhood has the highest proportion of single-family homes to all types of homes, while the Central Grant-Amherst and McKinley micro-neighborhoods appear to have proportionately higher levels of two-family homes and larger, according to the land use map on Page 17.

U.S. Census data seems to confirm these observations. As shown in the table in Figure 51, Block Group 4 and Block Group 2 have higher median housing values, while Block Group 3, equating with the Military micro-neighborhood, has the a high level of owner-occupied housing, which links to single-family homes.

Generally, it is apparent from the statistics in the table in Figure 51 that, across all four block groups, the housing is overwhelmingly pre-1939 vintage (and therefore well-constructed and of historic character), and while values have been climbing, a worrisome trend in decreasing owner-occupancy is evident.

However, beyond housing characteristics is the question of housing condition. How is the housing holding up? In March-May 2011 24

problem property situations were identified, in all types of structures, including residential. (See illustrative example in Figure 53.) In each case, information on the condition was recorded, as well as the address, and a photo was taken. Then these 24 properties were visited again in January, 2013, to see if conditions had improved. Again, a photo was taken. (See this report in Appendix G.)

Of the 24 properties the following before/after results were evident:

Improved	9
Same/Similar	12
Downgraded	3

These are heartening outcomes, in which 21 of 24 situations are either Improved or Same/Similar (and not worse) after two years. With many of the properties residential in nature, the evident stability of property conditions in the area is very positive news indeed for planning purposes. Nevertheless, it is critical for the community to be ever-mindful of the need to encourage proper maintenance and conditions, so ways to monitor



	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
1			
	2011: 220 Amherst Street was a boarded up multiple residence building on the Grant Amherst commercial corridor, just east of a gateway neighborhood entrance.	By 1/2013, the property had been renovated.	IMPROVED

Figure 53: In this excerpt of the 24-property condition assessment in Appendix G, a residential property at 220 Amherst Street is shown to have an “Improved” condition in January 2013 versus circa 2011.



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property conditions are included in the Recommendations below.

Recommendations:

- Continue housing inspections in this area to help to keep the housing stock stabilized.
- Neighborhood Housing Assistance should be emphasized for those who cannot afford repairs.
- A demonstration of changing the doubles to singles should be undertaken for the central micro neighborhood.
- A study of the correct density for these streets should be undertaken so when lots appear a strategy is in place to deal with them
- On street parking, off street parking and street scape improvements should be addressed in the whole area.
- A demonstration of reuse for the mid street taverns and delis into mixed use home office housing should be undertaken. City code should be looked at to allow this to happen.

3. Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework

The Buffalo Green Code represents a place-based development strategy that builds on Buffalo's award-winning comprehensive plan, *Queen City in the 21st Century*. The plan set the agenda for the city's future by outlining four fundamental principles: fix the basics; build on assets; implement smart growth; and embrace sustainability. The Green Code follows up on this effort with a two-step process.

- The first step translates the Comprehensive Plan's principles into a Land Use Plan that will guide the city's physical development over the next 20 years.
- The second step is a new Unified Development Ordinance designed to implement the Land Use Plan, including a new zoning code.

Because several other initiatives, including the TC BOA, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, and Urban Renewal Areas are either in progress or in need of updating/replacement, Buffalo Green

Code has been added to those other initiatives to become part of, as a group, the Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework (BCDF). The BCDF consists of:

1. The Buffalo Green Code's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) which encompasses a form-based zoning code that will prioritize form over defined uses, and a revised subdivision and sign ordinances;
2. A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) that will guide development along the City's coastal areas;
3. Urban Renewal Plans Disposition regarding the removal, replacement or modification of these plans to better reflect the City's community and economic development needs; and South Buffalo, Buffalo River Corridor, Buffalo Harbor, and Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Areas Master Plans, including the River Bend Commerce Park Master Plan;
4. The BOA. (For more information on the BOA, see the beginning of Chapter 3 on page 18.)

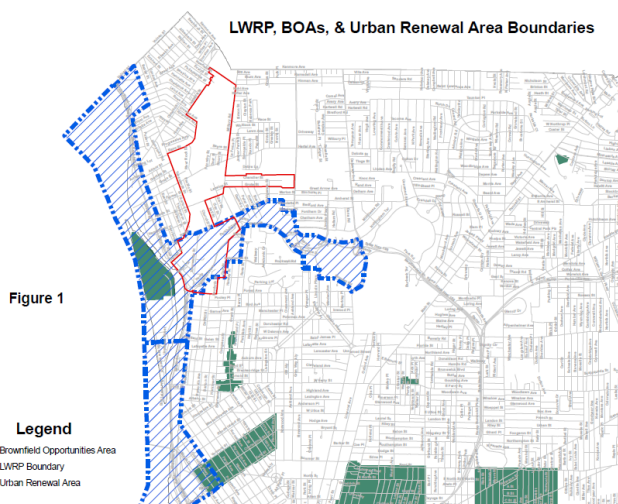


Figure 1
 Figures 54: A map presented as part of the Buffalo Consolidated Development Framework Draft Scoping Document for the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement, July 5, 2012 highlights the interrelationship of:

1. the TC BOA,
2. Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), and
3. Urban Renewal Areas.



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While the BOA focuses on brownfield redevelopment, the LWRP on waterfront uses, and Urban Renewal Areas on improvement of slum and blight conditions, the Buffalo Green Code addresses all land uses in the city, including Grant-Amherst, and provides rules for future development.

A Draft Scoping Document for a NY Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement was released in July, 2012 for comment. (See Figure 54) It is important that the Grant –Amherst community understand “which provisions and how each provision” within these initiatives apply to their community, and how they change over time.

4. Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey

The objective of this survey of the Black Rock neighborhood was to complete a Reconnaissance Level survey of 514 properties located within the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood as established by the City of Buffalo in 2006. This survey would locate and identify significant individual properties and potential districts. The survey boundaries include all streets within the boundaries defined as the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood, including Grant-Amherst.

After surveying a total of 514 properties, 223 primary buildings and structures were documented. In addition to including invaluable historic overviews of Grant-Amherst and detailed profiles of historic properties, this Survey included recommendations for future work:

1. Undertake an intensive level survey of certain key neighborhoods or streets which are the most significant to the local community,
2. Hold a series of public education meetings. These meetings should consist of one or more 2-hour workshops for the public that will present information such as an overview of the finding and recommendations of the Historic Resources Survey, the process of

RECONNAISSANCE LEVEL HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

BLACK ROCK PLANNING NEIGHBORHOOD CITY OF BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK NOVEMBER 2010



This Project is funded by Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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Figure 55: Cover page from the 2010 *Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey: Black Rock Planning Neighborhood*, including Grant-Amherst properties.

becoming National Register listed, historic rehabilitation “do’s and don’ts,” and potentially reviewing sources of funding and technical assistance.

3. City of Buffalo begin to officially recognize the historic resources – structures and areas of their greatest concentration – identified in the historic resource survey by officially listing them as City landmarks and historic districts. As a Certified Local Government, the City of Buffalo has the authority to begin this process immediately under the City Preservation Ordinance, Article III. Other buildings identified in this survey may consider beginning the process of nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The process could be accomplished over time and by sub-dividing and distributing the work. The City may undertake this process several ways, such as by:



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- encouraging property owners to apply for designation,
 - designating city-owned properties,
 - identifying threatened properties as priority designations, or
 - proceeding by property type such as commercial properties.
4. Once historic properties that have been identified in the historic resources survey have

been recognized, especially if historic districts are designated, the step of protection can be pursued. For historic structures owned by the City, this may mean commissioning a historic structure report in which experts evaluate what must be done to protect the historic features of a structure to ensure that its character is protected while new life-sustaining use and investment are added to it. Owners of larger and more prominent buildings such as churches, industrial or factory sites or other sites could be encouraged to undertake historic structure reports for their significant buildings. For

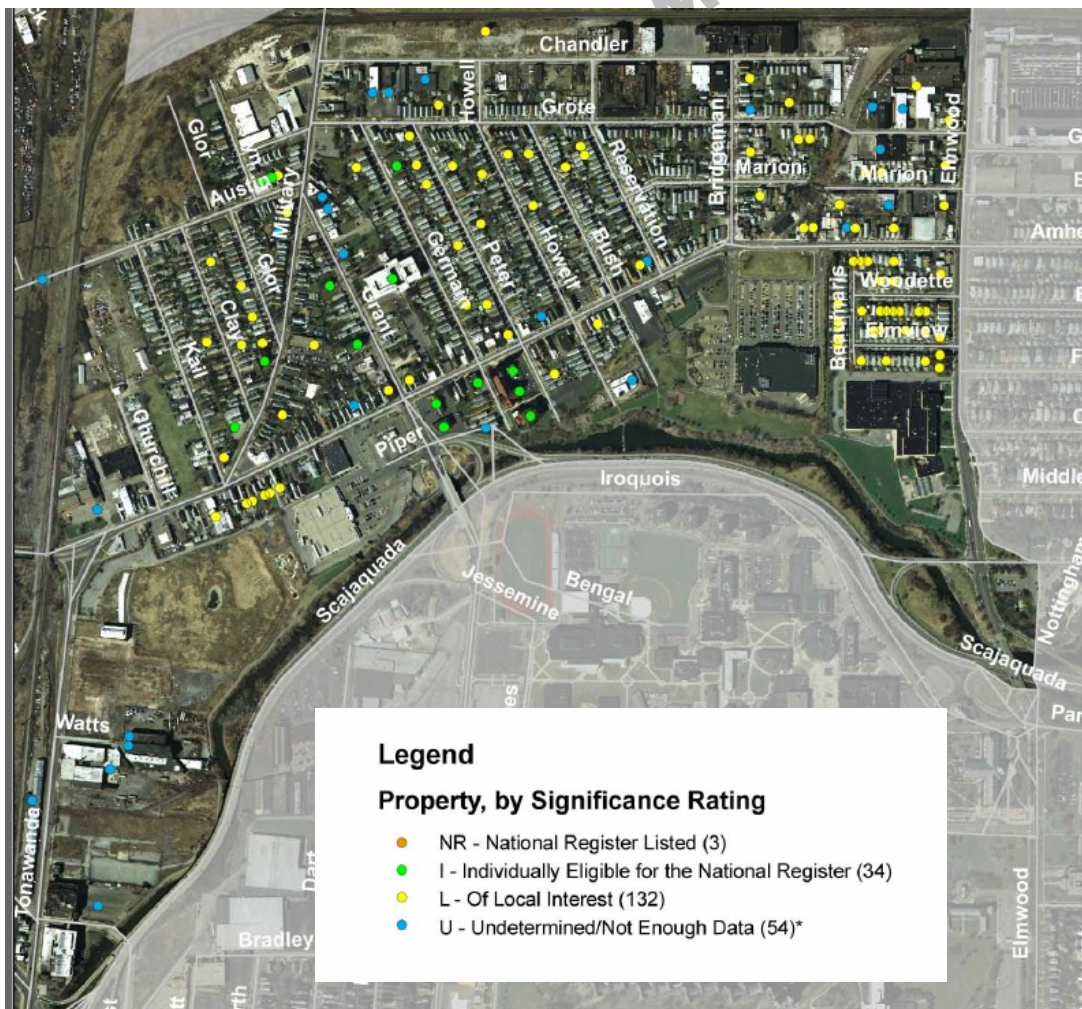


Figure 56: This map shows the location of Historic Property by Significance Rating in Grant-Amherst from the 2010 *Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey: Black Rock Planning Neighborhood*.

Detailed lists are to be found in the following pages.



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Locally Significant	Use	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Locally Significant	Use	Construction Date	Architectural Style
259 Amherst	Commercial	1938	Art Deco	1628 Elmwood	Commercial	1940	Commercial
277 Amherst	Commercial	1915	Craftsman	1652 Elmwood	Commercial	1900	Commercial
281 Amherst	Domestic	1950	Mid-Century	1676 Elmwood	Domestic	1900	Craftsman
287 Amherst	Domestic	1890	Craftsman	1700 Elmwood	Industrial	1910	Neoclassical Revival
289 Amherst	Domestic	1885	Workers' Cottage	1592-1598 Elmwood Ave	Commercial	1920	Neoclassical
293 Amherst	Commercial	1900	Commercial	170 Germain	Domestic	1910	Craftsman
370 Amherst	Commercial	1900	Commercial	81 Germain	Domestic	1950	Mid-Century
388 Amherst	Commercial	1905	Spanish Mission Revival	24 Glor	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage
440-442 Amherst St	Commercial	1915	Commercial	42 Glor	Domestic	1870	Workers' Cottage
491 Amherst	Commercial	1910	Craftsman	8 Glor	Commercial	1900	Queen Anne
526 Amherst	Domestic	1890	Vernacular	256 Grote	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
610 Amherst	Domestic	1890	Queen Anne	261 Grote	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
616 Amherst	Domestic	1900	Vernacular	267 Grote	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
637 Amherst	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	51 Grote	Commercial	1916	Commercial
638 Amherst	Domestic	1910	Craftsman	68 Grote	Domestic	1905	Queen Anne
641 Amherst	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	125 Howell	Domestic	1910	American Foursquare
645 Amherst	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	150 Howell	Domestic	1910	American Foursquare
659 Amherst	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	153 Howell	Domestic	1900	Vernacular
662 Amherst	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne	111 Marion	Industrial	1920	Vernacular
352 Austin	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne	134 Marion	Domestic	1890	Vernacular
14 Beaumaris	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	144 Marion	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
16 Beaumaris	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	75 Marion	Commercial	1910	Commercial
22 Beaumaris	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	12 Military	Commercial	1870	Commercial
24 Beaumaris	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	158 Military	Domestic	1895	Queen Anne
36 Beaumaris	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	47 Military	Domestic	1890	Vernacular
47 Bridgeman	Domestic	1900	Craftsman	89 Military	Educational	1955	Mid-Century
83 Bridgeman	Domestic	1890	Vernacular	112 Peter	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
133 Bush	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne	119 Peter	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
148 Bush	Domestic	1880	Workers' Cottage	150 Peter	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage
Chandler St at Howell St	Industrial	1950	Silo	155 Peter	Domestic	1890	Vernacular
43 Clay	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage	160 Peter	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage
50 Clay	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage	29 Peter	Domestic	1890	Workers' Cottage
91 Clay	Domestic	1890	Craftsman	76 Peter	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
15 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	78 Reservation	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
16 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	82 Reservation	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
25 Elmview	Domestic	1920	American Foursquare	16 Woodette	Domestic	1915	American Foursquare
36 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	18 Woodette	Domestic	1915	American Foursquare
39 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	28 Woodette	Domestic	1920	American Foursquare
41 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	31 Woodette	Domestic	1920	Queen Anne
50 Elmview	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	32 Woodette	Domestic	1915	Craftsman
1540 Elmwood	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	36 Woodette	Domestic	1940	Neocolonial
1550 Elmwood	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	39 Woodette	Domestic	1920	Queen Anne
1558 Elmwood	Domestic	1920	Craftsman	40 Woodette	Domestic	1915	Craftsman
				50 Woodette	Domestic	1930	Minimal Traditional

Figure 57: Locally Significant Historic Buildings in Grant-Amherst. A definition of “Individually Significant” is provided on page 37. Additionally, a property identified by Survey authors as “Key Individual Properties” is highlighted in black with white type; this, according to the authors, stands out as a notable historic property.

Undetermined/Do Research	Use	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Undetermined/Do Research	Use	Construction Date	Architectural Style
200 Amherst St	Industrial	1890	Industrial	16 Germain	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
352-354 Amherst St	Commercial	1910	Commercial	1065 Grant	Recreational	1915	Classical
464 Amherst	Commercial	1890	Queen Anne	1067 Grant	Domestic	1900	Queen Anne
528 Amherst	Domestic	1890	Vernacular	1037 Grant St	Religious	1917	Religious
634 Amherst	Domestic	1900	Craftsman	293 Grote	Industrial	1900	Industrial
71 Bridgeman	Commercial	1880	Second Empire	302 Grote	Industrial	1910	Industrial
27 Chandler	Industrial	1905	Industrial	316 Grote	Industrial	1920	Industrial
37 Chandler	Industrial	1905	Industrial	1 Howell	Industrial	1895	Industrial
41 Chandler	Industrial	1903	Industrial	141 Marion	Industrial	1920	Industrial
				148 Military	Commercial	1920	Commercial

Figure 58: Buildings in Grant-Amherst with Undetermined Significance. A definition of “Undetermined” is provided on page 37. Additionally, those properties identified by Survey authors as “Key Individual Properties” are highlighted in black with white type; these, according to the authors, “stand out as notable historic properties.”



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historic districts, this may mean that the City commissions design guidelines for the rehabilitation of contributing structures, as well as for compatible design of new structures to be built so that the district’s historic character is protected and enhanced, building by building.

5. In the meantime, the Survey authors recommended preparation of a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), which they provided to the City in draft form. While the MPDF document will not register any properties with the State and National Registers, it will provide a strong historical and architectural context statement under which a wide variety of individual buildings can be registered including residential, commercial, industrial, religious and other building and structure types. The flexibility of this document will also allow for additional buildings or districts to be registered using the MPDF as rehabilitation and restoration projects may bring new buildings into eligibility.

6. The authors also recommend, in order to protect and preserve the unique historic and architectural character of the Black Rock and Grant-Amherst neighborhoods, the creation of a locally designated Historic District be considered. A locally designated historic district will help the community and residents meet many of their goals for protecting and enhancing the unique character of their historic neighborhood. While there does not appear to be a potential State and National Register-eligible contiguous historic district in the survey area, there is sufficient intact historic fabric in several areas to create a locally designated “Historic Black Rock” historic district.

Establishing a local historic district will also help to create a “brand” and strengthen the identity of the Historic Black Rock neighborhood. Benefits of a local historic district are included in the Survey report. (See “Section 6.0—Recommendations,” in the Survey.)

The authors rated each building in the Survey.

Individually Significant	Use	Construction Date	Architectural Style
395 Amherst St	Governmental	1912	Flemish Revival
415 Amherst	Commercial	1923	Neoclassical Revival
417 A Amherst	Religious	1914	Romanesque Revival
417 Amherst St (Structure C)	Religious	1890	Vernacular
417 Amherst St (Structure B)	Educational	1924	Romanesque Revival
348 Austin	Governmental	1894	Romanesque Revival
350 Austin	Religious	1912	Arts and Crafts
165 Germain	Religious	1910	Tudor Revival
927 Grant	Social	1913	Renaissance Revival
986 Grant St	Religious	1906	Romanesque Revival
1005 Grant	Educational	1914	Collegiate Gothic
1020 Grant	Religious	1953	Religious
26 Military	Educational	1870	Romanesque Revival
70 Military	Religious	1894	Gothic Revival

Figure 587: Individually Significant Historic Buildings in Grant-Amherst. A definition of “Individually Significant” is provided on page 37. Additionally, those properties identified by Survey authors as “Key Individual Properties” are highlighted in black with white type; these, according to the authors, “stand out as notable historic properties.”



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Figure 59 and 60: Church of the Assumption at 435 Amherst Street (although listed as 417 Amherst in Figure 58) is where Rev. Richard Jedrzejewski is Pastor.

It is an excellent illustration of an “Individually Significant” Historic Structure as well as a “Key Individual Property” in Grant-Amherst. As part of a complex of buildings occupying an entire block, this church with its cornerstone laid in 1914 is described as a “spectacular Romanesque Revival church building as well as the Our Lady of Black Rock school and Rectory buildings. The entire complex of buildings appears to be National Register Eligible.” The church seats 1,560 people, making it one of the largest religious buildings in the city, and is an enduring, elegant symbol of Grant-Amherst.

The photo at left shows tower construction as well as the original church, erected in 1888, which was demolished once the new church was operational.

Photo sources:

Top, Mr. Parke, November 15, 2012. For additional information, see: <http://buffaloah.com/a/amherst/435/435.html>.

Left, Grant-Amherst Business Association’s Black Rock Historic Photo Project.



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

“I”- Individually significant resource: This resource retains a high level of architectural and/or historical significance. Buildings or properties identified as individually significant generally have a high quality of design, exhibit a recognizable architectural style and retain a high level of integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. This category may also include vernacular examples, which although they may not represent a specific style, still retain a high level of craftsmanship or form typical of their historic period. These properties appear to meet one or more of the Secretary of the Interior’s National Register Criteria for Evaluation and are potentially National Register Eligible. The properties in Grant-Amherst that met this criteria are listed in Figure 58:

“L” - Locally significant resource: This resource appears to retain an above-average level of architectural and/or historical significance and contributes to the general sense of place, scale and history of the survey area. Generally, it retains many of its original historic features and is a good representative of a particular style or trend in architecture. Examples of this category may be considered for local designation.

“U” – Undetermined: At the present time, there is insufficient information about this property to make a determination of eligibility for the State and National Registers.

5. Infrastructure Assessment for the Buffalo Consolidated Plan

In 2011, the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning undertook an assessment of property and infrastructure conditions in Grant-Amherst, as part of its role to analyze the characteristics of Buffalo’s different “Livable Communities” for federal aid purposes.

This analysis involved travelling the streets of Grant-Amherst to conduct a “windshield survey.” Assets and areas of concern were identified. Observations were then calibrated to match up with federal funding categories and limitations. Specific infrastructure deficiencies were emphasized. Then the cost of repair was estimated, using standard cost estimates. (See Figure 64.)

Some costs are small but have a big impact. For example, the provision



Figure 61, 62, and 63: Church of the Assumption interior (left) and narthex (right). These photos, taken during the 2011 Discover Amherst festival of a tour and the “Best Pie in Black Rock Contest” (see inset for an image of the sidewalk sandwich sign) illustrate the contributions to both amazing architecture and community vibrancy that historic structures like the Church bring to Grant-Amherst.

For more information on the Church, see Figures 59 and 60.



CHAPTER 3—KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES

of a bus shelter on a heavily travelled route, or a bench at a busy bus stop, are relatively modest expenses but serve many patrons, including many of vulnerable ages or health conditions. (See pages 15-16 and related discussion in Chapter 2 on the importance of good public transportation amenities to the neighborhood.)

Other costs are significant but provide benefits to a wide variety of people. For example, one of the Ten Steps of Walkability recommended by Jeff Speck in his book, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time* (2012), is “Plant Trees.” He writes, on page 223,

I used to work in Little Havana, the heart of Cuban Miami, where the main drag, Calle Ocho, is flanked by literally hundreds of blocks of one-story houses. As I would drive from street to street, I developed first impressions about which places were richer or poorer, safer or more dangerous. One day, the landscape architect Douglas Duany suggested that I take the same tour while thinking about trees. Nor sure what he was getting at, I tried it... and found that all my “rich” and “safe” neighborhoods had good tree cover, and all my “poor” and “dangerous” streets did not.

It’s best not to pick favorites in the walkability discussion — every individual point counts — but the humble American street tree might win my vote.

Trees offer the following benefits and appear to be in undersupply in Grant-Amherst:

Benefits of Trees

1. Energy Conservation
2. Water Quality Protection
3. Air Quality Protection
4. Carbon Sequestration
5. Increased Property Values
6. Profitable Businesses
7. Physiological Benefits
8. Smarter Children
9. Greater 'CommUnity'

10. Lower Crime Rates
11. Privacy
12. Beautiful Neighborhoods

As shown by the Infrastructure Assessment in the table below, it would not be hard to immediately identify \$1 million+ of needed infrastructure improvements in Grant-Amherst.

Infrastructure Assessment		
Benches	5	\$9,000
Bus Shelters	16	\$96,000
Bus Stop Sign	2	\$400
Crosswalk— Areas	7	\$22,470
Curb—Road Sections	2	\$78,000
Curb Ramps—Install	19	\$47,500
Curb Ramps— Repair	4	\$10,000
Drain Improvement	2	\$1,000
Drain Re-Asphalt	1	\$250
Gateway Existing	1	\$160,000
Gateway Install	4	\$80,000
Lane Striping	2	\$330
Light Pole Paint	4	\$640
Manhole Cover Recessed	7	\$2,100
Mill & Overlay— Road Section	1	\$22,596
Mill & Overlay— Full Reconstruction	2	\$182,400
Pavement Repair— Road Sections	Misc.	\$6,852
Sidewalk Repair	91	\$8,754
Traffic Calming Curb Extension	1	\$45,600
Traffic Signal Button Repair	2	\$400
Traffic Signal Paint	3	\$400
Tree Planting	598	\$239,200
Wayfinding Signage	1	\$20,000
Replace Pole Banners	13	\$4,550
TOTAL		\$1,038,442

Figure 64: Infrastructure items identified in an assessment undertaken in 2011 by the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning, with estimated costs included.



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Grant-Amherst has an abundance of assets.

At the same time, its large and growing refugee and immigrant population, racial, economic, and cultural diversity, and mixed conditions in residential areas mean that it is important for the community to develop a cohesive identity so that people recognize that they are part of a community.

As a result, concrete steps toward boosting the cohesion and quality of life in Grant-Amherst



Figure 65: On July 20, 2011, Greg Robinson led a tour of grant-funded improvements implemented by the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy along the Jesse Kregal Pathway, including new playground apparatus at the Peter Street Playground.



Figure 66: "The Vision of Olmsted" Mural, by Augustina Droze, is another part of the BOPC-implemented improvements.

should be undertaken, and these are enumerated here, as an accompaniment to observations shared earlier in this document, and as a prelude to a consolidated list of recommendations for this draft plan which appear beginning on Page X:

1. Encourage progress and participation in various planning efforts that support a vibrant and sustainable future for Grant-Amherst, including Historic Preservation, the City's Unified Development Ordinance (LWRP, TC BOA, Buffalo Green Code) and Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and others' grant-related efforts or operational duties with a local focus . (See Figures 65-66 for recent examples of grant-related efforts on the Jesse Kregal Pathway.)
2. Celebrate Grant-Amherst's heritage: Native American, early Black Rock, Military Road, War of 1812, Erie Canal, Industry, Cultural and Religious. Build on the success of the Grant-Amherst Business Association's "Historic Photo Project" and recent improvements sourced in Niagara River Greenway grant funding.
3. Leverage the success and strength of the Grant-Amherst Business Association, the Grant-Amherst Block Watchers, Scajaquada Creek Canoe Club, Polish Cadets, and other organizations to create a Community Projects Consortium, similar to how the South Buffalo Crew complements the Greater South Buffalo Chamber of Commerce. A number of doable projects in a high profile fashion that can garner wide support are possible. Draw examples from the South Buffalo Crew, Parkside Community Association, West Side Community Collaborative, and others. Promotional materials should be high quality, with a consistent look, with the goal of creating community-wide identify.
4. Create a Cross-Cultural Collaborative, to link activities of the refugee community and the agencies that serve that population with the



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Native American Center on Grant Street and its constituents, the diversity in local school populations, and long-term as well as new residents and businesses. Build a multi-cultural identity that also celebrates the past..

- Maximize recreational and open space opportunities along Scajaquada Creek, maintain the natural features, and optimize connections to the Jesse Kregal Pathway.
- Optimize transportation and street infrastructure to benefit all users, and create connections throughout the neighborhood to encourage the walkable, bicycle-friendly atmosphere that has taken hold on Amherst Street so it can extend elsewhere. Add Complete Street features to roadways and improve neighborhood gateway experiences.
- Develop and maintain high quality public spaces, including signage, art installations, and extensive landscaping. Examples are the improvements to the Jesse Kregal Pathway west of Grant Street recently undertaken by the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy. Partnering with local resources like the Black Rock Historical Society, Buffalo Maritime Center, WNY Railway Society, Pierce Arrow Museum, art museums and galleries, etc. can provide opportunities to add further character to local settings.

In the example highlighted in Figure 67, the area's distinctive War of 1812 history has a chance to be come more widely known, as the Buffalo Maritime Center undertakes to re-create a replica of one of the nine vessels Commodore Perry led to victory in the Battle of Lake Erie. Not many know of the placement of Commodore Perry's shipyard in the Scajaquada, but should the USS Trippe find a home in Black Rock, awareness would skyrocket.

- Work with the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, Black Rock-Riverside NHS,

BRRAlliance, NW Buffalo Community Center and other organizations to bring healthy homes and healthy living to Grant-Amherst.

For example, initiate a Healthy Community equity planning process, with broad participation, to identify deficiencies and the burdens, extraordinary in scale,



Figure 67: This article from the Buffalo News highlights an effort by the Buffalo Maritime Center on Austin St. to:

re-create the armed cutter USS Trippe, one of Perry's nine vessels in a fleet that he led to victory in the Battle of Lake Erie on Sept. 10, 1813. A replica of Perry's 34-foot vessel is being assembled not far from the Black Rock site where the original was built in 1811... 'We're hoping we're going to be able to dock her in Black Rock,' Allen said.

Siting this dock in Black Rock-Riverside is an example of an opportunity to partner with a local organization to add further character to local settings.



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

which are in existence in Grant-Amherst, and work with policy makers to improve Healthy Community equity in the area.

Another example is to disseminate information of particular relevance to the neighborhood. Weatherization and energy efficiency tips are as part of UnWasteNY.org, and mailing materials are available free for redistribution from the NY Public Service Commission (see www.askpsc.com). Organizations can request free printed materials, at no cost for shipping and can sign up for the “consumer leaders mailing list” once a year; brochures can be ordered by the 100s or 1,000s via a postcard, for programs like Lifeline, Free Cell Phone, Selecting an energy service company, Household Energy Use with savings tips,

Utility Service Interruption, Take the Chill Out brochure, Your Rights and Protections brochure, Helpline (liaison to utility for consumers), and Hotline (for shutoff help).

9. Promote innovative services for owners and renters, like:
 - A partnership with RESTORE, a Habitat for Humanity resale store on Amherst St.,
 - the University Heights tool library; \$10/year for membership, offering use of tools and other resources to encourage upkeep of homes and businesses.
10. Support targeted Comprehensive Code Enforcement in Grant-Amherst.

CITY June 23, 2012 12:05 AM

Painting for Preservation Heading to Amherst Street Today

BR buffalo rising
14

Painting for Preservation will be on Amherst Street today bringing attention to a historic property. In collaboration with Artsphere Gallery, artists of varying mediums will be capturing the unique architecture of 481 Amherst Street.

Painting for Preservation seeks to bring together artists of all media in support of historic distressed properties and communities. Artwork created on-site related to the location is seen as a means of raising positive awareness of the space and/or structure.

481 Amherst was built in 1923 by Valentine Homik who commissioned architect Karl Schmill to design it. Schmill was the same architect who designed Assumption Church and School. It was a Socony gas station at the outset, Standard Oil Company of New York, which then became Mobil. It was a Mobil Station up until 1981. It is in need of some TLC today. Investment in this building makes really good sense given all that is happening on Amherst Street and Black Rock.




Figure 68: An article appearing in Buffalo Rising in June, 2012 about 481 Amherst Street.

As progress is made in realizing the initiatives outlined in this draft plan, improvements will continue to multiply and increased market demand will tip the scales toward investment in properties like 481 Amherst Street, which will in turn spur further demand for property. Jeff Speck, an expert city planner who advocates for smart growth and sustainable design, addresses this in his recent book, in a chapter titled, Pick Your Winners: “The first question to ask before investing in walkability: where can spending the least money make the most difference? The answer, as obvious as it is ignored, is on streets that are already framed by buildings that have the potential to attract and sustain street life... Fix the street, and you’ve got the whole package, or close to it.”

The good news is that Amherst Street has the buildings and the potential. By fixing the street, and key elements in the neighborhood, Grant-Amherst will have the “whole package” indeed.



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

11. Continue anti-graffiti efforts. and to prioritize efforts for 2013 and additional years to come.
12. Optimize design of new development at Wegmans, Tops Market, and other commercial enterprises, to fit with neighborhood character to the greatest possible extent.
13. Encourage installation of “green energy solutions,” i.e. energy improvements in private and public buildings and spaces, as well as in neighborhood design.

The following is a consolidated list of the recommendations with many referred to in detail in previous chapters, provided as an “Action Agenda.”

Neighborhood and elected leaders are encouraged to review the recommendations and offer feedback in order to continue an up-to-date comprehensive neighborhood planning process



Figure 69: Conceptualized by Lead Artist Marissa Lehner and Emerging Leaders in the Arts Buffalo President, Marcus L. Wise, who is also a local businessman, the mural at the corner of Grant and Amherst Street converted a blighted lot into a celebrated community work of art.

Sponsored by the Grant-Amherst Business Association, Councilmember Joseph Golombek, Niemiec Builders Supply, Sam Hoyt, and 464 Gallery, this prominent lot can continue to develop as a local amenity, and serves as an example of the kind of project that can be successfully undertaken by a “Community Projects Consortium,” as recommended in this plan.



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Consolidated list of recommendations for this draft plan (see Chapter 5 for “Seven Prioritized Objectives for 2013-2014”):

Recommendation	Associated Goal
Use Clean Sweeps To Address Groups of Problem Properties	#1 Public Health & Safety
Address Safety Concerns from Abundant Brownfield Properties	#1 Public Health & Safety
Work Towards Cleansing Scajaquada Creek	#1 Public Health & Safety
Improve Communication between Residents & Law Enforcement	#1 Public Health & Safety
Advocate Increased Police Presence In Parks & On Paths	#1 Public Health & Safety
Improve Lighting Along Streets & Pathways	#1 Public Health & Safety
Promote Enforcement of Signage Regulations	#1 Public Health & Safety
Address Concerns Raised by the Sewage Treatment Facility	#1 Public Health & Safety
Investigate Using “Coastal Management” Regs. In Planning	#1 Public Health & Safety
Work to reduce crime through the use of environmental design principles and by improving recreational and employment opportunities for youth	#6 Public Health & Safety
Promote Festivals and Events to Bring Residents Together	#2 Parks and Recreation
Develop Plan to Open Scajaquada Crk. as Recreational Waterway	#2 Parks and Recreation
Improve Bike & Walking Paths Along Scajaquada Creek	#2 Parks and Recreation
Increase # of Parks & Green Spaces – 10 Min. Rule as Guideline	#2 Parks and Recreation
Look Into Re-Classifying some BOA land for Parks & Rec.	#2 Parks and Recreation
Develop Master Tree-Planting and Streetscape Plan	#2 Parks and Recreation
Look Into Lots formed by Angled Intersections for Green Spaces	#2 Parks and Recreation
Continue Housing Inspections to Keep Housing Stock Stabilized	#3 Housing
Strive to improve property maintenance throughout the community	#3 Housing
Emphasize Neighborhood Housing Assistance for Maintenance and Homeownership	#3 Housing
Demonstrate Possibilities of Double to Single Conversions	#3 Housing
Demonstrate Possibilities of Mixed Home/Office	#3 Housing
Correctly Assess the Zoning Density in Neighborhoods	#3 Housing
Address Building Height Along the Waterfront	#3 Housing
Install or Improve Signage Along Scajaquada Expressway	#4 Transportation
Address Natural & Manmade Barriers to Foot & Vehicle Traffic	#4 Transportation
Examine Feasibility of New or Expanded Pedestrian Rail Xings	#4 Transportation
Assess Possibility of Bridging Scajaquada Crk. & Expressway	#4 Transportation
Improve Connections to Adjacent Neighborhoods, Generally	#4 Transportation
Use Grant/Military as Gateway/ Corridor to Other Neighborhoods	#4 Transportation
Develop Plans for Off-Site Parking Near Congested Streets	#4 Transportation



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (continued)	Associated Goal
Advocate Increased Presence of Bike Paths	#4 Transportation
Assess the Deteriorating Condition of Sidewalks	#4 Transportation
Maintain & Improve Mass Transit Connections & Stops	#4 Transportation
Liaise with Grant-Amherst Business Association	#5 Commercial Dev.
Develop and Promote Micro-Neighborhood Branding	#5 Commercial Dev.
Encourage Redevelopment of Former Industrial Sites & BOAs	#5 Commercial Dev.
Continue Positive Trend of Promoting Neighborhood in Media	#5 Commercial Dev.
Incentivize Thru-Traffic to Stop in the Neighborhood	#5 Commercial Dev.
Recognize Buffalo State College as an important neighbor	#5 Commercial Dev.
Restore environmental quality and improve community health	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Foster partnerships between the private and public sectors to clean-up contaminated lands and waterways to restore environmental and community health	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Incorporate green technology, renewable energy and sustainable design features into new development	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Enhance employment opportunities through brownfield redevelopment	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Clean-up and redevelop brownfield sites to expand business and employment opportunities in the area	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Strengthen existing businesses and encourage a mix of local retail establishments	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Support small business development through apprenticeship programs, and increased live/work opportunities	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Improve access and connectivity	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Improve connections across the rail corridors and to destinations within and beyond the BOA	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Invest in quality streetscape connections and establish an on-street bicycle network to enhance pedestrian and cycle access.	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Expand trail and pedestrian connections to and along Scajaquada Creek, Jesse Kregal Pathway and the Niagara Riverwalk	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Celebrate the character and history of the area	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Protect and enhance the stable neighborhood fabric and heritage assets in the area	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Redevelop vacant and abandoned sites to improve neighborhood image and character	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Reuse historic buildings to preserve neighborhood character and enhance community vitality	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Target residential infill development to complement and strengthen existing neighborhoods	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Examine opportunities for enhanced recreational amenities	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Enhance the environmental condition and recreational potential of Scajaquada Creek and the Niagara River, restoring ecosystems and natural habitat areas	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Explore opportunities to provide new community parks and recreation facilities	#6 Improvements via Brownfields



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (continued)	Associated Goal
Capitalize on the proximity of Buffalo State College as an important community anchor, employer and educator	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Improve linkages and connections to the college, institutional development and student housing	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Focus investment and development to optimize benefits	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Utilize the BOA process to plan future growth smartly	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Plan for long term, incremental growth supported by focused implementation activities within priority development areas to make a big impact. Do not allow short term activities to preclude long term goals	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Balance brownfield redevelopment opportunities in the Tonawanda Street Corridor with environmental and development priorities in other parts of the city	#6 Improvements via Brownfields
Undertake more intensive level survey of certain key neighborhoods or street which are the most significant to the local community	#7 Historic Preservation
Hold a series of public education meetings ("how to" viz the National Register, "do's and don'ts" historic rehabilitation, sources of funding and technical assistance)	#7 Historic Preservation
City of Buffalo begin to officially recognize the historic resources -- structures and areas of their greatest concentration -- identified in the Historic Resources Survey, by officially listing them as City landmarks and historic districts.	#7 Historic Preservation
Advance protection by doing historic structure reports and then design guidelines for rehabilitation of contributing structures and new structures	#7 Historic Preservation
Use the draft Multi Property Documentation Form for additional registrations and as a resource for identifying potential districts	#7 Historic Preservation
Create a locally designed historic district.	#7 Historic Preservation
Use the Historic Resources Survey and windshield surveys to identify priorities.	#7 Historic Preservation
Encourage progress and participation in various planning efforts	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Celebrate Grant-Amherst's heritage	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Leverage organizations to create a Community Projects Consortium	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Create a Cross-Cultural Collaborative	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Maximize recreational and open space opportunities along Scajaquada Creek, maintain the natural features, improve manmade features, including those of the Jesse Kregal Pathway itself, and optimize connections to it	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Optimize transportation and street infrastructure to benefit all users, address traffic, congestion, and parking issues, create gateways and connections, all using New Urbanist principles	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Develop and maintain high quality public spaces	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Work with the Black Rock-Riverside NHS and NW Buffalo Community Center to bring healthy homes and healthy living to Grant-Amherst	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities



CHAPTER 4—CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (continued)	Associated Goal
Promote innovative services for owners and renters i.e. tool library and other resources to encourage upkeep of homes and businesses	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Support targeted Comprehensive Code Enforcement in Grant-Amherst	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities
Initiate a Healthy Community equity planning process to improve Health Community elements in the area	#8 Additional Strategic Opportunities



Figure 70: "Workers Put the Bite on Creek Gator" is the headline of a *Buffalo News* article chronicling the discovery and capture of a 4' American alligator in Scajaquada Creek in 2001. Immediately named "Scajaquada Jack," the gator was relocated to a St. Augustine, FL alligator farm. It became a local legend and remains so to this day. His name has been adopted by the Scajaquada Jack Canoe Club, which actively supports use of Scajaquada Creek as a recreational waterway.



CHAPTER 5—PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR 2013-2014

Based on the full analysis in Chapters 1-3 in this plan and in consideration of the Consolidated Recommendations in Chapter 4, the following Prioritized Objectives are presented for 2013-2014. See also Figure 73, “Map of Issues and Corresponding Objectives for 2013-2014.”

Seven Prioritized Objectives for 2013-2014

1. **Objective:** Create mixed home-office opportunities.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Create opportunity for demonstration in one in-block commercial establishment for mixed home-office space.
- ⇒ Work with project team of the Buffalo Green Code to implement improvements in future development that will allow, for example, mixed home-office space.

Measurable outcome: Develop a new model for mixed home-office space in neighborhood streets.

2. **Objective:** Create a multi property designation form and Black Rock Historic District.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Obtain grant funding.
- ⇒ Get expert assistance with designation process.
- ⇒ Submit for designations.

Measurable outcome: Multi property designation completed for three properties, and Black Rock Historic District created.

3. **Objective:** Further enhance Amherst & Grant Sts. Address traffic, congestion, and parking issues in alignment with New Urbanist

principles and improve key nodes at Elmwood, Grant/Amherst, and Tonawanda as Gateways for the neighborhood.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Develop familiarity with New Urbanist principles of neighborhood development.
- ⇒ Analyze traffic patterns including speeds, congestion, and parking issues.
- ⇒ Complete improvement plan.
- ⇒ Place Projects on City’s capital improvement schedule.

Measurable outcomes: Street Improvements on Amherst from Tonawanda St. to Elmwood Ave. with gateway designations completed.

4. **Objective:** Maximize appropriate development of recreation and open space opportunities in this area.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Identify recreation and open space standards and opportunities.
- ⇒ Participate in BOA planning activities.

Measurable outcomes: Use standards and opportunities to develop a recreation and open space map for BOA; share with project team.

5. **Objective:** Improve maintenance, enhancement and access to the Jesse Kregal Pathway.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Develop a partnership with Jesse Kregal Pathway Planning Committee, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and NYSDOT



CHAPTER 5—PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

- ⇒ Identify responsible agencies/ departments and data sources
- ⇒ Conduct/update condition assessment
- ⇒ Identify problem areas
- ⇒ Create a plan for improvements

Measurable outcomes: Clean and secure historic markers along path; Trim vegetative growth where it interferes with using the path.

6. **Objective:** Optimize recreation opportunities and waterway conditions in Scajaquada Creek.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Participate in Scajaquada Working Group Initiative and complimentary efforts.
- ⇒ Build the vision and community expectation that the Scajaquada Creek has a future as a recreational waterway for paddlesports.
- ⇒ Identify projects that advance this vision.

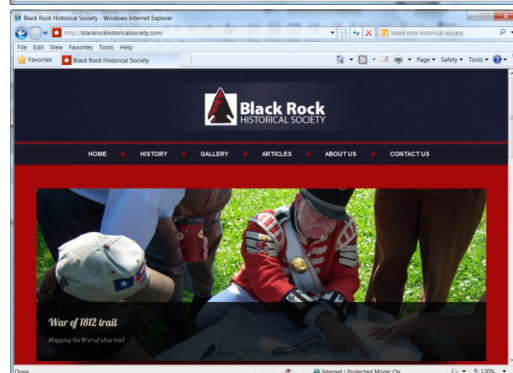
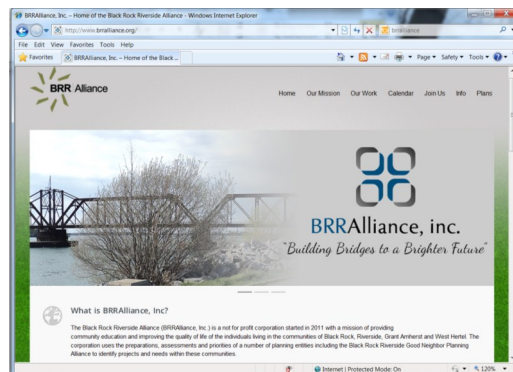
Measurable outcomes: Develop a list of discrete steps: Examples are : Modification/ removal of finger dam; Identification of future portage sites; Support of BN Riverkeeper paddlesport launch at 1660 Niagara as a prelude to improvements along Scajaquada for paddlesports.

7. **Objective:** Initiate a Healthy Community equity planning process with broad participation, to identify deficiencies and extraordinary burdens present in Grant-Amherst and work with policy makers to improve Healthy Community elements in the area.

Specific Actions:

- ⇒ Outreach to the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo for technical assistance.
- ⇒ Create a Wellness Advisory Committee.
- ⇒ Review Best Practices, like those recommended by the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and those discussed in a 2013 webinar, “Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Planning through a Health Equity Lens” (See <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/reports/webinars/default.htm>.)

Measurable outcome: Complete a preliminary report card on Grant Amherst from a Health Equity perspective; Finish an assessment of funding/program opportunities that can support a planning process and resultant implementation activities.



Figures 71 and 72: Two new organizations, the BRR Alliance (brralliance.org) and Black Rock Historical Society (blackrockhistoricalsociety.com), have been formed recently to implement key projects in this plan.

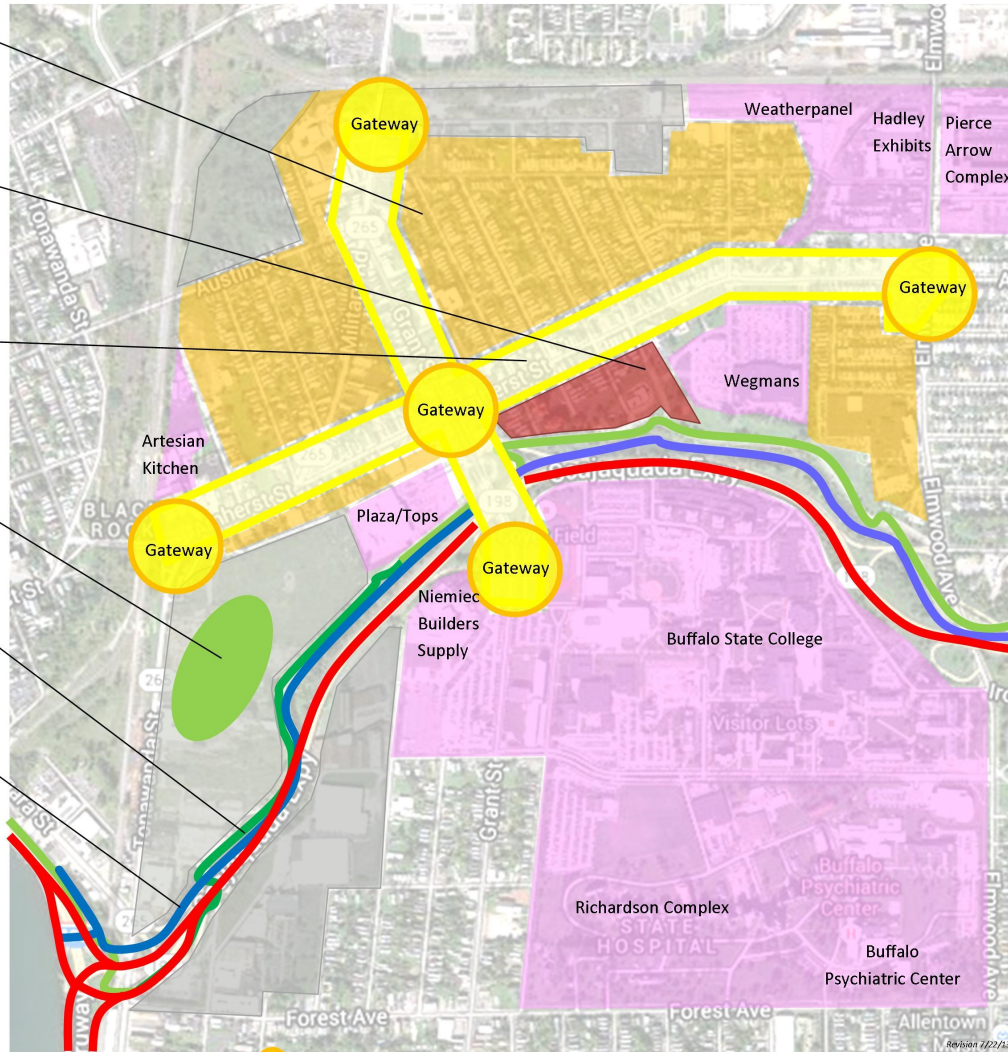


CHAPTER 5—PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Map of Issues and Corresponding Objectives for 2013-2014

ISSUES FOR 2013-2014

1. Immigrants and creative entrepreneurs need flexible work-spaces.
2. Architectural character is threatened neighborhood-wide; start supporting preservation.
3. Traffic is problematic, Grant and Amherst Sts. do not serve all users equally, and Gateways are needed.
4. Recreational space is limited in the neighborhood; land like this can be an opportunity.
5. Jesse Kregal Pathway is unkempt and unsafe, esp. this section.
6. Scajaquada Creek is minimally navigable and accessible, blighted by highway, and in distress environmentally.
7. All of Grant-Amherst needs a to unify around an identity to propel improvements.



CORRESPONDING OBJECTIVES FOR 2013-2014

1. Create mixed home-office opportunities.
2. Create a multi property designation form and Black Rock Historic District.
3. Further enhance Amherst & Grant Sts.
4. Maximize appropriate development of recreation and open space opportunities in this area.
5. Improve maintenance, enhancement and access to the Jesse Kregal Pathway.
6. Optimize recreation opportunities and waterway conditions in Scajaquada Creek.
7. Initiate a Healthy Community equity planning process with broad participation.

See Chapter 5 for Specific Actions and Measurable Outcomes

LEGEND Regional Assets: [Pink Box] Key Traffic/Gateway Enhancement Areas: [Yellow Box] Large-Scale Industrial/Vacant Areas: [Orange Box] Area of Distinctive Architecture: [Grey Box] Residential/Institutional/Other: [Red Box] Scajaquada Creek: [Red Line] NY Rte. 198/ Scajaquada Expy: [Blue Line] Jesse Kregal Pathway: [Green Line]

Figure 73: Map of Issues and Corresponding Objectives for 2013-2014. On the left column are Issues, and the right column are Corresponding Objectives, which are more fully discussed, with Specific Actions and Measurable Outcomes, in the previous pages of Chapter 5.



APPENDIX

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DRAFT DOCUMENT



APPENDIX A

Buffalo's "Coolest Up & Coming Neighborhood" in the *Artvoice* Awards for 2011

Grant-Amherst Business Association members won awards in the following categories in 2011, as part of *Artvoice's* Best of Buffalo awards, with perhaps the most important one being Grant-Amherst's recognition as the "Coolest Up & Coming Neighborhood":

1. Dining - Best Sausage • Spar's European Sausage Shop / Joe & Beth Kennedy
2. Shops & Services - Best Produce • Wegman's / Danny, Lou, & Kristi
3. The Fine Arts - Best Up & Coming Art Space • 464 Gallery / Marcus Wise
4. Nightlife - Best Bar Only You Know About • Rohall's Corner / Greg Rohall
5. Our People, Our City / Coolest Up & Coming Neighborhood • Grant-Amherst Neighborhood

DRAFT DOCUMENT



APPENDIX B

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan and PowerPoint Presentation
by Crystal Surdyk, Student, Geography & Planning Department, Buffalo State College

DRAFT DOCUMENT

2012

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan



crystal d surdyk
Buffalo State College
Department of Geography & Planning
4/28/2012

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

OBJECTIVE

Active members of the Black Rock community seek to develop a plan to eliminate the disconnect between the historic neighborhood and the Grant-Amherst business corridor. This plan is intended to provide recommendations to resolve the issue of the separation of the Black Rock community by the Amherst Street rail viaducts. Additionally, this plan will address bicycle and pedestrian safety and the walkability of the Study Area.

The plan will include:

- an initial assessment of the Study Area
- brief background and history of the Black Rock neighborhood
- outline of the desired overall project goals
- recommendations for design options that may best achieve the desired outcome
- recommended phasing plan with graphic illustrations
- project summary

ROLE OF THE INTERN/RESEARCHER

The purpose of the internship position with the Black Rock Riverside Alliance (BRRAlliance) was to address the concerns of the community in regards to the study area. The duties of the intern included but were not limited to the following:

- Collect relevant planning information for the project
- Present data to BRRAlliance Committee
- Assist committee with project development
- Prepare project recommendations
- Present project results to the committee

Throughout the course of fifteen weeks, three meetings were held in an effort to develop a plan that best meets the needs of the Black Rock neighborhood. This report is the result of the collaboration between the BRRAlliance committee members and the intern.

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a foundation from which immediate and future plans affecting the improvement, growth, and economic development of the Black Rock neighborhood can be built upon. Key stakeholders within the Black Rock community have identified the Amherst Street rail viaducts as an area of opportunity for improvement. The resolution of the issues associated with the neighborhood division, produced by the viaducts, will initiate the momentum necessary to generate community support for continued progress to be made. Creating a connection between the Black Rock Heritage District and the Grant-Amherst Business District will enhance the existing character and attributes of the two distinct neighborhoods and portray them as extensions of each other.

STUDY AREA

Once a major industrial corridor, Black Rock's borders consist of railroad tracks to the North and West, Scajaguada Creek to the South, and Elmwood Avenue to the East. The Black Rock-Riverside district is considered to be three separate and distinct neighborhoods: Riverside Park, Military, and Black Rock. The Black Rock neighborhood is defined by Census Tracts 55 and 59. Census tract 55 is referred to as the Grant-Amherst neighborhood and Census tract 59 as the Heritage District. The specific project area is located within these two Census tracts.

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

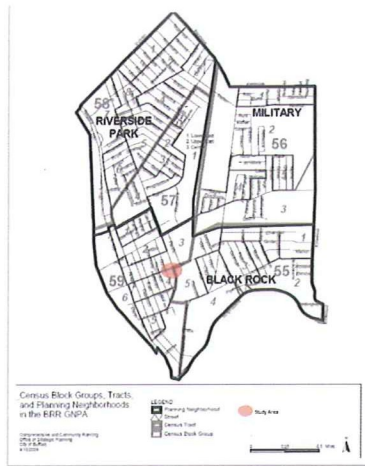


Fig. 1- Black Rock Neighborhood Census Tracts

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

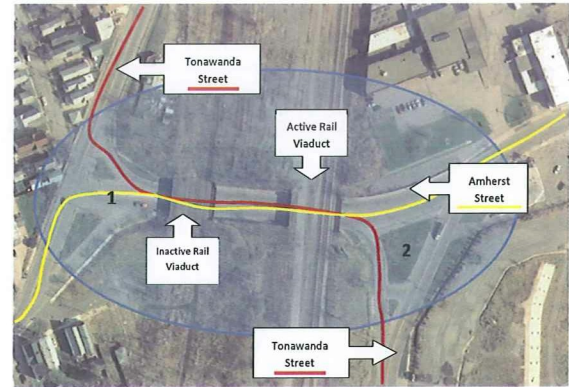


Fig. 2- Aerial View of Study Area

Figure 2 shows the area designated for modification. There are two rail viaducts separating the neighborhoods on either side of Amherst Street. Only one of the viaducts supports an active rail line. In addition to the physical separation of the neighborhoods, this area does not promote pedestrian or bicycle safety. The street is poorly lit and despite the existence of sidewalks, there is little barrier between the pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The current street configurations at 1 and 2 do not allow for efficient traffic flow.

In addition to the above listed observations, a SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) analysis was done in regards to the Black Rock Neighborhood as a whole. This analysis will be listed in the Appendix section at the end of the report.

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

Named for the large black chert rock (quartzite and limestone) embedded in the bank on the Niagara River, the first settlers, predominantly of Irish and German descent, arrived in Black Rock in 1794. General Peter Porter (for whom Porter Ave is named) purchased the original strip of land between Scjajacuada creek and the black chert rock in 1805, but Black Rock officially became a village in 1813.

The oldest part of the city of Buffalo, Black Rock boasted a vibrant shipbuilding industry. The significant role the shipbuilding industry played in the growth of Black Rock, contributed to the role Black Rock played in the War of 1812. The Scjajacuada shipyard was employed to build the fleet of Sir Oliver Hazard Perry in the war. The neighborhood also served as the site of three skirmishes and suffered in part from the burning of Buffalo by the British.

After the War of 1812, Black Rock began shifting its focus on attracting the Erie Canal. Black Rock had a significant natural port, but Buffalo had a more significant harbor. By this time, Black Rock was a thriving community, comparable to Buffalo. Over a two year period an intense competition developed between Black Rock and Buffalo for the location of the Erie Canal, but eventually Buffalo won out and by 1823 Black Rock began blasting away its nominally significant black rock to make way for the canal to pass through.

Initially, the Village of Black Rock occupied land from present day School Street in the south to Austin Street in the north, but divided by Scjajacuada Creek, it formed two sub-sections: Upper Rock and Lower Rock. With the rapid growth of Buffalo after the canal was installed, Upper Black Rock (which was located between Scjajacuada Creek and School Street) meshed into Buffalo, while Lower Black Rock (Scjajacuada Creek to Austin Street) remained isolated. It was really the canal that brought development into Black Rock. Local vendors and business owners were able to buy and sell from ships waiting in the Locks. The community developed its own industry, entertainment, and even water source. But the growing Black Rock was annexed by the City of Buffalo in 1853.

Another major influence on the economic growth of the Black Rock neighborhood was the construction of the Railroad in the 1850's. The building of the railroad essentially developed the western portion of Black Rock (considered by some to be the Grant-Amherst neighborhood). Various railways functioned

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

here including the Grand Trunk rail line, which served as the primary transport between Buffalo and Canada, and the Belt Line, which circled the city and connected the inner city to Black Rock, allowing both commercial and residential growth into the current Grant-Amherst neighborhood. The construction of the Belt Line paved the way for new businesses such as Buffalo Cooperative Stove, Acme Steel, Hard Manufacturing, Standard Plaster, and more.

Industry continued to thrive in the Black Rock neighborhood during the depression because suburban expansion was not affordable. Shopping and recreation flourished, but like many cities, the development of the thruway and government subsidies for new housing purchases detracted from the neighborhood. The construction of the I-190 destroyed community recreational spots, social clubs, and houses.

Despite a consistent loss in population and economic decline since the construction of the I-190, today, Black Rock is on the rebound. The increasing investment of new businesses and growth of existing businesses in Black Rock are key assets supporting the revitalization of the neighborhood. For example, Delish pastry shop relocated from its former location on Elmwood Avenue. If this reveals anything, it is that Black Rock is beginning to be seen as a viable, more affordable alternative to bustling Elmwood.



Fig. 3- Delish! - Newly relocated from the Elmwood strip

Black Rock Kitchen & Bar is a new restaurant on the Amherst strip, along with various art galleries including 464, Artsphere, and Blink.

These businesses are flourishing and adding to the atmosphere of the Grant-Amherst business district. Existing businesses such as Artisan's Kitchen and Bath/Appliance Associates of Buffalo, which recently moved into the old Buffalo Cooperative Stove building, Spar's European Sausages, a well-known community staple, and Wegman's, a major community employer, continue to be contributing assets to the neighborhood.

In addition to new business growth, Black Rock is bursting with history and character. Many of the homes date back as far as the late 1700's and there are several examples of unique and historic architecture spread throughout the entire community. Many of these historic buildings have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with the Market Square Historic District.

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

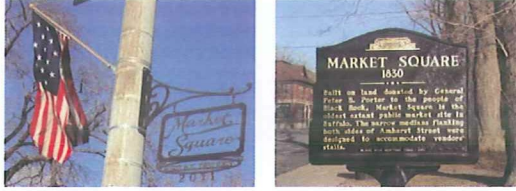


Fig. 4 & 5- The Market Square Historic District is distinguished by US flags as they looked in 1812, wrought iron signs, and markers.

Black Rock exists because of its location, location, location. Even now, its proximity to its surroundings is vital to Black Rock's continued push for revitalization and growth. Some of the major community attractions consist of Buffalo State College, two area supermarkets, Albright-Knox & Burchfield-Penney Art Galleries, the Buffalo Historical Society, Delaware Park, and the Jesse Kriegel Bike Path.

PROJECT GOALS & DESIRED PLANNING OUTCOMES

The desired outcomes of this project are outlined as follows:

- Reconnect the Black Rock Heritage District neighborhood with the business corridor of the Grant-Amherst neighborhood.
- Improve pedestrian safety and walkability within the study area.
- Improve bicycle accessibility and safety within the study area.
- Develop an implementable plan with realistic recommendations and phasing options.

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of the relevant data collected and the input of the BRRAlliance committee members, several recommendations have been formulated in compliance with the desired outcomes of the project. These recommendations are intended to be used as guidelines and can be implemented in phases so as to provide immediate results and long term solutions.

Objective: Improve Neighborhood Connectivity- Phase 1

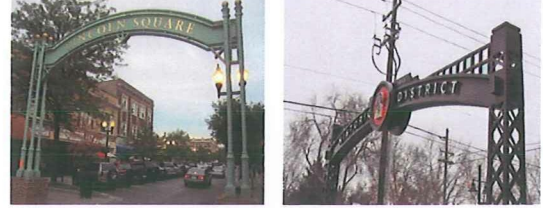


Fig. 6 & 7- Examples of Neighborhood gateways, identifying a specific community.

Recommendations:

- 1) Choose neighborhood identifier, such as a specific type of lighting style, banners, and signage.
- 2) Carry style through to other features in neighborhood, promoting a cohesive neighborhood feel.
- 3) Expand upon existing features unique to the neighborhood.
 - o Mural commemorating the history of Black Rock, located on Tonawanda Street
 - o Style of Market Square Historic District signs
 - o Black Rock neighborhood signs

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District



Fig. 8- Black Rock neighborhood sign



Fig. 9- Tonawanda Street mural

- 4) Solicit neighboring businesses for cooperation and participation in community revitalization efforts. Involve businesses in design plans.
- 5) Convert inactive rail line into a bike trail that can be connected to other existing bike paths in surrounding area. (i.e. Jesse Kriegel Bike Path that runs along Scajaguada Creek)

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

Improve Neighborhood Connectivity- Phase 2

Inactive Rail Viaduct Options:



Fig. 10- Inactive Rail Viaduct crossing over Amherst Street

- 1) Remove cap from inactive rail viaduct to give a more open and less disconnected feel to the study area.
- 2) Scale back retaining wall between active and inactive viaducts, eliminating wall where no longer structurally necessary.

Improve Neighborhood Connectivity- Phase 3

Intersection Redesign Options:

- 1) Redirect traffic flow, keeping existing infrastructure, but reducing traffic lanes to one lane in each direction.
- 2) Placement of traffic circles on either side of rail viaducts to address traffic flow and create symmetry and cohesion. Traffic lanes will be reduced to one lane in each direction for this option as well.

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District



Fig. 11- Possible street redesign implementing traffic circles on either side of the viaducts.

Objective: Improve Walkability- Phase 1

- 1) Install additional lighting along streetscape designed to human scale.
- 2) Install additional lighting along the retaining wall beneath the rail viaducts.
- 3) Install lighting along the Tonawanda Street mural wall to draw attention to the mural.
- 4) Install bollards between sidewalks and road passing beneath viaducts to provide a barrier between pedestrians and vehicles.

Improve Walkability- Phase 2

- 1) Add signage calling out pedestrian crossings.
- 2) Identify pedestrian crossings with painted crosswalks.

Improve Walkability- Phase 3

- 1) Install brick or stone crosswalks to identify pedestrian crossings.

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

Objective: Improve Bicycle Safety- Phase 1

- 1) Add bicycle lane along Amherst Street and Tonawanda Street using painted lines for identification.
- 2) Add appropriate signage to caution drivers of bicyclists.

Improve Bicycle Safety- Phase 2

- 1) Remove median between rail viaducts and replace with bollards, planters or leave open.
- 2) Add raised surface to street, to distinguish bicycle lane from vehicle lane.
- 3) Add bollards between bicycle lane and vehicle lane.

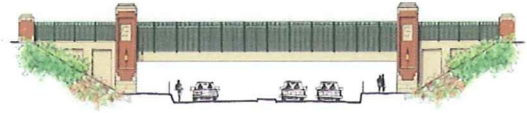


Fig. 12- Possible layout option for addition of bicycle lane. Keep in mind that the Amherst Street viaducts have a center structural pillar separating traffic travelling in opposite directions.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The above recommendations are separated by their main objective; however, these recommendations are intended and should be implemented simultaneously and in conjunction with each other. For example, by installing pedestrian friendly street lighting along the Amherst Street corridor, three objectives can be achieved. Choosing a consistent light design that is installed throughout the entire neighborhood adds to the cohesive neighborhood feel while addressing pedestrian and bicycle safety. Adding banners or hanging plants to the light posts can also enhance the design and desired cohesiveness. The details of what recommendations are chosen can be altered at the will of the community stakeholders, BRRAlliance committee members, and planning professionals. It is highly encouraged that those parties involved in the decision making process, discuss and agree upon the

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

adoption of a neighborhood vision and design format. Such details as specific lighting fixture styles or trash receptacles may set the tone for future revitalization efforts.

Aside from design recommendations, it is urged that the BRRAlliance committee members and community stakeholders find common ground in regards to the overall vision of the future of the Black Rock neighborhood. Mark Goldman, owner of Black Rock Kitchen & Bar, told *Buffalo Architecture and History*,

“So much of Buffalo is like a smile with all the teeth missing, but Black Rock still has most of its teeth.”

In other words, Black Rock has a strong foundation, a rich history, and abundant potential for growth; it simply needs some minor tweaking.

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

APPENDIX

S.W.O.T. Analysis- Black Rock Neighborhood | 2012

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Oldest community in Buffalo-Metro area ◦ Several pieces of historic architecture ◦ Building of the canal and later the railroad • Community character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Immense pride in neighborhood and history ◦ Strong community organization (ie. Black Rock-Riverside Alliance, Grant-Amherst Business Association) • Proximity to Buffalo State College • Access to public transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Metro bus routes easily accessible • Growing business corridor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Increasing number of small businesses moving into area, particularly along Grant-Amherst corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ties to Buffalo State College and capitalize on potential expansion • BOA project funding • Capitalize on growing Grant-Amherst business corridor • Capitalize on historic pride and value • Capitalize on potential of T-to-Green site and abandoned Rock Harbor student housing project • Black Rock Heritage Trail and mural as foundation for neighborhood connectivity • New Buffalo Green Code • Increasing activism by Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeepers
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnection of neighborhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Disconnected by the I-190, the Scjajaquada Fkwy, and the railway corridor • Lack of green space/parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No recreation or park space • Lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Poorly lit and maintained Tow Path ◦ Poor neighborhood walkability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood crime rate • High poverty rate • CSO pollution of Scjajaquada Creek and Niagara River • Disconnectors I-190, Scjajaquada Fkwy, railway corridor • Possible negative impact of Isabelle Housing Project

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Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

General Demographic Profile	Black Rock	Buffalo
Total Population	3461	270240
Population Density(people per sq. mile)	5823.68	6654
Total Families 2008	2445	
Ave Family size	3	3.1
Number of Adults 2008	2629	
Total Households 2008	1555	
Ave HH Size 2008	2.22	2.3
Total Pop in Households	3446	
Median Age: males	33.6	33.6
Median Age: females	36.7	35.3

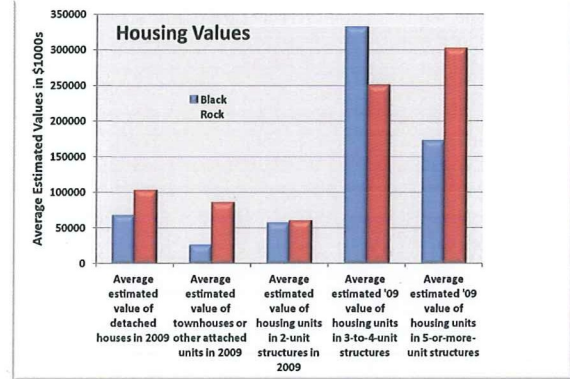
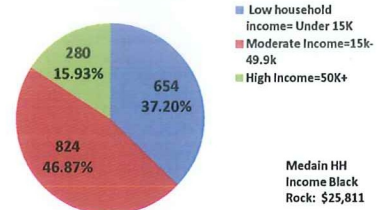
CHANGE IN GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS 2000-2008

Total Household Change from 2000 to 2008	-203
Percent Household Change between 2000 and 2008	-11.55%
Total Population Change from 2000 to 2008	-508
Percent Population Change from 2000 to 2008	-12.8%
2000 Total Population over the age of 25	2478
2000 Percent of Population over 25 without a High school Diploma	31.2%
2000 Percent of Population over 25 with a bachelor degree or more	12.4%
Low household income= Under 15K	654
Moderate Income=15k-49.9k	824
High Income=50K+	280
% of Low Income	37.2%
% of Moderate Income	46.9%
% of High Income	15.9%
2000 Total Income = 2000 HH X 1999 Median HH Income	36842406
2008 Total Income = 2008 Med income X 2008 Total HHs	40136105
2000 Percent of Vacant housing units of total housing units	19.7%

Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

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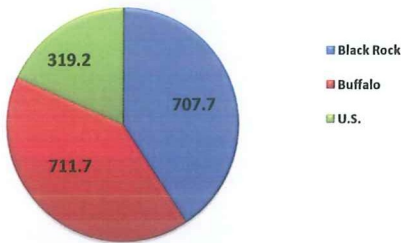
**2008 Household Income-
Black Rock**



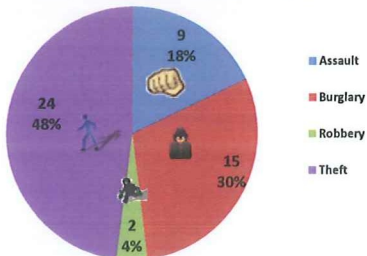
Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

2008 Crime Index



Crimes Committed: 4/01/11-5/11



Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

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- <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Black-Rock-Buffalo-NY.html#ixzz1PmfK9u5w>

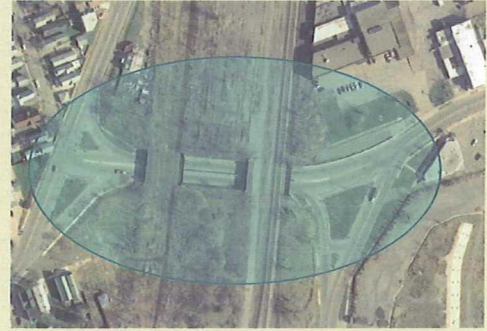
Black Rock Neighborhood Reconnection Plan

Proposed Plan to unify the Black Rock Heritage District with the Grant-Amherst Business District

BLACK ROCK NEIGHBORHOOD RECONNECTION PLAN

Prepared by Crystal Surdyk
Geography & Planning Department
Buffalo State College

PLANNING AREA



DISTINCT BORDERS: GRANT & AMHERST STREET CORRIDOR



Census Block Groups, Tracts, and Planning Neighborhoods as the BERR (GNFA)

Legend:
 Planning Neighborhood
 Census Tract
 Census Block Group

Prepared by Crystal Surdyk
 Geography & Planning Department
 Buffalo State College

- Once a major industrial corridor, Black Rock's borders consist of railroad tracks to the North and West, Scajaquada Creek to the South, and Elmwood Avenue to the East.
- The Black Rock-Riverside district is considered to be three separate and distinct neighborhoods.
- Census tract 55 is referred to as the Grant-Amherst neighborhood.

HISTORY:

1794-1813

- First settlers arrived
 - Predominately of Irish and German descent
 - Named for the large black rock (quartzite and limestone) embedded in the bank on the Niagara River
- The oldest part of the City of Buffalo
- Played a major role in the resistance to the British in the War of 1812
 - Construction of Sir Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet
 - Burned by the British along with the City of Buffalo



THE NIAGARA RIVER AND VICINITY AT BLACK ROCK, AS IT WAS PRIOR TO THE WAR OF 1812.

1813-1825

- Peter Porter purchased land between the black rock deposit in Scajaquada Creek
 - Present day location of Black Rock
- The Village of Black Rock was founded in 1813
- Black rock deposits blasted out of the banks along the Niagara River to make way for the Erie Canal
 - Erie Canal completed in 1825



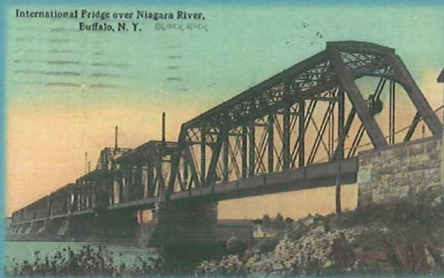
LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

- Black Rock's economy continued to grow
 - From shipbuilding to manufacturing
 - Spurred by the Black Rock Railroad and the power supply of the Austin Street Locks
 - Annexed by Buffalo in 1853 and connected by the Junction Railroad in 1871 and the Belt Line Railway in 1883



- Completion of the International Railroad Bridge in 1873 made Black Rock a strategic point because of its proximity and linkage to Canada

- Became a major route for the Underground Railway



A HUB FOR
INDUSTRIAL
GROWTH

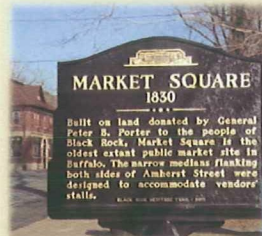
FROM WATER TO RAIL...

- 1913: Lock #72 is closed
- Squaw Island becomes a sewage disposal facility



FROM RAIL TO THE ROAD...

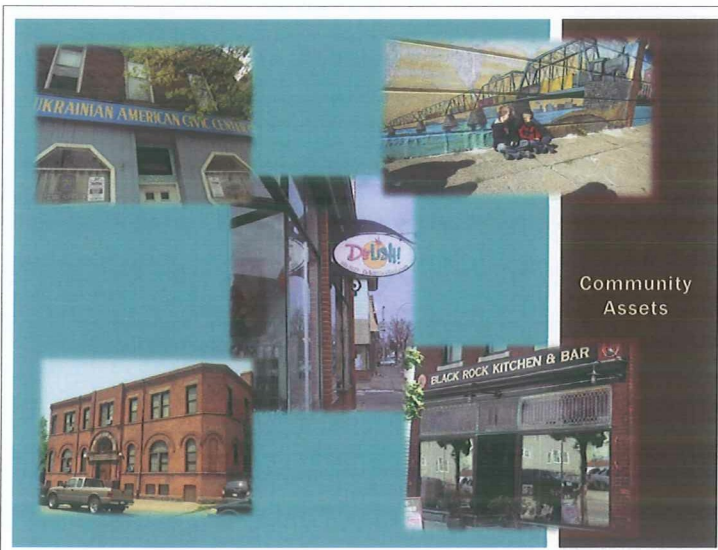
- 1927: The International Peace Bridge links the US and Canada
- The New York State Thruway I-190 is built on the remnants of the Erie Canal
 - Docks, houses and social clubs are demolished



CHARACTER OF A HISTORIC COMMUNITY

NEW BUSINESS GROWTH AND EXISTING BUSINESS REVITALIZATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Black Rock Kitchen & Bar ■ Studio 464 ■ Artsphere ■ Rohall's Corner ■ Sportsman's Tavern ■ Spar's Sausage Deli ■ Artisan's Kitchen & Bath/Appliance Associates of Buffalo | <h3>Major Area Employers</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wegman's ■ Tops ■ American Axle ■ Luvata ■ Du-Pont ■ Dunlop ■ And more |
|---|--|



Community Assets

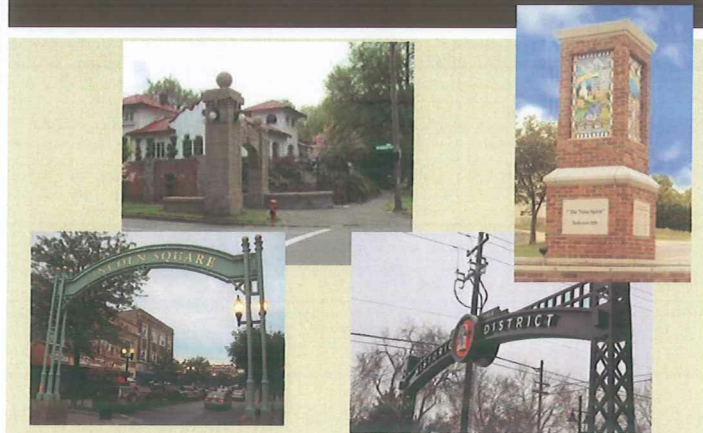
PROXIMITY

- Buffalo State College
- Supermarkets
- Albright-Knox & Burchfield-Penney Art Galleries
- Buffalo Historical Society
- Delaware Park
- Jesse Kriegel Bike Path
- Accessibility to interstates
- Elmwood Village shopping district
- Charter School for Applied Technologies
- Riverside Library

PROJECT GOALS:

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

COHESIVE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN



EXPAND EXISTING FEATURES



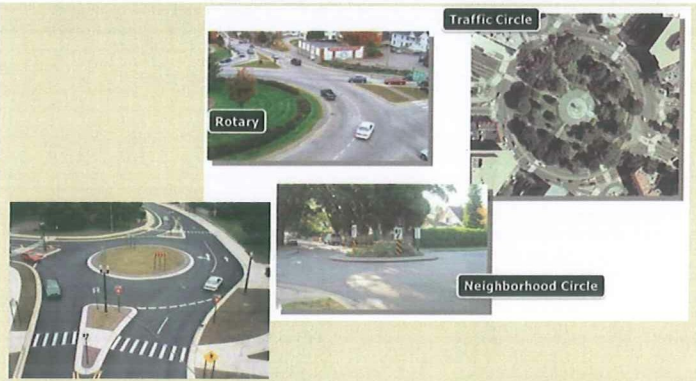
SOLICIT NEIGHBORING BUSINESSES FOR COOPERATION



REMOVE CAP FROM INACTIVE RAIL VIADUCT

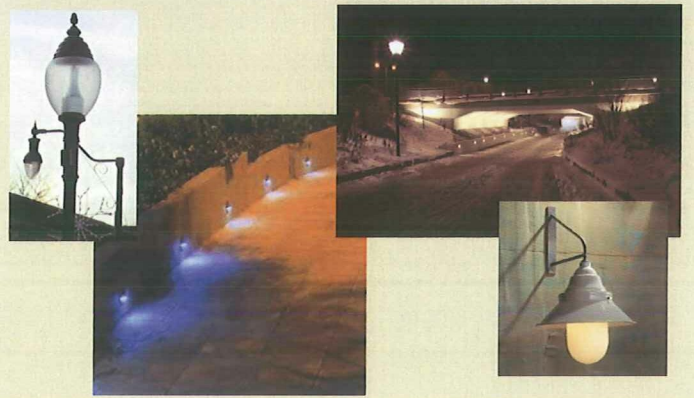


INTERSECTION REDESIGN

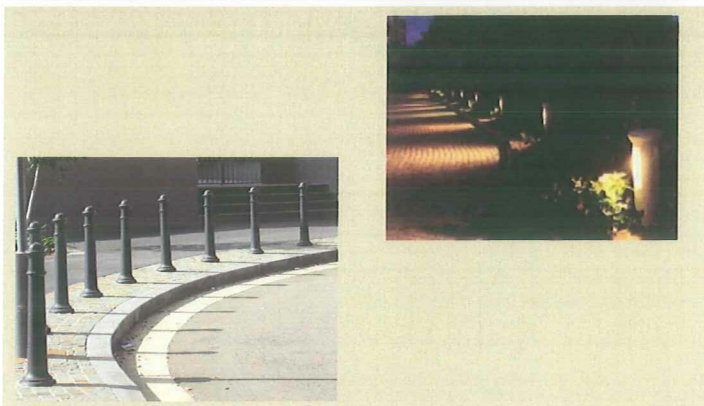


IMPROVE WALKABILITY

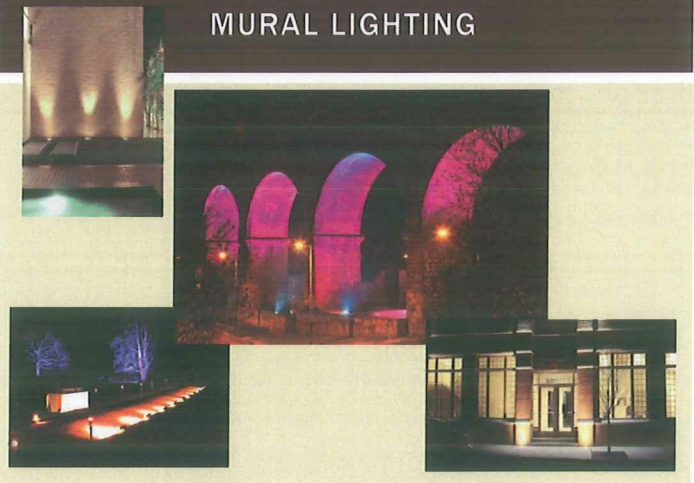
INSTALL PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY LIGHTING



PLACEMENT OF BOLLARDS

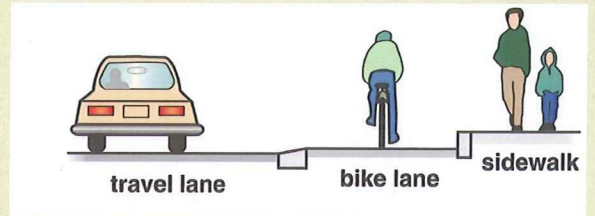


MURAL LIGHTING



IMPROVE BICYCLE SAFETY

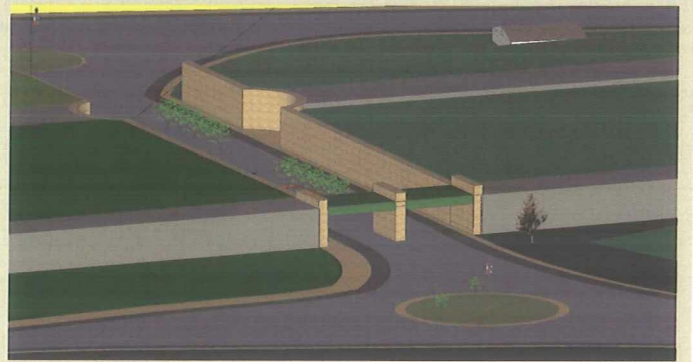
ADD A BIKE LANE



REMOVE MEDIAN



PHASE 1: ADD PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY STREET LIGHTS WITH BANNERS, BOLLARDS, & LIGHT THE MURAL



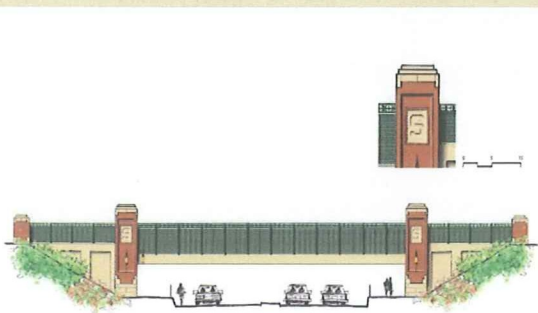
PHASE 2: REMOVE CAP FROM INACTIVE RAIL, MEDIANS, AND RESHAPE RETAINING WALLS



PHASE 3: INCORPORATE NEW TRAFFIC PATTERN AND ADD BIKE LANES



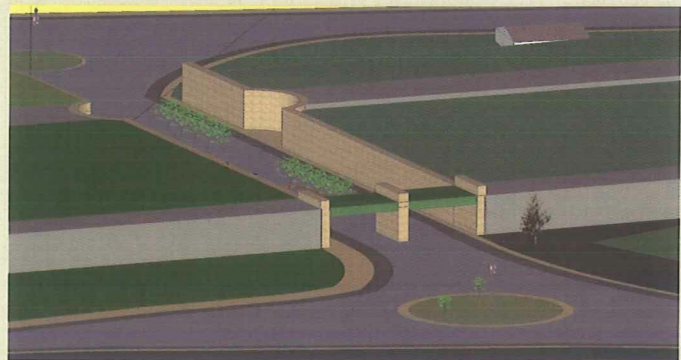
ADDING A SAFE BICYCLE LANE



PHASE 3: DECREASE TRAFFIC TO ONE LANE EACH WAY



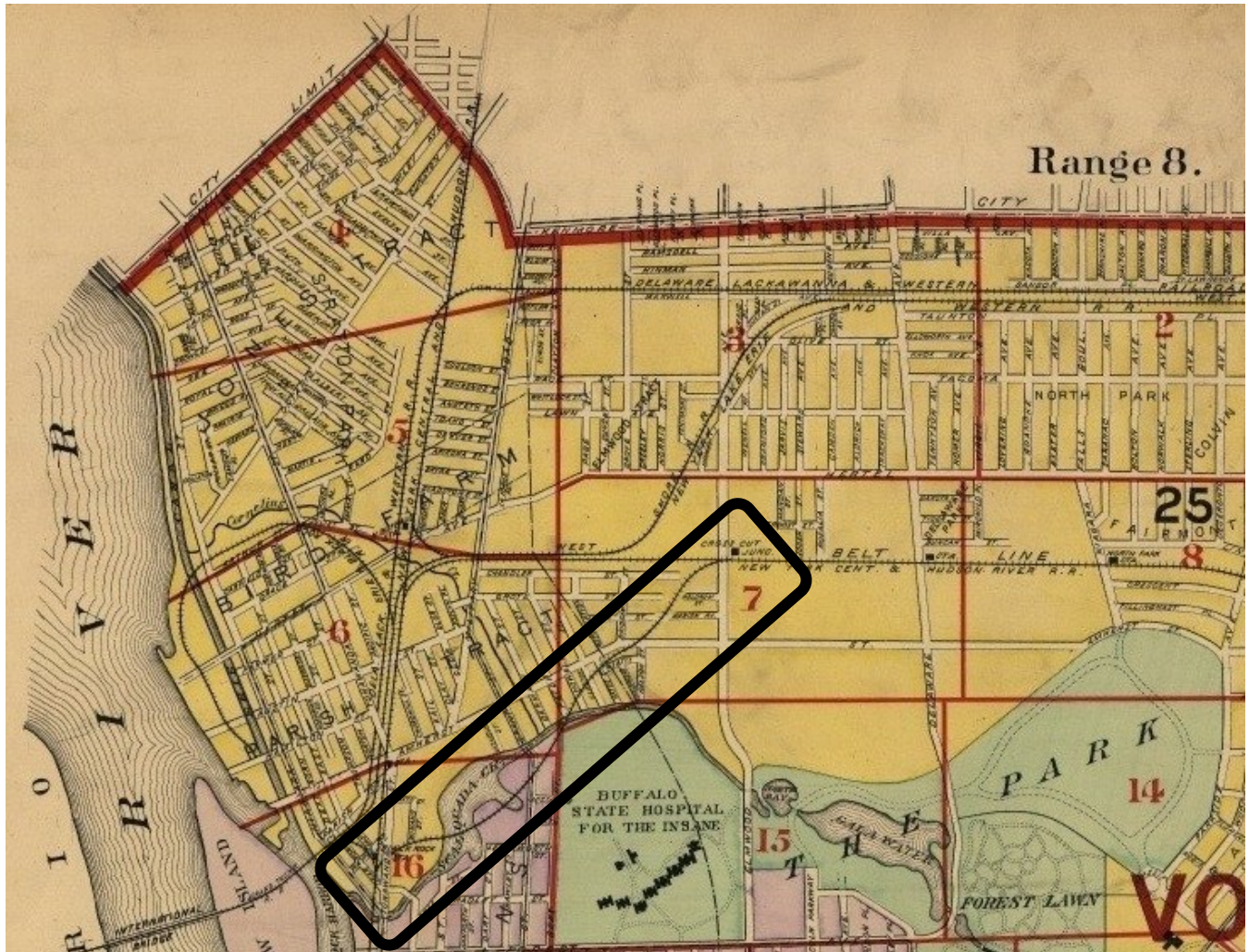
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!!





APPENDIX C

Map of Abandoned Rail Line
(See highlighted area below.)



Source: City of Buffalo Atlas, 1894, at http://www.erie.gov/atlasses/buff_94/city_atlas.html.



APPENDIX D

Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Community Meeting Notes, November 29, 2011

Notes from Community Meeting, Held November 29, 2011, Sponsored by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, for the Purpose of Soliciting Community Input into Neighborhood Needs in Advance of Preparation of the Grant-Amherst Community Plan

Mark Kubiniec, Grant Amherst Business Association—Welcome

Mary Ann Kedron, Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance — Introduction

Phil Haberstro, Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo — Who Needs to Be Here

- Business
- Elected Officials
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Citizens
- Buffalo State College

North Council District Member Joseph Golombek, Jr. — The Setting

Phil Haberstro— Healthy Community Model

1. Neighborhood/Environmental: Livability
2. Civic Health—Can all the kids play in the sandbox together, give ground to arrive at a better future?
3. Economic Well Being

The foundation that pieces 1-3 contribute to is Personal Health.

Suggestion: Pick three Priority Actions to make Grant-Amherst a better neighborhood, and improve the quality of life.

General Discussion—Early Issues List

Buffalo State College represents a partnership opportunity.
Multiple plans can confuse.

Phil Haberstro— Break Out Session

Get top three issues for each group. Keep in mind: Where is the common ground? How can we move forward?

Group 1:

Issues

Drug activity
Transient community
Code Enforcement
Section 8 (Private Owner Can't Compete)
Solution is jobs (New small businesses moving in with good quality products and services)
Support small business community
Kids tagging
Steer kids into art community
Landscaping
Get streets looking nice

Big Three from Group 1:

1. Infrastructure to Support Housing
2. Housing Stock
3. Small Business Support/Jobs
4. Youth Engagement Opportunities

Group 2:

Issues

Security
Police Patrol
Trash, especially between Amherst and Military
Dirty
Mayor's Task Force
NFTA Bus Stop
Rats/Rodents
Pedestrian Bridge from Buffalo State College to Wegmans

Big Three from Group 2:

1. Security/Safe Neighborhood
2. Cleanliness of Neighborhood
3. Pedestrian Bridge

Group 3:



APPENDIX D

Issues

Places for kids to go (theatre group)
Senior housing
Tim Horton's coffee shops
Housing: Have absentee landlords and tenants
take care of property as if it's your own
Get bad businesses out, and good businesses in

Big Three from Group 3:

Things for Everyone, especially Youth, to do
Housing
Quality Businesses

Group 4:

Issues

Small scale recreation (Green space per block)
Better communication with Buffalo State College
Get rid of drugs/crimes
Connect with immigrants

Big Three from Group 4:

Youth

Group 5:

Issues

Public safety
Better lighting for pedestrians, doorways
Blue light cameras
Improve Housing Stock
Some houses too small
Make more space for houses
Bigger parcels to include driveways
Land banking
Traffic and Parking
Improve flow
Slower speed
Better pedestrian crossing
Get rid of right on red at Amherst St. & Grant St.
Off street parking
"Neighborhood has changed" from owners, Polish
to refugees, and they're not here tonight
Metric: Is it safe enough for your college age kid/
auntie?

Big Three from Group 5:

Public Safety
Improve Housing Stock
Traffic and Parking
General Discussion:

Is no doctor or health center in the neighborhood
important? No.

Phil Haberstro— Next Steps:

Write up what happened tonight.
Get 5-7 people together and take key issues
identified tonight and write up action steps.
Create draft document to answer the question,
"How?"

Announcement:

There is a Youth Program at Assumption Church.
Are kids interested in it? They have to pay to
participate in it, and it is at capacity.



APPENDIX E

Neighborhood Survey, 2011

DRAFT DOCUMENT

Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance

Please Read & Respond / We Need Your Help.....!!!

The Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance is leading a neighborhood planning effort to determine what residents and businesses in Census tract 55 - Grant • Amherst would like to see developed in their neighborhood. The survey below will help inform our neighborhood planning group to identify what your perceptions and priorities are. Please take a minute to fill out the survey about the area between Tonawanda Street and Elmwood Avenue, and Chandler Street and Scajaquada Creek.

Please complete the following questions. You do not have to put your name on this. No one will contact you regarding your answers.

1. How long have you lived in the Grant Amherst neighborhood? _____

2. Where did you live previously _____

3. Do you

- a. Own
- b. Rent
- c. Live with relatives

4. If you were going to buy a home in Grant Amherst what kind would you want?

- a. Single home
- b. Double
- c. out of the neighborhood

5. How many people currently live in your home?

- a. 1 - 4
- b. 5 - 10
- c. More than 10

6. Are you currently

- a. Employed
- b. Unemployed
- c. Student
- d. retired / disabled

7. Do you use public transportation?

- a. Yes – this is my primary means of transportation
- b. No – I own my own transportation
- c. I use a combination of ways to get around such as: _____

8. I primarily shop at

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

9. Do you feel as if there are enough parks, playgrounds in this neighborhood?

- a. Yes
- b. No, where is a good spot for more recreation? _____

Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance

Please Read & Respond / We Need Your Help.....!!!

10. Do you feel safe in this neighborhood?

- a. Yes
- b. No, how can it be improved? _____

11. Do you know about local programs / resources that are available to you or your children?

- a. Yes
- b. No, what is needed? _____

11. Do you know who your local elected officials are?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Would you be interested in joining a block club?

- a. Yes, a good project in my neighborhood would be _____
- b. No
- c. I am a member of a block club.

13. What improvements would add to your likelihood to stay in Grant Amherst?

- off-street parking
- street trees
- more police patrols
- playgrounds
- community gardens

**If you would like to be included in the planning meetings
please list your name and contact details below.**

Name • address • email • phone

Please make additional comments about quality of life issues in the neighborhood below:



APPENDIX F

Traffic Speed Evaluation & Analysis

DRAFT DOCUMENT

Traffic Speed Evaluation & Analysis — Amherst Street

Location: Amherst Street at Bush Street, The Grant-Amherst Neighborhood, Buffalo, NY

Date/Time: June 21, 2013; 2:00 p.m.— 2:30 p.m.

Procedural Notes:

1. The recommended first step for measuring vehicle speeds is to determine where the observer wants to measure vehicle speed, in a location away from STOP signs or curves in the road that would tend to slow vehicles. We chose a location on Niagara Street going north, from one side of the intersection of Amherst Street to the other.
2. We measured and marked a distance of 300 feet on the sidewalk, from Marker 1 to Marker 2.
3. We used walkie-talkies, a stop-watch, and record sheet to measure how long it takes a vehicle to travel the 300 foot distance.
4. We recorded the results for thirty minutes from 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on June 21, 2013, a bright, sunny day. We observed a sample of 50 vehicles travelling north east on Amherst Street until they reached Marker 2 on Bush street. All of the vehicles were selected because they had an unobstructed path, and were the first cars to stop at the green light at the intersection of Amherst & Peter St.

Results:

Vehicles Observed: 50

Maximum Speed: 40 mph

Minimum Speed: 21 mph

Average Speed: 30 mph

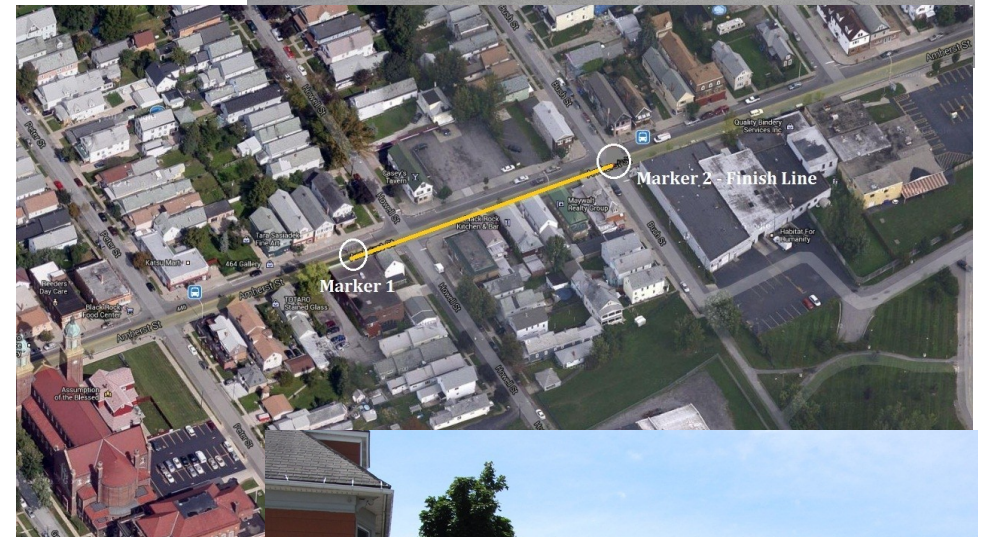
Vehicle Speed Over 30 mph: 23 vehicles, or 46%

Vehicle Speed Over 35 mph: 10 vehicles, or 20%

Vehicle Speed Over 40 mph: 1 vehicle, or 2 %

Personnel

Observers: Bill Parke, Community Planner, Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo; Kevin, Intern; Statistical Report: prepared by Jo-Sar Davis-Dacio, Intern.
















APPENDIX G





Illustrative Problem Properties, Circa 2011 and January 2013 Comparison

DRAFT DOCUMENT

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
1			
	<p>2011:, 220 Amherst Street was a boarded up multiple residence building on the Grant Amherst commercial corridor, just east of a gateway neighborhood entrance.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the property had been renovated.</p>	IMPROVED
2			
	<p>2011: 254 Amherst Street is an empty commercial building with graffiti on the west wall and a damaged sign on the Grant Amherst commercial corridor. Graffiti also appears next door.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the sign has been repaired, a new occupant established, and graffiti next door removed. However, new graffiti appeared on the west wall.</p>	IMPROVED
3			
	<p>2011: 369 Amherst Street is the key gateway corner for the Grant Amherst commercial corridor. The brickwork needs to be repointed and missing stones replaced.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the conditions remain similar.</p>	SAME/ SIMILAR







	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
4			
	<p>2011: 370 Amherst Street is a multiple use commercial property on the Grant Amherst intersection. This historic and architecturally interesting building is in need of façade improvement and occupied storefronts.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the white exterior has been repainted.</p>	IMPROVED
5			
	<p>2011: 386 Amherst Street is a new mural/public space on the Grant Amherst intersection. Completion of the mural and further landscaping is needed.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the mural had been finished, landscaping was improved, and a new business had moved in to the building.</p>	IMPROVED
6			
	<p>2011: 144 Bush Street is a boarded up double surrounded by residential properties in good condition.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the building is no longer boarded up and appears to have new occupants.</p>	IMPROVED

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
7			
	<p>2011: 166 Chandler Street is a storage facility For Sale in the Brownfield Opportunity Area program's Chandler Street Redevelopment Area #3, representing an important development opportunity and illustrating why the BOA should advance forward.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, the building remains for sale.</p>	<p>SAME/ SIMILAR</p>
8			
	<p>2011: 75 Clay Street is a boarded up residence with graffiti creating a blighting appearance in an otherwise-intact residential mid-block area.</p>	<p>By 1/2013, roof shingles are dislodged and the railing has been removed, but board-up of the door is gone, a new porch surface is in place, and graffiti is removed.</p>	<p>SAME/ SIMILAR</p>
9			

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
	2011: 158 Germain Street is a boarded up residence with graffiti and a broken window creating a blighting appearance in an otherwise intact residential mid-block area.	By 1/2013, the graffiti and overgrown bushes are gone, boards are removed, and the window is repaired.	IMPROVED
10			
	2011: 24 Glor Street is a boarded up single-family residence creating a blighting appearance in an otherwise-intact residential mid-block area. See photo at left (Code 6763) for conditions as of 5/11. (note demolition marking)	By 1/2013, there is no apparent change in condition.	SAME/ SIMILAR
11			
	2011: 966 Grant Street is prominently located near the Grant-Amherst intersection. It has been affected by graffiti.	By 1/2013, the building is in a similar condition, with graffiti gone but additional bricks missing from above right window on façade.	SAME/ SIMILAR

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
12			
	2011: 997 Grant Street is vacant, sizable (63'x 150'), well-located parcel.	By 1/2013, there is no apparent change in condition.	SAME/ SIMILAR
13			
	In 2011: 1004 Grant Street is vacant lot along a busy corridor near the Grant-Amherst intersection and represents an attractive redevelopment opportunity.	By 1/2013, a fence has been added/exstended.	IMPROVED
14			
	In 2011: 1016 Grant Street is a vacant lot near 1004 Grant; similar to 1004 Grant, it represents an attractive redevelopment opportunity, with the difference that this lot is city-owned.	By 1/2013, the lot continues to be vacant.	SAME/ SIMILAR

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
15			
	In 2011: 1047 Grant is a multiple use commercial property on Grant Street. Its façade is marred by graffiti.	By 1/2013, the building's appearance is similar to before.	SAME/ SIMILAR
16			
	In 2011: 1055 Grant Street is a prominently-located multiple use commercial property on Grant Street with a storefront that appears to be converted from commercial to office/residential use.	By 1/2013, the building looks the same.	SAME/ SIMILAR
17			
	In 2011: 1057 Grant Street (right) is a prominently-located multiple use commercial property on Grant Street with a vacant storefront.	By 1/2013, the building had been demolished.	DOWN- GRADED USE

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
18			
	In 2011: 1059 Grant Street (left) is a prominently-located multiple use commercial property on Grant Street with a storefront.	By 1/2013, the storefront had been covered by a grey accordion gate.	DOWN-GRADED FAÇADE
19			
	In 2011: 1065 Grant Street is a vacant motion picture theater (Showplace Theater), now for sale.	By 1/2013, boarded windows had been replaced (albeit some with glass block), doors had been painted, and a replacement marquee had been added.	IMPROVED
20			
	In 2011: 170 Howell Street is a recently boarded up two-family residential property. New graffiti can be seen on the	By 1/2013, the building is newly sided, a new porch has appeared, and boards are gone, as well as the utility box	IMPROVED

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
	utility box on telephone pole.	graffiti.	
21			
	In 2011: 69 Kail Street is a partially-boarded up two-family residential property needing a paint job on a street of otherwise well maintained properties.	By 1/2013, conditions remain similar.	SAME/ SIMILAR
22			
	In 2011: 133 Peter, a two family house with maintenance issues, including peeling paint around windows, missing siding near the roofline, a deteriorating roof, partial board up, and electric meters missing. With troubled properties north and none south, it is a key property.	By 1/2013, electric meters had been replaced, bringing a sign of occupancy that is promising, but other maintenance issues remain.	SAME/ SIMILAR

	CIRCA 2011	JANUARY 2013	UPDATE
23			
	In 2011: 150 Peter Street is a boarded up two-family residential next to a vacant lot.	By 1/2013, the residence had been demolished.	DOWN-GRADED USE
24			
	In 2011: 182 Peter Street has a broken window, dislodged downspouts, and other maintenance issues in an otherwise intact residential fabric.	By 1/2013, one downspout had been repaired but most other issues remain.	SAME/SIMILAR