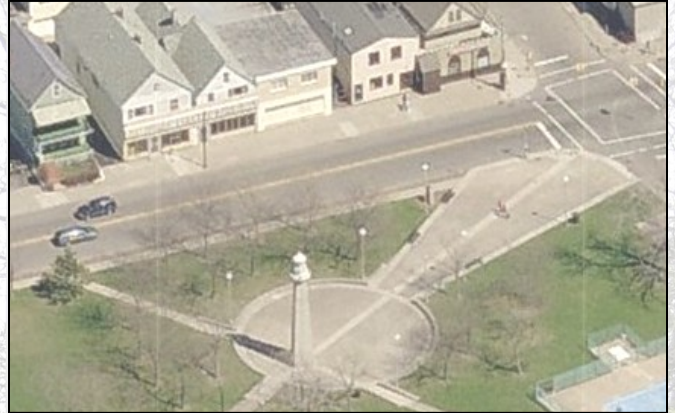


# 2010 Riverside Community Plan

## REDISCOVER RIVERSIDE

*Among Buffalo neighborhoods, in Riverside you'll find:*

- Olmsted-Designed Riverside Park,
- Easy Bike and Highway Access to Downtown and the Entire Region,
- Affordable, Attractive Housing in Quality Neighborhoods,
- Walkable Commercial Corridors,
- Business Incubators to Help You Get Your Business Moving, and
- An Enjoyable Waterfront Community!



*The lighthouse at Riverside Park (shown above and in background) is a focal point of both the park and the community. Promoting its renovation was determined by Rediscover Riverside in 2009 to be their first community improvement project.*



**DRAFT DOCUMENT**

*For updates on this planning initiative,  
visit: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside)*

## DEDICATION

*This plan is dedicated to all who work tirelessly toward the improvement of beautiful Riverside.*

## 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  
 Andrew M. Eszak, Former City Planner, Office of Strategic Planning  
 Bill Parke, Community Planner, Office of Strategic Planning

The Steering Committee of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA):

Sharon Adler	Mary Ann Kedron
Bill Buzak	Richard Mack, Co-Chair
Beverly Eagen	Bill Parke
Jackie Dillon	Larry Pernick
Bonnie Eschborn	Marge Price
Warren Glover	Evelyn Vossler, Co-Chair
Joe Golombek	

Dawn Schaffer, BRR GNPA Administrative Assistant

All Members of Rediscover Riverside, including the Planning Project Team:

Mercy Dela Cruz	Laurie Parks
Bonnie Eschborn	Don Petschke
Wayne Flading	Marge Price
Mary Ann Kedron	Evelyn Vossler
Bill Parke	

*As well as...*

Phil Haberstro, Wellness  
 Institute of  
 Greater Buffalo

Riverside Review

St. Mark's Church

Amvets Medallion Post  
 13

Buffalo Olmsted Parks  
 Conservancy

Grant Amherst Business  
 Association's  
 "The Historic Project"

Stevan Stipanovich

## 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 716.877.8400. For updates on this planning initiative, visit: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside)

Prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and Rediscover Riverside in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*.

Front Cover Images:

Foreground: Oblique aerial accessed 2009 at Bing.com

Background: 2009 photo by Bill Parke

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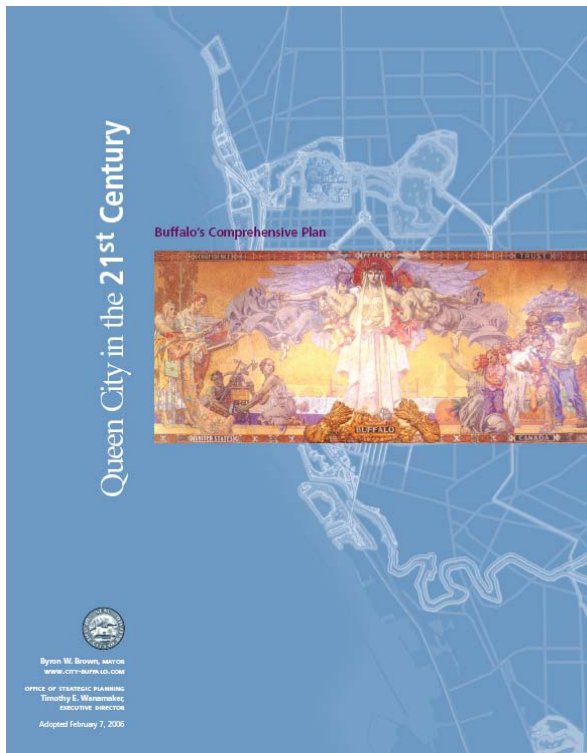


Figure 1: Report cover for *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan (Adopted 2006)*.



Figure 2: An oblique aerial view shows the relationship of Historic Black Rock to its neighbor to the north, Riverside.

### 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 the 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](http://www.city-buffalo.com/plan_black_rock)). The current document, Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan, is the second draft plan to be arrived at in Black Rock-Riverside through this initiative.*

### History of Riverside

Riverside has been shaped by broad economic, transportation, and political trends, which are best explored in the context of its history.

In the years following the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and incorporation of the City of Buffalo in 1832, what is today Riverside was predominantly farms and homesteads, with commercial and industrial development along the waterfront and along rail lines. In 1873, an International Railroad Bridge replaced a system of ferries serving Black Rock and Fort Erie in Canada. As Black Rock, to the south of Riverside, then developed into an industrial center, many families began moving to less industrialized areas to the north. Riverside offered a beautiful waterfront location that was a short trolley ride north of Black Rock factories. Larger lots, curving streets and a more suburban atmosphere created an attractive



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Figure 3: Like much of North Buffalo, North East Buffalo, and South Buffalo at the time, Riverside in this 1880 Ward Map of Buffalo is comprised of large homesteads, farms, and lots owned by real estate companies and major landowners (including properties owned by William A. Bird.)

alternative for Black Rock employees. Mark Goldman, in his 1980 *Courier-Express* article "First There Was Black Rock", wrote:

*During the last quarter of the 19th century, as Black Rock was becoming increasingly industrialized, overrun by large factories owned by people from outside the neighborhood, Riverside was left alone. It remained predominantly an area of farms and several large exurban private homes, like that of William A. Bird, the president of the Erie Savings Bank, who lived on a large estate located between Hertel Avenue (then known as Bird Avenue) and Ontario Street. Things began to take a change with the passage of the Hertel Avenue Sewer Bill in 1888. Just as is true in contemporary suburbia, sewer construction and real estate development proceeded concurrently. In 1890, for example, one of several real estate companies working in the area -- the North Park Land Company -- bought 30 acres of land in the vicinity of Riverside Park (then known as Germania Park), subdivided it, built two-*



Figure 4: This 1894 City of Buffalo Atlas reflects the impact of the 1888 Hertel Avenue Sewer Bill and resulting real estate development. It also shows the relationship between the Niagara River, Erie Canal and its towpath on either side, and Germania Park (soon to be redesigned as Riverside Park.) Residential properties have been laid out and Tonawanda Street is beginning its rise to prominence as a commercial corridor.

*family homes on the building lots and sold them to incoming homeowners. The area grew steadily and by 1900 there were close to 2,000 people in Riverside."*

As manufacturing continued to expand northward, Riverside found itself sandwiched between the industries located along the rail corridor east of



Figure 5: Construction of the Niagara Section of the Thruway in 1958 took place atop the filled-in Erie Canal and Towpath.



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Figures 6-8: Aerial photos reveal stages of development in Riverside. In the 1920s (top photo), (1) industry was expanding on the edges of the community; (2) residential blocks were nearly built out with homes; (3) key facilities were yet to be added; and (4) the Erie Canal remained in operation along the waterfront. By 1951 (middle photo), key facilities had been or were being added (like Riverside High School) and a landscaped embankment replaced the filled-in Erie Canal and Towpath. By 2009 (bottom photo) the I-190 replaced the Erie Canal and Towpath along the water. Some former industrial properties now sit vacant as brownfields, while others continue to thrive.



Tonawanda Street and those in the Town of Tonawanda, its northern neighbor. These included, car, tire and chemical industries and the commercial industrial section of Kenmore, which housed railroad and other manufacturing plants. (See Figures 6-8) Defined on three sides by industry and one by the Niagara River, the community developed as a neighborhood of blue collar workers and their families. Into the 1970s and 1980s, the hard work and success of these individuals allowed their children to move up the economic ladder into the suburbs and out of the neighborhood. This was accompanied by a loss of industrial jobs and the shift of industry to the South and overseas. Replacement jobs and workers did not come flooding in.

The construction of the Niagara section of the NYS Thruway in 1958 was yet another setback to the neighborhood. It effectively cut this neighborhood off from one of its greatest assets, its waterfront. Sse Figure 5)



Separation of the Riverside, Black Rock, Grant-Amherst, and West Hertel neighborhoods into three different council districts in 1961 weakened the voice of the people politically and it was not until 1981 were they reunited in a North Council District. Remarkably resilient under the circumstances, the community has fought to preserve its identity and through this planning process seeks to revitalize itself to once again be the vibrant hard working community it once was.

### Planning Context

In February, 2006, the City of Buffalo adopted the *Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup>*



Figure 9: The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance covers northwest Buffalo and includes Riverside.



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Figure 10: *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* sets forth a series of guiding planning principles that integrate the Community, Economy and Environment to form a cohesive blueprint for Buffalo's future. This plan for Riverside is consistent with this comprehensive approach to planning.

*Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan*, which set forth the planning principles and guidance for future prosperity and development in the City of Buffalo. (See Figure 1.) One of the key principles in the plan is to "Plan with Neighborhoods":

*The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad framework for neighborhood redevelopment across the city, but depends on neighborhood residents themselves to create and help implement more detailed local plans. In this way, residents can work with City staff to tailor overall policies to local needs, values and visions. Participatory neighborhood planning can also take advantage of local knowledge in applying city-wide policies and help mobilize local resources for implementation.*

*The City has created the Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) to support this process of neighborhood planning. Residents have been invited to participate in planning for eleven Planning Communities or districts around the city. Staff from the Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) provides guidance and technical assistance to create usable plans consistent with city-wide policies. All neighborhood plans produced through the GNPA will be submitted to the Planning Board for review and then forwarded to Common*



Figure 11: Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Planning Areas with 2000 Census Tracts.

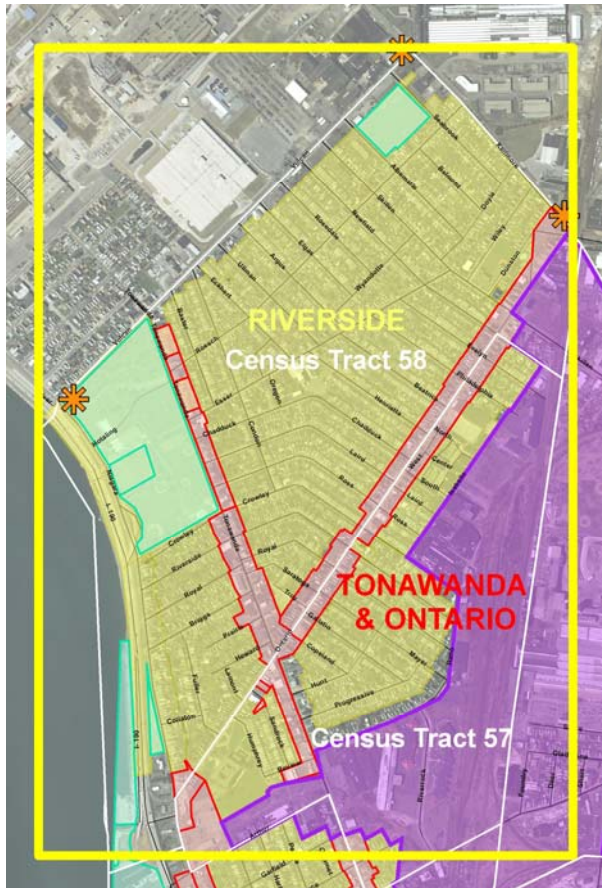


Figure 12: The Riverside Planning Area (yellow box) is comprised of Census Tracts 57 and 58 and includes the commercial corridors along Ontario and Tonawanda Streets.



## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

*Council for adoption. (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, page 86.)*

The Black Rock-Riverside GNPA recognized the need to plan locally, first by drafting a broader, GNPA-wide draft plan which was finalized in 2007, and then deciding to augment that effort with more localized “mini-plans” that could address the special circumstances present at a more localized level in five areas that comprise the BRR GNPA (See Figure 11):

- Black Rock
- Grant-Amherst
- Riverside
- West Hertel
- Tonawanda-Chandler Rail Corridor and North Elmwood Avenue/Potential Development Opportunity Area

Upon completing in 2008 its first mini-plan, *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan* (Draft 2008 — available at [www.city-buffalo.com/plan\\_black\\_rock](http://www.city-buffalo.com/plan_black_rock)), the Steering Committee of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA decided to devote its energies to planning that has led to the current document, *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan*, which is the second draft plan to be arrived at through this initiative in Black Rock-Riverside.

By partnering with local residents and community leaders represented by the membership of Rediscover Riverside, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA planners developed a strong sense of the importance of Riverside to the local community and City of Buffalo.

### Geographic Area

Riverside is comprised of census tract 57 and 58 in the northwestern part of the City of Buffalo, NY. It occupies one square mile of land. It is part of the North District in the Buffalo Common Council.

### The Planning Process

On the recommendation of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA and North District Council Member, a planning process in Riverside began in February, 2009, when Mary Ann Kedron, Chairperson of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) Housing Committee, attended the 10th meeting of a what was then a relatively new community group called “Rediscover Riverside”. Accompanied by Bill Parke, AICP, Community Planner of the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, Ms. Kedron, who is herself a longtime resident of Riverside, explained the benefits of neighborhood planning and outlined the GNPA planning process to those in attendance.

This was followed by meetings well-publicized in the *Riverside Review* in mid- and late-April 2009, when Ms. Kedron and Mr. Parke solicited advice from Rediscover Riverside members on current issues affecting their community (see Figure 15). Progress was further made with the involvement of Phil Haberstro, Executive Director of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, in meetings between May and July, 2009. During these meetings, significant data was gathered on community attitudes, assets, issues, and opportunities, with distribution of a healthy communities survey on May 6, 2009 and a personal and shared vision



Figure 13: Bonnie Eschborn, who leads meetings of Rediscover Riverside, displays a cake while accompanied by North District Council Member Joe Golombek at a meeting held in Riverside Park on July 1, 2009 at which completion of the “Shared Vision” Statement for Riverside was celebrated.



Figure 14: This panoramic photo looking from Riverside Park towards the Niagara River illustrates the scenic view available to park visitors.

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Figure 15: Residents team up to map assets and opportunities at a mid-April, 2009 meeting of Rediscover Riverside with guidance from Mary Ann Kedron of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA (center-left in suede jacket.)



Figure 16: Rediscover Riverside members, led by Bonnie Eschborn, undertake an intensive housing conditions survey in May, 2009. These surveys helped establish a baseline understanding of housing characteristics in Riverside.



Figure 17: Community members applaud as they adopt the "Shared Vision" Statement for Riverside that they helped create on June 10, 2009 at a Rediscover Riverside meeting at the Amvets Medallion Post 13 at 25 Review Place.

workshop on May 20, 2009. These efforts led to a "Shared Vision" Statement for Riverside, which was developed by Riverside residents themselves and adopted with widespread applause on June 10, 2009 (see Figure 17). This milestone was celebrated at a Rediscover Riverside meeting in Riverside Park on July 1, 2009 (see Figure 13.)

Concurrent with these meetings, from May to July, 2009, significant fieldwork was undertaken to analyze housing, commercial corridor, and other conditions in Riverside (see Figure 16).

With the completion of surveys of resident perceptions, the "Shared Vision" Statement, and fieldwork research, a number of strategy meetings were held to arrive at the observations and recommendations represented in this plan.

### "Shared Vision" Statement for Riverside

The strength of this plan is its connection to the people who live and work in Riverside. Throughout the planning process, the reality that residents and businesses in Riverside are the key to both the development of the plan and its successful implementation has been an essential premise.

The plan draws inspiration and guidance from the citizen-conceived "Shared Vision" Statement for Riverside:

***Riverside is a safe thriving community of choice where residents know and respect each other. We are proud of our flourishing neighborhoods. There is cooperation among churches, schools, block clubs, businesses, neighbors, and all level of government in improving community spirit, wellness and lifelong learning.***

***Riverside enjoys enhanced access to its beautiful waterfront and green spaces for youth, families and older adults. These are integrated with well kept, walkable, high home ownership communities, prosperous business districts, and environmentally sensitive industrial areas.***

***Riverside is a community that plans, works, and redefines itself on an ongoing basis to remain a thriving, livable community. (Adopted June 10, 2009)***



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This vision was developed in meetings with the members of Rediscover Riverside with the assistance of Phil Haberstro, Executive Director of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo in the summer of 2009. The vision itself guided subsequent fieldwork and planning analysis activities as well as the formulation of recommendations and key priorities in this plan. In addition, its comprehensiveness and focus on healthy living make it consistent with the guiding principles of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*.

### Public Participation and Publicity

The process that led to the vision provided ample opportunity for public participation as well as publicity to the planning effort.

Significant data was gathered in May 2009 on community attitudes, assets, issues, and opportunities through distribution of a healthy communities survey to attendees of the Rediscover Riverside meeting on May 6, 2009. Thirty responses to the survey were received. The survey gathered basic demographic information and asked respondents to indicate the streets of an intersection nearest their home or business, and then proceeded to request ratings on a number of components of a healthy community, as well as their level of happiness and satisfaction with their primary daily activity, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 10 (High). Also requested were lists of "What needs to change for us to have a healthier and more sustainable community?", "What is important to you? What do you value in this community?", and "What are our Riverside Community assets?" (See Figure 18)

Results indicate that, while respondents generally see themselves as happy and satisfied, at the same time they believe the community is not as healthy as it should be. The average score for answers to questions 5 and 6 regarding personal health is **6.3**, while the average score to questions 1 through 3 involving components of a healthy community is **4.0**.

To get a sense of how people feel about questions involving lists, for example Questions 7 and 8, it is helpful to use a word cloud to visualize proportionately what people believe needs to change "for us to have a healthier and more sustainable community" (Question 7).

Answers that were similar were pre-categorized, and the image in Figure 20 was the result. It is

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DATE: 5/6/2009 AGE ☐ UNDER 18 GENDER: ☐ M ☒ F  
☐ 18 TO 64  
☒ 65 AND OVER

PROJECT: RIVERSIDE

PLEASE COMPLETE AND TURN IN AT END OF SESSION. THANK YOU!

PROVIDE THE STREETS OF AN INTERSECTION NEAREST YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS:  
Ontario Niagara & IS THIS YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS? ☒

Rating: 0 (Low) - 10 (High)

- Do we have a healthy community?  
 (Consider the whole community— the environment, economy, social environment and services, personal health, happiness) Rating: 5
- Rate the "health" of our:
  - Environment (water, air, wastes, greenspace) Rating: 4
  - Economy (income, employment rate, taxes) Rating: 4
  - Social Environment (transportation, housing, education, arts/culture, community) Rating: 4
  - Human Health (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual; and health care) Rating: 4
- How "sustainable" is our community?  
 (Will our community be healthy 10, 20, or 50 years in the future if we continue doing what we are now?) Rating: 3
- What needs to change for us to have a healthier and more sustainable community?  
 (write answers below) More responsibility by aboriginal land holders
- How happy are you? Rating: 5
- How satisfied are you with your primary daily activity?  
 (that is: at work, school, home life) Rating: 5
- What is important to you? What do you value in this community?  
 (write answers below) access to nature, library, diversity of religious facilities
- What are our Riverside Community assets? (use back of page)  
as noted in #7

Figure 18: A completed form from the Healthy Communities survey conducted on May 6, 2009. The survey provided valuable information on the perceived status of Riverside.

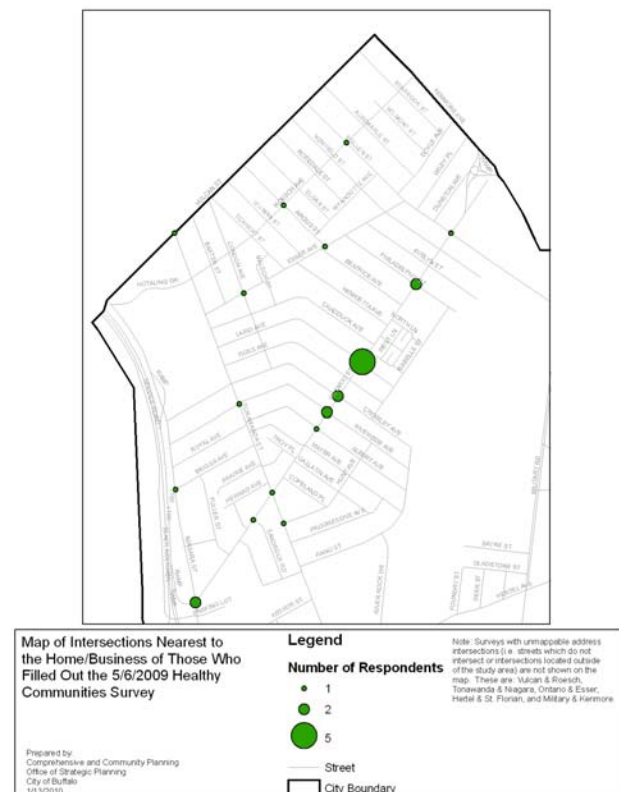


Figure 19: Map of where Healthy Communities survey respondents were from.



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Figure 20: Word cloud for what people believe needs to change “for us to have a healthier and more sustainable community” (Question 7).

apparent that Riverside residents have a range of concerns, beginning with crime, drugs, and issues that affect quality of life, like litter, noise and problem properties. They also value youth activities, which is represented under the category of community services.

People are also very clear on what they identify as Riverside Community assets (Question 8.) Categorization shows that Riverside residents love Riverside Park, the river and waterfront, and the people that enrich their lives: neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. Specific community amenities and the aspects of Riverside that give the community its character also tend to be listed:



Figure 21: Word cloud for Riverside Community assets (Question 8.)

Building on the information provided on May 6, planners worked with Phil Haberstro to hold a personal and shared vision workshop on May 20, 2009. First, using a form supplied by Mr. Haberstro, attendees were encouraged to share their personal visions for their community, to “dream big, be bold!” 34 personal vision statement sheets were received, yielding additional insight into the aspirations held by Riversiders for their community’s future. These were collected and analyzed at the meeting for the purpose of creating



Figure 22: A volunteer helps present a list of ideas which summarize the personal visions of those in attendance on May 20, 2009, as a key step towards building the “Shared Vision” Statement for Riverside.

lists that could consolidate and summarize personal visions. Four summary lists were created by facilitators drawn from the attendees. Then at a later meeting all personal visions and summary lists were reviewed, for the purpose of arriving at a draft of a “Shared Vision” Statement that could be finalized with community input at the Rediscover Riverside meeting on June 10, 2009.

The form is titled "The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo & Western New York, Inc." and includes a partnership note with Bill Paake (CSP) and Rediscover Riverside. It outlines a "Shared Visioning Process" with two steps: Step 1 involves writing a personal vision statement, and Step 2 involves a recorder summarizing the group's key thoughts. Handwritten responses include: "AN AREA OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW EACH OTHER", "ACTIVE STORE OWNERS, RESTAURANT PLACES TO WALK TO", "SAFE PLACE TO WALK, RIDE BIKES, PLAY TENNIS", "CLEAN", "POSITIVE ADVERTISING", "SENIOR LIVING", "COMMUNITY CENTER WITH GYM.", and "COMMUNITY GARDENS". The form also includes contact information for The Wellness Institute at the bottom.

Figure 23: A sample personal vision statement from the May 20, 2009 workshop.

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### First-Hand Fieldwork Research

Fieldwork research began with information obtained during a tour of Riverside by a longtime resident and community leader given to Bill Parke, Community Planner, as a member of the planning project team in March, 2009. During this tour, significant neighborhood trends were identified. This tour highlighted the significance of residential land uses in Riverside.

As a result, it was decided that Housing would be the initial area of focus for fieldwork research. Intensive housing surveying of a sample of homes during April, 2009 (see Figure 16) was followed by an all-encompassing windshield-level housing conditions survey in June and July, 2009. The windshield survey was carried out by Mr. Parke with assistance from Aaron Wood, an undergraduate planning intern from the University at Buffalo. Approximately 3,000 parcels were reviewed during five survey sessions, with a focus on residential properties outside of the Tonawanda and Ontario commercial streets. Possible problem properties were identified that exhibited the following characteristics:

- ✓ Board Up
- ✓ Graffiti
- ✓ Looks Vacant
- ✓ Maintenance Needed
- ✓ Shaffer Village Board Up
- ✓ Unlicensed Car
- ✓ Vacant Lot with High Grass
- ✓ Research Needed

In all, only 59 properties exhibited these problems and these were mapped and presented to a meeting of Rediscover Riverside in July, 2009.

On the basis of this information and in light of observations during the surveying sessions, it was then decided to focus additional fieldwork efforts on conditions along the Tonawanda and Ontario commercial streets in Riverside. On November 17, 2009, 384 parcels along these streets were reviewed. This led to valuable information on:

- ✓ vacant commercial buildings
- ✓ empty/underutilized storefronts
- ✓ vacant parcels
- ✓ vacant parcels with vehicle storage/garage
- ✓ parking lots
- ✓ occupied residences
- ✓ occupied commercial buildings

- ✓ community buildings, and
- ✓ special situations like apartment buildings, board ups, and conversions from storefront retail to other uses (for example, offices).

This information was mapped and used as a reference in the formulation of recommendations and key strategies.

### Background Studies

Existing proposed or completed plans were identified and assessed, so that this community plan could coordinate with established and upcoming planning initiatives. (See Appendix 3)

### Community Knowledge

Finally, knowledge of nearby communities has

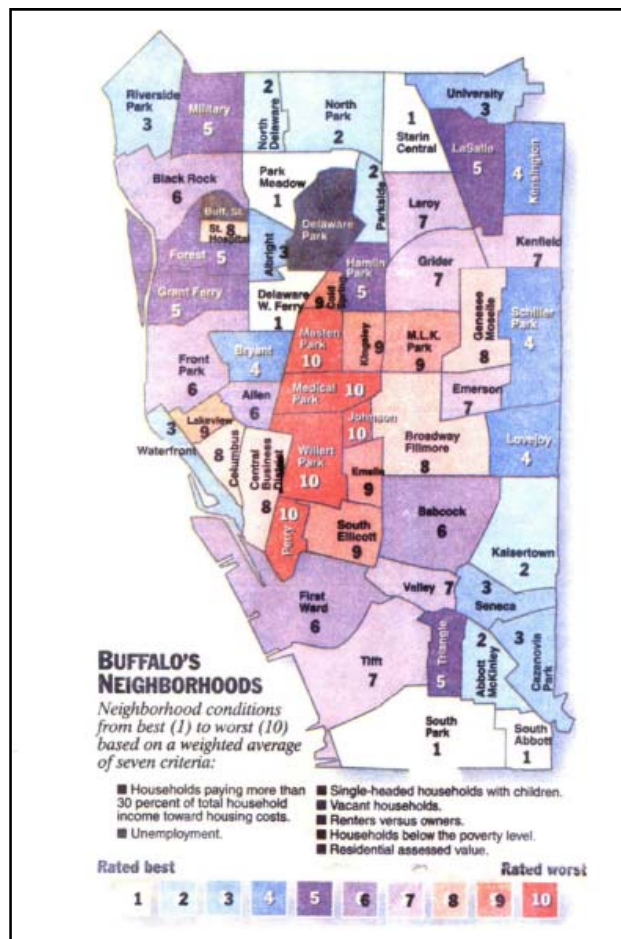


Figure 24: "Buffalo's Neighborhoods" is a useful background study of neighborhood conditions published by the Buffalo News on April 7, 1996. "Riverside Park" is shown in top left corner of map. In the mid-1990s, Riverside was rated a 3, near the best of Buffalo's neighborhoods. This plan will assess the current status of Riverside, in order to provide a road map for keeping it one of Buffalo's neighborhoods of choice.

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helped as planning efforts focused on what Riverside is and why it is important. Through the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA planning process, the strengths and advantages of other communities in the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA are well-known to planners and as a result it became possible to fully articulate and assert the uniqueness of Riverside, knowing that other communities each have their own advantages which will serve them well in planning efforts involving them in the near future.

### Goals of the Planning Process

The planning principles that have guided development of this plan and its goals are a reflection of all the above sources and research, plus guidance provided in *Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan*. These include:

- Complying with the sound planning principles found in *Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan*, following the guidance for neighborhood plans within it (see Appendix 4), and collaborating with the Good Neighbors Planning Alliance process in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning.
- Making the neighborhood safe, and easy for people to get around in.
- Keeping the community's vision for itself at the forefront of plan work and recommendations.
- Identifying the future strength of the area as being in the "Rediscover Riverside" brand name.
- Basing the future image of the community on significant public participation.
- Working with complementary initiatives and organizations active in Riverside, to sustain recent gains and transform that energy into a successful plan.
- Promoting the area's assets.
- Taking a fresh look. This community has existed a long time and it lives on within the context of a city which has experienced significant social and economic change in the recent and enduring past. It has also undergone significant change, and many residents are ready to reply to that change with intentional change of their own, as a product of this planning process.
- Supporting a plan that promotes a vital urban neighborhood experience for all who live, work, visit, and play in Riverside.
- Using brownfields and railways along the industrial and rail corridor from Rano to Skillen as resources for commercial development, not

#### MEET RIVERSIDE'S JENNY WILSON —

*I basically moved here last year after marrying my husband. I was living in Fairport, NY (a quaint suburb of Rochester). At first, I was a bit afraid of the location and did not change my mind about it until I started to become more familiar with the city and going to the meetings of Rediscover Riverside. I realized there are good people here that do care about a community and working hard to improve it.*



*My husband is a lifelong Buffalo resident. He grew up in Eden, but after college moved to the city area of Elmwood. He is a musician/teacher and 2 yrs. ago his drum studio on Elmwood was demolished. He needed a big place to live and work out of for teaching drum lessons. He found an old fixer here on Ontario St. 3,300 sq. feet for a bargain. It did need a ton of work and is still a work in progress, but we are very proud of our lovely new home now after we both de-wallpapered and re-patched a whole lot of sq. footage. We even had our renovation of our kitchen appear in an HGTV show! Anyways, we had it appraised by a realtor a few months ago and she would list it for double what we paid for it. So we are thrilled to have made such a good investment and have lovingly restored it to its former glory. I apologized to my husband as I had many times worried about his decision to purchase in Riverside... as they say location, location. However, he made a great decision and it has afforded us to explore opportunities with our careers and financial freedom. We love having a small mortgage and living in a big beautiful house.*

*In fact, my husband is currently renovating the front part of the downstairs area that used to be an old dentist's office and transforming it into an upscale salon for me. After losing a job in the pharmaceutical field, I did a career change 5 years ago and went to beauty school in Rochester. Now I can have the ultimate dream of opening a salon as our overhead is very low. I plan on providing one on one service with clients in a chemical free salon — all color and nails will be sans chemicals. I previously had been trained at a world renowned salon (Scott Miller Salon in Pittsford, NY) and now will be offering affordable and excellent service to people from all over Buffalo right here in Riverside!*

*In short, as a couple we enjoy living here because it is affordable and we don't have to be tied down to jobs we dislike. We both will be doing our dream jobs. We are close to all the great things the city of Buffalo has to offer. We have access to the grocery store across the street and find the produce is great, affordable, and convenient. Of course, we are aware of the improvements needed in our community but have found hope and inspiration with the group Rediscover Riverside. We believe that we need more people like us to come into the community and buy one of these beautiful homes to fix up. Take pride in ownership and community spirit.*

— Jenny Wilson



## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

- merely obstacles.
- Assessing to the extent possible the best future for the I-190, in a way that respects the continuance of the transportation services it currently provides.
- Creating new housing opportunities while strengthening rehabilitation of existing and frequently historic homes and buildings.
- Addressing the presence of negative influences on quality of life, like vacant properties, blight and crime.
- Building on the healthy community aspirations of Riverside residents.

### Outline of the Plan

This plan has five chapters plus appendices. The current chapter, Chapter 1 - "Overview", provides the history, vision, planning context, and goals of the planning process, as well as a description of public participation and fieldwork analyses. Chapter 2 - "Community Assessment", profiles key aspects of the neighborhood — demographics, physical characteristics, housing, economic development, transportation, community facilities, healthy community, quality of life and safety issues, and parks and recreation — and provides observations about them. Chapter 3 - "Recommendations", puts forth a series of action steps to guide stabilization and future growth in Riverside. Chapter 4, "Plan Implementation", sequences future actions, identifies key partners, sets forth next steps for each action, and identifies measurable outcomes. Chapter 5, "Funding", identifies funding sources and programs which may help implement the recommended actions. Finally,

#### MEET RIVERSIDE'S BONNIE ESCHBORN —

*I first lived on Roesch Ave. as a small child, moved to Wyandotte, and at 9 moved to Shaffer Village project with my Grandmother and Mom. All of these locations were on the perimeter of All Saints Church. Once married I lived on Fuller St. and then Austin St and off to Kenmore Ave.*



*It came a time when I could buy a home and I knew I wanted to live in the All Saints area. Not only because it was always home to me, but All Saints Church played their bells everyday at 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm. It was something that made the neighborhood feel so serene.*

*Driving down Beatrice one day I saw a home for sale. I called the realtor immediately. It took one walk through and we bought it. It happened to be the home on Beatrice that I had always loved as I walked the neighborhood. It was gun metal gray with turquoise trim (really ugly I might add.) Over the past 38 years many improvements have been made. It's now too big and too much to maintain but I have trouble imagining living anywhere else.*

*One thing I really miss though is the bells at All Saints they stopped playing them years ago. All of my memories are here in Riverside. It's home and I love it.*

— Bonnie Eschborn

complete Appendices provide key documents related to publicity, demographics, other plans and projects consulted while creating *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan*, and the "Rebuild Neighborhoods" section of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*, a key reference for this effort.



Figure 25: Christmas lights on Riverside Avenue during the holiday season of 2009 illustrate the pride local homeowners take in their residences.

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

## Introduction

Riverside has a proud history and a bright future. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the area was originally farms, homesteads, and shops, with commercial and industrial enterprises oriented toward the river, to the rails, and to what was once the Village of Black Rock to the immediate south. Throughout most of the 20th Century, Riverside grew to a bustling neighborhood of well-kept homes and thriving businesses and industry. Its commercial corridors were at one time full of shoppers, movie-goers, and the like. (see Figure 26 and its caption for more)

However, over the years the commercial streets of Tonawanda St. and Ontario St. have seen some disinvestment. And in housing, some areas are experiencing issues ranging from artificially low market valuation, to problem properties, to a lack of housing type choice or recreational opportunities. Some large factories have closed and their buildings and land await reuse. Quality of life issues like noise, crime, litter, and drug use are in evidence. These developments have caught the attention of residents and are a source of major

concern.

Nevertheless, with significant assets and high levels of civic engagement, the area is poised for a bright future. But to get there, it is critical to address specific community needs and take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities. This Community Assessment, combined with the community input received at recent public outreach events as discussed in the previous chapter, sets the stage for identifying needs and opportunities.

## 1. Demographics

Every ten years, the U.S. Census undertakes a survey of the nation's characteristics. This data provides a wealth of information about Riverside, which is experiencing significant demographic shifts as it moves forward in the 21st Century.

Riverside is comprised of two census tracts (Census Tract 57 and 58; see Figure 27 below for a map) and their attendant block groups and blocks. In this chapter, data is usually discussed at the census tract level.

### Communities: Riverside

### Family Roots and Friendly Rivalries Are Traditions Here

This is the first in an occasional series of articles on neighborhoods and places in Western New York.

By CAROL STEVENS

"If you're new to Riverside, let me give you some advice," says Frank Nucherenno as he tugs at the leather-look suspenders attached to his baggy pants. "Learn the difference between Black Rock and Riverside. Nothing irritates these people more than someone who confuses Riverside with Black Rock."

The distinction between the two Buffalo communities is — to an outsider — a subtle one. But to the residents of Riverside the differences are a point of neighborhood pride.

When Riverside High School was built, in 1928, the first complaint of local residents had nothing to do with courses, teachers or grades. With its back door in Black Rock and its front door in Riverside, locals were split over what the large, brick fortress of a school should be called.

"There was a big to-do over what to name it," said Mike Anelli, former principal of the high school. "A combination name was even considered."

After more than 50 years, the controversy continues. Native Riveriders claim Black Rock has always been "the other side of the tracks." Equally sensitive Black Rock residents insist their community has a richer history than the Riverside "suburb."

When North District Councilman Dan Quider, himself a native of the area, hung a "Welcome to Riverside" campaign sign at the intersection of Tonawanda and Hertel a few years back, he says he lost votes from residents who insisted the sign was hanging in Black Rock.

"I got more complaints about that than anything. Some people took extreme offense to it," Quider said.



Frank A. Nucherenno, left, and his brother James, outside the Tonawanda Street liquor store bearing their name.

"There is indeed a difference between Black Rock and Riverside. But the difference depends on whom you talk to. It's basically a matter of neighborhood identification."

Ask five people in Riverside to describe the boundaries of their neighborhood and you'll hear at least five different answers. All agree that Riverside's borders are the Niagara River on the west and the Town of Tonawanda to the north. But the boundaries to the east and south have been the subject of many a tavern dia-

greement. "This restaurant is in Riverside, isn't it?" asked a regular at Meister's Restaurant, 438 Hertel. "I don't know if it's in Riverside or Black Rock," answered owner Ron Meister. "That's one thing I don't

want to be quoted on."

Riverside is a community of about 12,000 residents within the City of Buffalo. A small town within a city, some people say. Yet Riverside residents are "Riveriders" first and foremost. It's not that Riveriders have any-

thing against their Buffalo connections. It's just that historically Riverside has had its own distinct business district, population base, industries and recreational outlets.

"Riverside has always been somewhat isolated," said Neil Ehrenreich, owner of the Riverside Men's Shop, at the intersection of Tonawanda and Ontario Streets. "There are only four ways of getting into the community. We are sheltered from the rest of the city. Most of our home owners have been here 30-to-40 years."

Ask five people in Riverside to describe their neighborhood and you're apt to hear the same answers over and over again. "A suburb within a city"... "A little working class town"... "A community of churches, taverns and pizzerias"... "A neighborhood of pool tables and tough talk."

Residents like to tell of the 26 nationalities of Riverside residents recorded in induction statistics during World War II, and the separate churches formed for the Hungarian, Polish and German immigrants. They point out the houses on side streets built with wood left over from the Pan American Exposition of 1901, and the original slate rooftops on homes surrounding Riverside High.

"This is a working class community. I cannot stress that enough," said Irene Gardner, a life-long Riverider described by many as the area's biggest booster. "This is a place where people work hard, pray hard and play hard."

This is a place where family-owned and operated businesses still make a go of it long after chains like Woolworth's have split for suburban malls. Where nothing but narrow driveways separate street after street of duplex houses. Where Charlie's Bakery on

DOWN BY RIVER  
Continued on Page A-4

Figure 26: "Years ago you couldn't get an empty store on Tonawanda Street if you waited years," (James) Nucherenno said. Neil Ehrenreich remembers his father's stories about Riverside's heyday when "on Saturday nights people had trouble walking on the streets because they were so crowded." These reminiscences from long-time Riveriders in a 1981 Buffalo Courier-Express article profiling Riverside shown partially above are evidence of Riverside as an area of bustling neighborhood businesses earlier in the 20th Century. (See full article in a readable scale online at: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside))



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Research was conducted to obtain data from each 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 decennial census. Additional research yielded 2007 estimates from a private company, Social Explorer.

Census tract boundaries have not changed in any way that would affect demographic statistics between 1970 and 2000, which facilitates comparisons over time.

The Census tells a story of a changing Riverside. (see Appendix 2 for a detailed statistical table.)

**POPULATION:** Riverside had less population in 2000 than in 1970 (-28%), mirroring a citywide trend.

**RACIAL DIVERSITY:** Riverside is more racially diverse than in 1970 while still remaining a neighborhood that is predominantly white. The percentage of population characterized as being white dropping from 99% to 89% between 1970 and 2000. In census tract 57 (extending south of Ontario Street to Arthur and the rail lines east), racial diversity is more marked, with the percentage of whites declining from 98% in 1970 to 81% in 2000, while census tract 58 changed from 99% to 92% whites between 1970 and 2000.

**GENDER:** The gender composition between males and females did not change significantly between

1970 and 2000, with the 1970 proportion of males to females being 47% to 53%, the 2000 proportion being 48% to 52%.

**AGE:** The proportion of young people under 25 to other age categories is lower between 1970 and 2000. For example, as shown in Figure 27, the proportion of children under 5 years old remained consistent at 7.6% of population, but children 5 to 9 dropped from 8.7% to 8.2%, children 10 to 14 dropped from 9.6% to 8.3%, teenagers 15 to 19 dropped from 8.5% to 6.8%, and young adults 20 to 24 dropped from 7.3% to 6.1%.

Adults 25 to 64 rose from 45.6% of population to 49.8%. Adults 65 to 74 dropped 7.8% to 7%, and adults 75 and over rose from 4.8% to 6.3%.

Riverside has less young people than in 1970, while the working-age population has increased. New retirees and their spouses in the age 65 to 74 age group has declined, but the 75 and over group is higher.

**HOUSEHOLDS:** Between 1970 and 2000, total households declined 12%, from 4,969 to 4,398.

**FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS:** The statistics tell a story of a decline in the number of “traditional” families in Riverside. Family households were reduced by 32%, or 3,913 to 2,677. Those family households with their own children under 18 dropped 27%.

**MARRIED-COUPLE FAMILIES:** Married-couple families decreased by over half in Riverside between 1970 and 2000 (i.e. 52%, or from 3,298 to 1,571). Statistics show that single mothers with children face greater challenges than married-couple families.

## 2. Neighborhood Identification and Physical Characteristics

### NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTIFICATION

If you ask a River sider what part of Riverside they live in, they are likely to give one of five responses:

- ✓ “All Saints”
- ✓ “Ross”
- ✓ “JH Williams”
- ✓ “Waterfront”
- ✓ “Roesch”

These areas were self-identified during a Rediscover Riverside meeting in 2009 and are

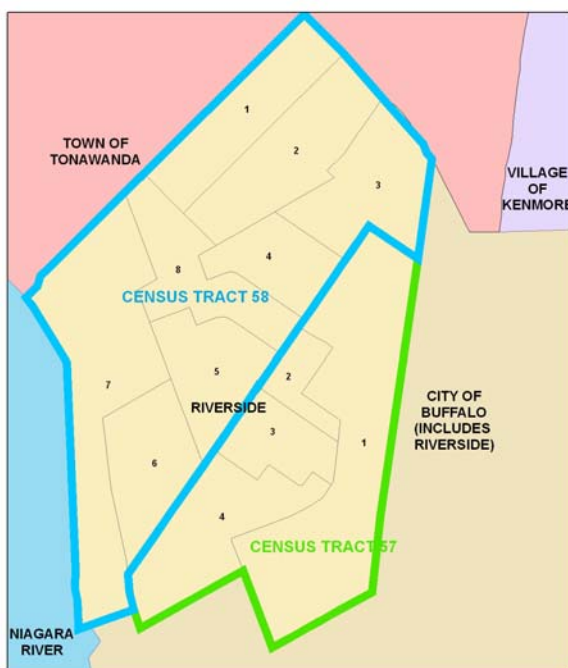


Figure 27: Census geography in Riverside, for the purpose of this plan, is divided into two census tracts, which are each comprised of block groups as shown.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

shown in the map in Figure 28.

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Riverside is a waterfront community, with the Ontario Street Boat Launch and Cornelius Creek Park along its waterfront and marquee Riverside

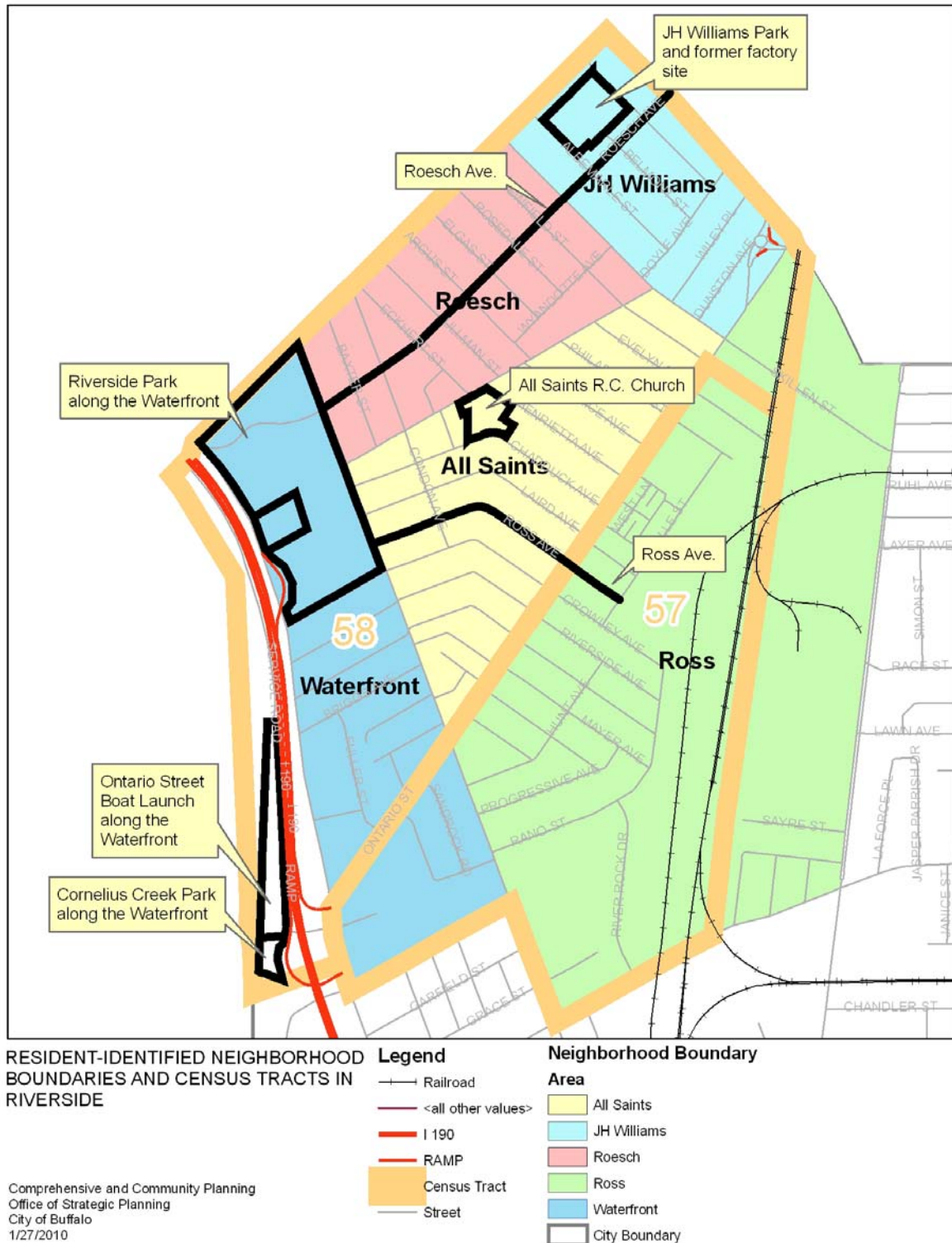


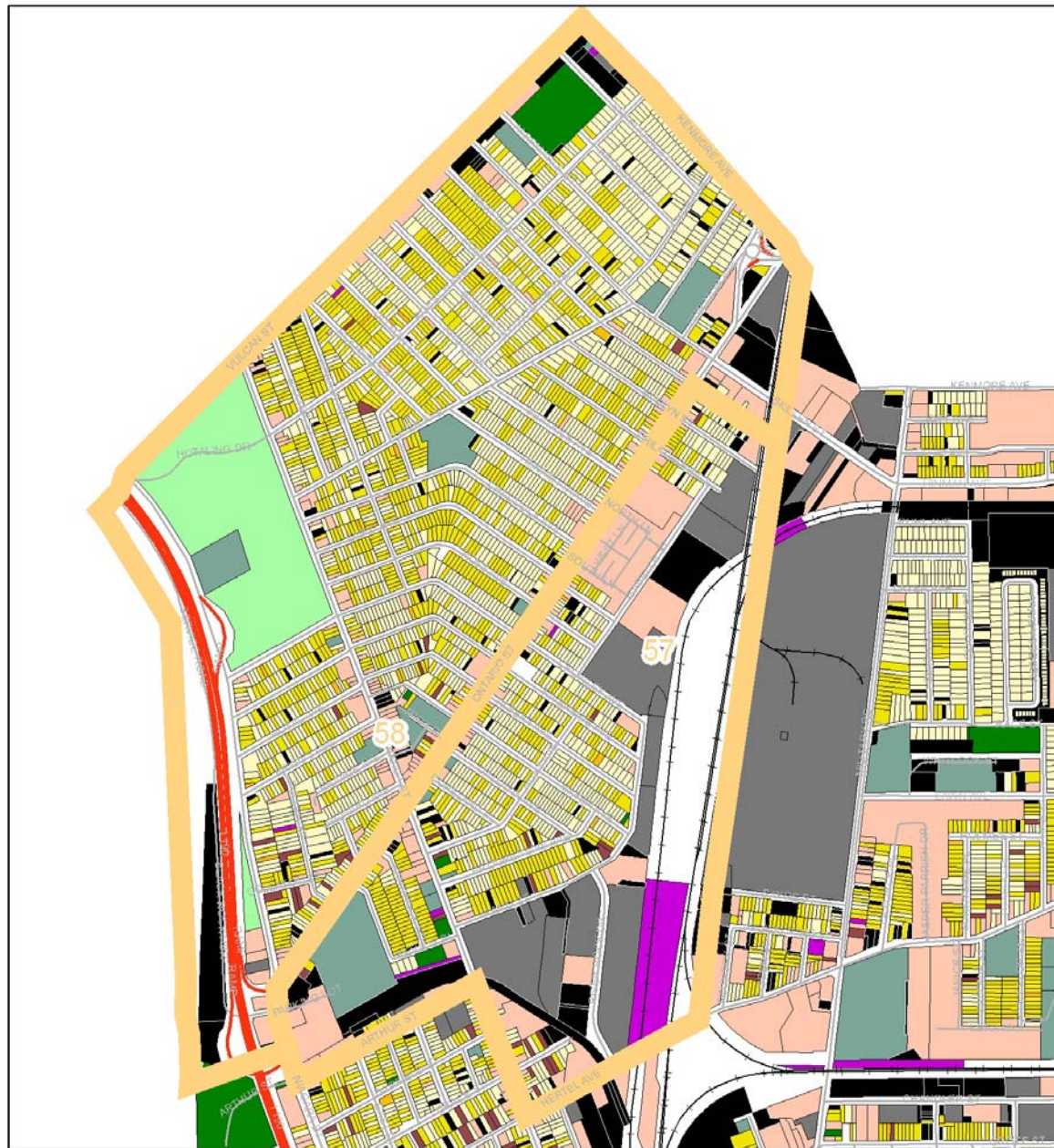
Figure 28: This map shows resident-identified neighborhood boundaries and the key streets and places that give the neighborhoods their name. These are shown in comparison to census tracts in Riverside. Note that the Ross neighborhood area east of Census Tract 57 is outside of the two Riverside Census Tracts and as a result is not included in the planning study area.

DRAFT 7/5/2010 — For updates, visit: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside)



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Park just on the other side of the I-190 connected waterfront amenities, it is also a close-knit, by a waterfront recreational path and the Irene K. comparatively-new Buffalo community, with a Gardner Pedestrian Bridge. However, east of its traditional urban design where residential areas are



PARCEL LAND USE

### Legend

Census Tract	Vacant	Industrial
Street	Commercial	Public Service
Residential single family	Recreational	Conservation Areas / Parks
Residential two family	Residential other	Community Service

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
1/27/2010

Figure 29: Land uses in Riverside reflect waterfront amenities that are a regional draw, while east of the waterfront can be found a community that can be characterized as having a traditional urban design.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

bisected by neighborhood commercial corridors, streets in a grid pattern provide good connectivity, and industrial uses tend to be clustered together. Riverside developed in the 1880-1930 timeframe and reflects a Euclidian zoning and walkable community sensibility. (see Figure 32) Land use in Riverside reflects this traditional urban design.

As shown in Figure 30, 87% of the parcels and 50% of the acreage is arranged in Riverside for residential use. Commercial properties, primarily along two main commercial corridors on Tonawanda and Ontario Streets, make up 5% of the parcels and 11% of the acreage. Vacant land comprises 5% of the parcels and 11% of the acreage (this is somewhat inflated, in that records identify some parkland and some parking lots as vacant land.) Meanwhile, Recreation and Entertainment, Industrial, Public Services and Public Parks separately comprise 1% or less of the parcels, but make up between 1% and 8% of the acreage.

Land Use Category	Count	%	Acres	%
N/A Total	20	1%	37.9	7%
200s - Residential Total	2941	87%	259.8	50%
300s - Vacant Land Total	172	5%	46.5	9%
400s - Commercial Total	185	5%	56.0	11%
500s - Recreation & Entertainment Total	7	0%	7.5	1%
600s - Community Services Total	16	0%	24.3	5%
700s - Industrial Total	17	1%	41.6	8%
800s - Public Services Total	8	0%	10.9	2%
900s - Public Parks Total	3	0%	38.4	7%
Grand Total	3369	100%	523	100%

Figure 30: Different land uses in Riverside, according to City of Buffalo 2009 assessment records.

Current zoning in the City of Buffalo is designed to reinforce these land uses (again, see map in Figure 32.) The city's zoning ordinance reflects a Euclidian model where similar land uses are grouped together. Generally, this form of zoning has served the community well. Fortunately, Riverside developed in the 1880-1930 period and industrial uses were clustered on the eastern and northern edges of the community. This is an especially beneficial arrangement for the neighborhood, considering that the prevailing winds are from the west. Meanwhile, recreational uses gathered along the waterfront and at edges of Riverside.

However, zoning and land use patterns have also led to a preponderance of residential uses between the Tonawanda and Ontario commercial corridors. As long as neighborhood residential trends remain

strong, this is an acceptable arrangement. However, the parcel after parcel arrangement of residential uses also means that there are few community gathering spaces like community gardens and pocket parks, people on the interior have to travel some distance to sizable parkland, and nuisance behavior related to problem properties has a broad impact when houses are laid out in high residential densities. Also, with an emphasis on function over form, some façade treatments along the commercial corridors are substandard, and in some cases newer infill housing has not been designed with setbacks and architectural features that allow the new builds to blend in with existing, more historic homes.

## 3. Housing

### INFILL HOUSING

During its first century, Riverside was in a period of housing being built. In these circumstances, the stability of its housing stock was assured. With Buffalo's ever-growing population up to the mid-1950s and its abundant local job opportunities in manufacturing, transportation, and other employment sectors, plenty of demand existed for new and existing housing. Continued demand for housing will lead to replacement of existing structures, and how that housing relates to the context of the street and neighboring structures is important.

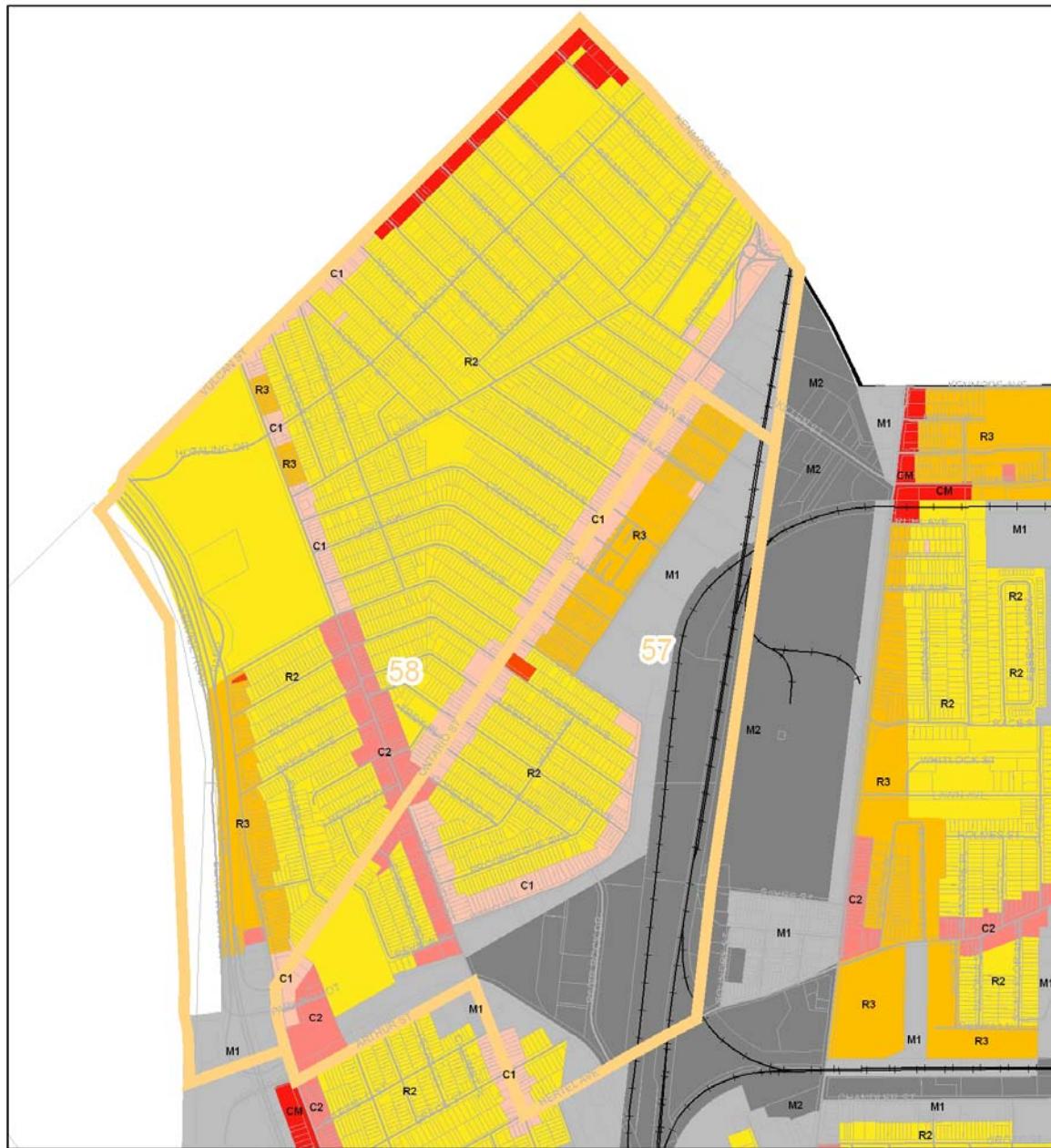
As mentioned in the discussion regarding zoning above, infill housing characterized by consistent setbacks and architectural features that allow the new builds to blend in with existing, more historic



Figure 31: This Riverside home is a regular on the Black Rock-Riverside Tour of Gardens and continues to add enjoyment to those who visit the "Riversiders of Buffalo NY" Facebook page.



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



### ZONING\*

\*Note: For display purposes only. For up-to-date, parcel-specific zoning, contact Land Use Planning, Office of Strategic Planning, at 851-5086.

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
8/12/2009

### Legend

— Census Tract

— Street

#### Zoning\*

C1 Neighborhood Business District - C1	M3 Heavy Industrial District - M3
C2 Community Business District - C2	R1 One-Family District - R1
C3 Central Business District - C3	R2 Dwelling District - R2
CM General Commercial District - CM	R3 Dwelling District - R3
M1 Light Industrial District - M1	R4 Apartment District - R4
M2 General Industrial District - M2	R5 Apartment-Hotel District - R5

Figure 32: Land uses in Riverside reflect waterfront amenities that are a regional draw, while east of the waterfront can be found a community that can be characterized as having a traditional urban design.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

homes is an important emerging need in Riverside. Well-designed homes are a compliment to the neighborhood. The reverse is also true: inappropriate infill detracts from functionality, makes conflict between neighbors more likely, and leads to a reduction of community feeling, and thus standards for upkeep lag. This is illustrated in the photos below.

In Figure 33, a classic Riverside residential street features historic homes with consistent setbacks and complimentary design. As a result, there is little need for fencing in the front yards. If needed, hedges meet the need for fencing while also projecting a natural, well-kept image. Neighbors interact freely as they encounter each other doing daily routines, building the bonds of community in the process, and these exchanges also provide a means for one neighbor to encourage another's compliance with community standards of housing upkeep and residential behavior.



Figure 33: Consistent setbacks and complimentary architectural design on this street in Riverside offer a variety of neighborhood benefits.

When the setback and design are inconsistent, as shown in Figure 34, the architectural fabric of the residential built environment is affected. The functional relation of one property to another becomes more troublesome: sight lines, property maintenance, noise, and other factors are more varied and can lead to disagreements between neighbors. When the living experience becomes more stressful, neighborliness begins to weaken. Tidiness and landscaping that communicates pride in property are not as frequently in evidence. Fences begin to appear in the front yards. Simply put, homes with incompatible designs in neighborhoods like Riverside just don't look as good or work as well as those with compatible designs.



Figure 34: Inconsistent setbacks and varied architectural design are illustrated in this photo of a suburban style ranch house set back from the street next to a traditional Riverside home to the far left. In addition to disrupted aesthetics, note the chain link fence and placement of blue cans, which appear as evidence of tension in the use of space.

The answer to this problem involves new ordinances and codes that emphasize quality design when infill housing is proposed.

### HOUSING DENSITY

As shown in Figure 30, 87% of the parcels and 50% of the acreage is arranged in Riverside for residential use. Residential is clearly one of the predominant land uses. The Land Use map (see Figure 29) confirms this (shades of yellow dominate the map; yellow represents residential land uses.) Housing density is high, with street after street occupied by housing with little intermixture of other uses.

### HOUSING TYPES

Housing in Riverside is dominated by the Buffalo Double, Bungalow, Cottage, Craftsman, American Foursquare, Ranch, and Cape Cod styles. The vast majority of housing is single family and two family homes, as illustrated in the map in Figure 35.

### HOUSING TENURE

As shown in the color-coded map in Figure 36, in most parts of Riverside, there is a mix of renter and owner-occupied housing. In others, there is a predominance of owner-occupancy. Overall, from a neighborhood-stabilization perspective, ownership patterns are strong, with 70% of residential properties owner-occupied.

### HOUSING VALUE

Figure 39 shows the value of residential properties. The map highlights two family homes, so that



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

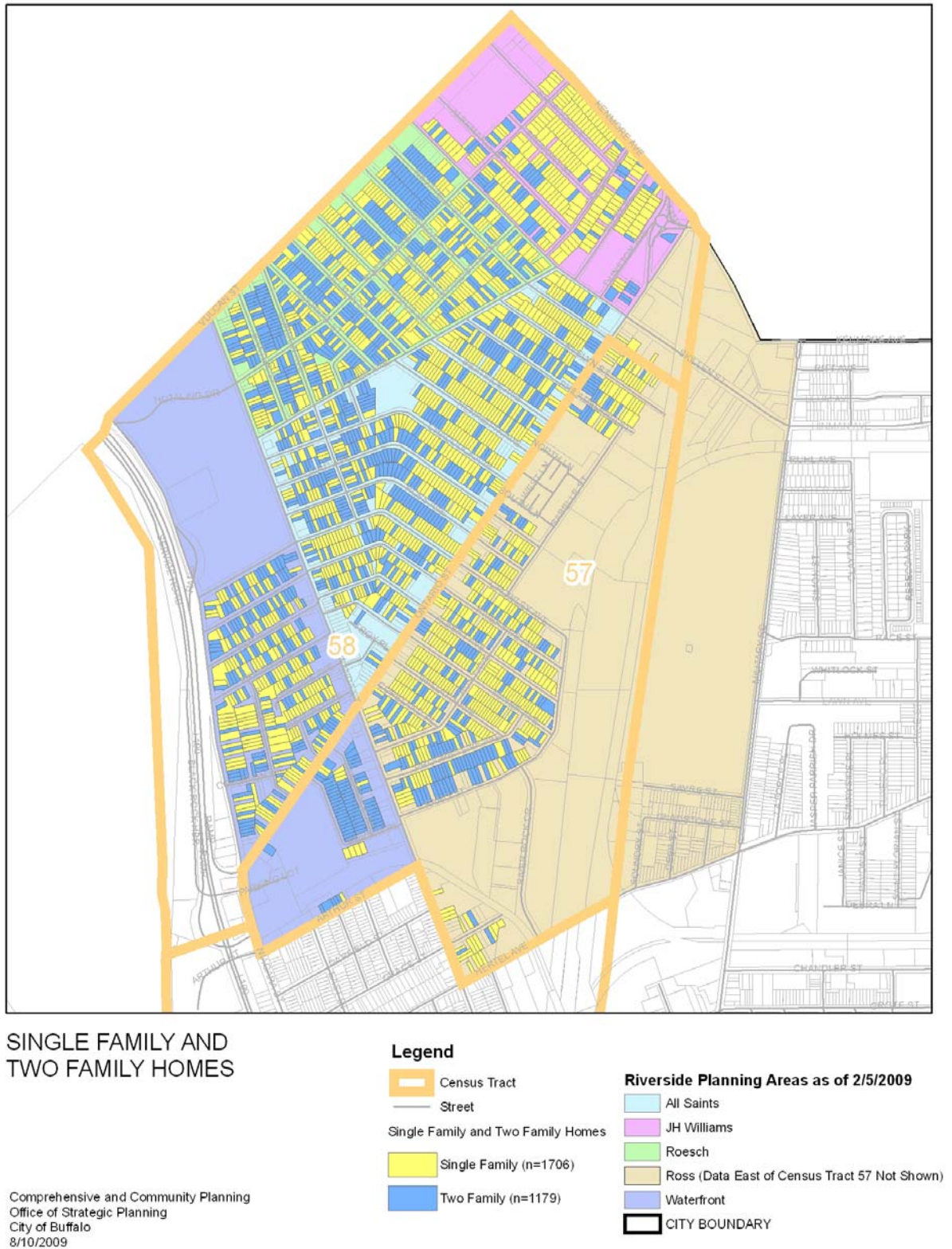


Figure 35: This map shows a variety of patterns between single family and two family homes. In some areas, there are pockets of one type amidst pockets of the other, while in other areas the two types mix from house-to-house. The former situation is illustrated in the JH Williams area, there is a predominance of single family homes.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



OWN VS. RENT OF  
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES  
(BASED ON PARCEL  
ADDRESS COMPARISON  
TO OWNER'S ADDRESS)

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
3/12/2009

### Legend

- Census Tract
- Street
- Residential Properties**
- RENT (878 or 30%)
- OWN (2063 or 70%)

### Riverside Planning Areas as of 2/5/2009

- All Saints
- JH Williams
- Roesch
- Ross (Data East of Census Tract 57 Not Shown)
- Waterfront
- CITY BOUNDARY

Figure 36: This map shows that ownership patterns are strong, with 70% of residential properties owner-occupied, according to a parcel address comparison to owner's address.



# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

assessed valuations can be differentiated between single family and two family homes, while overall valuation trends are still portrayed.

## HOUSING CONDITION

Because of the preponderance of housing in Riverside, it is an emphasis of this *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* to assess housing conditions in Riverside. This was done in two ways: an intensive housing survey of a small sample of properties, as well as a windshield survey that allowed for a complete survey of residential properties in Riverside.

In May 2009, a team of Rediscover Riverside members set out to conduct an intensive survey of

Land Use	Count	Percent
Residential Single - Family	161	84%
Residential Multi - Unit	29	15%
Mixed Use	0	0%
Vacant Lot	2	1%
Total	192	100%
Occupancy Status	Count	Percent
Occupied	179	93%
Vacant	5	3%
Boarded - Up	0	0%
"For Sale" Sign	2	1%
Other/Blank	6	3%
Total	192	100%
Overall Impression	Count	Percent
Excellent	48	25%
Good	102	53%
Average	36	19%
Poor	2	1%
No Answer/Other	4	2%
Total	192	100%

Figure 37: Descriptive statistics from intensive survey of 192 properties along Beatrice, Chadduck, and Henrietta Streets.

**Housing Condition Survey Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Circle One: Residential Single-Family, Residential Multi-Unit (i.e. Double/Duplex, Triple, etc.), Mixed Use - Commercial and Residential, Vacant Lot

1a. If Double/Duplex: Up-Down, Side-by-Side

2. Circle all that apply: Occupied, Vacant/Empty, Boarded-Up, "For Sale" sign

3. Circle all that apply: Wood (Clapboard or Shingle), Siding - Vinyl, Aluminum or Asphalt, Brick, Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Circle all that apply: Historic windows, Historic Door, Historic Porch, Little or no modern alterations

5. Circle One: Workers Cottage without additions, Workers Cottage with additions (Telescoping, etc.), Four-Square, Bungalow, Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Circle One: No rehab work underway, Property is being rehabbed (describe work being done below)

Area	Exc.	Good	Average	Poor	Not Present	Comments
Roof						
Chimney						
Gutters & Downspouts						
Exterior Walls						
Windows, Doors						
Porch and Balconies						
Foundation						
Garage (detached structures)						
Yard (Lawn Care, Shrubs, Grade)						
Tidiness (No Garbage, Debris)						
Front Steps						
Other (Walkway, Fence, etc)						
Sidewalk						

8. Overall Impression: \_\_\_\_\_

General guidelines to overall impression:  
 Poor: Structure requires extensive repairs and is or will soon be a threat to life, health, and safety to any occupant.  
 Average: Structure requires moderate rehabilitation from current condition that poses no threat to occupant.  
 Good: Structure requires light to no rehab work, such as peeling paint, missing porch railing or minor mortar repairs to chimney and foundation.  
 Excellent: Structure is in excellent condition. No cosmetic repair is work is required.

9. Did you talk with the owners or tenants while filling out this survey? Describe nature of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

A Survey of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance - Housing Subcommittee in partnership with the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 4/20/2009

Figure 38: Survey form used for intensive survey in March 2009.

a small sample of properties in Riverside around All Saints Roman Catholic Church. (see Figure 16) After receiving training in survey methods from a representative of the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, volunteers from Rediscover Riverside surveyed a total of 192 properties along Beatrice, Chadduck, and Henrietta Streets. In this area, volunteers found that of the 192 properties, 84% of the homes were residential single-family, 93% were occupied, and 150 of the 192 properties, or 78%, brought about an overall impression of being of Good or Excellent condition. (see Figure 37)

## WINDSHIELD SURVEY OF PROBLEM PROPERTIES

Nevertheless, it was determined that, even though the results of this small-area, intensive survey was encouraging, a complete survey of Riverside housing was needed to fully explore the question, "What is the condition of housing in Riverside?" As a result, on June 22, June 29, and July 20, 2009, a windshield survey was carried out of residential properties in Riverside, excluding those along the Tonawanda and Ontario commercial corridors.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

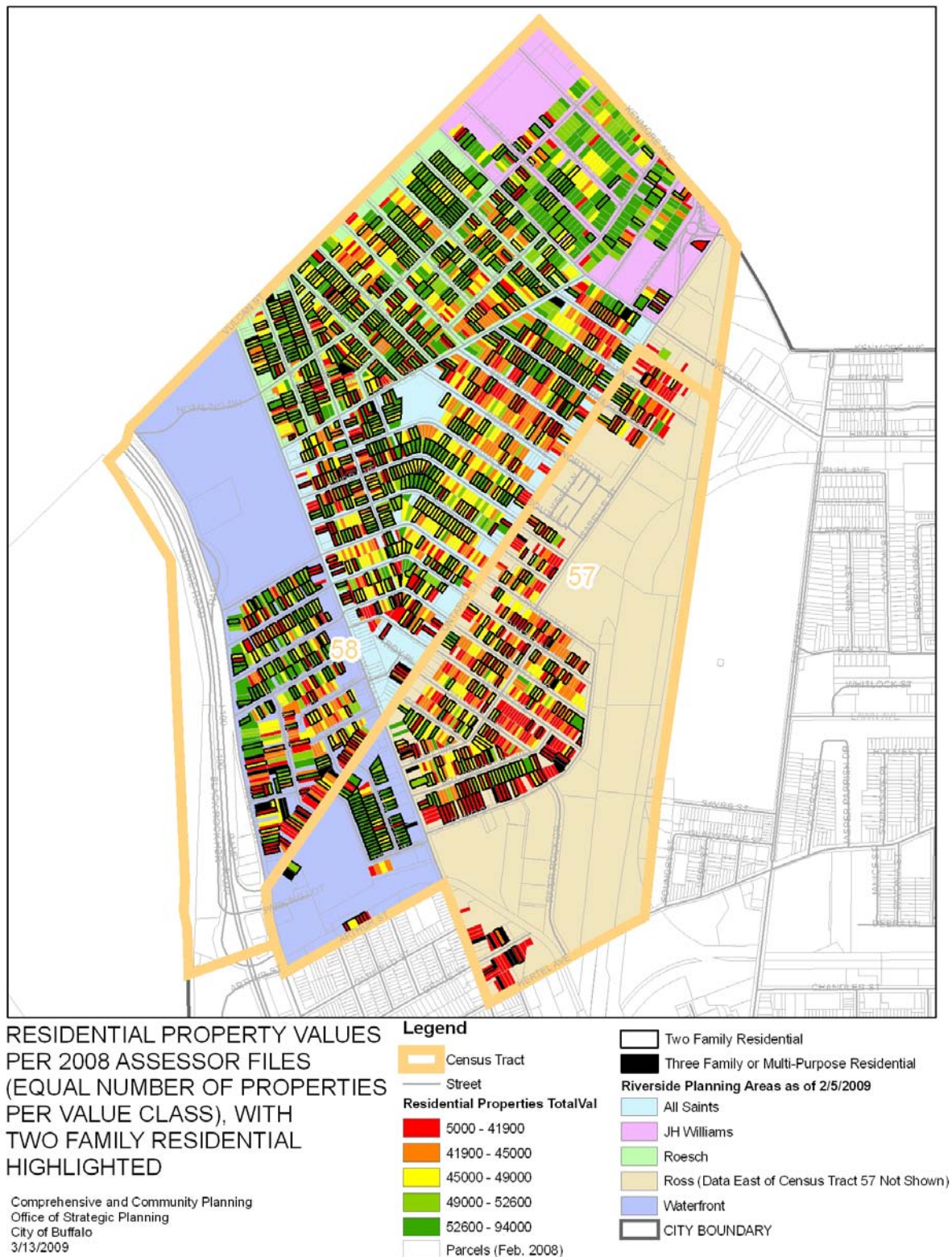


Figure 39: In this map, single family residential property values are able to be distinguished from two family residential property values (which shown with black borders), while still showing overall valuations. For example, a clustering of many higher value single family properties is in evidence in some areas. Note that since this map shows assessed values, these values may differ from market values depending on specific factors, for example when assessor and market values were determined for a particular property. Other factors influence value, like the location, size and characteristics of a given home.



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

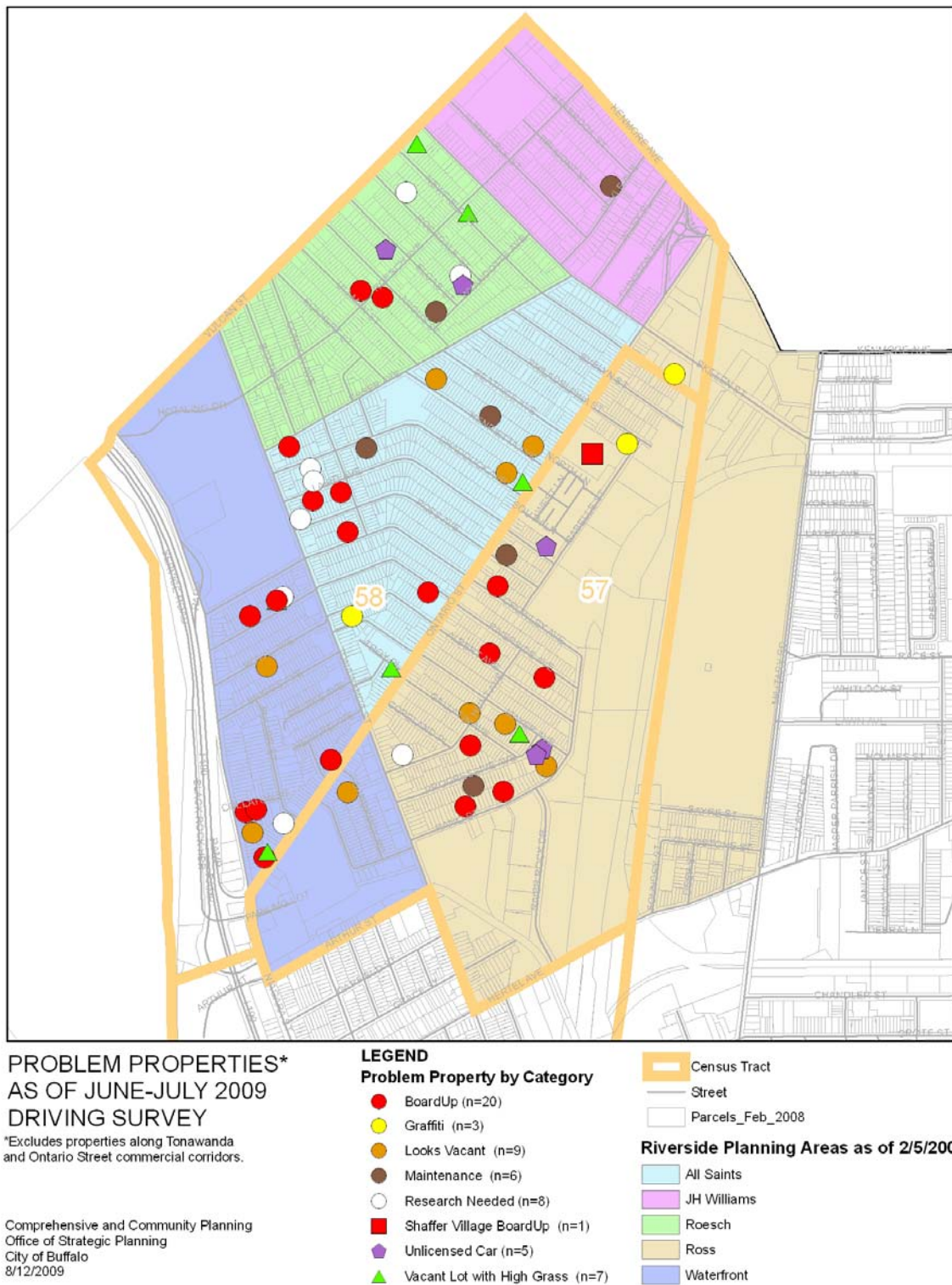


Figure 40: This map shows the results of the complete windshield survey of housing in Riverside (with the exception of properties along Tonawanda and Ontario Streets, which are in the neighborhood's commercial corridors.) Of approximately 3,000 parcels, only 59 exhibited significant problem property characteristics. (See map legend.)

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Using a parcel map with house numbers, ✓ properties were scanned for a variety of indicators of problem property status:

- ✓ Board Up
- ✓ Graffiti
- ✓ Looks Vacant
- ✓ Maintenance Needed
- ✓ Shaffer Village Board Up
- ✓ Unlicensed Car
- ✓ Vacant Lot with High Grass
- ✓ Research Needed
- ✓

In all, 59 properties exhibited significant problem property characteristics, out of approximately 3,000 parcels. (see Figure 40)

Results from both the small-area intensive survey of 192 properties and the complete windshield ✓ survey of approximately 3,000 show that problem properties, in terms of physical condition of housing, are not a large problem in Riverside at this time.

This does not reduce the need for vigilant ✓ monitoring of properties, however. Data and methodology from both survey efforts can help set a baseline to monitor the condition of housing in Riverside and identify changes and future trends.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Also important is to take into account additional considerations. One issue is that physical conditions do not always reflect significant quality of life issues emanating from certain properties. For this reason, later in this chapter the topic of Healthy Community, Quality of Life, and Safety is discussed. Also, it is important to assess the conditions along Tonawanda and Ontario Streets, which was indeed done separately and discussed in the following section on Economic Development. Finally, while problem properties are not apparently a significant problem in terms of the physical condition of housing in Riverside today, there are certain facts involving housing in Riverside that warrant careful consideration from a planning perspective:

- ✓ Some properties identified as being problem properties from a point of view of their physical condition are very prominent, being located in significant viewsheds. Properties in these locations in distressed condition especially send a poor message to travelers-by about the desirability of Riverside's housing.

Concentrated ownership of a significant number of properties in a neighborhood like Riverside, where housing values are very affordable while housing quality is very high, is worth monitoring. In a check of the City of Buffalo Property Information database via [www.city-buffalo.com](http://www.city-buffalo.com), for example, one corporation is shown in February 2009 to own 72 properties, and a sizable proportion of them are in Riverside. While this particular company has a good track record to date of investing to rehabilitate properties for the purpose of renting them to pre-screened occupants, not all landowners function in such a reliable manner, and Riverside could be vulnerable to landlord neglect unless housing code compliance is assiduously monitored and enforced.

Many older parts of Riverside have houses that lack parking. With average new automobile MSRPs in the \$28,000 range, driveways have become a desired amenity for most homeowners.

✓ Housing is predominantly single and two family is design. Also, local conditions in some areas have evolved since the 1880s-1920s, when much of the housing was built in Riverside. Therefore, a diversity of housing choices for various customer segments is desirable.

✓ Recreational and community-oriented spaces in many residential areas in Riverside are lacking.

✓ Some areas of Riverside are struggling with a clustering of problem properties. These deserve special attention.

✓ Some areas of Riverside are not enjoying the high valuations that their location would seem to suggest. It is important to find out what hindrances are in place for areas where higher valuations seem warranted.

## 4. Economic Development

Riverside, ever since it started its growth in the 1880s, has had a strong workforce, and the same fact remains today.

### WORKFORCE

Manufacturing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance jobs provided over 2/3 of all jobs



# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Workforce Profile from 2000 U.S. Census	
State: New York County: Erie County	
Tracts: 0057 0058	
	Number
<b>Males (ages 16+):</b>	3,667
In labor force	2,487
In Armed Forces	0
Civilian	2,487
Employed	2,191
Unemployed	296
Not in labor force	1,180
<b>Females (ages 16+):</b>	4,230
In labor force	2,240
In Armed Forces	0
Civilian	2,240
Employed	1,993
Unemployed	247
Not in labor force	1,990
<b>Workers (ages 16+) Employed in Selected Industrial Sectors:</b>	
Manufacturing	958
Retail trade	536
Educational services	232
Health care and social assistance	456
Accommodation and food services	306
Other services (except public administration)	192
Public administration	180
<b>Workers (ages 16+) Employed in Selected Occupational Groups:</b>	
Management, professional and related occupations	744
Services occupations	815
Sales and office occupations	1,086
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	1,203
<b>Means of Transportation to Work (Workers, ages 16+):</b>	
Car, truck or van	3,461
Public transportation	438
<b>Time Worked in 1999 (Workers, ages 16-64):</b>	
Worked in 1999	5,030
Usually worked 35 or more hours per week	3,813
Worked 50 to 52 weeks per year	2,824
Usually worked 15-34 hours per week	1,090
Worked 50 to 52 weeks per year	417
Usually worked 1-14 hours per week	127
Worked 50 to 52 weeks per year	21

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Figure 41: A Workforce Profile for Riverside based on the 2000 Census, compiled by The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, indicates that manufacturing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance jobs provided over 2/3 of all jobs (i.e. 68%) held by Riverside residents (see “Workers (ages 16+ Employed in Selected Industrial Sectors” category).



Figure 42: This photo of “Dan Mel”, Firefighter and Riverside resident, epitomizes the character of the workforce in Riverside: reliable, professional, and dedicated to high performance.

Travel Time	Riverside	City of Buffalo
Less than 5 minutes	4.3%	2.5%
5 to 9 minutes	14.7%	10.8%
10 to 14 minutes	21.4%	18.9%
15 to 19 minutes	21.2%	21.8%
Less than 20 minutes	61.6%	54.0%

Figure 43: Travel time to work for workers 16 years and over, 2000 Census.

(i.e. 68%) held by Riverside residents, while Educational Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Public Administration, and Other Services provided the rest. (see Figure 41) The Riversider work ethic is embodied by people like “Dan Mel”, the nickname of a Firefighter and Riversider who shows dedication at his job day in and day out in critical situations in Buffalo. (see Figure 42)

Riverside workers have better access to their jobs, as measured by travel time to work, than most workers in Buffalo. This could be because of the excellent highway access afforded to Riversiders, or because of the availability of local jobs that fit their skillsets, or both. 62% of Riversiders that do not work at home and are 16 or more years of age travel less than 20 minutes to their jobs, compared to 54% of Buffalonians overall. 19% travel less than 10 minutes to their jobs, compared to 13% of Buffalonians overall. (See Figure 43)

## BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Riverside is poised to benefit from several new initiatives that will help capitalize on its unique business advantages, and further strengthen business activity within and nearby its boundaries.

As shown in Figure 44, Zip Code 14207, which includes the Riverside neighborhood, and stretches north to near Sheridan Drive in Tonawanda, east to just beyond Elmwood Avenue, south to the Scajaquada Expressway, and west to the waterfront, in 2001 had fifteen business enterprises with 100 or more employees, three with over 500 employees, and one with over 1,000.

Among these are Luvata Buffalo, on Sayre Street, which according to published reports in 2010 plans to undertake a \$3 million expansion of its copper and brass rolling mill, in return for a new allocation of 650 kilowatts of electricity, adding 30 jobs to a current workforce of 647. Luvata Buffalo manufactures copper and copper-alloy semi-

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Summary of Businesses (Activity for 2001)										
ZIP Code 14207										
Type of Business (NAICS Name)	Total Businesses	Number of Establishments by Employment-Size Class:								
		1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-249	250-499	500-999	1000 +
Construction	51	29	10	10	1	0	1	0	0	0
Manufacturing	69	20	8	7	22	8	2	0	2	0
Wholesale trade	71	32	16	14	8	0	0	0	0	1
Retail trade	75	26	20	14	8	3	2	2	0	0
Transportation & warehousing	23	9	6	3	2	1	1	0	1	0
Information	13	3	3	4	0	1	2	0	0	0
Finance & insurance	11	2	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Real estate & rental & leasing	17	10	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional, scientific & tech. serv	22	15	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Mgmt. of companies & enterprises	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Admin. support, waste mgt, remed serv	31	14	5	7	2	2	1	0	0	0
Educational services	5	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Health care and social assistance	34	4	12	6	9	3	0	0	0	0
Arts, entertainment & recreation	7	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Accommodation & food services	60	37	8	4	9	2	0	0	0	0
Other services (except public admin)	53	38	8	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Auxiliaries (exc corp., subsid. & reg mgt)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unclassified establishments	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ZIP Code Business Patterns.

Figure 44 (left): Zip Code 14207, which includes Riverside, is host to many prominent employers including Luvata Buffalo and GM Powertrain, as well as many smaller enterprises providing key goods and services to the community. 552 businesses are listed in the chart, which is based on activity in 2001. Figures 45 and 46 (below): Entrance images for GM Powertrain and Luvata Buffalo, courtesy Google.com.



fabricated sheet, strip and plate-based products for building and construction, electrical/electronic and ammunition industries, as well as architectural and automotive applications, and in that regard it provides products for the North American auto industry. Luvata Buffalo will be upgrading equipment as part of its plans to consolidate in Buffalo some of its manufacturing operations currently conducted in Europe to lower overall production costs. (<http://www.luvata.com/en/About-luvata/Locations/Buffalo-New-York/> and *Business First*, "3 Companies Awarded Low-Cost Power", January 27, 2009).

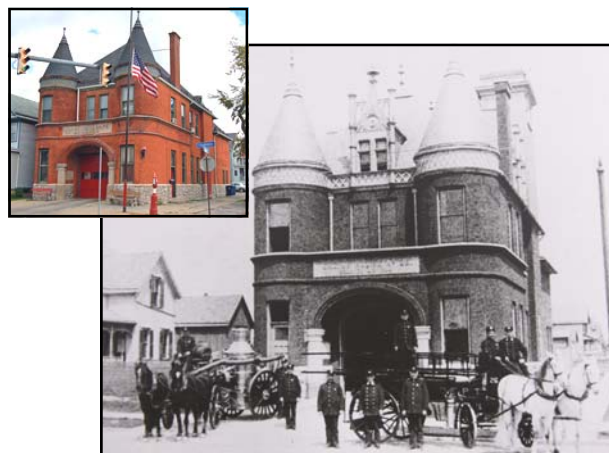
Another prominent nearby employer is the GM Powertrain plant in nearby Tonawanda. GM in February, 2010 announced a \$425 million investment at the plant, ensuring its future as the producer of GM's next-generation engine — the fuel-efficient, four-cylinder Ecotec. The *Buffalo News* reported that by the time GM completes its investment in Tonawanda, the plant will have the capacity to build 370,000 Ecotec engines a year. "This is the day we've been waiting for," said plant manager Steve Finch. "If anybody thinks that manufacturing is dead in America, they need to come here. It's alive right here in Tonawanda." (*Buffalo News*, "GM begins rebirth with engine plant in Tonawanda", February 19, 2010) This was followed in April, 2010 with a report that the engine plant plans to add 415 jobs as a result of winning production of the "Generation V" engine — representing an additional \$400 million investment by GM. This work is set to begin in 2012, and could bring the total job count to near 1,200. (*Buffalo News*, "GM plant expects to add 415 jobs", April 27, 2010)

In addition to these large corporations, Riverside is home to many small, growing enterprises. A ride along Tonawanda, Ontario, Niagara Streets and Hertel Avenue reveals many local businesses with strong ties to the community they serve.

## COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

In addition to its strong workforce and impressive business activity, Riverside has three prominent commercial corridors: Tonawanda Street, Ontario Street, and Niagara Street. (see Figure 49) Each corridor has distinctive characteristics:

TONAWANDA STREET as it exists within the boundaries of Riverside is a commercial corridor extending from Vulcan St. in the north to Hertel Ave. in the south. It has occupied a place of prominence in commercial Riverside for



Figures 47 & 48: Engine 26 today (top left) and in the early 1900s (lower right). Pictures courtesy of City of Buffalo and Grant-Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project".



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

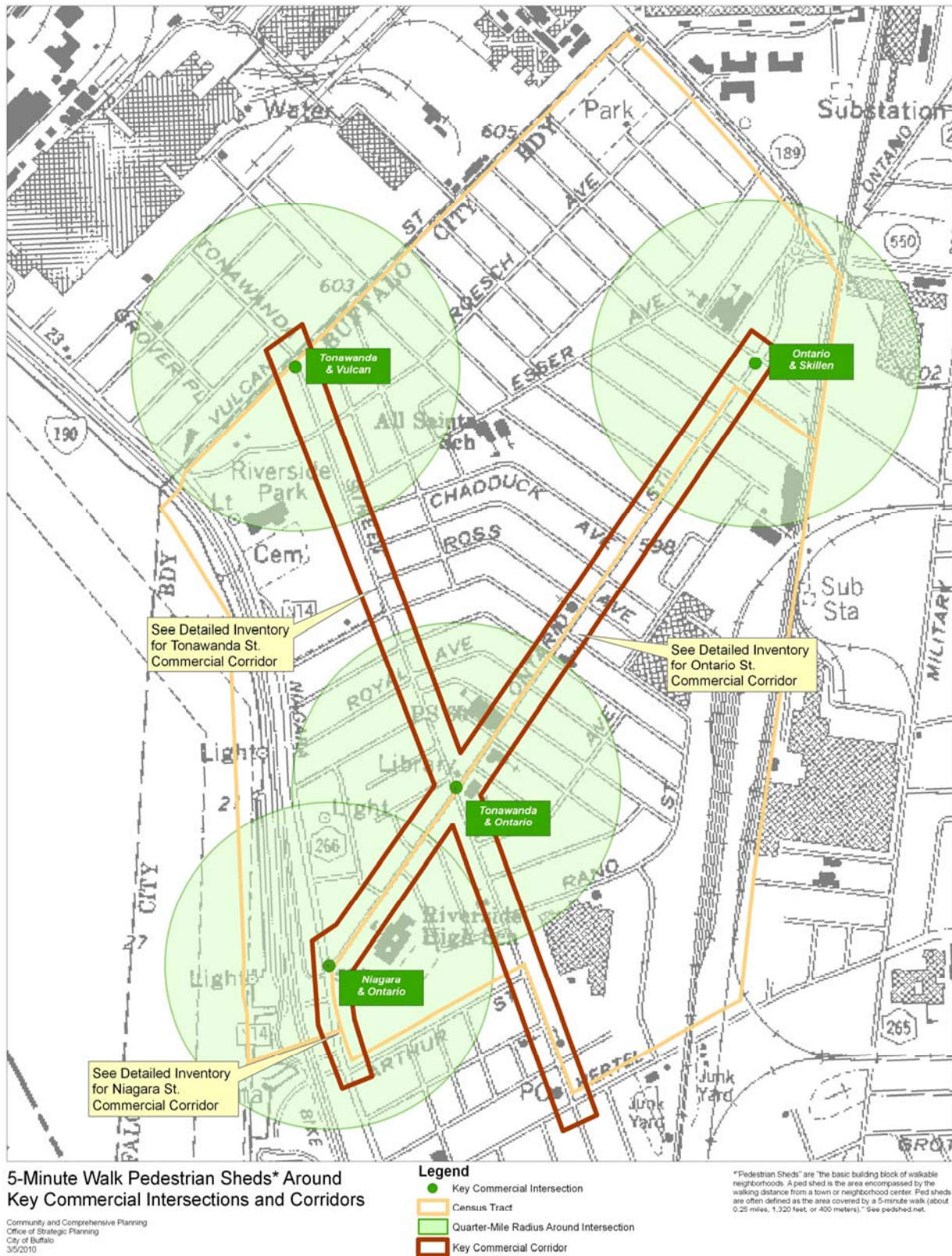


Figure 49: This map shows key intersections as well as their 5-minute walk pedestrian sheds, plus key commercial corridors.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

generations and serves streets that were developed early on in the history of Riverside. From the north, the corridor links Old Town, in the adjacent Town of Tonawanda, to Riverside Park and parkside commercial storefronts. South of the park is Riverside Library, M&T Bank, Rite Aid, and other shops until one arrives at Ontario Street, at the intersection of Tonawanda and Ontario. This key intersection features a brick church, two large commercial properties, and the art moderne Riverside Men's Shop property, which had the distinction in the 1940s of using the most modern features of the day including the city's first air-conditioning, first plate-glass doors, and first fluorescent lighting. (source: <http://www.buffaloah.com/a/main/4380/4380.html#Architect>). It is currently vacant. The commercial corridor proceeds south on Tonawanda Street past a supermarket, several important religious and social organizations, and storefronts, to the



Figures 50 and 51: Riverside Theater at 824 Tonawanda Street (top) opened in 1926 and was operated by the Schine Theatres circuit. When it closed the seats were removed and it became the Ski Deck. People skied down the slanted floor. The theater was demolished and the Riverside Library (bottom) was built on this site in the 1980s. Pictures courtesy of Grant-Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project" and Google.

distinctive Engine 26 firehouse at 703 Tonawanda & Progressive, built in 1894. (see Figures 47 and 48, and the map in Figure 49). From there, it proceeds south, past the former American Standard factory and some service businesses to Hertel Avenue.

ONTARIO STREET as a commercial corridor extends from Skillen Street in the north to Niagara Street in the south. Ontario and Skillen is a key intersection, with Skillen Street providing an important transportation route for automobile traffic in to and out of Riverside. Many residents use Skillen to access shopping opportunities that lie east of Military Road. At the intersection is a recently renovated Wilson Farms and busy Getty gas station, an apartment building, and a large developable parcel of land. Heading south on Ontario one finds many two-family homes, taverns/restaurants, and storefronts. Between Ontario and Isabelle, a parallel street to the east, are a former supermarket that is now home to the very popular Flying Bison Brewery and a Buffalo Municipal Housing Project known as Shaffer Village. Further south are churches, Sav-A-Lot supermarket, residences and storefronts, as well as a vacant City of Buffalo school, School 60—Riverside Academy. After encountering the intersection of Ontario and Tonawanda Streets, one finds one- and two-family homes up to and beyond Riverside High School, which is near the end of a multi-million dollar renovation. Ontario Street ends at Niagara Street, where several large parcels are available for redevelopment. This key intersection also provides easy highway access to and from northern suburbs via the I-190 highway ramps, as well as a car-oriented strip plaza with a busy Tim Horton's store.

NIAGARA STREET in this part of Riverside includes car-friendly shopping amenities as well as the entrance to the Ontario Street Boat Launch and Cornelius Creek Park, as well as the Riverwalk recreational trail along the waterfront. All three, the boat launch, park, and trail, are the subject of an ambitious plan to better knit them together as a prominent recreational destination, called Black Rock Canal Park.

### WINDSHIELD SURVEY OF RETAIL CONDITIONS

A windshield survey conducted on November 17, 2009 reveals varied retail conditions along neighborhood retail corridors Tonawanda and Ontario Streets. Improvements along Tonawanda and Ontario Streets are important to achieve,



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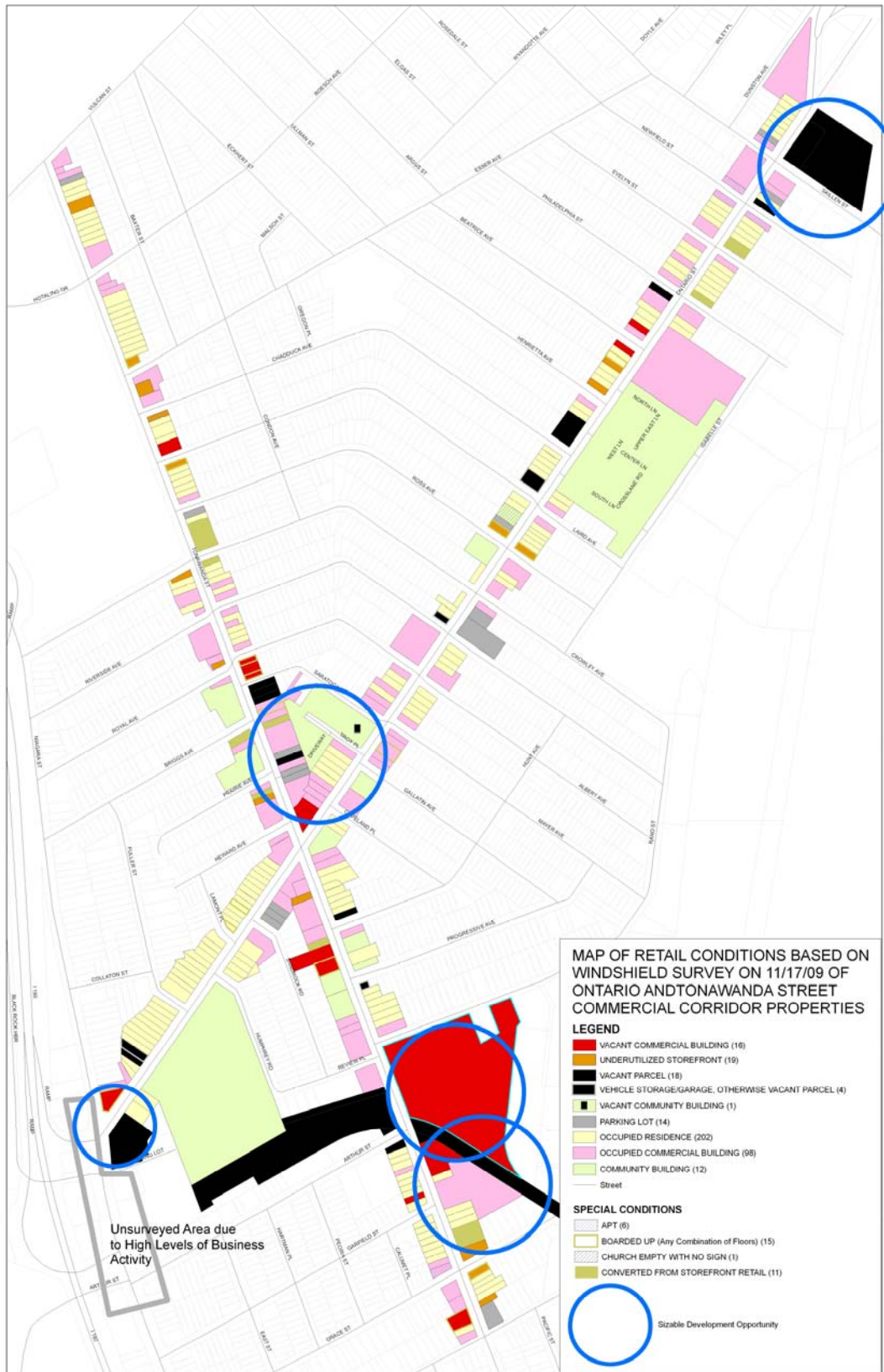


Figure 52: Retail conditions shown on this map indicate a widespread need for façade improvement and other programs to stimulate investment and retail activity along the Tonawanda and Ontario commercial corridors. Areas where opportunities exist for sizable development are also shown.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



Figure 53 and 54: Tonawanda and Royal Streets looking north toward the Riverside Library in 1932 (top) and today (bottom). In the historic photo, notice the trolley lines, overhead wires, and density of commercial and residential uses. Most buildings were wood frame and painted. In the bottom photo, the trolley lines are gone, density is reduced, siding is more in evidence, and storefronts are enclosed. Pictures courtesy of Grant-Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project" and Google.

considering they are surrounded by neighborhood residential areas which benefit from strong, positive commercial corridor activity and shopping choices. Meanwhile, car-oriented retail along Niagara Street seems characterized by high levels of business activity and building occupancy.

As shown on the map displayed in Figure 52 and detailed statistically in Figure 55, both Tonawanda and Ontario Streets represent walkable, neighborhood commercial corridors, with all the advantages of an urban shopping experience. However, much has changed in the employment

USE	COUNT
VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING	16
UNDERUTILIZED STOREFRONT	19
VACANT PARCEL	18
VEHICLE STORAGE/GARAGE, OTHERWISE V	4
VACANT COMMUNITY BUILDING	1
PARKING LOT	14
OCCUPIED RESIDENCE	202
OCCUPIED COMMERCIAL BUILDING	98

Figure 55: This table, based on survey data shown in Figure 50, shows that while 85% of the properties along Tonawanda and Ontario Streets are occupied commercial or residential properties, parking lots or community buildings, 15% are vacant land or buildings or underutilized storefronts or uses.

and retail trends of Riverside and areas nearby in the past 50 years. In earlier times, jobs were plentiful at local manufacturers and along Tonawanda Street "on Saturday nights people had trouble walking on the streets because they were so crowded." (see Figure 26) Today, a windshield survey reveals that, while 85% of the properties along Tonawanda and Ontario Streets are occupied commercial or residential properties, parking lots or community buildings, 15% are vacant land or buildings or underutilized storefronts or uses.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### BUSINESS INCUBATORS

In addition to workforce, business activity, and commercial corridors, Riverside is home to three of the six business incubators operated by the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation, the economic development arm of the City of Buffalo. All fully occupied as of early 2010, these are:

1. River Rock Industrial Incubator (RRII)  
155 - 165 - 175 Rano Street  
Buffalo, NY 14207

The former Chase Bag Company was renovated in the early 1990s and is now the home for nine tenants. With almost 60,000 sq. ft. of space, the River Rock Industrial Incubator is an anchor in the Northwest section of the city. Providing jobs and warehouse space, the RRII is a connection to Buffalo's past and continues to provide opportunities for its citizens.

2. Buffalo Free Trade Complex (BFTC)  
85 River Rock Drive  
Buffalo, NY 14207

The BFTC is an incubator facility with an attractive contemporary design that promotes upscale image surrounded by a clean environment that is aesthetically pleasing and well landscaped. BFTC encompasses two industrial wings of 30,000 sq. ft. each connected by a 17,000 sq. ft. central office core that includes a captivating 30 ft. high atrium and lobby.

BFTC is strategically placed and readily accessible to the interstate highway system serving the greater Buffalo area and in near proximity to the Peace Bridge, entry to Canada, and the QEW. BFTC is less than one



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mile from I-190, three miles from the Peace Bridge, minutes from the NYS Routes 265 and 198 and less than 10 miles from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

3. Can-Am Building  
100 River Rock Drive  
Buffalo, NY 14207

The Can-Am building is a facility coupled with a post-modern architectural design and individually high profile corporate identification entrances. The Can-Am building has been designed to attract new business start-ups, expansion, and / or relocation, targeted to the international community, through the offering of

industrial flex-space and incubator modules.

### RIVERSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

One of the most prominent public buildings in Riverside is about to experience a transformation, remaking it into one of the most innovative from a economic development perspective.

According to a January 2010 article in Buffalo Rising Online (<http://www.buffalorising.com/2010/01/school-reconstruction-riverside-high.html>), Riverside High School is part of Phase III of the Buffalo Public Schools Reconstruction Project, the largest preservation effort ever in Buffalo's history, and Phase III is near completion. The



Figure 56: Riverside is home to three of the six business incubators operated by the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation, the economic development arm of the City of Buffalo. For more information, visit: [http://berc.org/realestate\\_prop.php](http://berc.org/realestate_prop.php)

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approximately \$1.3 billion effort to reconstruct the schools has resulted in monumental improvements in these dated but splendid buildings, and Riverside High, at 51 Ontario Street, is no exception.

With renovations designed by Wendel Duchscherer Architects and managed by LPCiminelli Inc., and oversight by BPS Associate Architect Paul McDonnell, Riverside is in the final stages of being revamped and reconstructed to fit the needs of the 21st century in stunning style, while preserving the character of the original design, built in the 1920s. The final cost of renovations at Riverside High School will be near \$29 million.

Riverside is a 9 through 12 high school with approximately 850 students. The 9th graders have been moved to School #51 on Hertel for this construction project that has tackled different areas of the school in phases, allowing the top three grades to stay on site. Begun in 2008, the school will be nearly complete this April, and will accept all four class levels next fall.

McDonnell says that Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools Dr. James A. Williams has plans to put a School of Entrepreneurship in the building, and would like to see it open from 8AM to 10PM for those purposes. Kaleida Health maintains the school infirmary, and HSBC maintains a banking program for students, but the entrepreneurial school would invite after-hours business owners from the community to mentor present students and continuing education students through various modules pertaining to business.

### TONAWANDA STREET CORRIDOR BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

The City of Buffalo has been awarded a \$425,000 as part of the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program, to undertake Step 2 activities in the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA). Funds made possible by the Superfund/ Brownfield law in October 2003 provide municipalities and community based organizations with assistance, at up to 90 percent of the eligible project costs, to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for areas or communities

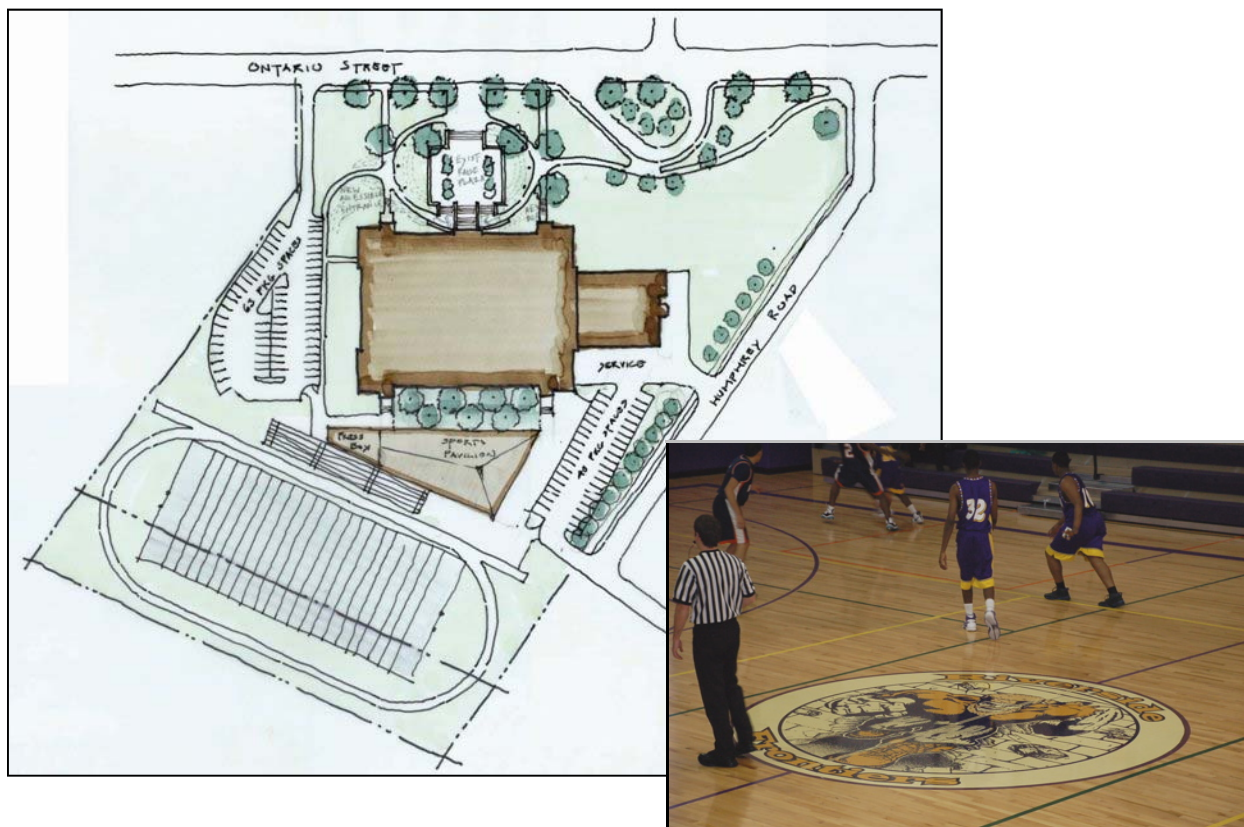


Figure 57 and 58: Riverside High School is undergoing a transformation, with renovated physical spaces, a new field house and ballfield, as shown in an image early in the renovation process from the Buffalo Public Schools (top left), and, most important from an economic development point of view, a new School of Entrepreneurship focus for its students. (Lower right image courtesy Buffalo Rising Online.)



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

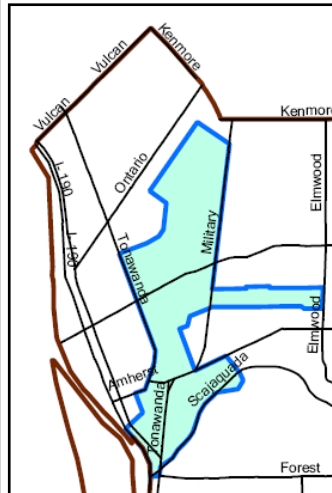
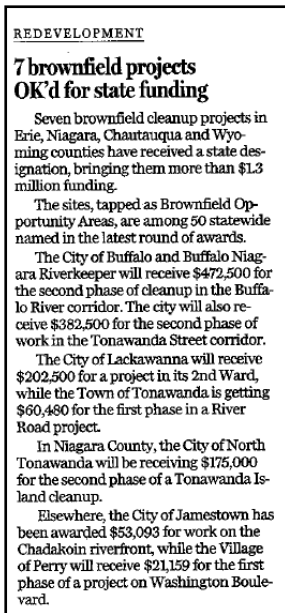


Figure 59 and 60: "7 Brownfield Projects OK'd for State Funding", Buffalo News, March 9, 2008, C-3. and a map of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area boundary. In Riverside specifically, the boundary of the BOA includes properties east of Tonawanda Street, to Rano to Crowley to Isabelle to Skillen.

affected by the presence of brownfield sites and to do site assessments for strategic brownfield sites for the purpose of facilitating redevelopment.

Step 2 Activities (i.e. planning and analysis leading to recommendations involving strategic properties) will be undertaken with this grant. 514 acres in the Tonawanda Street Rail Corridor, part of which runs east of Riverside, and the Chandler Street area are the focus. In Riverside specifically, the boundary of the BOA includes properties east of Tonawanda Street, to Rano to Crowley to Isabelle to Skillen. (See Figures 59 and 60)

## 5. Transportation

### BUS

Riverside is well-served by a network of bus routes provided by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. (NFTA) (See Figure 61) Routes like the Kenmore 30 and the Hertel 23 provide east west service, while several routes provide north south service, including the 63 Riverside, an express bus to downtown Buffalo. All routes in Riverside are in Zone 1, as Buffalo overall, further adding to the potential savings for bus riders, because additional funds required by passage into other Zones are not needed for travel within Riverside and the rest of



Figure 61: NFTA bus routes serve Riverside with both north-south and east-west routes. Commuter service to downtown is provided by . Routes "7 Brownfield Projects OK'd for State Funding", Buffalo News, March 9, 2008, C-3. and a map of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area boundary. In Riverside specifically, the boundary of the BOA the city.

### CAR

Riverside has excellent highway access via the I-190.

- ✓ For travelers from Riverside headed south and to downtown, an onramp is available at the foot of Hertel Avenue.
- ✓ For travelers from Riverside headed north, an on-ramp is available at the foot of Ontario Street.
- ✓ For travelers from downtown, an exit ramp is at Austin Street.
- ✓ For travelers from the north, an exit ramp is at Ontario Street.

The street network of Riverside is also of good design, with a network of streets facilitating north-south and east-west travel, as well as access to commercial corridors, adjacent neighborhoods, and highway travel. Traffic counts indicate a well integrated street transportation system. (See Figure 62)

### BOAT

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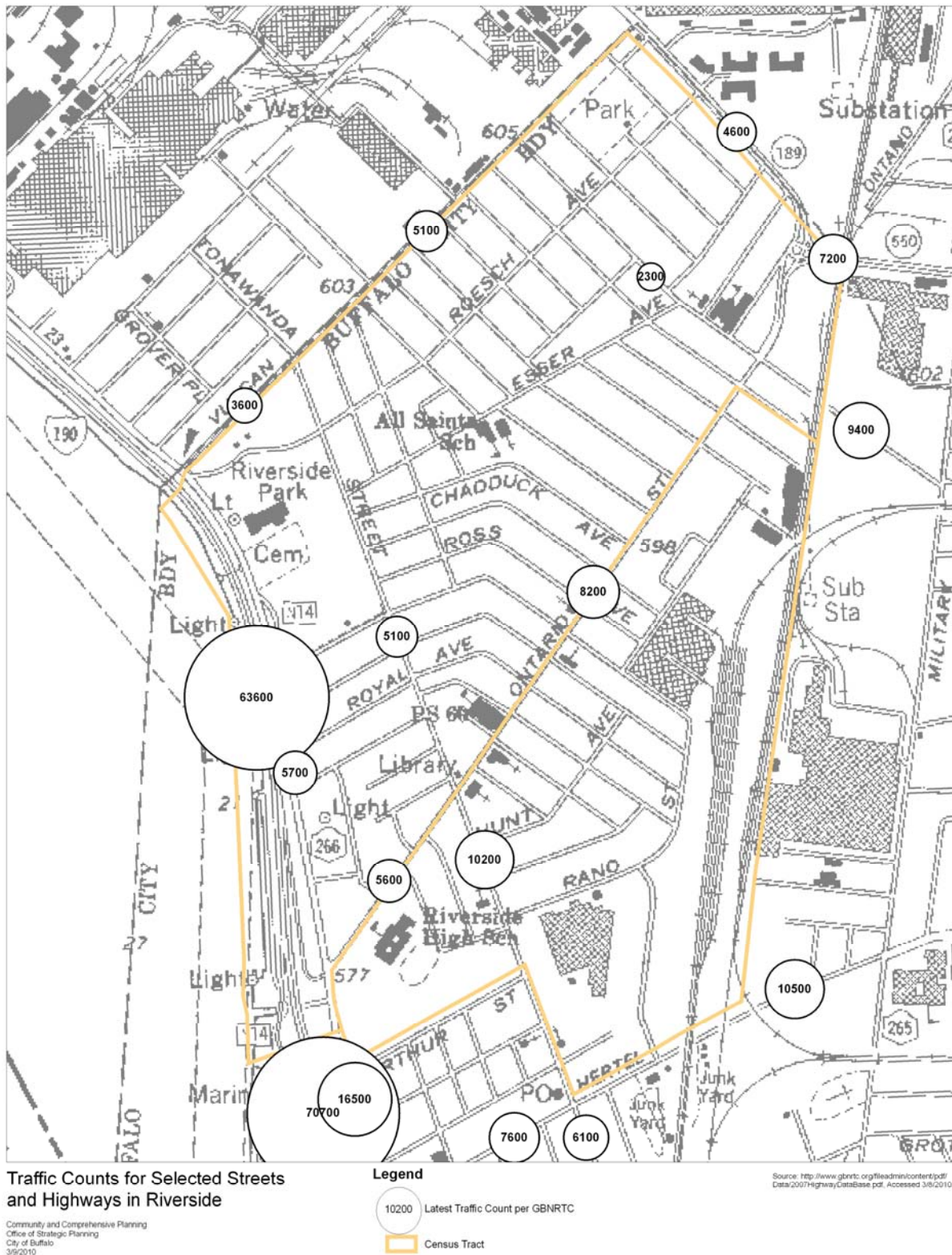


Figure 62: This map shows traffic counts in Riverside, by using proportional symbols in the form of white circles to represent traffic per day for selected streets and highways. Highest counts are found on the I-190, Niagara, Tonawanda, Ontario, and Skillen. These high traffic areas correspond to the key intersections, key commercial corridors, and sizable development opportunities identified in Figures 49 and 52.



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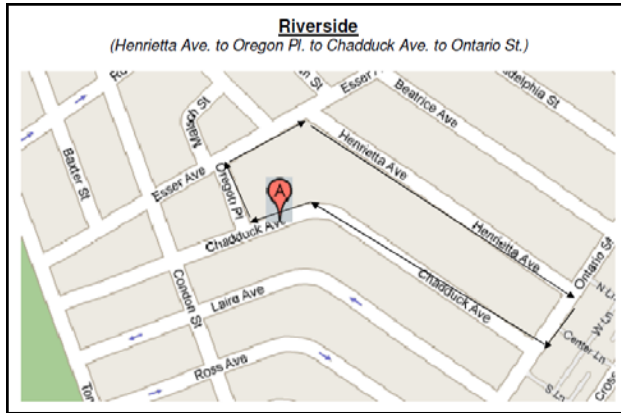


Figure 63: The route taken for walkability survey on September 22, 2009. Many deficiencies were identified that diminishes the area's walkability. Since the area included a residential as well as a commercial street, it is likely representative of conditions in the Riverside neighborhood. Overall, walkability was summarized in a written report as having a score of "Fair".

The Ontario Street Boat Launch offers free launch access to the Buffalo River in a park-like setting.

### BICYCLE

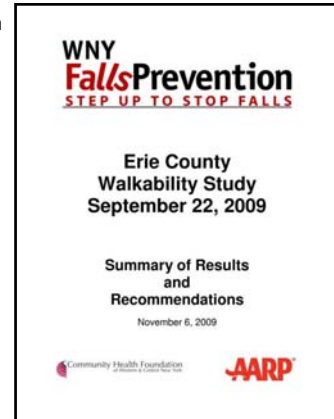
Bicycle resources in Riverside are good. The Riverwalk, accessible via the entrance to the Ontario Street Boat Launch and via the Irene K. Gardner Pedestrian Bridge, provides a waterfront multi-use trail experience which extends uninterrupted from Riverside north to the Tonawandas and south to downtown. Routes in Riverside designated as part of an on-street bicycle network are also identifiable in the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council's *Bicycle Route Guide*. Enhanced neighborhood bike routes would increase access to the aforementioned Riverwalk Bike Trail and provide safer transportation to Riverside Park, which is a major recreational hub for the neighborhood.

### PEDESTRIAN

Pedestrian travel for recreational purposes is enhanced by the Riverwalk. However, a recent study involving members of Rediscover Riverside found deficiencies in the everyday walkability of Riverside in a study area that included a segment of a commercial corridor and a residential area. This report, titled *Erie County Walkability Study: Summary of Results and Recommendations*, was created based on results of a walkability survey held on September 22, 2009, as part of an initiative of the WNY Falls Prevention Consortium.

This area was selected not only because it is the center of Riverside geographically, but also

Figure 64: The title page from the *Erie County Walkability Study: Summary of Results and Recommendations* report. Recommendations specific to Riverside can be found in the Appendix. The entire report is available online at <http://www.chfwcn.org/Tools/Library/frontend/item.asp?ItemID=84>



because it offers several resources important to rebuilding this neighborhood. (All Saints RC Church, a stable residential fabric, the Ontario Street commercial corridor, and housing and apartment complexes.) Lastly this area represents a diverse group of streets including local areas where individuals are striving to age in place with community support. A summary of the results show that in all aspects of walkability, the study area scored "FAIR" on a performance scale ranging from POOR to FAIR to GOOD/ EXCELLENT.

Ratings Summary: (see Appendix 3 for detailed recommendations)

Crossing the Street:	FAIR
Sidewalks:	FAIR
Driver Behavior:	FAIR
Driver Safety:	FAIR
Comfort & Appeal:	FAIR

Based on these results, it is important for pedestrian infrastructure to be maintained, and improved where necessary.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### STREET WIDTH

An important consideration in the livability of Riverside related to transportation, urban design, housing and quality of life is the width of the streets. Street width affects traffic circulation, parking, plow service, relations between neighbors, and more. As part of this plan, an analysis was undertaken to assess street widths in Riverside. Using the *Index to Paved Streets to December 1983*, street widths were assessed for every street in Riverside. The results are instructive. (see Figure 65) Most of Riverside, including the commercial corridors of Ontario and Tonawanda

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

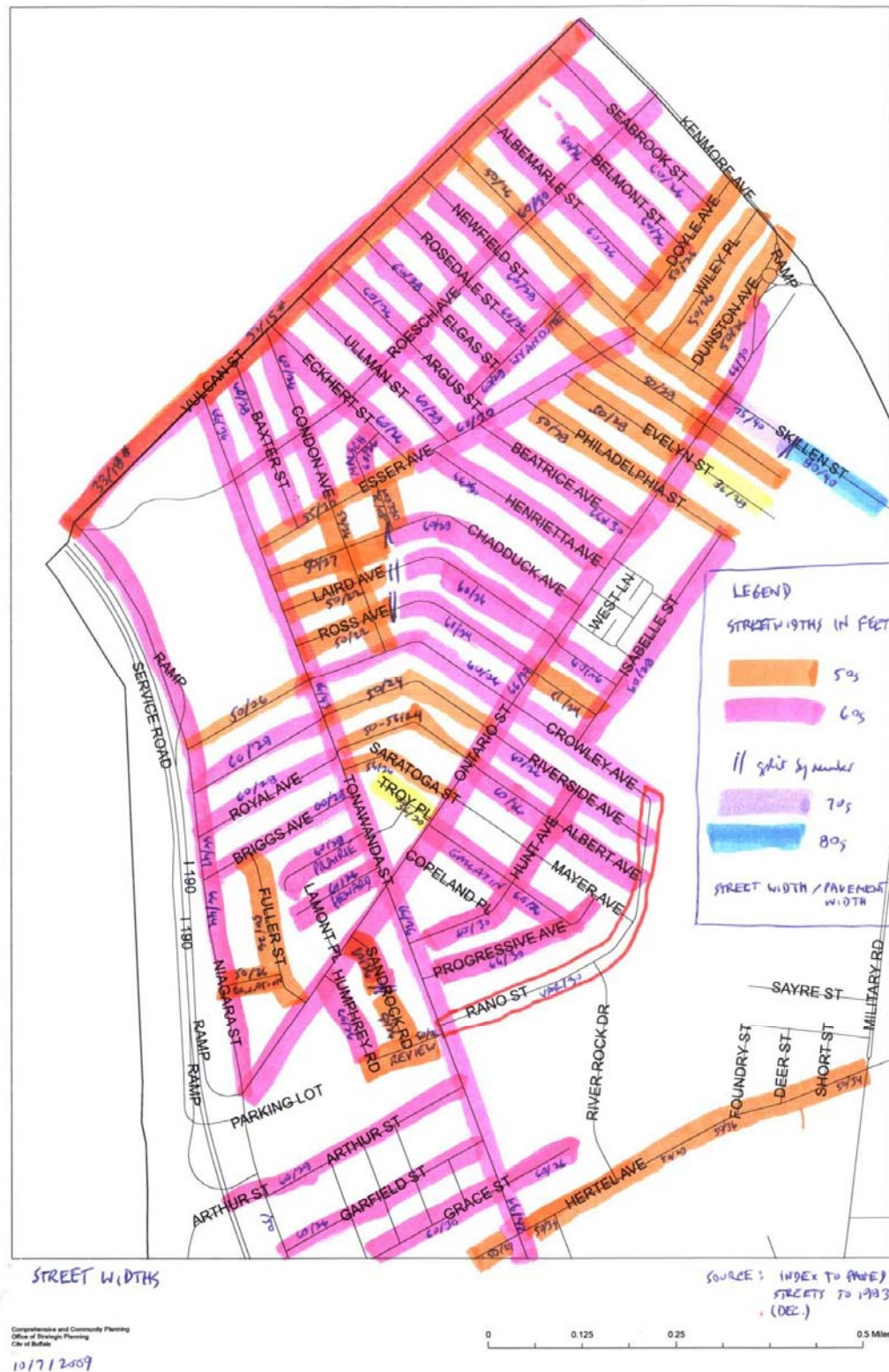


Figure 65: An analysis of street widths in Riverside. Most of Riverside has a street width in the 60-69 foot range (indicated in the pink shade), while some areas along Tonawanda Street are somewhat narrower, with a street width in the 50-59 foot range (orange). Exceptions are Troy Place and the foot of Evelyn Street, with widths in the 30s (yellow), and Skellen, with a width in the 80s (blue). It would be instructive to analyze the link between street width and other neighborhood conditions.



## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Streets, have a street width of 60-69 feet. Other areas have narrower widths except Skillen Street, which has a width of 80 feet.

Areas where the street width is relatively narrow, at 50-59 feet, are:

- ✓ In the Waterfront area, Fuller and Collation Streets, just east of Niagara Street, and Sandrock and Review, just east of Ontario Street. Also, the float of Crowley Ave. between Niagara and Tonawanda Streets. These areas

are some of the first parts of Riverside to be developed. It is interesting to note that several of these streets are adjacent to significant community assets like Riverside Park or Riverside High School

- ✓ In the area west of All Saints RC Church, Esser up to Eckhert, as well as, south of Esser, Chadduck, Laird, and Ross, plus Condon and Oregon, all have street widths in the 50s. So do streets around School 60. East of All Saints, Philadelphia, Evelyn, and Newfield



Figures 66 and 67: The placement of the I-190 has dramatically altered life in Riverside, which has always been a waterfront community. In a 1911 photo at Niagara and Royal (top), the Niagara River, Tow Path, Erie Canal and Niagara Street work in harmony together. In an image from today (bottom), it is clear that, even with scenic overlooks and access to the Riverwalk via the Irene Gardner Pedestrian Bridge, the I-190, which replaced the Tow Path and Erie Canal, has lowered the attractiveness of the waterfront. Pictures courtesy of Grant-Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project" and Google.

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have portions with street widths in the 50s.

- ✓ In the area around J.H. Williams, several streets are in the 50s in terms of their width, including Doyle, Wiley and Dunston. These are some of the most recent areas of Riverside to be developed.
- ✓ In the Ross Ave. area south of Ontario Street, Ross itself between Ontario and Isabelle has a street width in the 50s, as do the foot of Philadelphia and Newfield.

Areas with the narrowest streets include Troy Place near School 60 and the foot of Evelyn Street.

The street width of Rano varies.

Further investigating the relationship between street width and such factors as the availability of garages for homes, the density of housing, and the age of housing, would be beneficial. It is likely that in some areas, street width does not significantly contribute to neighborhood issues if garages exist, lot sizes are adequate and homes are single family and the housing is relatively new. However, if garages are not present, lots are narrow, houses are doubles or triples, and housing is aging, adding narrow street widths to the equation could lead to additional livability issues.

### THE EFFECT OF THE I-190 ON RIVERSIDE

For over 100 years, between 1825 and the 1930s, Riversiders enjoyed the Niagara River in a harmonious setting. The Tow Path and adjacent land was a location for the Riverside lighthouse, businesses, and summer cabins, as well as for the tow path for mules along the Erie Canal. Even in the 1930s, after the Erie Canal had run its course as a transportation waterway and had been filled in, a landscaped waterfront with paths and grass

greeted visitors and residents along the waterfront in Riverside. Waterfront life was quiet and enjoyable.

Since the 1950s, the placement of the I-190 has dramatically altered life in Riverside. The I-190, which replaced the Tow Path and Erie Canal, has lowered the attractiveness of the waterfront, reduced convenient access to the waterfront, and is a source of noise and pollution. Other communities are investigating how to redesign, remove and relocate, or otherwise reduce the negative effects of waterfront highways on their communities. Such an effort is appropriate for Riverside as well.

## 6. Community Facilities

Riverside is host to a great variety of community facilities that are well distributed throughout the community and improve the quality of life for its

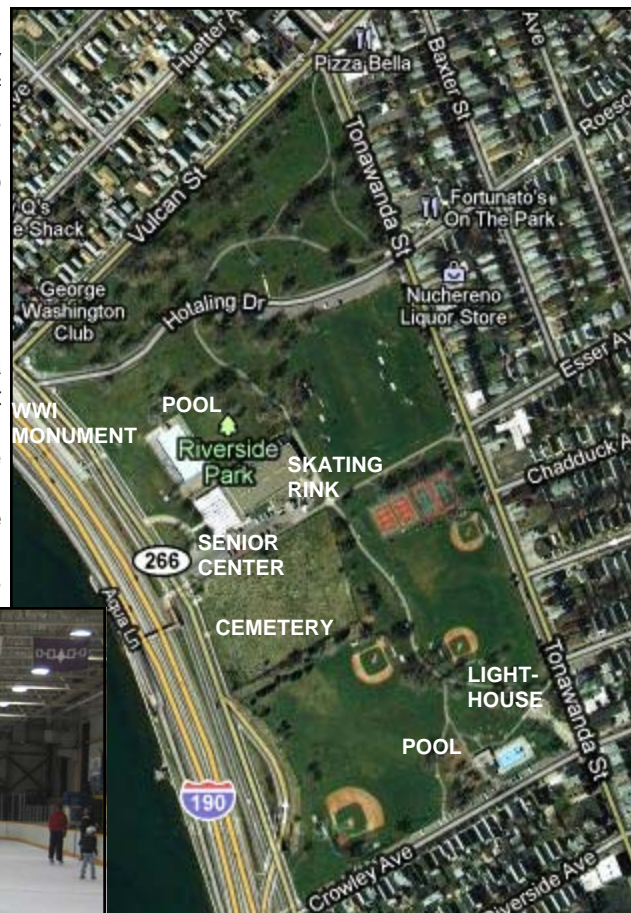


Figure 68-69: A photo (left) from February 15, 2010, shows Riverside youths and adults enjoying a free skate sponsored by a local elected official at Riverside Rink. Riverside Rink also achieved fame in 2010 as the practice rink for the gold medal-winning U.S. Paralympic sled hockey team. Shown at right is an aerial image identifying several facilities at Riverside Park.



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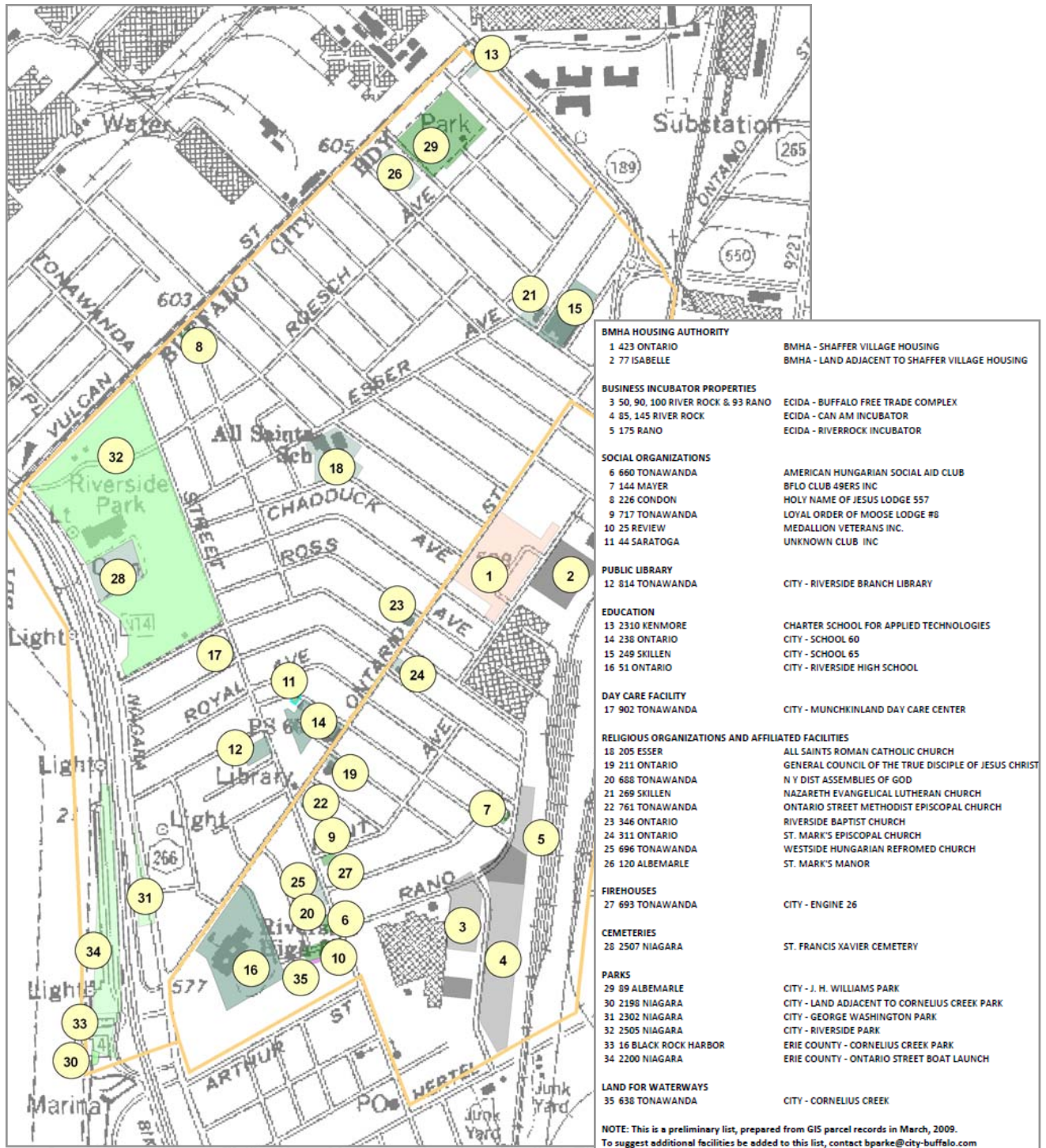


Figure 70: Riverside is host to a large number of public buildings and facilities, as well as social/religious organizations, as shown in the map and list above. The selected facilities shown provide a good illustration of the services available to Riversiders. However, this list is preliminary; to suggest additional facilities be added to this list, contact Bill Parke, AICP, at bparke@city-buffalo.com.

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residents.

As shown in the map in Figure 70, a selection of 35 facilities in Riverside includes a good cross-section of the types of amenities that make neighborhood life strong. Business incubator properties provide assistance to businesses that grow in Riverside and are eventually able to graduate to larger, more prominent facilities. Education and literacy is aided by the public library at 814 Tonawanda, a day care facility at 902 Tonawanda (Munchkinland, operated as a facility of North West Buffalo Community Center), public schools at 51 Ontario (Riverside High School) and 249 Skillen (School 65), as well as a charter school just across the neighborhood boundary on Kenmore Avenue (the Charter School for Applied Technologies) at Kenmore and Vulcan. Numerous social, religious and affiliated facilities can be found along or near the commercial corridors of Ontario and Tonawanda, but on streets interior to residential areas as well, like Esser, Skillen, and Condon.

In addition to the business incubators, the library, and public schools, public facilities also include the parks (discussed further later in this chapter), the Engine 26 firehouse, the BMHA housing complex at Schaffer Village, and, new for 2010, the temporary location of the D-District police, while their station on Hertel Avenue undergoes mold removal.

Among the more unique public facilities is the land providing the underground route for Cornelius Creek east of Riverside High School. Remarkable among private facilities is the historic St Francis Xavier cemetery.

However, this is just a snapshot. Additional facilities are added as Riverside develops, or remain lesser known for various reasons. For example, the Boys and Girls of the Northtowns, with administrative offices in Old Town, Tonawanda, at 54 Riverdale Avenue, has program locations in Riverside at:

- ✓ All Saints Club  
127 Chadduck Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
(716) 874-0050
- ✓ Charter School For Applied Technologies Club  
2303 Kenmore Avenue  
Buffalo NY, 14207  
(716)873-9842 ext. 214

- ✓ Shaffer Village Club  
98 Isabelle  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
(716) 876-3768

If you have a private or public facility that serves the community, recommend its inclusion in the final version of this plan by contacting Bill Parke, AICP, with information about it at: [bparke@city-buffalo.com](mailto:bparke@city-buffalo.com).

## 7. Healthy Community, Quality of Life, and Safety

A key concern of Riversiders, based on public participation in the preparation of this plan, is the interrelationship of healthy community, quality of life, and safety (see the Vision Statement on Page 5 and results of a healthy communities survey to attendees of the Rediscover Riverside meeting on May 6, 2009 on Pages 6-8).

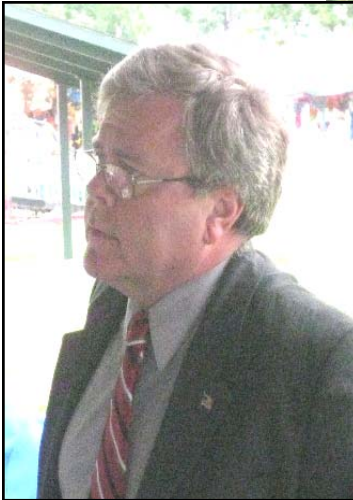
The Healthy Communities approach, according to a 1996 manual published by the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition and as recommended by Phil Haberstro of the Wellness Institute of Greater



Figure 71: Youths play with toy guns in Riverside Park on July 1, 2009.



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Figures 72 and 73: Buffalo Police Department Detective Dennis Richards addresses a Rediscover Riverside meeting in Riverside Park in July, 2009. Nearby, an officer keeps a watchful eye on festivities related to July 4th celebrations while riding in an electric car.



Buffalo, “offers community groups and local government a process which helps everyone focus their efforts towards a common goal — to create a healthy, sustainable community by improving quality of life.” What is a healthy community? Quebec’s Villes et Villages en Sante states a healthy community can be recognized in the following way:

- ✓ Whether it meets the basic needs of its citizens (food, water, housing, employment, safety)
- ✓ The quality of its environment (natural or man-made)

- ✓ The vitality of its social fabric
- ✓ Its efficient use of material resources
- ✓ Its cultural accomplishments
- ✓ The vitality and strength of its economy
- ✓ Access to public and private services
- ✓ The involvement of citizens in the decisions that affect them, and
- ✓ The health of its citizens

Steps to achieving a healthier community are for the community to define their own vision, followed by the determination of the measures of existing health (social, physical, environmental, economic,

	2005				2006				2007				2008				2009			
	Tract 57	Tract 58	Riverside	City	Tract 57	Tract 58	Riverside	City	Tract 57	Tract 58	Riverside	City	Tract 57	Tract 58	Riverside	City	Tract 57	Tract 58	Riverside	City
Murder	0	1	1	56	0	0	0	74	0	1	1	55	0	0	0	37	1	1	2	60
Rape	1	6	7	184	2	3	5	174	2	3	5	164	1	3	4	168	2	3	5	121
Robbery	10	28	38	1667	19	45	64	1708	24	36	60	1534	16	27	43	1531	23	36	59	1580
Assault	19	27	46	2031	28	41	69	2004	22	43	65	1737	22	49	71	1930	30	51	81	2026
Burglary	53	106	159	4240	70	136	206	4447	49	126	175	4386	43	147	190	4130	58	114	172	3829
Larceny	87	148	235	10089	79	134	213	8871	97	184	281	9204	103	199	302	9306	107	199	306	8783
Vehicle Theft	22	69	91	2401	27	53	80	2129	39	47	86	2281	31	47	78	1872	27	42	69	1601
Arson	2	3	5	408	2	3	5	150	1	2	3	114	0	2	2	112	0	1	1	87
Kidnapping	1	1	2	90	0	3	3	75	1	5	6	80	1	2	3	77	0	5	5	99
CPCS	13	36	49	2507	24	28	52	3249	34	54	88	3301	37	42	79	3475	51	54	105	3502
Dangerous Weapons	4	5	9	227	0	6	6	176	2	4	6	244	2	5	7	258	2	8	10	245
Sex Offenses	5	2	7	236	2	12	14	348	0	6	6	273	1	4	5	304	3	5	8	312
Forgery	4	4	8	223	2	1	3	176	3	2	5	146	4	0	4	177	2	4	6	183
Prostitution	0	0	0	111	1	1	2	205	1	0	1	129	0	0	0	76	0	0	0	58
Stolen Property	1	3	4	294	1	4	5	193	0	1	1	155	0	4	4	127	4	5	9	138
Coercion	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	30	1	0	1	34	0	0	0	23	1	1	2	31
Criminal Mischief	83	130	213	5389	84	174	258	5137	93	179	272	5407	94	189	283	5208	102	161	263	5397
Fraud	2	14	16	930	13	10	23	974	5	15	20	921	6	11	17	931	8	13	21	844
Offenses Against Public Order	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	9	2	0	2	6	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	11
Simple Assault	47	82	129	3332	80	120	200	4189	69	156	225	4842	74	151	225	4880	85	178	263	5154
Offenses Against Family	0	1	1	28	0	2	2	36	2	2	4	4	25	0	0	18	0	0	0	21
DWI	2	2	4	224	2	2	4	252	1	2	3	166	1	1	2	194	1	3	4	267
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle	0	0	0	18	0	2	2	19	1	1	2	40	0	1	1	44	0	3	3	31
Disorderly Conduct	4	3	7	215	1	4	5	294	1	2	3	197	0	6	6	182	1	4	5	222

Figure 74: With crime data from 2005-2009 and population figures, crime trends and crime rates can be identified between Tract 57 (southeast of Ontario Street), Tract 58 (northwest of Ontario Street), Riverside overall and the city overall. In Riverside, Assault, Simple Assault, Larceny and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance are trending upwards or are at high levels compared to the city overall, while Vehicle Theft is trending downward (but still significantly higher than the city overall in Tract 57.)

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etc.) as a baseline, and then specific actions and plans to achieve the vision. With the vision having been elucidated in Chapter 1, and measures of existing health identified in this Community Assessment in Chapter 2, plus specific actions and plans represented by Recommendations in Chapter 3, all involving significant public participation, Riverside is on its way toward realizing its healthy community goals using a correct process.

It is clear that Riversiders have significant quality of life concerns. As we see in page 8, concerns begin with crime, drugs, and issues that affect quality of life, like litter, noise and problem properties. Youth activities are also important. In this section, to frame the healthy communities issue with quality of life concerns, we will review one component of the healthy communities model — safety as a basic need of citizens in Riverside — and profile initiatives, current and emerging, that promote positive change in regard to safety in Riverside's neighborhoods.

Crime statistics for the period 2005 to 2009 shown below in Figure 74 can be used to identify major crime categories that are declining, holding steady, or increasing. In addition, with the benefit of crime statistics from the City, crime rates per 1,000 population in the area of Tract 57 (southeast of Ontario Street), Tract 58 (northwest of Ontario Street), Riverside overall (Tract 57 + Tract 58) and the city overall can be compared as well. Statistics show that many serious crimes — Murder, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Arson, Kidnapping, Dangerous Weapons, Sex Offenses, Forgery, Stolen Property, Prostitution, Coercion, Fraud, Offenses Against Public Order, Offenses Against Family, DWI, Unauthorized Use of Vehicle, and Disorderly Conduct — are either low in number, not increasing appreciably, or nearly equal to city rates for those crimes overall, or a combination of the three.

One crime category, in fact, is significantly declining: Vehicle Theft.

VEHICLE THEFT dropped 24% between 2005 and 2009 in Riverside, from 91 to 69. This illustrates a lowering trend, where thefts had dropped from 91 ('05) to 80 ('06) to 86 ('07) to 78 ('08) to 69 ('09). The number of vehicle thefts per 1,000 population remain high compared to the city overall, however, with 9.27 per 1,000 in Tract 57, 5.40 per 1,000 in Tract 58, 6.46 per 1,000 in Riverside overall, compared to 5.47 per 1,000 citywide.

However, several crime categories are increasing in number and/or trend, or are high in number compared to city rates, or both: Assault, Simple Assault, Larceny and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance (CPCS).

ASSAULT has increased 75% between 2005 and 2009 in Riverside, from 46 to 81. This seems to illustrate a rising trend, where assaults increased from 46 ('05) to 69 ('06) to 65 ('07) to 71 ('08) to 81 ('09) in Riverside overall. The trend is remarkable in both Census Tracts; in Tract 57 (southeast of Ontario Street) the per capita incidence is high, and in Tract 58 (northwest of Ontario Street), where the number of assaults increased every year in the five year period, from 27 ('05) to 41 ('06) to 43 ('07) to 49 ('08) to 51 ('09). Concurrently, assaults remained relatively steady in number at the city level. On a per capital basis, assaults are 10.3 per 1,000 in Tract 57 versus 6.56 per 1,000 in Tract 58, 7.58 per 1,000 in Riverside overall and 6.92 per 1,000 in the City of Buffalo overall.

SIMPLE ASSAULT is elevated in Tract 57 from 2006-2009 versus 2005's statistics, while



Figure 75: A rare instance of gang graffiti in Riverside, found on an abandoned house on Laird Avenue near Tonawanda St. in 2009, was discussed at a July, 2009, meeting with police.



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increasing steadily in Tract 58, Riverside overall, and the City of Buffalo overall. In the past five years, the number of simple assaults have doubled in Riverside, from 129 in 2005 to 263 in 2009. The problem is trending up in Tract 58, from 82 ('05) to 120 ('06) to 156 ('07) to 151 ('08) to 178 ('09). On a per capital basis, simple assaults are high compared to the city overall, with 29.19 per 1,000 in Tract 57 versus 22.89 in Tract 58, 24.61 per 1,000 in Riverside overall and 17.61 per 1,000 in the City of Buffalo overall.

LARCENY is another troublesome crime in Riverside, increasing 30% in five years between 2005 and 2009 in Riverside, from 235 to 306. This seems to illustrate a rising trend, in that after initially dropping from 235 ('05) to 213 ('06), they rose to 281 ('07) to 302 ('08) to 306 ('09). Tract 57 (southeast of Ontario Street) has 36.74 larcenies per 1,000 people, versus 25.59 in Tract 58 (northwest of Ontario Street), 28.63 per 1,000 in Riverside overall, and 30.01 per 1,000 in the city overall.

CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE ("CPCS" in Figure 74) has increased 114% between 2005 and 2009 in Riverside, from 49 to 105. This seems to illustrate a rising trend, where Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance increased from 49 ('05) to 52 ('06) to 88 ('07), then dropped to 79 ('08), and then rose again to 105 ('09). Meanwhile, the trend is upward in the city overall as well, with an increase of 40% in the past five years. The trend and per capita statistics for CPCS are particularly strong in Tract 57 (southeast of Ontario Street), where the number of CPCS arrests increased every year in the five year period, from 13 ('05) to 24 ('06) to 34 ('07) to 37 ('08) to 51 ('09). On a per capital basis, CPCS arrests are 17.51 per 1,000 in Tract 57, 6.94 per 1,000 in Tract 58, 9.82 per 1,000 in Riverside overall, and 11.97 per 1,000 in the City of Buffalo overall.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### QUALITY OF LIFE CONCERNS HAVE BEEN A LONG-TIME CONCERN

While serious crimes are those most likely to draw attention and arrest statistics, quality of life crimes are among those that are most frequently witnessed, and cause great concern among responsible residents. Quality of life crimes have long been a focus of Riversiders. For example, in April, 2000, according to an article in the *Riverside*

*Review*, "Residents of Riverside/Black Rock and D-District officers rolled their sleeves up and began working productively on ways to reduce crime in the community. Over 140 people packed the community room of the D-District station house Thursday night to open the lines of communication. The meeting was organized by the Concerned Citizens Group and sponsored by the Riverside Business Assoc., the Black Rock Business Assoc. and the *Riverside Review*. Topics discussed included the benefits of community involvement, strategies to reduce narcotics trafficking, frequency of police patrols, and addressing quality of life crimes like noise, misbehaving tenants, and gang activity by making effective complaints about crime. (*Riverside Review*, "Black Rock & Riverside Residents Meet With Police to Reduce Crime", April 27, 2000)

Many of the suggestions made in 2000 were reiterated in 2009 by Detective Dennis Richards when he addressed Rediscover Riverside in July, 2009. Among his strongest recommendations were:

- ✓ Call the Buffalo Police Department TipLine to report criminal activity with specific details
- ✓ Realize that 90% of violent crime is drug-related
- ✓ Be a nosy neighbor

### PUBLIC HOUSING CONCERNS

The Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) operates Shaffer Village Housing on the southeast side of Ontario Street, in the midst of one of Riverside's main commercial corridors. Shaffer Village offers low income residents many housing amenities, including one and two bedroom senior apartments, two, three, four and five bedroom family apartments, most utilities included, close to the Grant (#3), Niagara (#5) and Kenmore (#30) bus lines, the Northwest Buffalo Community Center provides resident programs and activities, and individually controlled heat.

However, significant concerns over this property's condition and affect on the neighborhood have repeatedly surfaced in community conversations during this *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Community Plan* planning process, and the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA-wide planning process that preceded it.. These were heightened in June 2005 by the elimination of the BMHA police force. According to a 2009 article in the *Buffalo News*, this force patrolled 26 housing developments

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throughout the city that are home to about 10,000 tenants. On average, housing police responded to about 8,500 calls per year and made about 800 arrests. When the force was dissolved due to federal funding cutbacks, city police in the various districts took up the slack.

Neighborhood concerns about Shaffer Village were recently detailed in a letter filed by North District Council Member Golombek as part of the May 12, 2009 agenda of the Buffalo Common Council. (See Figure 78)

Fortunately, "the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority again will have a dedicated police force," according to a May, 2010 article in the *Buffalo News*.

A one-year contract will lead to the formation of a task force responsible solely for authority- owned properties. The hours of operation will be 3:30 p. m. to 1 a. m. The 18-person force also will have two lieutenants and one captain.

Patrol cars will be marked with authority signs and stationed in the authority's housing developments.

One substation or satellite office will be in Kenfield-Langfield Homes on the city's East Side, and another will be in Shaffer Village in Riverside. The force's former headquarters at Commodore Perry Homes on Perry Street will reopen. Williams said the task force will have a greater presence at the developments he called "our problem children." "This doesn't stop district cops from responding to calls within their district, as well. But when calls come through, our guys could get there first and could be more helpful because they're more familiar with [authority] residents," Williams said. The action comes five years after the previous board of commissioners voted to eliminate a 26-member public safety department as part

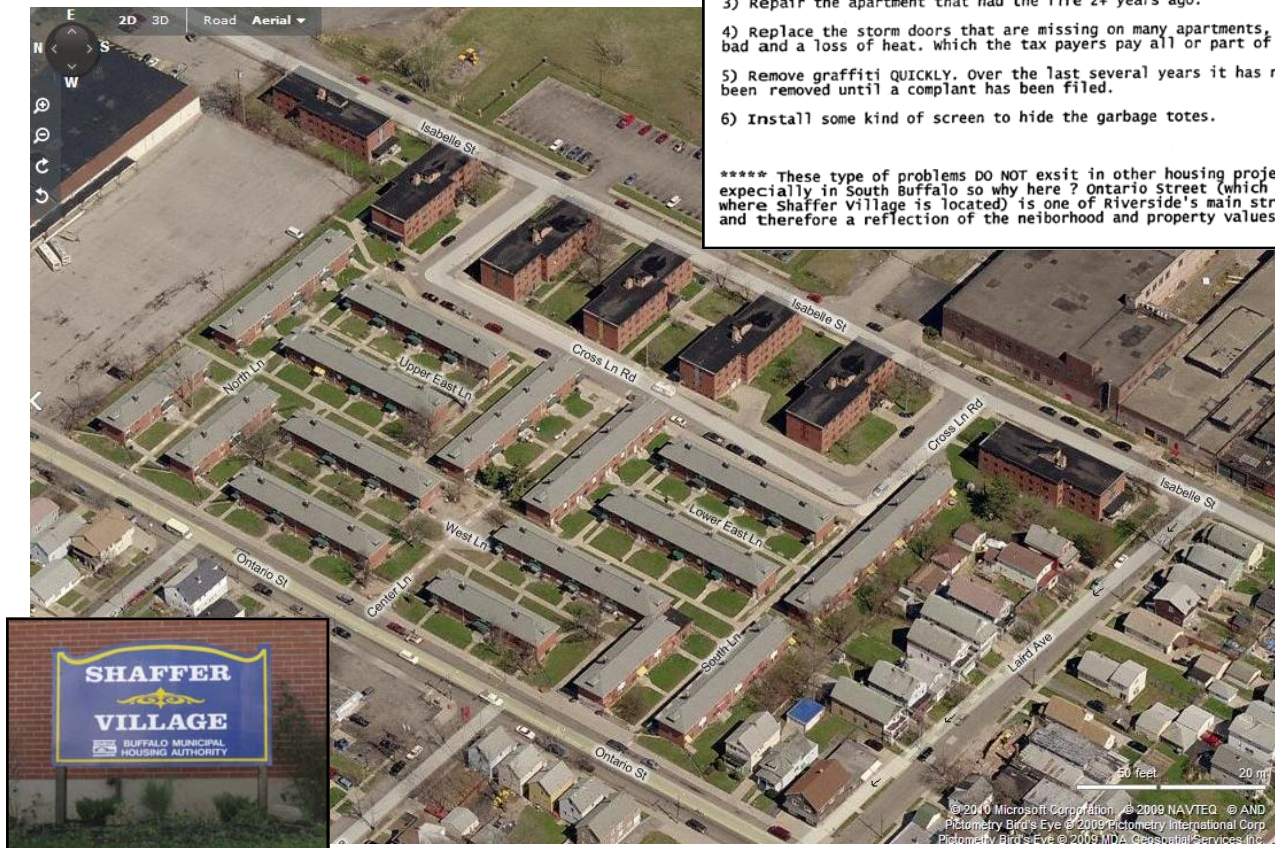


Figure 76-78: A sign for Shaffer Village is shown along an aerial view of the housing complex. In top right is an excerpt from a letter of concerns regarding Shaffer Village filed by Council Member Golombek as part of the May 12, 2009 agenda of the Buffalo Common Council meeting.



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of budget cuts, seeking to save about \$2 million.

In addition, in 2010 the D-District has been temporarily relocated to buildings on the campus of All Saints R.C. Church, while mold abatement takes place at their station on Hertel Avenue.

These developments, coupled with continued strong civic engagement by the community in addressing quality of life issues with assistance from the North District Council Member and Office of Mayor Brown, indicate progress has been and can continue to be made in preserving the quality of life of Riverside Residents.

### BLOCK CLUB COLLABORATION

An illustration of the benefits of civic engagement by Riversiders in the fight to maintain quality of life and lower the incidence of crime has been one Riverside block club acting as host to an emerging, cutting edge collaboration with the City of Buffalo at the block club level to fight crime. In a October, 2009 *Buffalo News* article titled, "Police enlist block club leaders in intensified push against crime," a Riverside block club is revealed as the pilot block club for a citywide program of the Buffalo Police to try to strengthen the roles of block club leaders in

fighting crime. According to the article, "Noting that neighborhood activists serve as the eyes and ears of their communities, the Police Department will begin the Block Club Coordination Program this fall. It will seek to foster better communication between police and neighborhood groups by giving block club presidents direct email access to Deputy Police Commissioner Daniel Derenda. They will receive special passwords that will allow them to communicate with Derenda, reporting suspicious activities, troubling trends and other neighborhood concerns. A pilot program has been under way in a Riverside neighborhood since summer, 2009 and Derenda said he has been pleased with the results. 'To see it happen citywide, I think it will be a good thing,' he said." North Council Member Joseph Golombek Jr. agreed that dealing with drug houses is a looming priority in his district, which covers Riverside, Black Rock and portions of the West Side and North Buffalo. 'I won't say we have an epidemic [of drug houses], but we have enough of them,' he said. The Block Club Coordination Program also will likely help police to better prioritize neighborhood concerns, Golombek said. Empowering block club presidents to become more involved in reporting issues, Golombek said, will help police to separate (out) serious problems." (*Buffalo News*, October 13, 2009)

Progress in this direction was significantly furthered when Interim Police Commissioner Daniel Derenda and Mayor Byron W. Brown unveiled KNOW during



Figure 79: The "Nosey Neighbor is a good Neighbor" message on this balloon from a National Night Out celebration in Riverside represents good advice to local residents in the fight against crime.



Figure 80: Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown helps celebrate National Night Out at an event in Riverside in August, 2009. In an evening filled with fun and food, Mayor Brown said, "It's critically important that people understand that they can make their neighborhoods safer if they come together, and they work with one another."

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a news conference on June 10, 2010. In a published report in the Buffalo News titled, “KNOW links ears and eyes of block clubs with police”, the community learned:

Twenty-six block clubs in the City of Buffalo now have a way to keep cops in the “KNOW.” KNOW—Keeping Neighborhoods on Watch—does not replace the 911 emergency police line or the 311 line for calling in quality-of-life complaints but is designed to enhance these efforts. If block club members see someone loitering in their neighborhood or if they become aware of other types of suspicious activities, they can go to a special Web site—[www.city-buffalo.com/know](http://www.city-buffalo.com/know) — and give police a heads-up, anonymously. Lt. Gail Allen, stationed in Police Headquarters, will disseminate these tips to the appropriate police unit for a follow-up investigation.

One of the initiatives Riverside could effectively undertake is to strengthen its network of block clubs, to take advantage of enhanced collaboration opportunities offered by KNOW, as well as through the Buffalo Board of Block Clubs and Office of Citizen Services. Fortunately, a leading block club in Riverside shows the way toward success, as illustrated below.

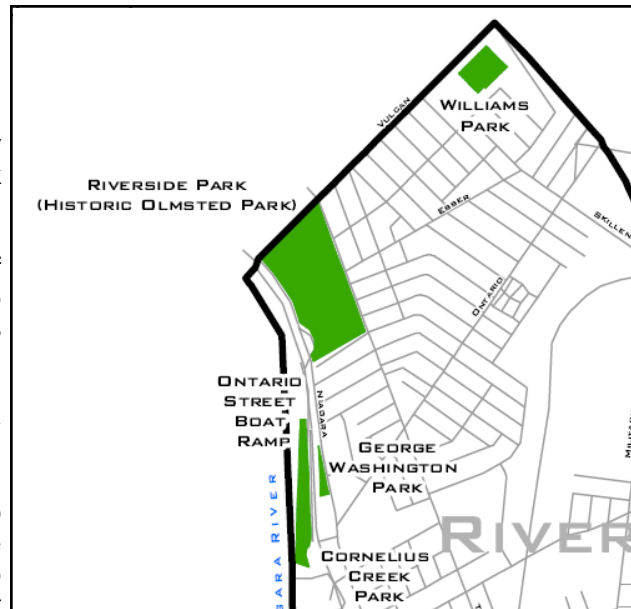
### NATIONAL NIGHT OUT: AN EXAMPLE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT ITS BEST

Nothing illustrates the commitment of citizens to healthy, safe streets than a block party, and in the summer of 2009 the United Streets block club gained citywide attention for its National Night Out celebration. Under the leadership of Dave Spinda, residents held a potluck on beautiful August day, painted balloons, rented a rock climbing wall, and

played host to a visit from Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown as a way to promote neighborliness and make progress in the fight against crime. (see Figures 79 & 80)

## 8. Parks and Recreation

Parks in Riverside and the recreation activities they and their facilities afford are some of the most enjoyable aspects of living in Riverside. As one longtime resident remarked at a March, 2010 community meeting, “Riverside Park has never been more beautiful; it is a gorgeous, wonderful asset.” Indeed, parks and sports have been key to Riverside for generations, as illustrated in Figures



Figures 81 & 82: There are five parks in Riverside, as shown in the above map, plus two Recreational Facilities. Key park and facility information is provided in the table below from the “Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Plan”,

Name	Type	Acreage	Amenities
Riverside	Park—Destination	37.2	Little League (5), Tennis (2), Basketball (2), Public Shelter (2), Grills (2), Wading Pool
Ontario Street Boat Launch	Park—Neighborhood	1.2	
J.H. Williams	Park—Neighborhood	0.7	Basketball (1), Soccer (2), Football (1)
Cornelius Creek	Park—Passive Park		
George Washington Park	Park—Passive Park	1.2	
Riverside Ice Rink	Recreational Facility		
Riverside Wading Pool	Recreational Facility		



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Figure 83: Black Rock-Riverside baseball is celebrated in this historic photo provided by the Grant Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project".



Figure 84: Hundreds enjoy the pool and casino at Riverside Park in this photo from the mid-1940s, courtesy the Riverside Review. Photo provided by the Grant Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project".

83-86.

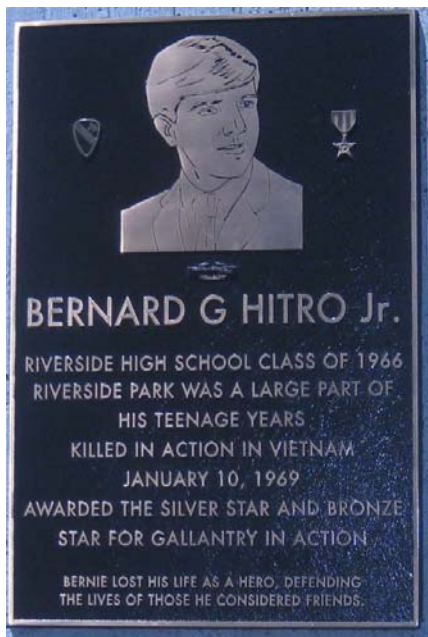
A 2003 report, titled "Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Plan", identified five parks in the Riverside neighborhood: Riverside, Ontario Street Boat Ramp, J.H. Williams, Cornelius Creek, and George Washington Parks, plus Recreational Facilities in the form of Riverside Ice Rink and Riverside Wading Pool.

How popular are parks and recreation in Riverside today? There are several indicators:

- ✓ Another illustration of the long standing popularity of sports in Riverside is the induction of an earlier Riverside High School football

coach, Charlie Dingboom, into the 2010 Class of the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame. Coach Dingboom's tenure at Riverside lasted from 1959-89. After leading Riverside to the 1960 Harvard Cup Co-Championship with Burgard, he went on to take Riverside to 11 more Thanksgiving Day games. Besides a 41-game unbeaten streak, Dingboom became the only coach in Harvard Cup history to win five straight unshared championships.

Former player for Riverside, Joe Ehrmann, offered this account: "Coach D. used his position and platform as a coach to not only help turn boys into men, but he also impacted a community by creating civic pride in



Figures 85 & 86: Veterans join residents gather (above) to dedicate a new memorial plaque at the Riverside Park lighthouse on Memorial Day, 2010. Erected in honor of Bernard G. Hitro, Jr., the plaque (right) describes Mr. Hitro's courageous service during the Vietnam War. It also testifies how "Riverside Park was a large part of his teenage years." The same can be said for tens of thousands of other youth in Riverside.

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Riverside that lingers to this day."

### CURRENT NEEDS, INITIATIVES AND RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

#### RIVERSIDE PARK

Current needs in Riverside Park are for a walk path, particularly along Vulcan Street; at least two dog waste drops; sidewalks for winter; clearing bus stops of snow and ice in winter; and facilities planning. At the same time, significant investments are being made to what many consider to be Riverside's crown jewel. In addition to other improvements, Riverside Park's playing field benefitted recently from a \$50,000 grant to the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to provide bleachers and benches made from recycled materials, and an updated irrigation system. On May 21, 2009, it was reported in the *Buffalo News*, in an article titled, "NFL, Bills help fix up Riverside Park field", that This park is so well cared for since [the] Olmsted [Conservancy] took it over that it's easy to make this investment," said Michael K. Clarke, executive director of Buffalo Local Initiatives Support Corp., a not-for-profit that works with local governments to revitalize neighborhoods. "We know we have a great and very involved little league here and well-supervised kids, and it's important for the stability of the neighborhood and it's important that these kids have recreational and health opportunities, and this fills the bill," he added. Buffalo Bills players Lee Evans, Brad Butler and Jon Corto, and members of the Buffalo Jills were on hand for the announcement in Riverside Park. The \$50,000 grant was the most available for field maintenance and facilities support. John Gurbacki, vice president of Black Rock-Riverside Little League Football and Cheerleaders, said the grant will further the positive changes he said have occurred in recent years. "Since I've been involved, the Conservancy has done nothing but get the field better and better. It's a night-and-day difference," Gurbacki said.

Riverside Park also is the subject of significant planning efforts being undertaken as part of the new *The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century* (January, 2008). This plan document, part of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, provides a history, inventory of amenities, assessment of existing conditions, and recommendations for improvement of Riverside Park. The plan has seven Goals for Restoration:

1. *Restore the historic integrity of the park from the period of significance.*
2. *Reestablish the visual and physical connection between Riverside Park and the Niagara River.*
3. *Improve access and circulation in the park for vehicles and pedestrians.*
4. *Improve or rationalize recreation and services by balancing unstructured recreation with structured recreation.*
5. *Integrate the original Olmsted park with the south portion of park.*
6. *Establish connections to areas surrounding the park.*
7. *Restore the basic park elements.*

This list of goals in the plan are accompanied by a series of proposed projects that, if/when achieved, will transform the park into one which more carefully balances park goals with community recreation needs. These include a number of notable suggested alterations to the current park layout, including near-term projects like restoration of ponds and pathways on the north end of the park targeted for implementation by late summer, 2010, and longer term projects, like relocation of the pool, ice rink, and senior center from the historic section of the park to elsewhere in the community, so that historic park pathways can be restored south of Hotaling Drive and a grand concourse connecting the park to the Niagara

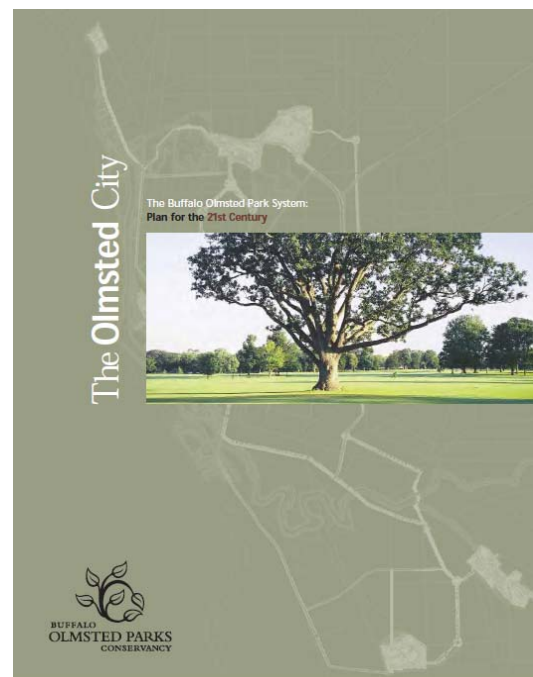


Figure 88: Cover of *The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century* (January, 2008)



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Figure 89: Map showing the restoration plan for Riverside Park, from *The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century*. Note especially the placement of restored pathways over land currently occupied by the pool, ice rink, and senior center, (building footprints are shown in white) and the expansion of the proposed concourse over the I-190 to the Niagara River.

River can be created. (see Figure 89; note especially the placement of restored pathways over land currently occupied by the pool, ice rink, and senior center, and the expansion of the proposed concourse over the I-190.)

The plan's discussion of Riverside Park concludes with a key statement, the full import of which is worth reviewing:

### Riverside Park Restoration Plan

The restoration plan shows the long term vision for restoring Riverside Park based upon the goals and corresponding recommendations. The partial restoration image of the park shows the parts of the park that cannot be restored

while the pool, ice rink, and senior center remain in the historic section of the park and more suitable locations in the surrounding community are not found for these facilities. (*The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century*, page 101; emphasis added.)

This important statement opens the door for efforts to begin discussions, in partnership with the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and the Riverside Community, on how to relocate some or all of these facilities in a way that:

- ✓ aids future improvement of the park according to *The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century*,
- ✓ continues the long tradition of excellent recreational facilities being readily available in Riverside, and
- ✓ sets the stage for reuse of land in Riverside that may be currently underutilized.



Figure 90: Transforming the Ontario Street Boat Launch and Cornelius Creek Park into an improved "Black Rock Canal Park" is a community-led vision that has wide support in Riverside.

### ONTARIO STREET BOAT LAUNCH, CORNELIUS CREEK PARK, and RIVERWALK

Erie County owns and operates an interconnected series of waterfront recreational facilities near the western terminus of Ontario Street with the Niagara

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River in the City of Buffalo: Cornelius Creek Park, Ontario Street Boat Launch and a .25 mile linear foot segment of the Erie County Riverwalk. Due to the unrealized recreational potential of the site and its declining physical condition, since 2006 local community leaders — initially through the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA and now through the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee — have been working on a plan to improve these facilities, transforming them into an improved “Black Rock Canal Park.” (see Figure 90) In response to broad community support, Erie County partnered with the City of Buffalo and New York State to contract with a consultant for a Feasibility Analysis of the Concept Plan, including a site inventory, alternative elements, project phasing, broad cost estimates, public involvement, New York State Environmental Quality Review documents, and a draft Feasibility Analysis report. A draft report is nearly ready for public review and comment, and initial improvements are expected in coming years.

J.H. WILLIAMS

In 2010, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Parks Committee recommended soil testing J.H. Williams for chemicals. Recent improvements to the park have been significant and include: the basketball court has been repaved, baseball diamond redone, soccer field updated, playground updated, and bushes cut down so the park can be seen from the street, addressing a formerly unsafe condition. The Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Parks Committee recommends working with the nearby Charter School for Applied Technologies at 2303 Kenmore Ave., which has indicated interest in fixing up the park.

### GEORGE WASHINGTON PARK

In a newspaper article from June, 2006, community efforts to maintain and enhance local parks received wide attention, stating that “When Riverside’s George Washington Park started falling apart, Andy and Nancy Avel paid \$2,500 for a riding lawnmower to cut the public grass. They also started planting daffodil bulbs in the park off Niagara Street, picking up after other people’s dogs and carrying buckets of water from their house for the park flowers until the city allowed them to draw from a nearby fire hydrant.” (*Buffalo News*, “Neighbors fight to fend off ‘flippers’”, June 30, 2006.) Such efforts exemplify community “ownership” of local greenspaces and parks, which broadcast their importance beyond the neighborhood and onto the radar screens of local

officials, agencies, and media, multiplying support for their upkeep.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### BECOMING HEALTHY, CLEAN AND GREEN

As mentioned previously on page 13, “the parcel after parcel arrangement of residential uses also means that there are few community gathering spaces like community gardens and pocket parks, people on the interior have to travel some distance to sizable parkland, and nuisance behavior related to problem properties has a broad impact when houses are laid out in high residential densities.” This is a serious challenge for Riverside, which is characterized by a preponderance of residential land use between its residential corridors (see Figure 29 on page 12.) Fortunately, there is an answer for this.

*People need to scratch about in the soil, breathe in the scent of plants and flowers, let off steam, and meet other people. For many, it’s almost like therapy.*

— Martine Petelot, a community-gardening Parisian, as quoted in *National Geographic*’s October, 2006 article titled, “Urban Downtime,” which was forwarded by Riversider Sharon Adler to Riverside planners

In 2008, Riversider Sharon Adler forwarded to Riverside planners an October, 2006 article from *National Geographic* titled, “Urban Downtime.” The article asserts that cities and their neighborhoods need to prioritize the provision of greenspace in order to improve their livability. Among the benefits cited are:

- ✓ Stronger sense of community,
- ✓ Better coping with everyday stress and hardship
- ✓ Less aggression
- ✓ Less violence
- ✓ Better management of problems
- ✓ Less litter
- ✓ Less graffiti
- ✓ Better behavior among children
- ✓ Better ability to “ignore distractions and



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Figure 91: In June, 2010, the American College of Sports Medicine released its new version of the "American Fitness Index. The Buffalo metropolitan region ranks in the middle of the pack.

concentrate on the task at hand," helping us "roll with the punches" rather than "fly off the handle"

✓ Better physical health

Frances Kuo in the Landscape and Human Health Laboratory of the University of Illinois remarks that living in a city, with its relentless crush of noise and traffic, conflicts and demands, makes us "crabby and impulsive." The Mayor of Paris echoes this, saying in the article, "A modern city needs areas free from density, noise, and the frenzied urban pace. We must re-create the

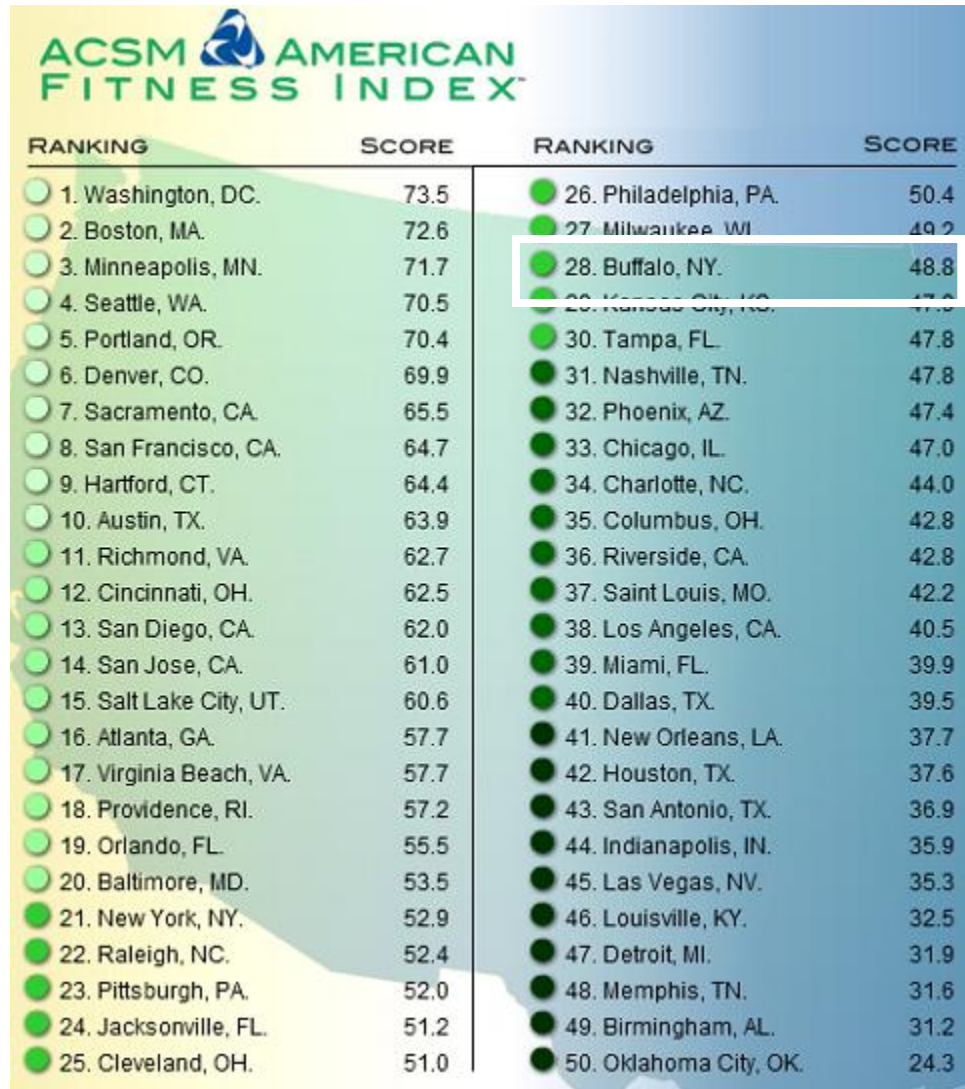


Figure 92: This photo, appearing on the "Riversider's of Buffalo NY" Facebook page when it was visited in June, 2010, was accompanied by the comment: "Riverside Park received another grant from the NFL Grassroots Program. Some of the Buffalo Bills came out to sign some autographs. The kids and adults had a great time. We are very proud to have one of the best parks in the city." A challenge ahead for Riverside is how to expand amenities in Riverside Park like bike networks and recreational facilities into surrounding neighborhoods, so that benefits involving recreation and civic engagement can extend into the community. The concepts shown the maps in Figures 93-96 may point the way. They suggest that developing enhanced, sustainable boulevards, on- and off-street bicycle routes, and community gardens, playgrounds and parks in areas where there is a preponderance of residential land uses can improve recreation and civic engagement in Riverside.

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kinds of spaces that lend themselves to talking, walking, discovering, relaxing.”

These observations about the value of greenspace were confirmed recently when an article appeared in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology* in 2010, based on a meta-analysis of 10 UK studies involving 1252 participants. The article, titled, “What is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis,” observes that:

(Response to green exercise, i.e. outdoors in a natural setting,) for both intensity and duration showed large benefits from short engagements..., and then diminishing but still positive returns. Every green environment improved both self-esteem and mood; the presence of water generated greater effects. Both men and women had similar improvements in self-esteem after green exercise, though men showed a difference for mood. Age groups: for self-esteem, the greatest change was in the youngest, with diminishing effects with age; for mood, the least change was in the young and old. The mentally ill had one of the greatest self-esteem improvements. This study confirms that the environment provides an important health service.

Buffalo could use some fitness among its general population. In June, 2010, the American College of Sports Medicine released its new version of the “American Fitness Index,” which tracks the health and fitness level of America’s 50 largest metropolitan regions. The index is defined as a “composite of preventive health behaviors, levels of chronic disease conditions, health care access, and community resources and policies that support physical activity.” The Buffalo-Niagara region ranked in the middle, 28th out of 50, as shown in Figure 91.

As the preceding discussion has illustrated, greenspace and community well-being go hand-in-hand. Riverside Park and the other facilities in Riverside demonstrate that fact. (see Figure 92) The question becomes, from a planning perspective,, how do we extend greenspace into Riverside?

The maps in Figures 93-96 may point the way.

ENHANCED, SUSTAINABLE BOULEVARDS

Figure 93 shows, in a green band of color, where Niagara Street from Ontario to Vulcan was improved years ago into a fine boulevard with new pavement surfacing, bike lanes, and other amenities, in combination with sweeping views of the Niagara River.

One concept is to extend boulevard designs to Vulcan, Kenmore, and Skillen in a new way for a new century.

### VULCAN

Vulcan has the potential to become a “Miracle Mile”, and its transformation will carry with it a number of innovative concepts that will benefit its travelers, Riverside and the city overall:

- ✓ As a well-known mile-long corridor and the only one of its kind in Buffalo, with proper signage Vulcan is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this distinctive characteristic , becoming a destination recreational activities seeking a mile-long length, Bicyclists, runners, power walkers and more will enjoy a road facility that coincides with a mile-long workout regimen.
- ✓ Vulcan is wide, relatively unadorned with street ornamentation, and boasts a sizable Right of Way between the street and sidewalk. With tree plantings, swales, water retention via adjacent grassy areas, and other innovative, environmentally-sustainable road design features, it could become a model for green roads for the entire City of Buffalo. As one resident remarked in a March 31, 2010, “Focus on the coming green economy. Solar, wind, energy efficiency hold the jobs of the future. Riverside could get out front on these initiatives. Water quality and conservation could be an important area of community initiative.” The Tonawanda Street Corridor BOA (see page 29) and innovative, environmentally-sustainable road design features can be part of realizing that vision.
- ✓ Vulcan extends from industrial land uses in the Northeast at its intersection with Kenmore, to commercial, residential, and finally recreational land use as travelers arrive at the Niagara River. This spectrum of land uses, from industrial to recreational to the beauty of the Niagara River, can act as a metaphor for how Buffalo started out with an emphasis on industrial output and now all land uses are equally valued as a rainbow of opportunity for its citizens.



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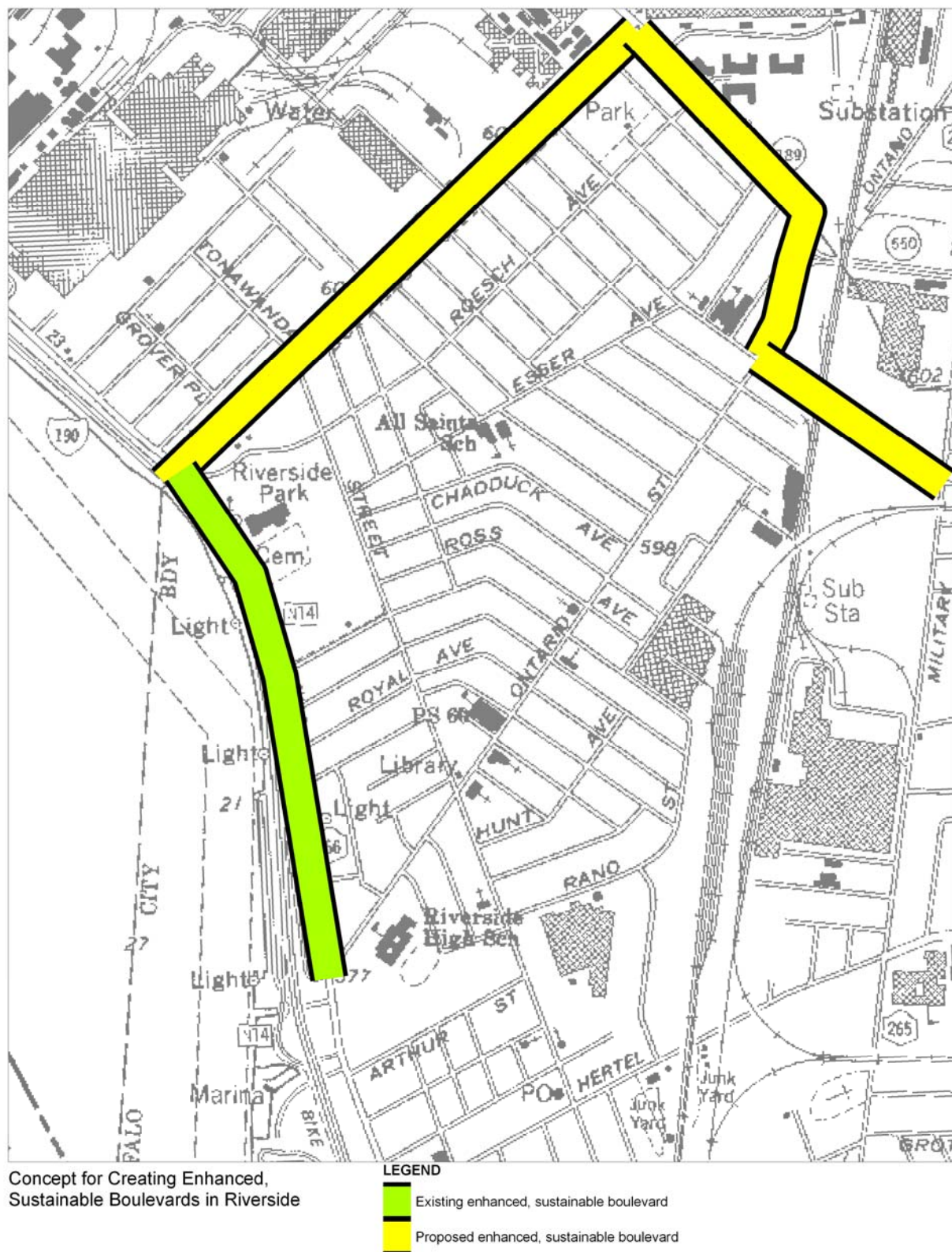


Figure 93: Niagara Street from Ontario to Vulcan was improved years ago into a fine boulevard, with new pavement surfacing, bike lanes, and other amenities, in combination with sweeping views of the Niagara River. One concept is to extend boulevard designs to Vulcan, Kenmore, and Skillen in a new way for a new century.

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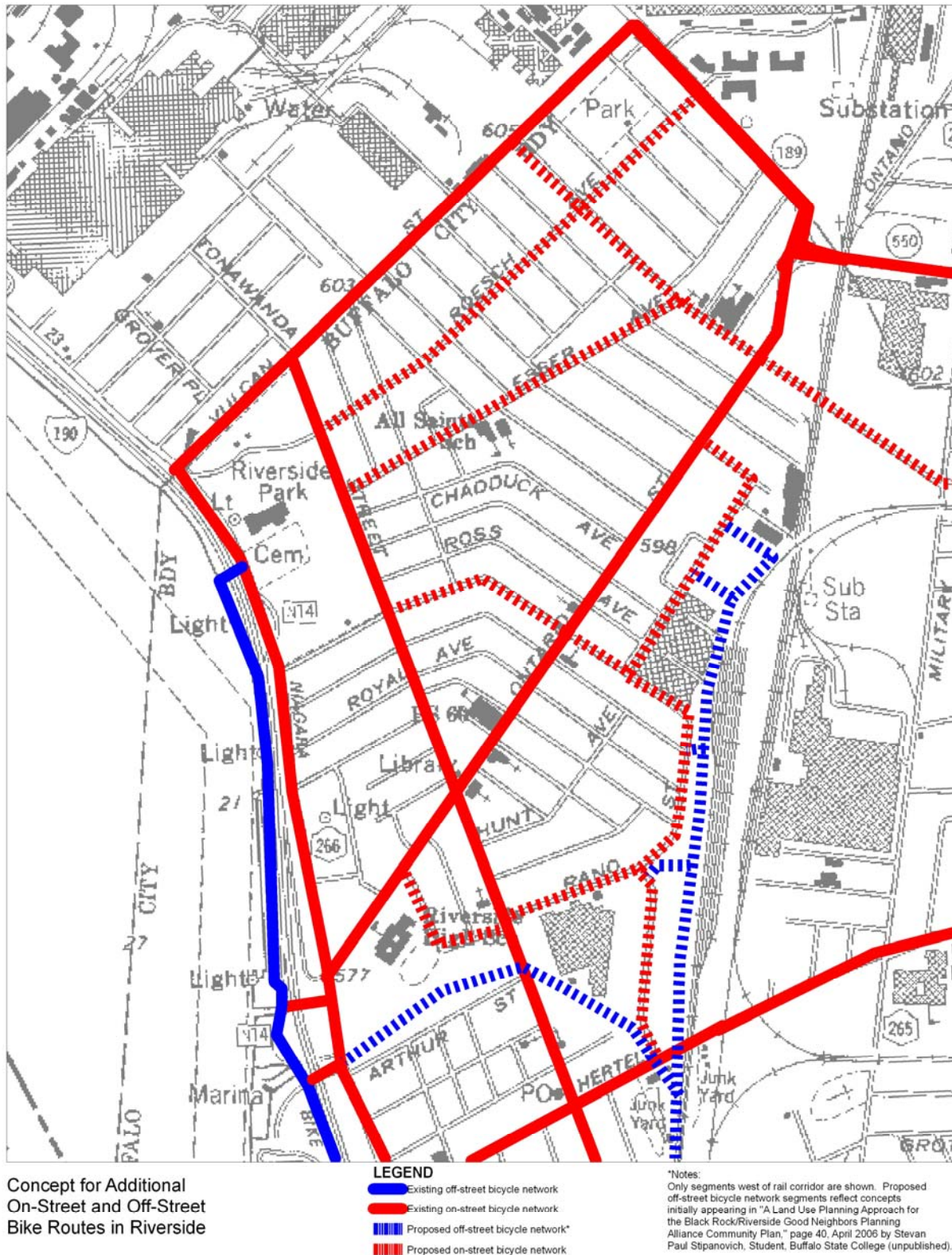


Figure 94: Expanding on-street and off-street bike routes, as shown in this concept map, would be one way to combine healthy recreational exercise activities with "eyes on the street" to deter criminal and anti-social behavior.



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Figure 95: It is a rare occurrence for vacant lots to arise in Riverside, and every effort should be made to replace them with appropriate infill development. However, when redevelopment does not materialize, lots can in certain circumstances be used for greenspaces, which can build civic engagement in parts of Riverside where land use can be characterized as predominantly residential and opportunities for in-person social networking can be few and far between. Existing parks and greenspaces are found at the edge of this targeted area shown above.

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### KENMORE and ONTARIO

In these sections of Kenmore and Ontario, existing road widths and broad viewsheds make both streets appropriate for extensions of the boulevard concept.

*Address the “other” entrance to the Riverside Commercial Corridor: Skillen St. from Military to Ontario. A corridor of scrap, salvage yards generally known as “the dumps” has no or unsafe sidewalks, no landscaping, no trees. The underpass thru the viaduct is dark, dangerous and usually wet. This is our “exit” to shopping in the N. Delaware redeveloped strip — and the Grabiarz School on Military Rd. It is not a safe walk and countless residents try to get through there every day.*

— Resident comment received 3/31/2010 in response to a slideshow presentation of an early version of the Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan.

### SKILLEN

Skillen is a major entry and exit gateway for the neighborhood and is a street where the conditions are ripe for beautification, as indicated in the resident comment below:

Skillen can become a great way for travelers to get their first taste of Riverside’s attractiveness. Inclined areas on either side of the Skillen between Ontario and Military, flanking each side of the rail overpass, can be landscaped to turn a dreary

conduit into a impressive gateway.

### ADDITIONAL ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET BIKE ROUTES

Figure 94 shows existing bike routes and makes the case for additional on-street and off-street bike routes in Riverside. Users of bicycles for recreational exercise tend to be level-headed people, just the type who can provide “eyes on the street” and report and deter criminal activity within the neighborhood. (see Figure 96)

Summary Data (M and SD) for the Profile of Mood States (excerpted)

Group	Recreational Cyclists (n = 17)		Nonathletes Cyclists (n = 17)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Tension	44.29	5.28	49.29	10.83
Depression	45.71	7.94	46.82	9.92
Anger	47.41	6.96	51.12	10.52
Vigor	55.41	7.88	50.06	9.65
Fatigue	49.65	6.40	51.47	10.31
Confusion	45.24	8.30	44.65	10.92

Figure 96: Users of bicycles for recreational exercise tend to be level headed people, just the type who can provide “eyes on the street” and report and deter criminal activity within the neighborhood. The excerpted study data above shows Recreational Cyclists have lower tension, depression, anger, and fatigue than Nonathletes Cyclists, but higher levels of vigor. Source: Journal of Sport Behavior, 1998 (see <http://www.thefree library.com/Personality+characteristics+of+competitive+and +recreational+cyclists-a053336112>)

TheWashCycle, an advocacy organization for bicyclists in Washington, DC, relays a report in *The Washington Post’s* DC Crime Report for June 3, 2010, as an “Eyes on the street moment”:

KANSAS AVE., 4900 block, 9:55 to 10 p.m. May 20. Three people tried to rob a person at a bus stop at gunpoint. When two people on bicycles intervened, the assailants fled empty-handed.

Creating bicycle lanes to accommodate this type of rider and recreational exercise activity, building on the existing bicycle route network, is an obvious design improvement appropriate for Riverside.

The concept creates new on-street bike routes from Riverside Park into the interior of Riverside, along Roesch, Esser and Crowley. Skillen provides a route from Northwest to Southeast, while another new bike route links Riverside High School with the Rano-Isabelle corridor. the From southwest to northeast in the southern part of the neighborhood,



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Figure 98 & 99: These before and after photos illustrate how a dilapidated house can be torn down, ownership of the resulting vacant lot can be assumed by an adjoining homeowner, and the land can be turned into a beautiful garden. This garden at 85 Beatrice, owned by Bonnie Eschborn, is shown as it appeared in the 2008 Black Rock-Riverside Tour of Gardens

Off-street routes take advantage of both the Tonawanda rail corridor and Cornelius Creek right of way, so that northern neighborhoods, southern neighborhoods, and the waterfront are all connected to a off-street route that can potentially extend south along the rail corridor, creating an off-street network that can complement the Riverwalk network along the waterfront. Creating these connections permits a circuit to be established for a better recreational experience..

### TARGETED ADDITIONAL GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT

As the preceding pages have shown, providing places for recreation and community-gathering is important to the quality of life in urban areas. Land use patterns indicate that, inland from the waterfront, there is a preponderance of residential uses in some areas. After evaluating existing parks and cemeteries, as well as greenspaces associated with BMHA and School 65, an "Area Targeted for Additional Greenspace Development, as Community Gardens, Playgrounds, and Pocket Parks" has been identified. (see Figure 95) This concept illustrates ways to address instances of vacant lots within the residential and commercial fabric of the neighborhood, even though a preferred solution by far is that vacant lots be redeveloped to repair the fabric of the built environment, whenever possible, in support of the the vast majority of parcels in Riverside which are characterized by productive uses. It makes sense, when infill plans to replace structures that occupied

the lot previously fail to materialize and every effort has been made to encourage infill development, to review these lots for transformation into new uses on a case-by-case basis.

When a vacant lot is purchased by an adjacent owner who either assumes ownership of the entire lot or splits the lot with another adjacent owner, the lot is absorbed into a private owner situation and can become a garden, driveway and garage, or yardspace. Bonnie Eschborn of Rediscover Riverside's garden on Beatrice is a great illustration of a homeowner who assumed ownership of a vacant lot and has turned into a beautiful, garden oasis. (see Figures 98 & 99 for before and after photos.)

When a vacant lot is not absorbed into the property of an adjacent owner, it can in certain circumstances nevertheless become greenspace, where children can play and neighbors can meet, even while remaining in public ownership, turning blighting conditions into community assets which serve as gathering places. One example of this type of greenspace is a community garden, which can be created when a property becomes city-owned, redevelopment proposals fail to materialize and adjacent homeowners decline to assume ownership to expand their lots. By applying to Grassroots Gardens, community groups can have vacant publicly-owned parcels that they are interested in converting into community gardens become part of a lease arrangement between Grassroots Gardens and the City of Buffalo, so that liability and insurance is provided by Grassroots

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Gardens, the city retains ownership, and the community group can create a community garden in accordance with existing rules. For more information, visit Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo online at <http://www.grassrootsgardens.org>.

One local, outstanding Grassroots Garden—leased community garden can be found in neighboring Black Rock, where two dilapidated buildings on the northeast corner of Dearborn and Hamilton were torn down by the City of Buffalo, and the Dearborn Street Community Association and local residents partnered with the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA and elected officials to turn the lots into a beautiful “Black Rock Heritage Garden.” This community garden brings people together, while at the same time being recognized for its beauty by Buffalo in Bloom. In 2010, the profile of this garden was further elevated when dedicated as the first Bicentennial War of 1812 Peace Garden in the United States, according to the Binational Tourism Alliance. (see Figures 100–102)



Figure 100: In 2007, these two buildings (left) were empty, unsecured, and a blighting influence in Black Rock.



Figure 101 & 102: By 2010, they were replaced by a community garden, which was then dedicated by Mayor Brown and other luminaries as the first War of 1812 peace garden in the U.S. (above) During the ceremonies, a father told his son the story of the garden. (left)



## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Recommendations for the *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* were arrived at through extensive public involvement, planning research and analysis, and refinement.

On March 31, 2010, at a meeting of Rediscover Riverside, attendees were provided with a slideshow of Chapters 1 and 2 as it existed at that time, and then a list of "Preliminary Neighborhood Planning Ideas for Riverside Plan — 3/31/2010" was shared, which incorporated a tear off section where comments and suggestions were encouraged. In addition, Phil Haberstro of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, recorded notes from the discussion of the idea s on newsprint for later reference. Feedback from the March 31 meeting was then incorporated into a subsequent list, which was then distributed on May 25, 2010 to a group of Riverside residents and property owners who have been involved in creation of the Riverside Plan from the time of completion of the Vision Statement in June, 2009, i.e. the "Riverside Planning Project Team" (see Page i under "Acknowledgements" for a list of members). The list was initially prioritized in a meeting involving the "Riverside Planning Project Team" held on June 27, 2010 and confirmed in a meeting of the general membership of Rediscover Riverside on June 30, 2010.

The ultimate goal of the *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* is to join with other neighborhood plans of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA) to form a single BRR GNPA neighborhood plan to become a component of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*, in accordance with its "Restore Neighborhoods" section. (see Appendix 4) Until that time, and even afterwards, this is a "living document," and additional suggestions from the community are welcome to it, so that Riverside can have the most informed, brightest future possible.

The recommendations below are divided into the following categories:

1. Housing
2. Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design
3. Historic Preservation
4. Transportation and Infrastructure
5. Commercial and Economic Development
6. Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront
7. Quality of Life and Public Safety
8. Marketing

SHORT TERM = 1 YR OR LESS

LONG TERM = 1 YR TO 5 YR

### HOUSING

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Support provision of housing for a diversity of populations (example: veterans) and all age groups, including senior housing.
- ✓ Address narrow street issues and their connection to housing issues by exploring use of vacant lots for parking, carefully designing new infill housing development, converting doubles and triples to singles to reduce demand for parking, and looking at zoning changes long-term.
- ✓ Incorporate public housing in a more positive way or seek removal. Monitor Section 8 housing and work to address emerging issues.
- ✓ Help create more block clubs where needed.
- ✓ Develop partnership with city government regarding inspections, demolitions, foreclosed properties, and maintenance and reuse of vacant properties.
- ✓ Address vacant lot issues by supporting enforcement of and improvement of laws on the books regarding specifications for doing a demolition and removing debris, grading land, adding topsoil and facilitating reuse of land.
- ✓ Take advantage of code enforcement opportunities and support existing or new approaches to address problem properties, working cooperatively with housing liaison.
- ✓ Create diverse housing types, including patio homes, condos, etc. where appropriate.
- ✓ Support Judge Nowak housing court initiative.

#### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Work to increase homeownership levels, connect homeseekers with available properties, promote better housing opportunities and conditions, create targeted streets programs, and engage in housing-related planning. Work with BRR NHS, others.
- ✓ Promote conversion of doubles and triples into singles to adapt housing to changing needs of homeowners.
- ✓ Do inventories of problem properties with the help of block clubs and review periodically with North District Council Member to identify solutions to specific situations.
- ✓ Explore programs and funding that can work with special situations involving housing, like Safe Routes to Schools, Better Schools, Better Neighborhoods, and others.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Develop an inventory of infill lots and procedure for keeping it updated.
- ✓ Create concept plans for new housing development.
- ✓ Track owner occupancy ratios, in an effort to keep owner occupancy at 75% or above.
- ✓ Partner with the Town of Tonawanda to leverage activities that benefit Old Town and Riverside.
- ✓ Track trends in property ownership, to ensure good performance of owners of large number of properties.
- ✓ Encourage programs that improve accountability and improvement in landlord-neighborhood, landlord-tenant and tenant-neighborhood relations.
- ✓ Support and add to local memorials and public art installations that promote civic pride.
- ✓ Document and celebrate historic and famous Riversiders.
- ✓ Look into landmarking Engine 26 Fire House at 703 Tonawanda.
- ✓ Research and promote improvements that highlight Riverside's history: Native American, War of 1812, Erie Canal, industrial, waterfront (ferry boats), and Pan Am history, to name a few.
- ✓ Advocate for the maintenance and preservation of key historic assets, like St. John the Baptist Church at 60 Hertel, a designated Buffalo landmark.

### LAND USE, ZONING AND URBAN DESIGN

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Monitor major planning initiatives and promote public participation opportunities involving them.
- ✓ Ensure plan provisions are consistent with Buffalo Comprehensive Plan and City initiatives and policies.
- ✓ Explore ways to improve off street parking.
- ✓ Advocate for the development of community-wide design standards for residential and commercial areas.

#### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Work with the City of Buffalo and community stakeholders to effect positive changes in land use, zoning, and urban design in the community, especially through the pending zoning rewrite process with the Camiros firm.
- ✓ Protect environmental landscapes and resources.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Restore lighthouse feature in Riverside Park.
- ✓ Develop historic document/photo library of historic features of Riverside to inform future improvements, in partnership with Grant Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project".
- ✓ Explore renovation/reuse/redevelopment of former School 60/Riverside Academy.
- ✓ In light of the changing condition of the waterfront over the past 100 years, identify and compile information on the waterfront aspects of the community before the Thruway construction as a basis for future planning.

#### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Undertake a historic resources survey.
- ✓ Add signage commemorative plaques to historic homes.
- ✓ Position properties to take advantage of NYS historic rehab tax credit, both residential and commercial.

### TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Make streetscape improvements to Niagara St., Ontario St., and Tonawanda St. (See "Why Elmwood Works") Block grant funds can provide an improved street infrastructure, consisting of brighter street lighting, plantings, trees, benches, gardens, sidewalks, security cameras, 19th century styled light and power poles.
- ✓ Develop mile-long Vulcan Street as a grand boulevard, taking advantage of its width, lack of signals, and available grassy right of ways. Add infrastructure features that make it a local model for environmentally-sustainable street design. Extend boulevard treatments from Vulcan to Kenmore, Ontario, and Skillen.
- ✓ Undertake activities to improve transportation and infrastructure improve walkability, and provide infrastructure for a variety of users consistent with the Complete Streets concept. For example, restoring sidewalks, painting lines for crosswalks, etc. improves the walkability for all users, including seniors, which helps them stay independent and in their homes.
- ✓ Promote traffic calming changes to existing streets where appropriate.
- ✓ Create a bicycle lane network.
- ✓ Organize litter reduction/cleanup/beautification activities.



## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Do branding banners featuring the lighthouse image.
- ✓ Maintain existing lights (call 311; Mr. Golombek has National Grid number/information)
- ✓ Add or improve signage to effectively inform travelers as to highway entrances, neighborhood gateways, park entrances, historic and cultural attractions, and other neighborhood amenities.
- ✓ Support efforts to investigate the feasibility of relocating the I-190 inland to the Tonawanda Rail Corridor, or otherwise minimize the I-190's negative effects on Riverside.
- ✓ Support improvements to roads, bridges, highways, recreational trails, and parks that act in concert to improve access to the waterfront and other destinations.
- ✓ Ensure all crosswalk markings and traffic lights are maintained to ensure pedestrian safety.
- ✓ Encourage the use of mass transit.
- ✓ Inventory the capacity of infrastructure and utilities (electric, gas, sewer, water) to ensure they are up to par for redevelopment needs of companies.
- ✓ Partner with economic development agencies to bring small business development programs and opportunities to Riverside.
- ✓ Improve facades, lighting, property upkeep, and tidiness in key commercial corridors and gateways to help enliven them. Strengthen Riverside Business Association and encourage participation of local business and other partners in activities to promote revitalization.
- ✓ Support streetscape/transportation-related improvements that will positively impact commercial corridors. (see Transportation)

### LONG TERM:

### COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### SHORT TERM

- ✓ Encourage planning for redevelopment of each of the four key commercial nodes (Niagara & Ontario, Ontario & Tonawanda, Ontario & Skillen, Tonawanda & Vulcan) and three key commercial corridors (Niagara, Ontario, and Tonawanda Sts.): for example, seek Main Street grant program money for "Riverside Marketplace Square" at Ontario & Tonawanda; develop a "Riverside Village" commercial strip between Ontario & Tonawanda and Riverside Park.
- ✓ Conduct inventories of local manufacturing/industry and work with economic development officials to promote them.
- ✓ Expand business incubators in Riverside since our three are full to capacity.
- ✓ Support Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area program, so that developable land and employment grow and market demand follows.
- ✓ Promote creation of a development fund, so that key properties can be purchased, improved, and public-private partnerships can lead to development.
- ✓ Support redevelopment of properties at the former Riverside Men's Shop site at the intersection of Tonawanda & Ontario Sts. in a way that is positive for the community, includes improvements that maintains corner identity, and ensures access to shopping activity for all users (pedestrians, automobiles and bicycles)
- ✓ Bring more focus on the coming green economy. Solar, wind, energy efficiency hold the jobs of the future. Riverside could get out in front on these initiatives.
- ✓ Support Riverside High School's "School of Entrepreneurship" program.
- ✓ Open up more storefront businesses with attractive signage.
- ✓ Encourage infill that acts to strengthen commercial activity.
- ✓ Hold educational sessions/distribute brochure-newsletter/do articles on good practices like the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach™, Why Elmwood Works initiative, the Erie Niagara Framework for Regional Growth, local economic development-related programs, and area advantages like demographics and neighborhood recreational and cultural attractions. For example, storefront businesses should have attractive, appealing signage above the street windows, which should be maximum open to show displays of the goods and/or services available in that store. Other examples: cleanliness, beautification, promoting/marketing the district to outside patrons, nourishing a sense of community within the neighborhood, façade improvements, and repairing the urban fabric.
- ✓ Encourage development/expansion of commercial activity that accommodates incidental business that arrives from visitors to improve neighborhood attraction as a destination.
- ✓ Address public safety needs of visitors as well as residents.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Transition businesses from incubators into vacant business spaces in Riverside by implementing timeframes in incubators.
- ✓ Encourage visibility of second floor business activity to add to the density of commercial corridors.
- ✓ Encourage more sports- and recreation-oriented programming, i.e. boating, kayaking, walking exercise routes, and biking, even boatbuilding and boat restoration, to take advantage of our waterfront community location.

### PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Expand park, garden and greenspace opportunities, taking advantage of emerging vacant lots.
- ✓ Promote safety in the parks.
- ✓ Facilitate new improvements to parks, for example by inventorying existing recreational assets and matching them up with trends and changing demand.
- ✓ Support new recreational trails/bike paths and expansion and improvement of existing ones, like the Scajaquada Creek Bike Path, Seaway Trail, Riverwalk.
- ✓ Interface with Buffalo Riverkeepers on waterfront activities.
- ✓ Integrate activities with Greenway Commission goals and objectives.
- ✓ Work with Buffalo Olmsted Conservancy and City of Buffalo to explore: relocating Senior Center/Pool/Rink from Riverside Park in a way that realizes the tremendous potential to the Park and to redeveloping Riverside; adding new uses like an amphitheatre in the park; bringing back the casino to the park.
- ✓ Support creation and maintenance of clean, safe parks, playgrounds, community gardens, specialized gardens (rain gardens, sculpture gardens, etc.), and other recreational assets, and access to same.
- ✓ Have successful community volunteer involvement in maintenance of parks and their features.
- ✓ Maintain and manage activities in the park to avoid messes, i.e. grill use, trash disposal.

#### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Create enhanced access to the waterfront.
- ✓ Take parking lots out of parks where feasible.
- ✓ Improve use of the parks.
- ✓ Promote waterfront development that is consistent with local plans.
- ✓ Encourage enhanced waterfront activities that would benefit the economics of the community, i.e. Black Rock Canal Park enhancements to boat launch and addition of restaurant and other facilities.

### QUALITY OF LIFE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

#### SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Develop community initiatives with positive impact (Faces project, July 4th festivities, National Night Out, Financial Literacy, "Riverside Home Days", water quality and conservation, etc.).
- ✓ Increase presence and visibility of public safety officers.
- ✓ Improve the communication and relationships between residents and the police force, by monitoring crime trends, and promoting community policing, and enforcing curfews to address crime categories and geographic areas undergoing a rise in crime rates.
- ✓ Raise community awareness of ways to reduce crime and encourage participation in them (effective crime reporting, use of tip sheets, graffiti/litter monitoring and removal, neighborhood walks and cleanups, etc.). Cleanups can be held in spring and fall and coordinated between City DPW (large trash pickup), neighborhood, and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.
- ✓ Promote steps to maintain police presence in Riverside, i.e. keep D-District in Riverside, develop a police satellite in Riverside, ensure patrol patterns include Riverside.
- ✓ Support youth activities and engage more adolescents in neighborhood life and its quality of life goals, by partnering with schools, after school programs, NWBCC, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

#### LONG TERM:

- ✓ Promote neighborhood schools, which among other benefits provide more convenience and the potential for parent involvement in the education of their children.
- ✓ Help provide immigrants with housing, education, social, and employment services by collaborating with resettlement agencies.
- ✓ Encourage prosecution of more criminals by working with the District Attorney's Office.
- ✓ Take steps to facilitate police being more responsive to residential calls for assistance, including loud vehicles, loud music.



## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Embrace Clean Sweeps as a way to address concentrations of problem properties.
  - ✓ Increase awareness of Homeland Security operations in the planning neighborhood, and encourage their siting here.
  - ✓ Develop knowledge and support of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques so that the best ones can be implemented locally. (for example, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Community Oriented Policing, Situational Crime Prevention, and Problem-Oriented Policing).
  - ✓ Coordinate policing with block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association so that they can be more pro-active in their security measures.
  - ✓ Develop awareness of crime trends and incidences so that better crime fighting information is obtained.
  - ✓ Explore best practices (Elmwood Village Strategic Plan 2009-2012) and the use of programs like "Asset Based Community Development" (ABCD) and others applicable to Riverside to increase the capacity, performance, and outcomes of individuals, groups, and organizations.
  - ✓ Seek ways to partner with organizations to offer programs that benefit the community while providing positive economic impacts (example: An exercise center at All Saints or Riverside Park?).
  - ✓ Promote local achievements and character development activities (Sports programs, Be-A-Sport, sport achievements like Riverside Frontiers football, faith community initiatives and events, etc.).
  - ✓ Look at health information system statistics with eye toward improving air quality and other environmental factors.
- to its location east of the lake and on the waterfront.
- ✓ Sponsor a community festival along one or a series of closed-off streets with community service groups and businesses renting tables.
- LONG TERM:**
- ✓ Market the neighborhood with aid of real estate professionals.
  - ✓ Work to increase tourism in the area by interfacing with City- and County-wide activities, for example Bass Masters fishing tournament and War of 1812 commemorative activities. Locations might include Harry's Harbourfront or Riverside Park.
  - ✓ Raise awareness of green aspects of urban design and living in Riverside.
  - ✓ Undertake activities that help capture neighborhood identity.
  - ✓ Take a Continuous Quality Improvement approach to neighborhood improvement.

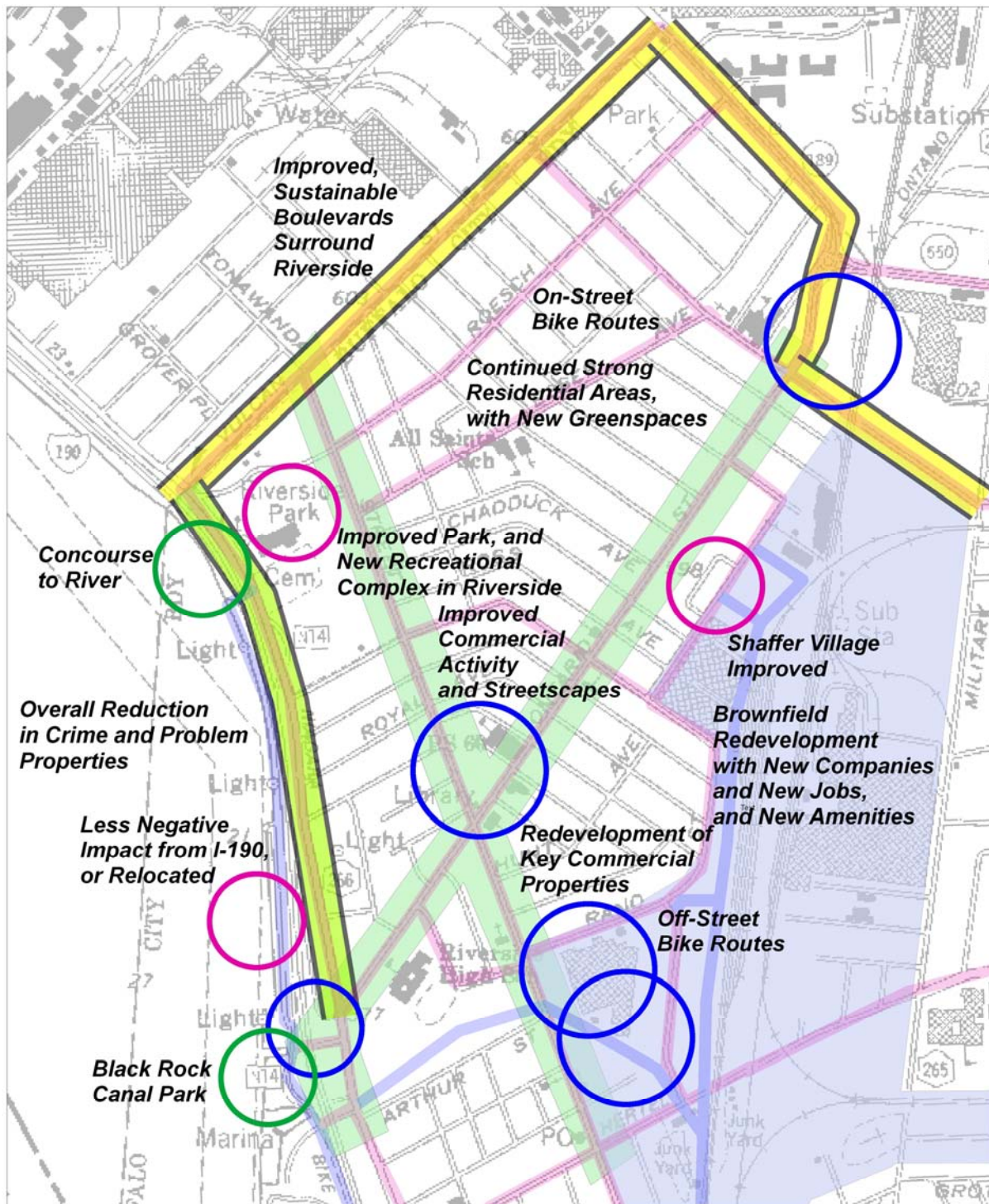
### MARKETING

#### **SHORT TERM:**

- ✓ Start or promote existing community public interest activities, e.g. garden walks, health fairs, farmer's markets, homebuyer seminars, business days with discounts, school and community center open houses, park programming like theatre/concerts
- ✓ Seek funding. A 501c3 corporation can receive loans and grants.
- ✓ Brand the neighborhood with a logo and other marketing techniques. Bring attention to the unique experience of sunsets in Riverside due

## CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## SECTION 1: GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE



## Glimpse into the Future - Selected Improvements from Plan Recommendations that Illustrate a Better Riverside



## CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### SECTION 2: NEXT STEPS

July 5, 2010 - Distribution of Draft Plan online at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside/) and at Riverside Library

July 5 to August 15, 2010 - Publicity brochure distributed (see Appendix 1), presentations conducted, and comments solicited on Draft Plan

August 11, 2010 - Last Rediscover Riverside Meeting before comments due on 15th

September 1, 2010 - Final Draft Plan, to be posted online at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside/)

After September 1, 2010 - Comments are welcome on an ongoing basis, because this is a “Living Document.” At the same time, the planning process will begin in another Black Rock-Riverside neighborhood. There are four neighborhoods in Black Rock-Riverside:

- ✓ Black Rock
- ✓ Grant Amherst
- ✓ Riverside
- ✓ West Hertel

With completion of the Riverside’s *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan*, it joins Black Rock’s *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan* as two of four neighborhood plans to be completed.

When plans for the four areas are completed, it will be proposed that they form a combined Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance plan, which will become part of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*. (For more information on this process, see Appendix 4.)

## **CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **SECTION 3: SUPERPRIORITIES: A LIST FOR CITY OF BUFFALO ACTION**

Note: This Section is to be completed upon further consultation with local elected officials and relevant departments and agencies. As indicated in “Chapter 3: Recommendations,” there are many areas of needed improvement. Issues like feasibility, funding, capacity and current priorities need to be recognized and accounted for, and this is best done in partnership. With assistance from the Office of the Mayor, North District Council Member and Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, it is possible to identify many of the relevant department and agencies, and strengthen existing working relationships or initiate productive new ones.



## CHAPTER 5: FUNDING

As a comprehensive neighborhood plan, *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* includes many categories of action and strategies; each will either involve funding that may be shared with others, or may have funding particular unto themselves.

However, several areas of funding can be identified in many categories. This list, and funding opportunities for other recommended actions in this plan, will be confirmed and expanded upon with completion of the “Superpriorities: A List for City of Buffalo Action” (on previous page) and as projects reach planning, design and implementation stages.

### **Brownfields: Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Project**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- New York State Department of State
- City of Buffalo

### **Housing**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal
- Local Private Partners, both commercial and nonprofit
- Local Foundations
- City of Buffalo in-kind contribution
- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo.

### **Commercial and Economic Development**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- NYS Main St. Program
- City of Buffalo/Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation in-kind contribution
- North District Council member item
- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo
- Federal Funds through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), administered locally by Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council and the New York State (NYS) Department of Transportation

### **Parks and Recreation**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo

- Niagara River Greenway Commission

### **Quality of Life and Public Safety**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- City of Buffalo in-kind contribution
- Black Rock-Riverside NHS
- North West Buffalo Community Center
- North District Council member item

### **Marketing**

#### *Funding Sources:*

- City of Buffalo/Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation in-kind contribution
- City of Buffalo in-kind contribution
- North District Council member item
- Black Rock-Riverside NHS

Note: Additional suggestions for funding sources are welcome. To share your ideas, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at 716.877.8400.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - PUBLICITY

APPENDIX 2 - DEMOGRAPHIC TABLE

APPENDIX 3 - RELEVANT PLANS AND  
PROJECTS

APPENDIX 4 - "REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS"  
SECTION OF *QUEEN CITY IN  
THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:*  
*BUFFALO'S COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN*



## APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

LETTER SENT TO OVER 50 BLOCK CLUBS,  
CHURCHES, ASSOCIATIONS, AND  
COMMUNITY LEADERS IN JUNE, 2009:



### Black Rock - Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance

GNPA, P.O. Box 382, Buffalo, NY 14207

**Meetings Monthly at the  
Northwest Buffalo Community Center**  
155 Lawn Avenue, Buffalo

#### **Working, Planning and Building a Better Neighborhood!**

Public Safety • Housing • Land Use, Zoning & Urban Design • Economic Development • Riverside Park

June 1, 2009

Dear Friends;

At the May 20 Rediscover Riverside meeting, Riverside took a leap into the future, with attendees sharing their personal vision statements for their community. Asked to "dream big" and "be bold," nearly 40 Riverside residents participated in a 90-minute work session facilitated by Phil Haberstro, from the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Buffalo Niagara All America City committee. Among the visions were: "An area of people who know each other." "River more accessible." "We respect and communicate with one another and everybody is comfortable, happy, content, and proud of our home, neighbors, and community." "Village atmosphere." "A neighborhood where my children can safely raise their children."

How many ideas were generated? Take these five, multiply them by two (because each participant had about ten ideas to share), multiply them again by 40 (for the number of participants at the meeting), and you can see that hundreds of great ideas for Riverside's future were shared on May 20.

Over the next week, these ideas will be further refined and shaped with the help of a committee comprised of four Riverside residents, one from each of the four visioning groups that formed at the meeting.

After further refining, a shared vision statement will be considered for adoption at the Rediscover Riverside meeting on June 10.

Were you unaware or unable to attend the May 20 meeting? It is not too late to add your personal vision for Riverside! Write your personal vision statement for your Riverside community — dream big, be bold! These are your hopes and dreams for your community! — and send them to [rediscover\\_riverside@yahoo.com](mailto:rediscover_riverside@yahoo.com). Share this invitation with your family, friends, and neighbors. Your vision will be joined with hundreds of others and transformed into a single shared vision statement for Riverside for consideration at the June 10 meeting, to be held at 6:00pm at the Amvets hall at 25 Review Place, off Tonawanda Street. The Riverside Community is encouraged to attend on June 10 — residents, families, property owners, community groups, companies, schools, institutions, organizations, and... you! If you are unable to attend this meeting, follow up information will be posted online at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside), which will be our online gathering-place throughout the rest of 2009.

This process will culminate by July 4, when a shared vision, created by the Riverside community for the Riverside community, will be ready to kick-off a neighborhood planning effort, coordinated by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance in collaboration with Rediscover Riverside and the entire Riverside community, leading to a bright future.

Sincerely,

*Evelyn Vossler* *Richard Mack*

Evelyn Vossler Richard Mack  
Co-chairs of the BRRGNPA

## APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

INVITATION SENT TO OVER 100 MEMBERS OF  
REDISCOVER RIVERSIDE, MAY, 2009:

***What is your vision for Riverside?***

### **An Invitation to the Riverside Community**

**Join a creative work session on May 20 which will lead to a “shared vision” statement for Riverside.**

***Who should attend? Residents, families, property owners, community groups, companies, schools, institutions, churches, organizations, and... you!***

**6:00PM on Wednesday May 20, 2009  
at the Rediscover Riverside meeting,  
Amvets hall at 25 Review Place,  
off Tonawanda Street.**

**We will create a “shared vision” statement to guide us in formulating a plan for a bright future for Riverside. Phil Haberstro, from the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Buffalo Niagara All America City committee, will facilitate this 90-minute work session at the May 20 Rediscover Riverside meeting. Please join us!**

*Sponsored by:* Rediscover Riverside | Black Rock-Riverside GNPA | North District Council Office | Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo



# APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

RIVERSIDE REVIEW MAY 13, 2009:

Page Eight

Riverside Review - Putting the Community Into Community Newspaper

May 13, 2009

## Missing - Reward!

**BUFFALO - RIVERSIDE AREA**

**Female Orange Cat**  
Lost May 4, 2009  
Needs medication daily and special food  
Last seen on Briggs Ave. / Prairie Ave.  
Please call **570-1257**



## Riverside Residents Begin Creating a Vision

by Evelyn Vossler

The Riverside Community - residents, families, property owners, community groups, companies, schools, institutions, churches, organizations, and you - are encouraged to attend a creative work session on May 20

which will lead to a shared vision statement for Riverside.

Phil Haberstro, from the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Buffalo Niagara All America City committee, will hold this 90-minute work session at the Rediscover Riverside meeting in partnership with the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA at 6:00pm on Wednesday May 20, 2009, at the Amvets Hall at 25 Review Place, off Tonawanda Street.

Bring your colleagues, neighbors, family and friends. At this meeting, the Riverside Community will actually develop a draft of its shared vision statement. Another meeting will be held in mid-June to finalize and ask the Riverside Community to adopt your vision statement, so that it will be completed in final form by July 4th!

This shared vision statement, created by the Riverside Community, will then form additional public participation activities in the coming months as well as the planning, research, analysis and recommendations which will lead to a high-quality community plan for Riverside by the end in 2009.

## - NOTICE -

**NORTHWEST BUFFALO COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.**

**2009 ANNUAL CORPORATE BUSINESS MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2009**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**NORTHWEST BUFFALO COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.**  
**155 LAWN AVENUE**  
**BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14207**

All persons are encouraged to attend, serve as Corporate Members and serve as members of the Board of Directors regardless of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, family status, or handicap status.

The Northwest Buffalo Community Center, Inc. is an equal opportunity human service provider. All community residents and other interested individuals are welcome to attend.

**NW Buffalo Community Center, Inc.**



**Martin A. Grunzweig**  
Board President

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE 2009-2010 PROGRAM YEAR WILL BE ELECTED AT THIS MEETING**



## Shay Completes Basic Training



PFC Jeremy Shay, son of Janet and Pay Shay of Warren Ave., Kenmore has completed basic training at Fort Sill, Okla. He is the grandson of Jane and Jim Yeates of Laird Ave and the late Larry Shay of Prairie Ave.

He will be home on leave in about 4 weeks, which is much anticipated by twin sister Jonelle, brother Kyle, and "Belle".

After his leave he will be stationed in Germany.

## "We're Right Under Your Nose."

**Mustachio's Pizza**

**2701 Elmwood Avenue at West Girard**

**WE NOW ACCEPT**

**874-8909**

Riverside, Black Rock, North Buffalo, Kenmore and Tonawanda.

HOURS: Mon.-Thurs. 11am-11pm; Fri & Sat. 11am-Midnight Sun. Noon-10pm

## JOIN US FOR DINNER

Bar-B-Que Ribs • Grilled Chicken  
Cheese Ravioli • Spaghetti Parmesan  
Roast Beef • Veal Parmesan  
AND TRY OUR FABULOUS FISH FRY

**COUPON**

**\$2.00 OFF**  
Any Large Pizza

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER  
UNLIMITED QUANTITY  
WITH COUPON • EXPIRES May 31, 2009

**COUPON**

**\$1.00 OFF**  
Any Large Sub

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER  
UNLIMITED QUANTITY  
WITH COUPON • EXPIRES May 31, 2009

## TRAFFIC TICKETS? DWI? SPEEDING? RECKLESS DRIVING

Your License is Important!

**CALL 316-0713**

Evening/Saturday hours available

**MATTHEW BEMBEN**  
Attorney at Law

257 Elmwood, Ste. 310  
Buffalo, NY 14222

## PIT HERE AND BE A WINNER!

**BC Automotive USA**

**Complete Car Care Services**

**Memorial Day GPS Give-Away**

Ends May 22nd  
**HURRY ON IN!**

[www.BCAutomotiveUSA.com](http://www.BCAutomotiveUSA.com)

**2813 River Road • 716-240-9416**

## SPRING FLING AND CHINESE AUCTION

To Benefit the

## Black Rock / Assumption Boys & Girls Club

**SATURDAY, MAY 16TH, 6pm - 9pm**

**NIAGARA FRONTIER AMERICAN LEGION POST #1041**  
**533 AMHERST STREET, BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14207**

Donation: **\$20** EXTRA SHEETS OF AUCTION TICKETS:  
\$5 EACH OR \$10 FOR 3

**Includes Draft Beer, Pop, Food and a Sheet of Auction Tickets**

## Come Check Out Our New Menu!

## MIKE'S Family Pizzeria

**205 Ontario Street**  
**877-4500**

TAKEOUT and DELIVERY

Traditional Pizza • Chicken Wings • Gourmet Pizzas  
29 Varieties of Subs • Philly Style Loaded Hoagies • Salads  
Grilled Paninis • Souvlakis • Tacos • Calzones • Stomolits

**DAILY SPECIALS**

Sunday: **FREE 2 LITER POP** with a purchase of a Party Pizza & 50 Wings

Monday: **\$2.00 OFF** any Large Pizza

Tuesday: **\$2.00 OFF** a Bucket of Wings

Wednesday: **\$1.00 OFF** any Whole Sub

Thursday: **\$1.00 OFF** any Large Taco



# APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

RIVERSIDE REVIEW MAY 27, 2009:



## RIVERSIDE REVIEW

The Voice of Northwest Buffalo Since 1923

CIRCULATION OVER 14,000 WEEKLY — FREE  
TO ALL OF NORTHWEST BUFFALO — A CITY WITHIN A CITY  
877-8400 215 Military Road, Buffalo, N.Y. 14207

May 27, 2009  
Vol. 86 No. 21

The Voice of Buffalo Online at:  
[www.buffaloreview.com](http://www.buffaloreview.com)

### \$50,000 NFL Grant Slated to Improve Field at Riverside Park

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy will receive a \$50,000 grant from the Buffalo Bills as part of the National Football League Grassroots Program. The grant was announced last week during a media event at Riverside Park with members of the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Jills and youth football players.

The grant, awarded by the Buffalo Bills, the NFL Youth Football Fund and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), is part of \$2.5 million in field refurbishment awards allocated nationally this year. It will be used to upgrade Buffalo's popular Riverside Park playing field with an updated irrigation system, new bleachers and benches made from recycled plastic.

"The enhancement of the Riverside football field is an important project for this community. The athletic leagues that use the field are enthusiastic supporters of the park and the neighborhood. It is where

most of them live, and many children will benefit for years to come from this strategic investment from the Buffalo Bills and NFL's Grassroots initiative," said Michael K. Clarke, executive director, Buffalo LISC.

"The Conservancy is very pleased with this \$50,000 grant from the Bills and NFL's Grassroots initiative. Riverside Park is a center of activity for many young people playing football, swimming, even ice skating. All of these programs provide thousands of neighborhood children with safe and healthy activities, one of the things that makes our Olmsted Parks and the community so great," said Thomas Herrera-Mishler, president / CEO of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.

For more than 100 years, Riverside Park has provided the neighboring community with green space and a beautiful overlook to the Niagara River. The football field is used for practices and games in the warm



Members of the National Football League Grassroots Program, LISC, and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy joined members of the community at last week's press conference announcing a \$50,000 grant to fix up the Riverside Park football field.

months by the Black Rock Riverside Little League Football and Cheerleaders organization and as a practice field for Riverside High School's Harvard Cup-winning football teams.

The NFL Grassroots Program

a partnership between the NFL Youth Football Fund and LISC, the nation's leading community development support corporation, has funded the construction or renovation of 170 football fields nationwide in the past decade.

In the last 11 years, the NFL Youth Football Fund has granted over \$25 million to revitalize playing fields in underserved neighborhoods. Fields are newly built or significantly renovated, with improvements in the past decade.

*Continued on Page Nine*

### Riverside Residents Create Vision for Future

At the May 20 Rediscover Riverside meeting, Riverside took a leap into the future, with attendees sharing their personal vision statements for their community.

Asked to "dream big" and "be bold," nearly 40 Riverside residents participated in a 90-minute work session facilitated by Phil Haberstro, from the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Buffalo Niagara All America City committee.

Among the visions were: "An area of people who know each other." "River more accessible." "We respect and communicate with one another and everybody is comfortable, happy, content, and proud of our home, neighbors, and community." "Village atmosphere." "A neighborhood where my children can safely raise their children."

How many ideas were generated? Take these five, multiply them by two (because each participant had about ten ideas to share), multiply them again by 40 (for the number of participants at the meeting), and you can see that hundreds of great ideas for Riverside's future

were shared on May 20th.

Over the next week, these ideas will be further refined and shaped with the help of a committee comprised of four Riverside residents, one from each of the four visioning groups that formed at the meeting.

After further refining, a shared vision statement will be considered for adoption at the Rediscover Riverside meeting on June 10th.

Were you unaware or unable to attend the May 20 meeting? It is not too late to add your personal vision for Riverside! Write your personal vision statement for your Riverside community — dream big, be bold! These are your hopes and dreams for your community! Send them to [rediscover\\_riverside@yahoo.com](mailto:rediscover_riverside@yahoo.com).

Share this invitation with your family, friends, and neighbors. Your vision will be joined with hundreds of others and transformed into a single shared vision statement for Riverside for consideration at the June 10 meeting, to be held at 6:00pm at the Amvets hall at 25 Review Place, off Tonawanda Street.



Nearly 40 Riverside residents helped to create a vision for Riverside.

### Personal Testimony About 30-Hour Famine

*In first person*

by Josh English

While not eating for thirty hours is far from what starving children in third world countries experience, it is still an enlightening experience. The 30-Hour Famine, created by World Vision, is a way to raise awareness for third world countries.

I participated in this, with the Riverside Baptist Church youth group. Even though we weren't eating for thirty hours, it was still, for the most part, a good time. Everyone got along, interesting lessons were taught by the youth group leaders, fun games, and a couple of good videos. So, the experience wasn't exactly torturous.

However, it is interesting what being deprived of food, even for a relatively short amount of time, can do to your mood. Some of us began to get pretty cranky about half way through; we began to argue about pointless things. This is partly due to the lack of sleep that we got, although it's not that we couldn't sleep, we just chose to stay up with our friends. Lack of sleep and an empty stomach are not a good combination.

I don't know how the rest of the group felt, but one of the things that I thought to myself was, "I'm hungry, but I know when I'm getting my next meal. Children in Africa go without eating for more than thirty hours, and without knowing when they are going to eat next! They experience this excruciating pain without adequate clothing, and become violently ill." While the 30-Hour Famine is an uncomfortable experience, it's basically a micro-version of what really happens in third world countries. However, it is an excellent way to raise awareness and money for children in need.

Our youth group raised over \$700, which is enough money to feed two children in Africa for a year each. If the 30-Hour Famine sounds like something you'd be interested in, I urge you to look up information on it, and try and get involved. Even if you aren't a Christian, getting involved in the 30-Hour Famine is a great way to help those in need, and an admirable thing to do.

☆☆☆☆

### Calling All Gardeners!

The Black Rock Riverside Tour of Gardens means your garden application and your neighbors too, (since clusters achieve more visitors), no later than Monday, June 15th. Please see the website [www.brgardenwalk.com](http://www.brgardenwalk.com) or call Sharon 877-2740 or Liza 875-7497 with any questions or for an application.

This 5th annual community event will be held Saturday, August 1st, 10 - 4 pm, Saturday, 8 - 10 pm for well lit gardens, and Sunday, August 2nd, 10 - 4 pm. You can commit to Saturday evening only if you choose, but we do need a

commitment for someone to be in your garden to greet visitors on both Saturday and Sunday days.

Volunteers will be needed for two hour shifts a our two headquarters on the days of the event, (details to follow).

The next Tour of Gardens meeting will be held Wednesday, June 3rd at 6:15 pm at the NW Comm. Center, 155 Lawn Street. All are welcome to join us as we plan for another successful year!

\* Applications can also be picked up at the Riverside Review. Please be sure to fill out and sign the front and back.



## APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

TRIFOLD BROCHURE DISTRIBUTED  
BEGINNING JULY 5, 2010:

**DEAR RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY LEADER:**

Your help is needed now. Until August 15, 2010, Rediscover Riverside and the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance invite you to share your enthusiasm and energy for Riverside by reviewing the draft *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan*, sharing it with others, and giving us your ideas on improving it.

We all want a Riverside that we can cherish and call home. Today is an important time in Riverside. A 45-page "Community Assessment" in the plan reveals an abundance of assets that endear us to Riverside. But some of Riverside needs fixing. We need to:

- Arrest crime and anti-social behavior,
- Address problem properties,
- Increase the family-friendliness of Riverside,
- Improve storefronts and the streetscape,
- Reuse vacant industrial buildings and land,
- Strengthen healthy living and our waterfront,
- Have a community where all law-abiding citizens can feel at home.

Download the Plan (see the instructions in "How You Can Help" part of this brochure) or find it at the Riverside Library. Read it. Share it with Others. Offer your ideas. Let's Make it Real — Together!



affordable housing churches community diversity family friends gardens history library neighbors  
**park people river**  
waterfront

Riverside has so much to offer! Here's a list, started in May 2009. What do you like best about Riverside?



Amazing Christmas lights on Riverside Avenue during the holiday season of 2009 illustrate the pride residents take in their homes.



Riverside Park and a view of the Niagara River are the focus of this historic postcard. Riverside's history is rich enough to match its bright future!



### 2010 Riverside Community Plan

You are invited to join with Rediscover Riverside, the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, and our community partners to help develop a comprehensive neighborhood plan for Riverside in 2010!

"Riverside is a safe thriving community of choice where residents know and respect each other..."

— Start of the Shared Vision Statement for Riverside (Adopted June 10, 2009)

### Help Us Build a Better Riverside!



**LET US TELL YOU HOW WE GOT STARTED:** In 2008 dedicated Riversiders began meeting as Rediscover Riverside to chart a brighter future. Then, in early 2009, these leaders partnered with the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and began the process to create a high quality, citizen-led neighborhood plan for Riverside.

In May, 2009, Riversiders met to identify what they believe "needs to change for us to have a healthier and more sustainable community." Here is the list — Do these issues match your concerns as well?





Community members applaud as they adopt the Shared Vision Statement for Riverside that they helped create at a Rediscover Riverside meeting in June 2009 with 40 attendees.

**POSITIVE CHANGES START WITH A VISION:** By summer, 2009, community members had developed a Shared Vision Statement for Riverside:

**Shared Vision Statement for Riverside:**

*Riverside is a safe thriving community of choice where residents know and respect each other. We are proud of our flourishing neighborhoods. There is cooperation among churches, schools, block clubs, businesses, neighbors, and all level of government in improving community spirit, wellness and lifelong learning.*

*Riverside enjoys enhanced access to its beautiful waterfront and green spaces for youth, families and older adults. These are integrated with well kept, walkable, high home ownership communities, prosperous business districts, and environmentally sensitive industrial areas.*

*Riverside is a community that plans, works, and redefines itself on an ongoing basis to remain a thriving, livable community. (Adopted June 10, 2009)*

**EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS:** With our Shared Vision, consultation with experts, and public participation of knowledgeable members of Rediscover Riverside in meetings during 2009-2010, a draft plan complete with Emerging Recommendations has been developed, covering the following topic areas:

1. Housing
2. Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design
3. Historic Preservation
4. Transportation and Infrastructure
5. Commercial and Economic Development
6. Parks, Recreation and Waterfront
7. Quality of Life and Public Safety
8. Marketing

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** We've publicized meetings in the *Riverside Review* and contacted local block clubs and associations. But we need to make sure all interested Riversiders know about this initiative and have a chance to contribute their dreams, suggestions, and feedback — including you! Here is how you can help:

**Friend Us!** Find us on Facebook by searching Redevelop Riverside.

**Check It Out!** Look over our draft plan and Emerging Recommendations, and tell us what you think! Visit us online at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_riverside/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_riverside/) and:

1. Join the Yahoo! Group with your Yahoo! ID
2. Click on the Files section to get the draft plan
3. Send us your thoughts by contacting Bonnie Eschborn at [beschborn@hersheys.com](mailto:beschborn@hersheys.com) or (716) 912-0616. This is a living document, so your ideas are always welcome.



Bonnie Eschborn displays a cake with North District Council Member Joe Golombek at a meeting in Riverside Park in July 2009 to celebrate completion of the Shared Vision Statement for Riverside. Notice the lighthouse on the cake!

## APPENDIX 1: PUBLICITY

YAHOO! GROUP USED FOR PUBLICITY PURPOSES, LOCATED ONLINE AT [HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/PLAN\\_RIVERSIDE](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PLAN_RIVERSIDE) (SCREENSHOT TAKEN 7/5/2010):

**plan\_riverside - Plan Riverside**

Search for other groups...

Home

Activity within 7 days: 1 New Member - 3 New Messages - 3 New Photos - 2 New Files

**Description (edit)**

'Plan Riverside' has been created to facilitate community participation in an initiative to create a comprehensive neighborhood plan for Riverside in Buffalo, New York, i.e. census tracts 37 and 38. This is an initiative of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and Rediscover Riverside and community partners. Join the Group and you will be notified of updated planning documents and milestones achieved in creating a neighborhood plan for Riverside.

**Key Documents:**  
Join the Group and Click on 'Files' link on left

**Key Milestone Dates:**  
Spring 2009 - Asset mapping, resident surveys, fieldwork, and Personal Vision Statements  
June 10, 2009 - Shared Vision Statement for Riverside adopted  
January 1 to June 1, 2010 - Writing of plan, with frequent updates and presentations at Rediscover Riverside  
March 31, 2010 - Community Meeting to share ideas and preliminary recommendations  
June 30, 2010 - Rediscover Riverside Meeting to discuss prioritization of recommendations  
July 3, 2010 - Distribution of Draft Plan online here and at Riverside Library  
July 3 to August 13, 2010 - Publicity brochure distributed, presentations conducted, and comments solicited on Draft Plan  
August 14, 2010 - Last Rediscover Riverside Meeting before comments due on 15th  
September 1, 2010 - Final Draft Plan, to be posted here  
After September 1, 2010 - Comments are welcome, planning process begins in another Black Rock-Riverside neighborhood, and combined plans to become part of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan

A key part of this initiative is to create and strengthen community partnerships between residents, businesses, block clubs, organizations, property owners, and neighborhood stakeholders. We invite you into the planning process to offer your comments or request a presentation. Contact Richard Mark, Co-Chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at 716.877.8400.

**Richard Mark and Evelyn Vessler, Co-Chairs**  
Bill Parker, Community Planner

**Most Recent Messages (View All)**  
(Group By Topic)

**New file uploaded to plan\_riverside**  
Hello, This email message is a notification to let you know that a file has been uploaded to the Files area of the plan\_riverside group. File :  
Posted - Sun Jul 4, 2010 3:41 pm

**Riverside Planning Project Team Reviews, Starts Prioritizing Recomm**  
On June 27, 2010 the Riverside Planning Project Team met at St. Mark's Church on Ontario St. to review and begin the process of prioritizing recommendations  
Posted - Wed Jun 30, 2010 3:59 pm

**Upcoming Meetings of Rediscover Riverside: June-Sept. 2010**  
Upcoming Meetings of Rediscover Riverside: For more information, see the Charterbox section of the Riverside Review, or contact Bonnie Eschbarn at 914-0616.  
Posted - Wed Jun 30, 2010 3:58 pm

**New file uploaded to plan\_riverside**  
Hello, This email message is a notification to let you know that a file has been uploaded to the Files area of the plan\_riverside group. File :  
Posted - Thu Jun 24, 2010 3:13 pm

**Buffalo News: Brother Discovers a Hero**  
Brother discovers a hero: Details of how a local soldier died trying to save a comrade in Vietnam recently came to light Buffalo News, May 30, 2010  
Posted - Tue Jun 8, 2010 11:37 am

Add plan\_riverside to your personalized My Yahoo! page [with](#) [HY!](#) [RSS](#)

**Message History**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010			2	3		4	1					
2009					3	1	2	1	1	1	1	2

**Group Email Addresses**

Post message: [plan\\_riverside@yahoogroups.com](mailto:plan_riverside@yahoogroups.com)  
 Subscribe: [plan\\_riverside-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:plan_riverside-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
 Unsubscribe: [plan\\_riverside-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:plan_riverside-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
 List owner: [plan\\_riverside-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:plan_riverside-owner@yahoogroups.com)



## APPENDIX 2: DEMOGRAPHIC TABLE

### DEMOGRAPHIC TABLE

SUMMARY TABULATION OF DATA FROM U.S.  
CENSUS 1970, 1980, 1990, & 2000:

	1970 Tr57	1970 Tr58	River- side	1980 Tr57	1980 Tr58	River- side	1990 Tr57	1990 Tr58	River- side	2000 Tr57	2000 Tr58	River- side
<b>Total Population</b>	4028	10731	14759	3430	8689	12119	2998	8190	11188	2912	7776	10688
<b>Race</b>												
White	3930	10669	14599							2359	7147	9506
Black or African American	71	6	77							239	152	391
Other	27	56	83							314	477	791
<b>Sex</b>												
Male	1898	5120	7018	1600	4153	5753	1407	3921	5328	1406	3710	5116
Female	2130	5611	7741	1830	4536	6366	1591	4269	5860	1506	4066	5572
<b>Age</b>												
Under 5 years	302	825	1127	246	583	829	243	636	879	231	584	815
5 to 9 years	388	902	1290	259	540	799	243	560	803	251	623	874
10 to 14	437	983	1420	297	642	939	229	490	719	294	593	887
15 to 19	388	871	1259	319	702	1021	199	445	644	207	521	728
20 to 24	264	808	1072	314	814	1128	209	628	837	165	484	649
25 to 64	1688	5035	6723	1500	4042	5542	1427	4070	5497	1411	3907	5318
65 to 74	321	832	1153	298	880	1178	255	803	1058	207	537	744
75 and over	240	475	715	197	486	683	193	558	751	146	527	673
<b>Median Age</b>				29.7	33.2		32.3	33.6		32.3	34.7	
<b>Households/Families</b>												
Total Households	1344	3625	4969	1294	3421	4715	1206	3447	4653	1179	3219	4398
Family Households	1034	2879	3913	863	2376	3239	755	2215	2970	689	1988	2677
With own children under 18 years	546	1387	1933	437	1068	1505	374	1005	1379	388	1024	1412
Married-couple family	832	2466	3298	628	1834	2462	495	1552	2047	377	1194	1571

## APPENDIX 3: RELEVANT PLANS AND PROJECTS

### RELEVANT PLANS AND PROJECTS

#### RELEVANT PLANS

*Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Neighborhood Plan, Draft* (January 2007)

*The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century* (January, 2008)

*Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* (Adopted 2006).

*Queen City Waterfront: Buffalo Waterfront Corridor Initiative* (April 2007)

*Tonawanda Street Corridor Plan* (May 2000)

*Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Plan* (2003)

#### RELEVANT PROJECTS

"A New Concept: Black Rock Canal Park"  
Slideshow and Proposal (2008)

"A Land Use Planning Approach for the Black Rock/Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance Community Plan," Student Paper by Stevan Paul Stipanovich, Buffalo State College (2006)

"Draft Feasibility Study for the Relocation of the Niagara Section of NYS Thruway" (1994)

Grant Amherst Business Association's "The Historic Project"

"Proposal for a Black Rock Boulevard," by Campaign for Greater Buffalo, History, Arts, and Culture (2005), and Presentation to Black Rock-Riverside GNPA (2009)

*Note to Reader:* This is a "Living Document." Please share news of plans and project you feel are relevant to this neighborhood plan by contacting Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at 716.877.8400.



## APPENDIX 4: “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS”

“REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS” SECTION OF  
QUEEN CITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
BUFFALO’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan



Byron W. Brown, MAYOR  
WWW.CITY-BUFFALO.COM

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING  
Timothy E. Wanamaker,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Adopted February 7, 2006

## APPENDIX 4: “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS”

### “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS” SECTION OF QUEEN CITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: BUFFALO’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan

A reorganized school system will retain some citywide magnet schools but also create a new set of standard school types to be replicated in each of three newly-drawn geographic zones across the district. These arrangements will facilitate choice, permit school populations to match the ethnic diversity of the different neighborhoods, and reduce the extent of bussing across the city. New efforts to improve staff recruitment and retention and to measure school performance are being made to support the overall goal. Workforce diversity and development initiatives will also enhance economic opportunities for Women and Minority-Owned Business Enterprises.

Extensive improvements in the physical plant of schools are required to fully implement the plan. The Joint Schools Construction Board has developed a \$950 million district-wide program under which, over the next ten years, a number of obsolete schools will be closed, several new schools will be built, and the remainder reconstructed, upgraded and re-equipped to provide a 21st century quality education.

The first phase of the program, scheduled to begin in 2004 and extend through 2006, will involve the reconstruction of nine schools at an estimated capital cost of \$155 million dollars. Reconstruction of a tenth school was recently completed. The remainder of nearly \$800 million will be reinvested in schools over the remaining life of the program.

The great opportunity is to coordinate schools reconstruction with neighborhood revitalization, including housing rehabilitation and new construction, maintenance of appropriate residential densities, good neighborhood design, promotion of public transit, and other smart growth principles. Such coordination of investments is all that much easier because the planned first phase of the schools reconstruction program has one school in each of the City’s Planning Communities slated for improvements.

The alignment of these investments, however, won’t happen by itself. It is important that the Joint Schools Construction Board, which combines membership from both the School Board staff and City Hall staff, remain in position. The schools reconstruction program and City neighborhood revitalization efforts must be planned and implemented together. The City of Buffalo is committed to working in close cooperation with the Buffalo Board of Education to make sure this happens.

#### 2.4.5 REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS

Achieving the overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan requires a new strategy for rebuilding Buffalo’s neighborhoods and managing its housing stock. This strategy includes mobilizing the resources of residents through neighborhood planning, investing scarce public dollars in more concentrated and better coordinated ways, working to link housing programs with economic development initiatives, and managing the size and quality of the housing stock in relation to housing targets and population projections.

Conditions in Buffalo neighborhoods vary widely. Some are in good shape, attractive as living environments, and competitive as housing markets. Some are in desperate condition, with many dilapidated structures, high vacancy rates, low home-ownership rates, and a proliferation of vacant lots. The rest are somewhere in between, with residents struggling to maintain aging structures against decades-long trends of population decline, disinvestment and deterioration. The worst of these conditions map closely with patterns of poverty, unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, single-parent households and other indicators of social and economic distress.



## APPENDIX 4: “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS”

### “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS” SECTION OF QUEEN CITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: BUFFALO’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Queen City in the 21st Century

Along with the other challenges identified in this plan, Buffalo must address the needs of its neighborhoods if the city is to survive, let alone meet the goal of the Comprehensive Plan. The physical, social and economic fabric of these neighborhoods must be repaired to a standard of quality that Americans expect of their residential environments. Yet the scale of this challenge is clearly beyond the financial, managerial and human resources of the City without additional assistance from higher levels of government, active involvement by private sector investments, and a real mobilization of neighborhood residents themselves.

The Comprehensive Plan specifies a four-part strategy for rebuilding Buffalo’s neighborhoods. It begins with the active participation of neighborhood residents through the Good Neighbors Planning Alliance to plan and implement change where they live. It continues with coordination of economic development initiatives that have the potential to attract new residents with housing programs that can offer those people an attractive place to live in the city. It requires that scarce housing subsidies and other neighborhood investments be better focused to produce more tangible results. Finally, it involves a combination of housing demolition, rehabilitation and new

construction to manage the size and quality of Buffalo’s housing stock in anticipation of continued population decline followed by an eventual resurgence.

#### Plan with neighborhoods

The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad framework for neighborhood redevelopment across the city, but depends on neighborhood residents themselves to create and help implement more detailed local plans. In this way, residents can work with City staff to tailor overall policies to local needs, values and visions. Participatory neighborhood planning can also take advantage of local knowledge in applying city-wide policies and help mobilize local resources for implementation.

The City has created the Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) to support this process of neighborhood planning. Residents have been invited to participate in planning for eleven Planning Communities or districts around the city. Staff from the Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) provides guidance and technical assistance to create usable plans consistent with city-wide policies. All neighborhood plans produced through the GNPA will be submitted to the Planning Board for review and then forwarded to Common Council for adoption.

Figure 49. Much of the renewal of the city will come in reclaiming streets like this one. The bottom shows a portion of the 200 block of Prospect Avenue in 1996. The top shows the same street in 2001 after the entire block of homes was replaced or renovated. The demonstration project that developed the block involved voluntary compliance with urban design guidelines and had mixed results, although the improvements to the neighborhood are dramatic (Source: The Lower West Side Neighborhood Stabilization Demonstration Project: Housing Design Review Guidelines, 2nd Ed., 2002).



## APPENDIX 4: “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS”

### “REBUILD NEIGHBORHOODS” SECTION OF QUEEN CITY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: BUFFALO’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan

Although housing is the core of any neighborhood, these plans must take into consideration all other land uses. Residents are encouraged to plan for a broad range of functions and amenities, including community services, neighborhood shopping, schools, churches, parking, street-lighting, sidewalks, trees, parks, gardens and more.

In general, every plan developed through the GNPA is obliged to address the four guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan. Plans should provide for sustainable development to achieve the interdependent goals of economic growth, environmental regeneration, and greater social equity. They should also incorporate principles of smart growth to repair or reinforce Buffalo’s typically compact and efficient urban environments. In addition, they should follow the basic principles of “fix the basics” and “build on assets” in all their proposals.

More specifically, GNPA neighborhood plans should:

- Build on the assets of the Ellicott plan, Olmsted park system, and Buffalo’s waterfront;
- Concentrate resources and integrate neighborhood and housing development with school reconstruction, economic development initiatives, preservation projects and transit corridors;
- Restore and maintain public infrastructure such as buildings, streets, sidewalks, water and sewer, trees, parks and greenways;
- Incorporate the remediation and reuse of brownfields to meet neighborhood and citywide goals;
- Shed the excessive number of city-owned vacant properties. Consider appropriate reuse or disposition of City-owned land and public buildings, make homesteading a priority using a quicker, easier process;
- Redevelop vacant land and property with infill housing or other appropriate uses;
- Apply urban design, planning and environmental management guidelines, and the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design;

- Promote energy conservation and use of alternative sources of energy;
- Dramatically improve the welcoming of immigrants to Buffalo, and in the process breathe new life into our city. Collaborate with local resettlement agencies that bring diverse newcomers to the Buffalo area to provide immigrants with housing, education, social, and employment services. We need to strategically improve how these people are served and expand this inflow, as other cities like Utica, Minneapolis, and Cleveland have done.

In addition, all neighborhood plans should identify the opportunities for private sector involvement and investment; work to increase social integration through participation, planning and implementation; and consider local proposals in light of regional and city wide needs to promote job creation, social equity, and environmental quality.

This “checklist” is not a straitjacket for neighborhoods and Planning Communities. Each will have considerable flexibility in defining how neighborhood plans apply citywide policies. Each neighborhood will be able to express its own distinctive identity, needs, resources and aspirations through the plan. But each plan should be specific about what is proposed, how it will be accomplished, and how it advances progress to the citywide goal.

#### Focus investments for maximum impact

The neighborhood redevelopment strategy also requires that investments be focused and concentrated to achieve maximum impact. Investments in housing and neighborhood-related infrastructure have typically been made in a scattered and uncoordinated manner. From 1998 through 2003 the City invested an average of \$32.8 million a year – mostly from the federal government – in housing and neighborhoods. Indeed, going back to the beginning of the federal Community Development Block Grant program in the mid-1970s, Buffalo has received the better part of a billion dollars in housing subsidies. Although improvements have been made, a proportionate impact is difficult to discern.