

2015

WEST HERTEL COMMUNITY PLAN

Our Vision: West Hertel offers a compelling mix of affordable living, business opportunity, and enriching life-style for those who seek quality, convenient urbanism without high cost.

DRAFT DOCUMENT



*Today's Key Partner:
Buffalo Police Dept. D-District Headquarters.*



*Today's Pride:
Aurubis Buffalo at 70 Sayre St. runs one of
the region's most historic, largest, and best
industrial enterprises.*

*Yesteryear's Memory:
A street car on the #23 Fillmore-Hertel line.
It is now served by NFTA Metro Buses.*

DRAFT DOCUMENT

Draft for Discussion Only, 05/04/2015. To share your opinion or get involved in helping the community, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance at rich@buffaloreview.com, or Margaret Szczepaniec of the West Hertel Association at westhertelassociation@gmail.com. This document was prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and West Hertel Association in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated with gratitude to all those who have carried West Hertel's industrial might into the 21st Century.

We, the People, recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together; that a freedom which only asks what's in it for me, a freedom without a commitment to others, a freedom without love or charity or duty or patriotism, is unworthy of our founding ideals, and those who died in their defense.

—Barack Obama

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

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YOUR COMMENTS

Your opinions regarding the ideas and proposals in this plan are important — It is a "living document." To share your opinion or get involved in helping the community, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at rich@buffaloreview.com or Margaret Szczepaniec, President, West Hertel Association at westhertelassociation@gmail.com. Prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and West Hertel Association in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan.

Cover Photos: Background: A street car on the #23 Fillmore-Hertel line has completed the Hertel Avenue portion of its route and is on N. Parade. Cars operated from both the Hertel and Broadway International Railway Co. barns. The Hertel barn was at Military and Hertel on land now occupied by PS 94—West Hertel Academy. *The Last Decade of Buffalo Trolleys*, by Harold J. Ahlstrom. Reproduction by permission of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Buffalo, New York. *Inset:* D-District HQ by Mary Ann Kedron in 2014; Aurubis Buffalo by Bill Parke in 2011.

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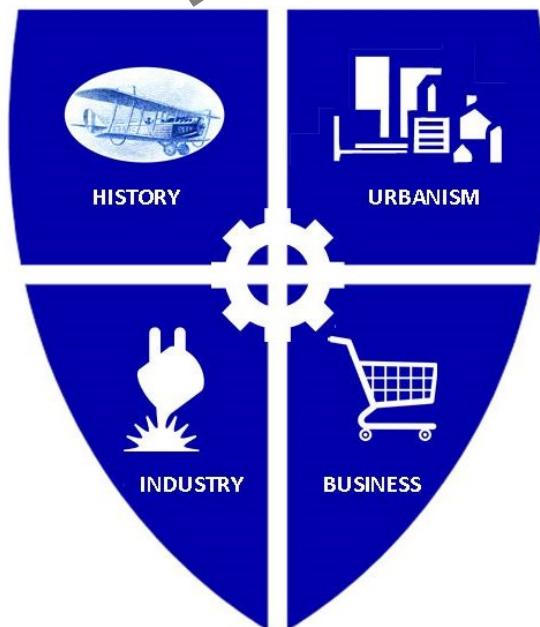
WEST HERTEL COMMUNITY PLAN



DEAR FRIENDS...

Welcome to the 2015 West Hertel Community Plan!

Travelers might think of West Hertel mostly as a means for quick access to other parts of North Buffalo via streets named Hertel, Military, and Elmwood, or to jobs or shopping or work at the Aurubis industrial facility. West Hertel is indeed all of these, but also much more. West Hertel serves as, and has always been, an engine for growth and prosperity in Buffalo. It has hosted commercial innovators and legions of workers who have made epic contributions in the fields of industry and transportation. Today West Hertel is a center of community services, shopping opportunities, Aurubis, and a huge number of job-generating small businesses. Figure 1 presents



WEST HERTEL NEIGHBORHOOD BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Figure 1: West Hertel in 2015 is reflected in this coat of arms: History is shown with the Curtiss "Jenny" airplane, produced by Curtiss Aeroplane at 2050 Elmwood at a factory which later housed Consolidated Aircraft and Bell Aircraft; Urbanism is key, as the neighborhood provides easy access to goods and services in a variety of settings; Business includes the huge retail trade presence on North Elmwood; and Industry remains strong with Aurubis as a major factory on Military, and small enterprises on Hinman. The center gear evokes the area's role as an engine, binding all elements together and also orienting outward in all directions.

a coat of arms which reflects this identity. A gear at the center reflects the area's role as an engine for growth and prosperity. It also binds key community elements together (History, Urbanism, Industry and Business) while simultaneously orienting outward in all directions.

This plan and its work products represent the first steps in raising awareness of today's West Hertel, rebranding it from a path for thru-travel to a place to where growth and prosperity come to life.

A key strategy involves reuse of many large, vacant developable parcels in West Hertel which, once filled, will add critical mass to the area's already powerful role as an engine for growth and prosperity. Development of parcels at Elmwood-Hertel, Hertel-Military, and on North Elmwood points the way. Who will benefit? Certainly business interests directly involved but also residents, as more people enjoy the convenience and value of the area's housing, and local businesses which will respond to the gravitational pull of customers to an area with increased sales. Finally, the city, county, and state will derive revenue from expanded activities in West Hertel. As a result, development, and taking the steps to facilitate it, are key recommendations in this plan.

West Hertel is not like other areas of Northwest Buffalo, and it need not be. All it needs is renewal from within to achieve even better economic and community performance. Development should combine with improved infrastructure and streetscape elements. Neighborhood stabilization work should complement the physical changes. The area's character needs to be promoted.

A bright future awaits. Business owners, residents, community leaders, and elected officials like Mayor Brown and North District Council Member Golombek are already invested. Let's build on that commitment, and keep it moving!

— Members of the 2015 West Hertel Community Plan Project Team, including Mary Ann Kedron, Margaret Szczepaniec, and members of the West Hertel Association, May, 2015

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QUICK REFERENCE PRIORITY ACTION PLAN

This matrix provides a list of key priorities, ranking a selection of Recommendations and Strategies

found in Chapter 4. It is provided here as a quick reference.

INITIATE IMMEDIATELY TO 1 YEAR:		PARTNERS
<i>Traffic Study</i>	To improve safety, slow traffic, reduce traffic backups at intersections, facilitate truck routes, and improve the experience of the street for buses, bicyclists and pedestrians on Hertel Avenue, from Delaware Ave. to Military Rd.	City of Buffalo DPW
<i>Rebecca Park Expansion</i>	The existing Rebecca Park housing development is a model for new, spacious, modern housing in Buffalo. It has kept its value over time, and represents sustainable urban design. With land available to the northeast of the current development, a concept that builds on the success of Rebecca Park and can be effectively developed.	Land owner 1525 William St., LLC
<i>Heritage Walking Trail</i>	In 2010, the Niagara River Greenway Commission approved funds for a War of 1812 Trail in Black Rock, which has brought new-found appreciation to that War of 1812, Erie Canal, and pre-Civil War community. A similar program is needed, to raise awareness of West Hertel's tremendous civic, religious, industrial, and transportation history.	BRRAlliance, Black Rock Historical Society, Funders
<i>Community Space at District-D HQ</i>	The space in front of District-D HQ is highly-visible. Adding benches and community-friendly amenities like a watering station for pets, bike rack, dog poop station, and historical/memorial markers would further enhance the community's connection with its public safety officers and send a message that the police are approachable, and a safe, livable community is a top concern.	City of Buffalo Police Department District-D
<i>Maintain Brick Streets</i>	To the east of Northwest Buffalo Community Center are several streets paved with bricks; these need upkeep, enhancement, and replacement.	City of Buffalo DPW
<i>Optimize Outdoor Recreation</i>	Enhanced outdoor recreational amenities at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center greenspaces, complemented by "Community Policing Through Environmental Design" elements like cameras and lighting could lead to healthier residents in West Hertel.	Northwest Buffalo Community Center

INITIATE IN 2-3 YEARS:		PARTNERS
<i>Aid Aurubis in Expansion</i>	Provide any needed community support to Aurubis' efforts to receive economic development assistance, so that any excess plant capacity can be put to use and new market share can be obtained.	Aurubis, Elected/Economic Dev.Officials
<i>Improve the Jasper Parrish Complex</i>	Jasper Parrish is in need of a makeover; new siding and porches are being added to the complex now. These improvements could be expanded to include (1) an integrated playground area for kids living at Jasper Parrish (with assistance from NW Buffalo Community Center), (2) a thru street for use by public safety officers, and (3) upgrades of fences. More ideas will undoubtedly come from an engaging effort to plan improvements.	BMHA, with Assistance from NW Buffalo Community Center

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CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor's Planning Alliance 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. Recognizing the value of planning at a more local, neighborhood-level, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA began a process with strong Council Member support in 2007 of creating neighborhood plans in partnership with local block groups and community groups, leading to its first draft plan in 2008, *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan* (Draft 2008), followed by, *Rediscover Riverside: 2010 Riverside Community Plan* (Draft 2010), and the 2013 Grant-Amherst Community Plan (Draft 2013). This *2015 West Hertel Community Plan* (Draft 2015) is the final plan in this 4-plan effort and it is intended to work in concert with the Buffalo Green Code, Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area, and other elements

of the City's Unified Development Ordinance.

2. History of West Hertel

As shown in Figure 2, up until and after the Civil War the neighborhood we know today as West Hertel was a sparsely populated area in comparison to its older neighbor, Black Rock. It did have some major features: the Buffalo-Niagara Falls—Lewiston Railroad ran along its western border, and parallel to the railway inland was historic Military Road. Cornelius Creek

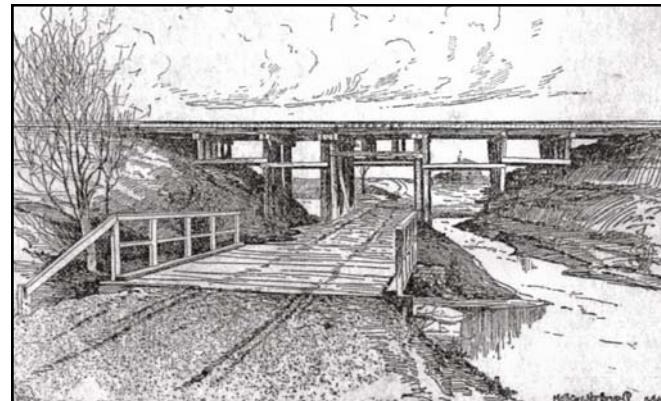


Figure 3: Hertel Avenue in 1887, looking through the Erie Trestle, and Cornelius Creek to the right. This is near the Hertel-Elmwood intersection today.

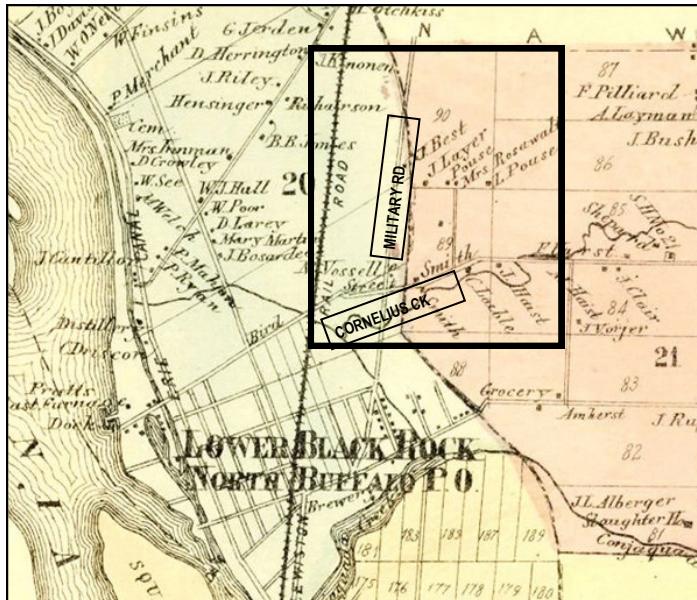


Figure 2: The inset box of this 1866 map of land owners shows what is now the West Hertel neighborhood as a sparsely settled area to the northeast of Lower Black Rock. Prominent features inside the box include the Buffalo-Niagara Falls-Lewiston Rail Road as well as Military Road running inside the left border, and Cornelius Creek running along the bottom, i.e. south of "Bird," which has become Hertel Ave. today.

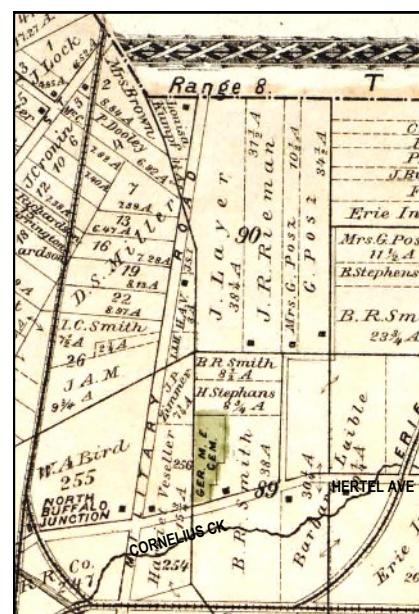


Figure 4: This 1880 ward map shows West Hertel still dominated by large landowner tracts. Elmwood Ave. does not yet extend into the area.

CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW

wound its way south of Bird Street, which was named after William A. Bird who owned a farm to the west. Bird Street is now known as Hertel Avenue: John Hertel was a businessman who opened a hotel closer to the intersection with Niagara Street in the 1870s, rose to prominence, and ran for Congress. By 1887, Hertel Avenue was described in the *Buffalo Express* east of Black Rock as “a country road. The land through which it runs is largely held by land associations and others who anticipate a rapid development of the section as a residence neighborhood. West Hertel did begin to grow rapidly around the time of World War I, as people became attracted to jobs in factories and foundries situated there and catering to the war effort.

Emblematic of the area's special industrial status is the achievement of 2050 Elmwood Ave. as the “world's largest aeroplane factory in 1917,” operating as the Main Plant of Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company. Curtiss was known for seaplanes and trainers, and large orders for its JN trainers (featured on the famous “upside down Jenny” postage stamp) and Model R scouts, combined with America's entry into World War I, resulted in multiple Curtiss factories in Buffalo: initially in a leased portion of the Thomas Power Building and then at multiple sites in and near West Hertel: on Churchill St., Austin St., Bradley St., and at the Century Telephone Building (now Foundry Lofts at 1738 Elmwood Ave.) Largest of all was the Main Plant at 2050, aka “North Elmwood,” which covered 72 acres, with 71 acres under one roof. Started in July 1917, it was in operation three months later and cost \$4,000,000.

As jobs at local factories and foundries grew, more houses were built and local Catholic leaders felt a parish was needed. The commute to Assumption Church on Amherst Street was long and often difficult. A tract of land on the corner of Hertel and St. Florian was purchased in the fall of 1917. A combination church/school building was erected. The building was dedicated on February 2, 1919. In 1963 the church broke ground for a new house of worship, and the former place of

worship was converted into classroom space for the school. (The site is now home to Renovation Church; see Figure 13)

West Hertel became an industrial powerhouse, not only for Buffalo or New York State, but for the entire country. A sampling of large factories and firms in the early 20th Century is shown in Figure 10. They include marquee names of American manufacturing in the last century. Coal and electric power companies supplied energy. Foundries provided raw goods, in companies like American Brass (now Aurubis), Strong Steel, American Magnesium, Kencroft Malleable, General Riveters, General Drop Forge, Standard Buffalo, and Continental Copper and Steel. Machine shops and manufacturers provided the finished goods, from furniture, radios and railway signals to trucks and airplanes. Aircraft manufacturers with storied names like Curtiss, Consolidated, and Bell created planes that made key contributions to our country in both peacetime and wartime. Warehouses and railways provided essential storage and shipping services.

After World War II, some industry like Bell Aircraft,



Figure 5: The caption for this image in the book *Curtiss Aircraft, 1907-1947* reads, “Air view of the Curtiss North Elmwood plant in Buffalo, NY, which was the world's largest aeroplane factory in 1917.” The vantage point is looking south, so that Hinman Ave. runs along the bottom, Elmwood is on the left, and Hertel is along the top. Erie International Rail Road is in view in an “S” shape extending from top-center to far-left. In addition to the remarkable size of the factory at 2050 Elmwood Ave., this image is notable for the modest level of other development in this part of West Hertel in 1917.

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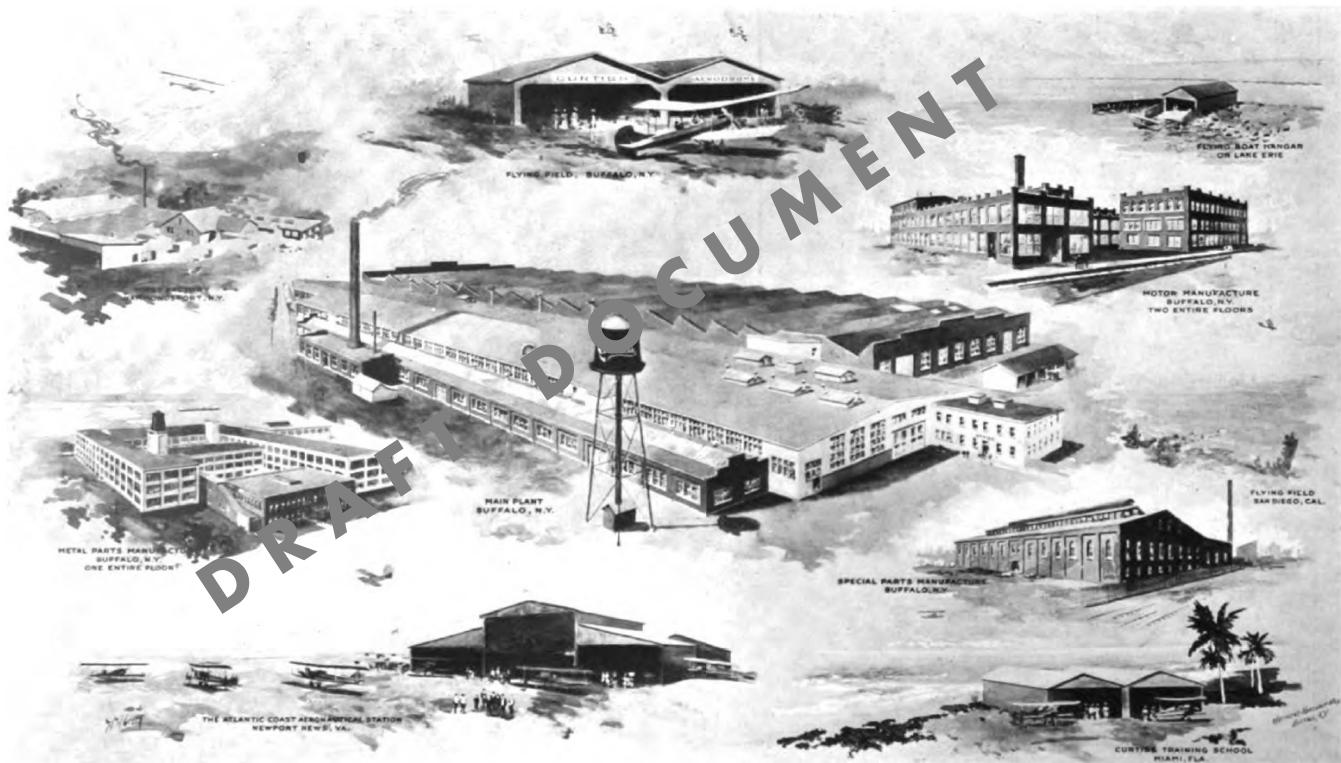


Figure 6: This collection of Curtiss factories and facilities illustrates the company's substantial presence in Buffalo and especially West Hertel at the start of World War I. Of special interest are: At center, the "Main Plant" at 2050 Elmwood Ave. and to the upper right of that the "Motor Manufacture" plant at 1738 Elmwood Ave., now Foundry Lofts.

the last aircraft builder at 2050 Elmwood, quickly closed and West Hertel began a transformation away from being an industrial center populated by the working class and primarily Polish demography to a new identity.

Challenges emerged as jobs were lost, schools closed, poverty increased, public safety issues arose, and some large parcels and buildings became vacant.

But the area's outlook began to turn positive in the 1990s with the opening of Delaware Consumer Square on former rail and factory land along the North Elmwood part of the neighborhood. Anchor retailers were joined by additional retail operations in outparcels and plazas.

3. Today's Trends

A successful transformation continues: many



Trolley-car tracks and open touring cars were part of Hertel Avenue in 1916.

Early view of the site of St. Florian's Church. Cornelius Creek is in the background.

In 1914, Charter Member, Valentine C. Szwanka, posed in his first automobile.



Figures 7-9: Images of the early years of the West Hertel neighborhood, from a parish history published by St. Florian Church.

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Factory Name	Address	Type
The American Brass Co. Buffalo Branch	Sayre & Military	Mill, Casting, Plating, etc.
Black Rock Milling Corp., Park & Pollard Co.	Foundry & Hertel	Poultry, Stock, Grain Drying
P&P Car Line Inc.	Sayre Dead End	RR Car Repair Shops
Hans Lumber & Millwork Inc.	Sayre Dead End	Woodworking
Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.	Short & Gladstone	Transformer Station
NYCRR	RR Wye South of Hertel & Foundry	Diesel and Locomotive Inspection
DLWRR Black Rock Yard & Freight Offices	North of Hertel at "Tonawanda RR"	Yard & Freight Offices
NYCRR Switch & Signal Tower	South of Hertel at "Tonawanda RR"	Switch & Signal Tower
Strong Steel Foundry Co.	Hertel & Novis	Foundry
American Magnesium Corp.	NW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Foundry
Buffalo Plywood Corp.	NW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Unspecified Factory Operation
Kencroft Malleable Co.	South Side of Hertel at Deer	Foundry
International Railway Co.	Hertel & Military	Hertel Av. Car House No. 3
Service Steel Co.	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Steel Warehouse
General Riveters Inc.	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Factory
Dow & Co. Inc.	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Construction and Industrial Equipment Sales & Service
P. Ballantine & Sons	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Beer Warehouse
Elmwood Av. Freight/Erie RR	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	RR Freight
General Drop Forge Corp.	SW Corner Elmwood & Hertel	Foundry?
Atterbury Motor Car	South Side of Hertel at Greeley	Automobile Factory
Standard Buffalo Foundry Inc.	South Side of Hertel at Greeley	Foundry
General Service Administration	2050 Elmwood	Airplane Factory
Continental Copper & Steel Industries	SW Corner Elmwood & Ramsdell	Smelting Furnaces
Kelley Electric Machine Company	Hinman west of Elmwood	Machine Shop
Atlas Pattern Works	Hinman west of Elmwood	Unspecified Factory Operation
Misc. Small Enterprises	Hinman west of Elmwood	Misc. Small Enterprises
Wire Works Woodworking	Elmwood & Ramsdell	Woodworking
Misc. Small Enterprises	Kenmore Ave.	Misc. Small Enterprises
LaSalle Courts	Kenmore Ave.	Defense Housing Project
S.B. Whistler & Sons	NW Corner Skillen & Military	Machine Shop for Dies, Tools, etc.
Bettinger Coal & Coke Corp.	South Side of Skillen	Coal Silos, etc.
Unnamed Factory Building	South Side of Skillen	Machine Shop
Military Road Industrial Center Inc.	Military (North of Chandler and RR)	Unspecified Factory Operation
General Railway Signal Co.	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Electric Railway Signals Manufacturer
Taylor Signal Co.	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Electric Railway Signals Manufacturer
Federal Radio Corp.	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Radios
Lippard-Stewart Motor Car	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Motor Car Manufacturing
Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corp.	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Airplane Motor Factory
Century Telephone Construction Co.	1738 Elmwood (fmr FWS)	Telephone Switchboards and Related Equipment Mfg
The Kittinger Furniture Company	1893 Elmwood	Manufacturers of Fine Furniture
Hall Aluminum	2050 Elmwood	Airplane Manufacturer
Consolidated Airplanes	2050 Elmwood	Airplane Manufacturer
Bell Airplanes	2050 Elmwood	Airplane Manufacturer
Gwinn Aircar	2050 Elmwood	Airplane Manufacturer airplane/car

Figure 10: A sampling of large factories and firms operating in the early 20th Century reveals both the scope of industrial activity in West Hertel and marquee names that are fixtures in the history of American manufacturing like American Brass (now Aurubis,) Curtiss, Consolidated, Bell Airplanes, Century Telephone, Taylor Signal, Kittinger Furniture and more.

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CHAPTER 1—OVERVIEW



Figure 11: This 1951 aerial shows the extent of major industry as well as the prominence of the Erie International Rail Road.

traditional assets and companies have remained strong, and new retail has brought new vibrancy to the economy. As a result, today the West Hertel neighborhood continues as an engine for growth for Buffalo and Western New York:

- West Hertel is a leading center for large-scale retail offerings. Elmwood has TOPS Markets and Target at Delaware Consumer Square, as well as Home Depot and Aldi's.
- Aurubis is one of the region's most historic, largest, and best industrial enterprises.
- Innovative small businesses populate the Hertel Commerce Park and Hinman Ave., as well as within Delaware Consumer Square.
- Essential community service assets include Police District-D headquarters, a large post



Figure 12: By 2014 retail (The Home Depot, Aldi), commercial, schools, social services, and housing complexes have replaced some industry, rail and vacant land. Other vacant parcels, however, have emerged.

office, Grabiarz School of Excellence, West Hertel Academy, Northwest Buffalo Community Center, and the Neighborhood Health Center — a federally-designated Health Center that provides services to anyone regardless of ability to pay. In addition People Inc. operates Elmwood Health Center at 2128 Elmwood Ave., Cantalician Center for Learning has adaptively reused a school at 665 Hertel Avenue, and Renovation Church has taken over the former St. Florian Roman Catholic Church at 567 Hertel Ave., thanks in large measure to the efforts of North District Council Member Joseph Golombek and the West Hertel Association.

- Convenient and affordable living can be found in old-style homes on side streets.

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- Historic buildings with high character like Houk Lofts, Foundry Lofts, and ARCO Lofts have recently emerged.
- The area has excellent access to local colleges, public transportation, highway routes, and higher-priced neighboring districts like The Museum District, Elmwood Village, Grant Amherst, Hertel Ave.'s Little Italy, and the Village of Kenmore.

West Hertel models best practices in economic transformation, i.e. how to make productive use of land in urban settings through adaptive reuse of existing structures and new construction. It has embraced its role as hosting a car-friendly, big box shopping experience rarely seen within the City of Buffalo. Meanwhile, large tracts of developable land remain for further investment.

But the preceding brief history and illustrative

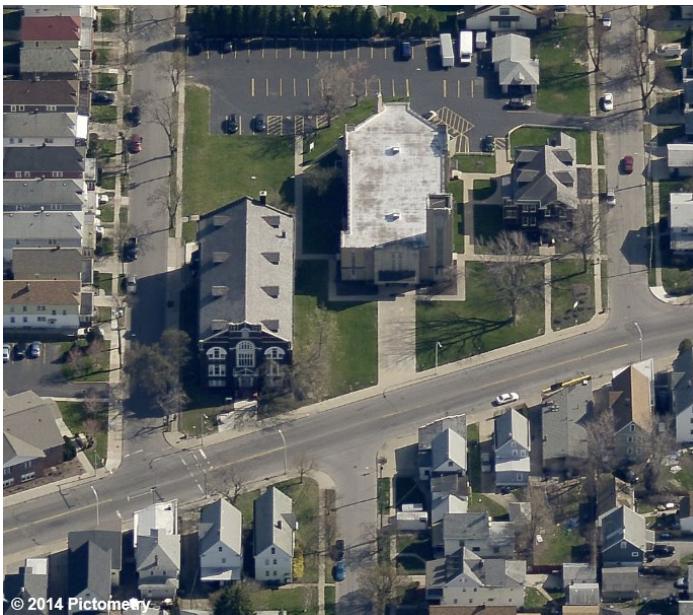


Figure 13: Reuse of the former St. Florian Roman Catholic Church campus as Renovation Church is just the latest example of how existing structures in West Hertel are being creatively transformed. While the exterior of all buildings on the campus have retained their traditional look, the interior of the church (at center) has been transformed to facilitate a less formal, more engaged worship style, and rooms in the former school (at left) are redone to send an exciting, community-building message to youth.



Figure 14: Community leaders discuss neighborhood initiatives at a recent meeting of the West Hertel Association.

statements above don't tell the whole story. Chapter 2 looks at the area's demographics, neighborhood characteristics, and specific assets both apparent and emergent. What we have heard during conversations with local leaders and in public consultations is reflected in Chapter 3. These lead to Chapter 4's Recommendations and Strategies, while "A Quick Reference Priority Action Plan" for implementation efforts covering the timeframe between now and 3 years is on Page 2.

CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

1. Geographic Area

The geographic boundaries of West Hertel are Elmwood Avenue to the east, the Tonawanda St. Rail Corridor to the west, Chandler St and the Railroad to the south, and Kenmore Avenue to the north. These boundaries respect rail line and major streets, as well as conform to the geography of Census Tract 56. (see Figure 15)

2. The Broader Context

The eastern boundary of West Hertel is Elmwood Ave., and as discussed in the previous chapter this area features a combination of historic buildings with industrial lots experiencing reuse as well as new shopping plazas which contain some of the most recent retail opportunities to come to Buffalo, plus regional shopping destinations like Home Depot, TOPS, Target, and Aldi's. Extending further east along West Hertel is North Buffalo, which is an attractive community providing a walkable traditional neighborhood shopping experience surrounded by quality residential neighborhoods.

North of the West Hertel neighborhood is Kenmore Village. In 2009 Kenmore was recognized as one of "America's Great Neighborhoods" by the American Planning Association (APA) and described as "Buffalo's first bedroom community and streetcar suburb... a quaint village with its own mayor, trustees, and police and fire departments. Here you'll find tree-lined streets and exceptional views of the Queen City's skyline."

South of West Hertel are vibrant communities that attract visitors far and wide: Grant Amherst, the Museum District, Buffalo State College, and the Elmwood Village, another of APA's America's Great Neighborhoods" designated in 2007 and described as being "at the crossroads of a historically significant parkway system and home to an impressive collection of world-class architecture, Elmwood Village is a premier urban,

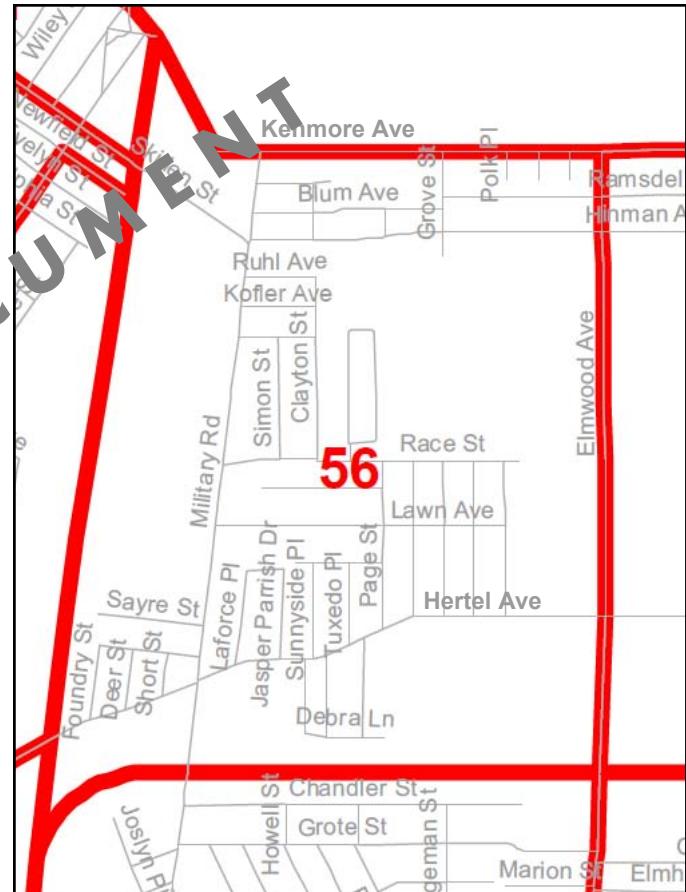


Figure 15: The geography of 2010 Census Tract 56 is shown in this map, with the southern and western boundaries formed by railways.

mixed-use neighborhood.... (selected) for its vitality, broad spectrum of cultural and social assets, and its commitment to maintaining high community standards while solving real problems."

The western boundary of West Hertel is the Tonawanda St. Rail Corridor, an active rail line which also forms the spine of the Tonawanda St. Corridor Brownfield Opportunities Area (BOA) program. This rail line acts as a significant boundary and sections off to a certain extent the four neighborhoods that comprise the Northwest Buffalo: West Hertel, Riverside, Grant Amherst and Black Rock. A handful of east-west traversing roadways provide access between the neighborhoods to the east of the rail line (West

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CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Hertel and Grant Amherst) and those west of the rail line (Riverside and Black Rock). In addition, a recreational trail called the Jesse Kregal Pathway, Scajaquada Creek, and the NY-198 expressway, all located in Grant Amherst just to the south of the West Hertel neighborhood, provide east-west travelways.

3. Demographics

Community demographics provided by the U.S. Census help profile the current makeup of West Hertel and the trends influencing its future.

The following section provides a discussion of demographic data for 1990, 2010, and 2013 (est.) in relation to West Hertel (Census Tract 56) and the City and County overall.

As shown in Figure 16, the overall population of West Hertel fell only 1% between 1990 and 2010. The 2013 5-Year estimate from the American

Community Survey indicates that the population level remains stable. What is different is the racial and ethnic mix of the community. We see a 36% decrease in White between 1990 and 2010, with a significant increase in Blacks, Hispanics and others. Blacks more than doubled between 1990 and 2010, and Hispanics increased from 142 in 1990 to nearly 1,000 in 2010; both retained similar levels to 2010 in 2013. This has changed the diversity of the community, with it reflecting a distribution more typical City of Buffalo overall.

The population is younger on average than 20 years ago. There is also an increase the number of Foreign Born residents, doubling between 1990 and 2010, and continuing to increase dramatically since 2010 to 569 today, or 14% of the total population. Welcoming and integrating new arrivals into the life of West Hertel is an important part of future efforts.

There just over 2,000 housing units in this

	1990		2010		Change		2013 Est.	
W. Hertel (Census Tract 56)								
Population	4,219		4,182		(37)	-1%	4,176	
White	3,566	85%	2,271	54%	(1,295)	-36%	2,254	54%
Black	487	12%	1,125	27%	638	131%	1,136	27%
Other	166	4%	786	19%	620	373%	786	19%
Hispanic	142	3%	975	23%	833	587%	942	23%
Under 18	1,021	24%	1,184	28%	163	16%	988	24%
18 to 64	2,439	58%	2,578	62%	139	6%	2,828	68%
65 and over	759	18%	420	10%	(339)	-45%	360	9%
Foreign Born	204	5%	415	10%	211	103%	569	14%
Housing units	2,080		2,022		(58)	-3%	2,024	
Occupied	1,875	90%	1,782	88%	(93)	-5%	1,714	85%
Owner	770	41%	653	37%	(117)	-15%	609	36%
Renter	1,105	59%	1,129	63%	24	2%	1,105	64%
Vacant	205	10%	240	12%	35	17%	310	15%
Other vacant	118	58%	107	45%	(11)	-9%	193	62%

Figure 16: Census data for Population and Housing Units 1990 vs 2010, and 2013 (Est.)

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community. The good news is that the number of housing units has remained stable and occupancy rates are favorable: 85% of units are occupied. There are nearly twice as many renters as owners. One cause for concern is the rising number of vacant housing units and increasing numbers of those characterized as "Other vacant". These are often abandoned homes, since they are not for sale or rent, or the elderly occupant has moved away. (For more on "Other vacant," visit <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/h-21-13-01.pdf>) However, it is important to note that both statistics, Vacant and Other Vacant, are at lower levels in West Hertel than the average citywide, and many of these vacancies are attributable to large public (BMHA's Super Parrish and LaSalle Courts) and private (Hertel Homes, LLC) housing complexes and the fact that many owners of doubles have an unoccupied flat by choice. Nevertheless, finding ways to keep landlord properties in good shape and reduce the likelihood of vacant and abandoned properties are important ways to safeguard the future condition and livability of residential areas.

Figure 17 shows that the median value of housing in this community is rebounding from a sharp drop between 1990 and 2010. In constant 2013 dollars, the median value was \$86,921 in 1990 versus \$59,397 in 2010. The median value of housing in West Hertel is now \$64,800.

2010 also signaled an era when housing was increasingly expensive in West Hertel for lower income families, with more mortgages and more instances where 30% or more of income went to housing or rent. These rates have eased in recent years, which is good news.

Meanwhile, rent in constant 2013 dollars has steadily increased from 1990, from \$406 then to \$576 in 2010, and recently rising to \$593 in 2013.

The fact that more and more families are going without having a vehicle indicates that public transportation and Complete Streets are an important part of West Hertel's future. Thirty percent of households now have no vehicle available.

	1990		2010		Change		2013 Est.	
W. Hertel (Census Tract 56)								
Housing units	2,080		2,008		(72)	-3%	2,024	
1960 or later	292	14%	518	26%	226	77%	388	19%
1940 to 1959	790	38%	641	32%	(149)	-19%	867	43%
1939 or earlier	998	48%	849	42%	(149)	-15%	769	38%
Median value (2013\$)	\$86,921		\$59,397		(\$27,524)	-32%	\$64,800	
Units with a mortgage	215		329		114	53%	417	
30% or more for housing	53	25%	156	47%	103	194%	91	22%
Median gross rent (2013\$)	\$406		\$576		\$170	42%	\$593	
Units paying rent	1,096		915		(181)	-17%	1,105	
30% or more for rent	503	46%	546	60%	43	9%	526	48%
Households	1,875		1,594		(281)	-15%	1,714	
No vehicle available	132	7%	480	30%	348	264%	513	30%

Figure 17: Census data for Housing and Households in 1990 vs 2010, and 2013 (Est.)

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	1990		2010		Change	2013 Est.	
W. Hertel (Census Tract 56)							
Population 25+	2,793		2,257		(536) -19%	2,625	
Less than high school	1,043	37%	510	23%	533 -51%	235	9%
High school	1,675	60%	1,501	67%	(174) -10%	727	28%
Bachelors or higher	275	10%	246	11%	(29) -11%	593	23%
Population 16+	3,320		2,683		(637) -19%	3,344	
In labor force	1,793	54%	1,545	58%	(248) -14%	2,013	60%
Unemployed	167	5%	256	10%	89 53%	218	7%
Family	1,335		1,012		(73) -7%	1,064	
Below poverty level	292	27%	374	37%	82 28%	328	31%
Median Family income ('13\$)	\$31,980		\$24,882		(\$7,098) -22%	\$31,607	

Figure 18: Census data for Education, Work and Income in 1990 vs 2010, and 2013 (Est.)

Figure 18 reveals that, among the number of adults aged 25+, the percent with less than a high school diploma has shrunk, indicating a better educated population is available to support revitalization.

The dip in family fortunes between 1990 and 2010 is also reflected in rates of unemployment, the number of families living below poverty level, and median family income. In 2010 the unemployment rate was 10%, double that of 1990 (5%). It has improved recently to 7%. In 2010 more families (37%) lived in poverty than in 1990 (27%) or in 2013 (31%). Median family income in 2010 (\$24,882) was far less in 2013 dollars than in 1990 (\$31,980) or recently in 2013 (\$31,607). It is good to see recovery underway.

4. Neighborhood Characteristics

There is no better lens in which to see conditions at the street level than to explore the neighborhood in person. On June 17, 2014 and again on July 11, 2014, Community Planner Bill Parke conducted a windshield survey of conditions throughout the West Hertel neighborhood's publicly-accessible spaces. A map of parcel boundaries with property addresses overlaid over a background of aerial photography was used. Each parcel was reviewed. Marks on



Figures 19 and 20: On left, a truck is parked on the front lawn. On right, a driver leaves his keys in the ignition while visiting a convenience store. *Takeaway:* Laxity in obeying laws invites criminal mischief in others.



Figures 21 and 22: On left, a business emphasizes its side entrance over its front. On right, a house on the corner lot is left untended, with high grass and shrubs. *Takeaway:* Appearances make a big impact.



Figures 23 and 24: On left, a house remains boarded up after a fire. On right, a streetside memorial tied to a pole catches the eye amidst unkempt lawns. *Takeaway:* Visual blight should not endure and spread.

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Figures 25 and 26: A house in the otherwise high-demand Rebecca Park neighborhood shows signs of vacancy. *Takeaway:* Recognize such assets and support them.



Figures 27: A walker (shown at far right in this photograph, past the sidewalk user and in front of white car) uses a cut-thru to cross private property, which is for sale. *Takeaway:* Encourage respect for private property, and restore a sense of safety for property owners and pedestrians using sidewalks alike.



Figures 28: A stroller is guided by a pedestrian down Laforce Pl. using the street, even though sidewalks are available on either side of the street. *Takeaway:* Infrastructure improvements to ensure safety for all users are worthy investments. At the same time, education campaigns can promote good pedestrian habits.

the map identified unusual conditions, and in certain cases photos were taken.

This windshield survey yielded a favorable impression of residential areas overall. Nevertheless, there were some instances where standards and codes were not being followed, good practices were not kept up, and assets needed strengthening. Work by the West Hertel Association with property owners to address these situations could bring about a better appearance to the neighborhood. These situations are illustrated in Figures 19-28, with each accompanied by "Takeaway" observations.

5. Current Land Use Patterns

As shown in Figure 29, land use patterns in West Hertel still largely reflect the area's industrial and transportation heritage of a century ago, with large parcels bordering clusters of residential development and corridors of commercial enterprises. Railways also appear at the edges. It is clear that West Hertel is a working community, where traditionally workers were able to live near their jobs, and now automobiles are used along major streets to conveniently access the amenities in demand today.

Specifically, along Hertel Avenue can be found a mix of commercial properties, public and private community service properties and pockets of residential and vacant properties.

On Elmwood Avenue are large commercial and vacant properties, most formerly industrial.

Along Hinman Avenue are moderately and small sized commercial properties with pockets of residential homes. (Note: BMHA's large LaSalle Courts housing complex between Blum and Kenmore along Grove is shown as commercial in Figure 29.)

Skillen St. is host to large commercial and industrial users, and the enormous Aurubis

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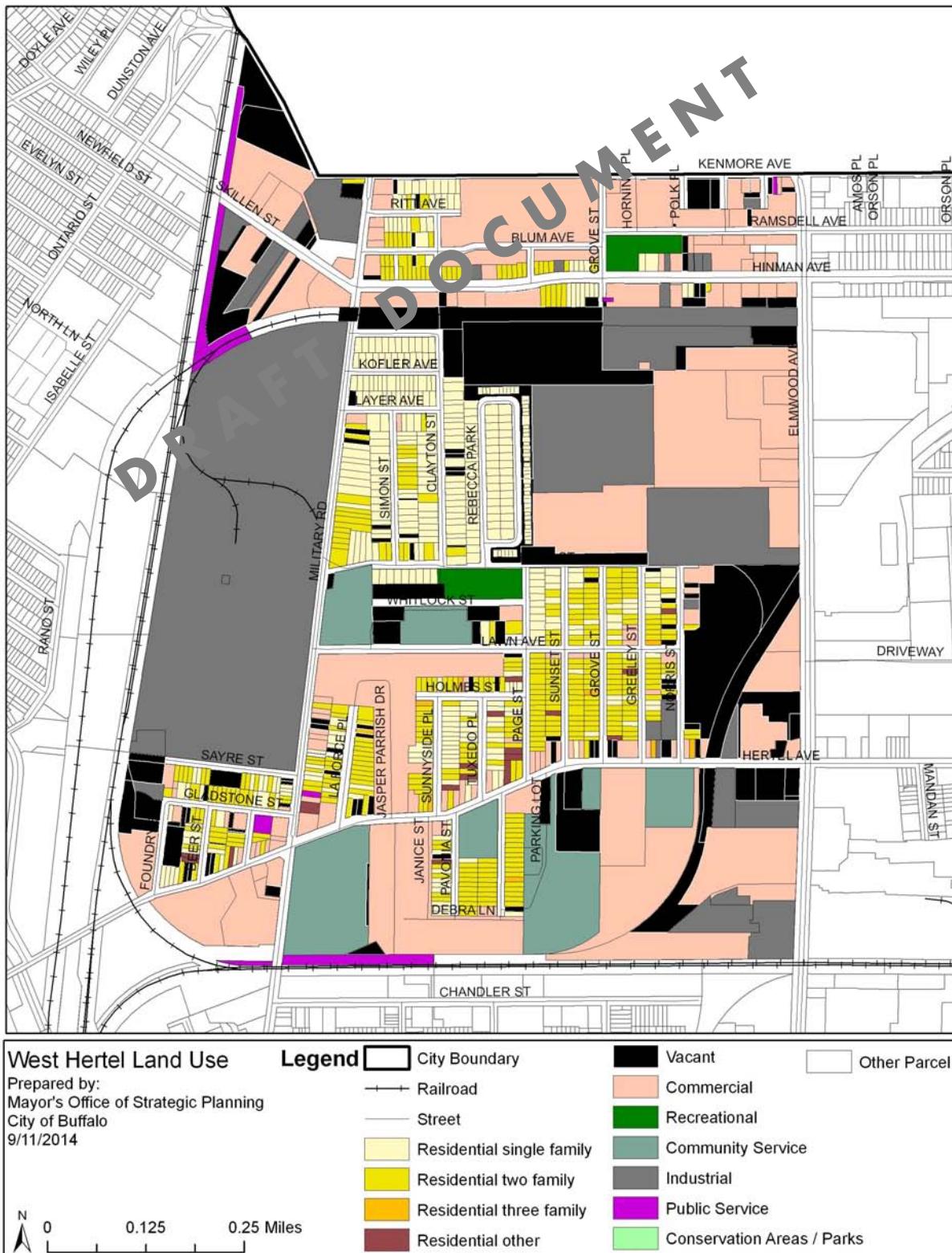


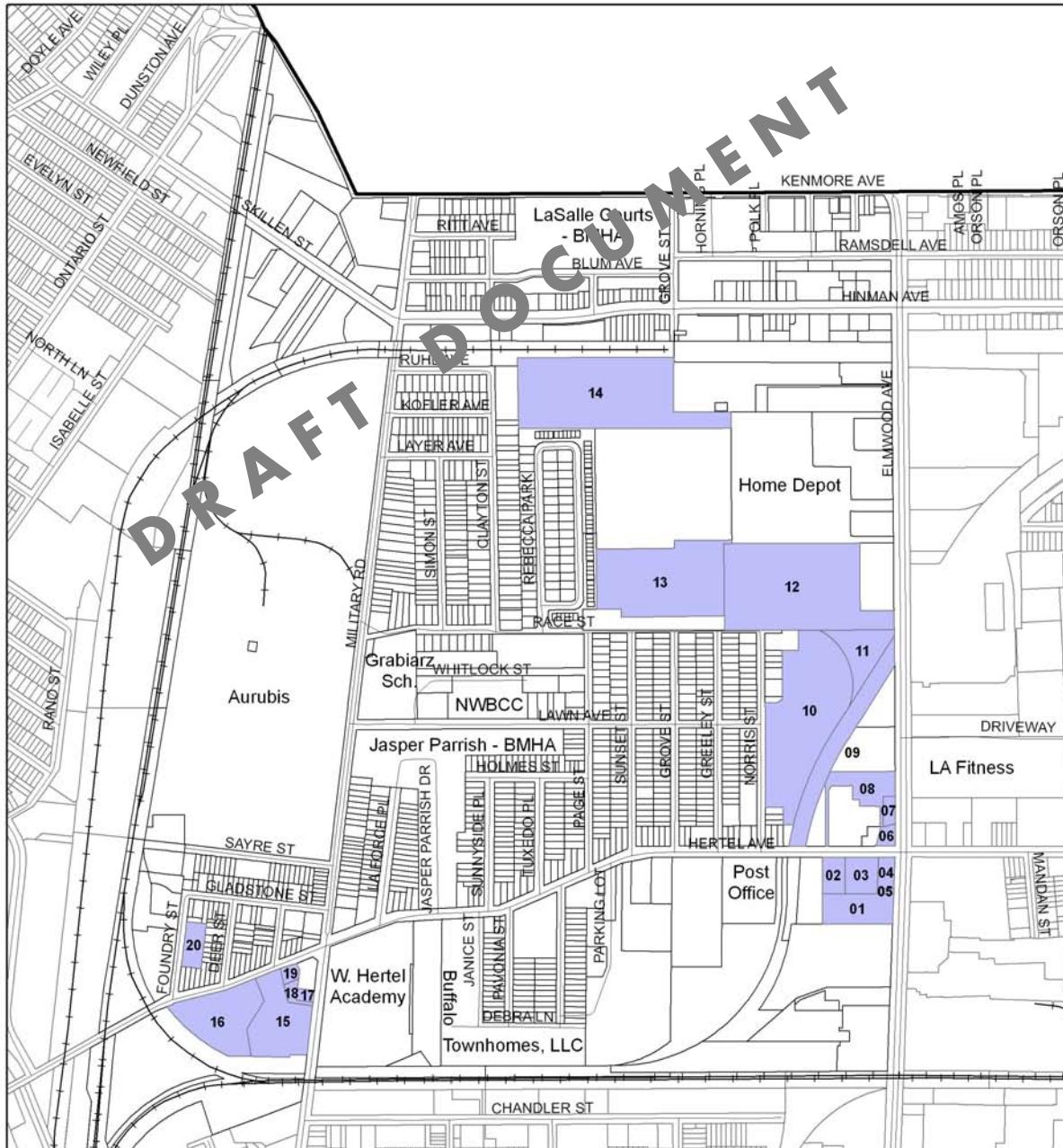
Figure 29: West Hertel Land Use map.

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Large Underutilized Parcels

Prepared by:
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning
City of Buffalo
2/1/2015



0

0.125

0.25 Miles

Legend

- Large Underutilized Parcel
- West Hertel Parcel (in Census Tract 56)
- Other Parcel
- Railroad
- Street

Figure 30: Large Underutilized Parcels in West Hertel.

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NUMBER	ADDRESS	OWNER	OWNER ADDRESS	OWNER CITY	CALCACRES
01	1820 ELMWOOD	JFD HOLDING L P	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	1.8
02	773 HERTEL	DENI FRANK; DENI JENNIE	20 NORRIS ST	BUFFALO NY	0.7
03	785 HERTEL	JFD HOLDINGS L.P.	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	1.0
04	1854 ELMWOOD	JFD HOLDINGS L.P.	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	0.4
05	1822 ELMWOOD	DENI FRANK; DENI JENNIE	20 NORRIS ST	BUFFALO NY	0.1
06	770 HERTEL	D3 ELMWOOD NORTH, LLC	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	0.3
07	1876 ELMWOOD	D3 ELMWOOD NORTH, LLC	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	0.3
08	1880 ELMWOOD	D3 ELMWOOD NORTH, LLC	20 NORRIS	BUFFALO NY	1.6
09	750 HERTEL	FAST FLANGE INC	1930 ELMWOOD AVE	BUFFALO NY	3.1
10	35 NORRIS	JFD HOLDINGS LP	20 NORRIS ST	BUFFALO NY	8.6
11	1984 ELMWOOD	JFD HOLDINGS LP	20 NORRIS ST	BUFFALO NY	1.8
12	2020 ELMWOOD	SRK 2020 ELMWOOD ASSOCIATES	4053 MAPLE RD	AMHERST NY	10.3
13	2000 ELMWOOD	2000 ELMWOOD, LLC	PO BOX 2594	NIAGARA FALLS NY	7.4
14	2030 ELMWOOD	1525 WILLIAM STREET LLC	1530 PENNSYLVANIA AVE	BROOKLYN NY	9.9
15	409 HERTEL	ADORNETTO PE FRN	276 MILITARY	BUFFALO	3.2
16	357 HERTEL	HERTEL WAREHOUSE INC., C/O ATTN: MORGAN MATERIALS INC	PO BOX 68	BUFFALO NY	3.5
17	320 MILITARY	THUNDER BAY HOLDING COMPANY	43 COURT ST	BUFFALO NY	0.2
18	204 MILITARY	THUNDER BAY HOLDING COMPANY	43 COURT ST	BUFFALO NY	0.2
19	427 HERTEL	THUNDER BAY HOLDING COMPANY	43 COURT ST	BUFFALO NY	0.2
20	15 FOUNDRY	SANTINO CAMPANELLA	1250 BROADWAY	BUFFALO NY	0.7

Figure 31: List of properties which correspond to those on the Large Underutilized Parcels map on in Figure 30.

enterprise is in evidence south of there along Military Road.

Community Services are found along Lawn Ave., with the BMHA's Jasper Parrish housing project along the southern side of Lawn Ave. (appearing in the map as a commercial land use.)

Residential clusters can be found along Military, east of BMHA's Jasper Parrish housing project, and south of Hertel Avenue around Renovation Church.

6. Large Acreage Vacant Land Groups

Figure 30 reveals an important opportunity to the future of West Hertel. Clusters of vacant land or large underutilized parcels can be seen, and in most instances they are contiguous. In fact, an analysis of parcels in this community using GIS mapping reveals 55 acres of vacant/underutilized land in the neighborhood. In addition to sharing boundaries, much of this land is at very prominent intersections or in commercial corridors: Elmwood & Hertel, North Elmwood, and Military & Hertel.

Unified Development Ordinance

Urban Core (N-1)

- N-1D (Downtown Hub)
- N-1C (Mixed-Use Core)
- N-1S (Secondary Employment Center)

Urban Center (N-2)

- N-2C (Mixed-Use Center)
- N-2E (Mixed-Use Edge)
- N-2R (Residential)

Urban Neighborhood (N-3)

- N-3C (Mixed-Use Center)
- N-3E (Mixed-Use Edge)
- N-3R (Residential)

Urban Edge (N-4)

- N-4-30 (Single Family)
- N-4-50 (Single Family)

Open Space

- D-OS (Square)
- D-OG (Green)
- D-ON (Natural)

Campus

- D-R (Residential Campus)
- D-E (Educational Campus)
- D-M (Medical Campus)

Employment

- D-S (Retail Strip)
- D-C (Flex Commercial)
- D-IL (Light Industrial)
- D-IH (Heavy Industrial)

Corridor

- C-R (Rail Corridor)
- Metro Rail
- Waterfront



Figure 32: The Green Code is a historic update of Buffalo's development framework. Its draft zones for West Hertel are shown above, as of early 2015.

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#14 on the list and map above is somewhat removed from roadways, offering a master-planned-type development alternative to the other sites.

The strength of the neighborhood's retail, commercial, and industrial operations and proximity to Buffalo State College and other assets also mean that these properties, many of which are owned by the same owner, can link readily to nearby markets.

7. New Zoning, through the Buffalo Green Code

Zoning is designed to guide development by specifying what can and can't be built on a given piece of land. The Buffalo Green Code, through the soon-to-be-finalized Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), is the city's first comprehensive zoning rewrite since 1953 and codifies the land use policies of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan and Buffalo Green Code planning documents. It combines land use, subdivision, and public realm (e.g.; streets, parks, and sidewalks) standards into a single, user-friendly document.

The Code implements the community's vision for the development of the city, arrived at through significant public engagement, including meetings with the West Hertel Association, business owners, residents, and other stakeholders. As a "form-based code" it emphasizes neighborhood character as its organizing principle. This approach was chosen because of its unique capacity to help realize the community's vision for walkable, transit-supportive neighborhoods.

The West Hertel neighborhood can take considerable pride in how the Code balances commercial, industrial, residential interests and community amenities. At the same time, working with the city in future years to bring this vision to reality on the ground will be a key shared responsibility.



Figure 33: Traffic counts (with year) for specific road segments obtained from GBNRTC.org reveal very well-travelled major routes in West Hertel.

8. Street Width, Traffic, and Connectivity

The city's *Index of Paved Streets* (1983) provides street width measurements on a overall basis for segments of the major routes through West Hertel. Specifically:

- Hertel Ave. Foundry-Military is 50-feet in width, and Hertel Ave. Military-Delaware is 66'.
- Elmwood Ave. Amherst-City Line is 99'.
- Military Rd. Chandler-City Line is 66'.
- Kenmore Ave. width varies.

The driving experience of roadways in West Hertel seems to indicate that they are sufficiently wide and engineered for heavy use by trucks and automobiles. Traffic counts taken in 2010-2011 by the region's transportation planning agency, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), indicate robust use of the major roadways in West Hertel, as shown in Figure 33. Specifically, traffic on Elmwood is approximately 20,000 vehicles per day, while on Hertel the number varies from 11,000 just east of Military to 17,000 just east of Elmwood. Meanwhile, over 15,000 vehicles

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traverse Military Road near Aurubis daily.

What is of concern is how well other users of roadways are faring.

Pedestrians have very limited street crossing opportunities, with very long blocks a frequent characteristic of the major streets of Military, Hertel, Elmwood and Kenmore along with only occasional traffic signals.

Those using bus stops and bus shelters are exposed to the environmental effects of heavy traffic conditions.

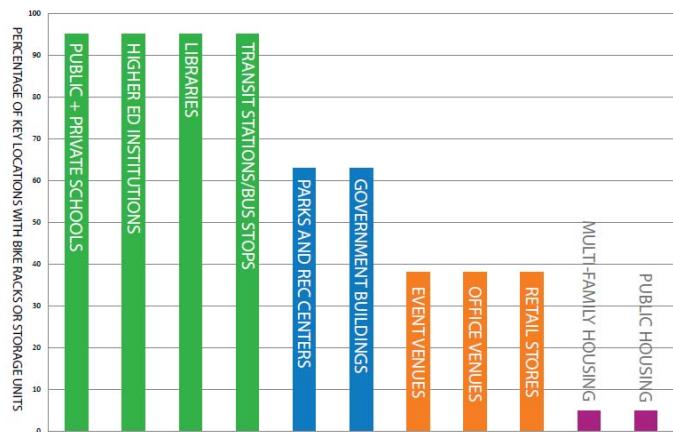
The needs of bicyclists have recently been documented as part of the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan: Technical Memorandum#1: Existing Conditions Assessment* (2014). Considering the area's growing foreign born population (14% are foreign born in 2013), high level of residents without access to a private automobile (30% in 2013), and low income levels (31% of families below poverty level in 2013), West Hertel is well positioned to benefit from improvements in bicycle transportation infrastructure.

The 10 goals of the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan* dovetail nicely with the needs and opportunities of West Hertel:

- Safety:** Improve the comfort and safety of a wide range of bicyclists.
- Create Complete Streets:** Help to improve accessibility for all modes of transportation, not just bicyclists.
- Revitalization/Economic Development:** Enhance the ongoing revitalization of Buffalo.
- Connectivity to Existing Bicycle Facilities:** Connect directly to existing shared use paths or other bicycle facilities.
- Accessibility to Underserved Communities:** Provide a viable means of transportation to traditionally underserved communities by connecting residents to Live, Learn, Work and Play

destinations.

- Create Linkages to Destinations:** Provide linkage to transit stations and/or key commercial, night-life, cultural or open space destinations.
- Improve Safe Routes to School:** Create safer off-road and on-street bicycle connections to schools for students of all ages.
- Complement the City's Reconstruction or Repaving List:** Incorporate dedicated bicycle improvements into the City's current list of reconstruction, repaving or restriping projects
- Political + Community Support:** Recommend improvements that have wide support among 1) elected officials, 2) City staff, 3) bike advocates and 4) community groups to ensure that recommendations are politically viable and endorsed by the community.
- Cost + Engineering Challenges:** Identify projects that offer few engineering challenges and are of relatively low cost so that the network can be expanded rapidly (e.g. a street wide enough to accommodate bicycle facilities within the existing right-of-way.)



The chart above shows the percentages of bike racks in Buffalo by location type. These numbers are averages for the location type. (source: BFC Application)

Figure 34: Only 5% of Multi-Family Housing and Public Housing in Buffalo have bike racks or storage units for bicycles. Both types of housing are in abundance in West Hertel, so investigating how these deficiencies apply to West Hertel is recommended.

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Figure 35: According to the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan*, there is a dearth of bicycle facilities in West Hertel. None of the facilities found in other parts of Buffalo exist in West Hertel.



Figure 37: The *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan* sees potential for bicycle facilities on Elmwood Ave. and Kenmore Ave., as well as road diet changes to West Hertel.



Figure 36: A Gap Analysis in the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan* indicates Corridor Gaps exist on Elmwood Ave., Hertel Ave., and Hinman Ave., an Infrastructure Barrier is formed by rail lines along the Tonawanda St. rail corridor to the west, and a Land Use Gap is present in the North Elmwood area.

The *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan* identifies a number of potential or real inadequacies of the bicycle infrastructure in West Hertel.

One potential inadequacy has to do with the tendency in Buffalo for there to be insufficient bike racks for locations of Multi-Family Housing and Public Housing, both of which are in abundance in West Hertel. Figure 34 shows that only 5% of these locations have bike racks or storage units. There is a lack of existing bicycle facilities (bike



Figure 38: This map from the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan* shows bicycle and vehicle crashes in West Hertel. According to the plan, "The data was gathered through NYSDOT's Accident Location Information Service (ALIS) Database. The crashes analyzed occurred between February 2011 and December 2013, representing about 3 years of crash data."

lanes, shared lane markings, shared use paths, and bike/pedestrian overpasses) in West Hertel, as shown in Figure 35. Meanwhile, West Hertel has been identified as containing Corridor Gaps, an Infrastructure Barrier formed by the rail lines of the Tonawanda St. rail corridor, and a Land Use Gap, as shown in Figure 36. As a result, several improvements to bicycle infrastructure are possible, according to the Bikespace Analysis Map of the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan*, shown above in Figure 37:

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Figure 39: According to the *Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan*, there is a lack of bicycle facilities in West Hertel. None of the facilities found in other parts of Buffalo exist in West Hertel.

- New bicycle facilities for Elmwood Ave. from Amherst St. to Kenmore Ave., as well as Kenmore Ave. itself. “Bicycle facilities” refers to bike lanes, shared lane markings, bike paths, or bike/pedestrian overpasses.
- Hertel Ave., especially west of Elmwood Ave., is a candidate for road diet based on an analysis of feasibility referencing traffic volume.

Finally, an analysis of bicycle and vehicle crash locations shown in Figure 38 indicates that Hertel near St. Florian is a street “that crashes tend to occur on and near.” This applies to the intersections of Elmwood-Hertel, Military-Hertel, and Skillen-Military, and Hertel Avenue west of St. Florian. “This map will inform network-planning recommendations so that streets with a high crash risk are addressed.”

In addition to improving network quality for bicyclists, what are the kind of improvements that might apply to these intersections and streets? First, it is important to also understand the importance of these streets not only to individual users but also to commercial interests. Hertel

Avenue runs east-west through this community and represents a way to bring goods and services from Niagara Street and the I-190 Niagara Thruway to the community and into North Buffalo. Elmwood Avenue runs along the eastern side of the community and gives community access to major commercial activities. Military Road runs through the western side of the community and links industry and schools to the community, as does Kenmore Ave. in the north. In fact, the city’s Truck Routes in the West Hertel neighborhood shown in Figure 40 reveals that Hertel Ave. is a truck route. In the map’s full dimension, the truck route actually runs the entire length of Hertel Ave., from Main St. in the east to I-190 in the west. Second, it is important to keep in mind the growing diversity of the area’s inhabitants, as detailed in previous pages.

The kind of improvements needed are revealed in a recent updated report, *The Innovative DOT Handbook* (3rd ed., January 2015), prepared by Smart Growth America and the State Smart Transportation Initiative. Examples include:

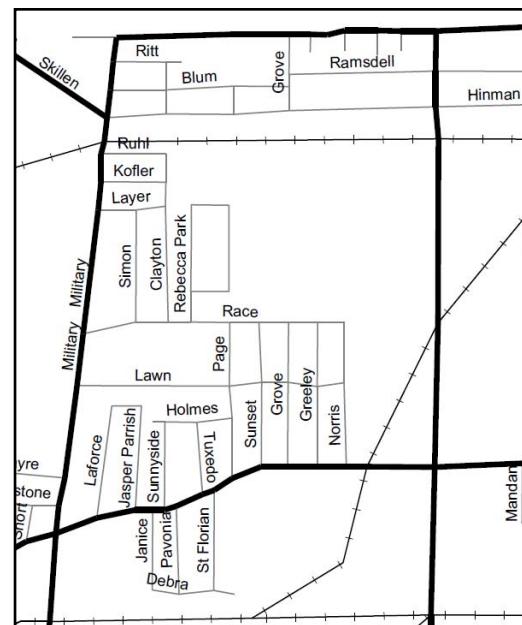


Figure 40: Truck Routes in West Hertel are Elmwood Ave., Kenmore Ave., Military Rd., and Hertel Ave., and are represented in this map with bold lines.

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For buses:

- Timing traffic signals to prioritize bus movement at intersections like Hertel-Elmwood and Hertel-Military.
- Real time arrival prediction displays at bus stops.

For all users:

- Complete Streets for all road users, including clearly marked crosswalks and bike lanes. These features will benefit both the road using public (drivers of autos, trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians) and local retail establishments. A 2013 report by NYC DOT provides evidence that improved accessibility and a welcoming

street environment created by Complete Streets projects generates *increases in retail sales in project areas*. In addition, research by the Cockrell School of Engineering (2006) has shown that striping bike lanes makes the road safer for motorists as well as bicyclists.

9. Rail Lines

The rail lines in this community represent both strengths and weaknesses.

As barriers, they have eroded neighborhood cohesiveness, isolating the West Hertel community from others. Some community members have improvised with paths and shortcuts. These are dangerous because parts of the rail lines are working railroads and are also characterized by relative isolation.

Rail lines also represent strength and opportunity, because they have potential for servicing new industries using greener transportation along existing rail lines and the potential for light rail rapid transit with stops in this neighborhood. Finally, former rail lines, as suggested in the development scenarios provided as part of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) studies, can conceivably be used for recreational trails. But the possibilities don't stop there: MassDOT, for example, has demonstrated a commitment to its state's rails-to-trails program by issuing a policy in 2013 to permit the shared use of rail rights-of-way by rail lines and bicycle paths, provided the two uses are separated by appropriate fencing. (See Focus Area 5 of *The Innovative DOT Handbook*.) With current or former rail lines making up three of the four edges of the West Hertel neighborhood (see Figure 41), this example presents a very interesting concept for further exploration.

10. Brownfields

In July 2014, the City of Buffalo issued a "Working Draft" of its Tonawanda Street Corridor

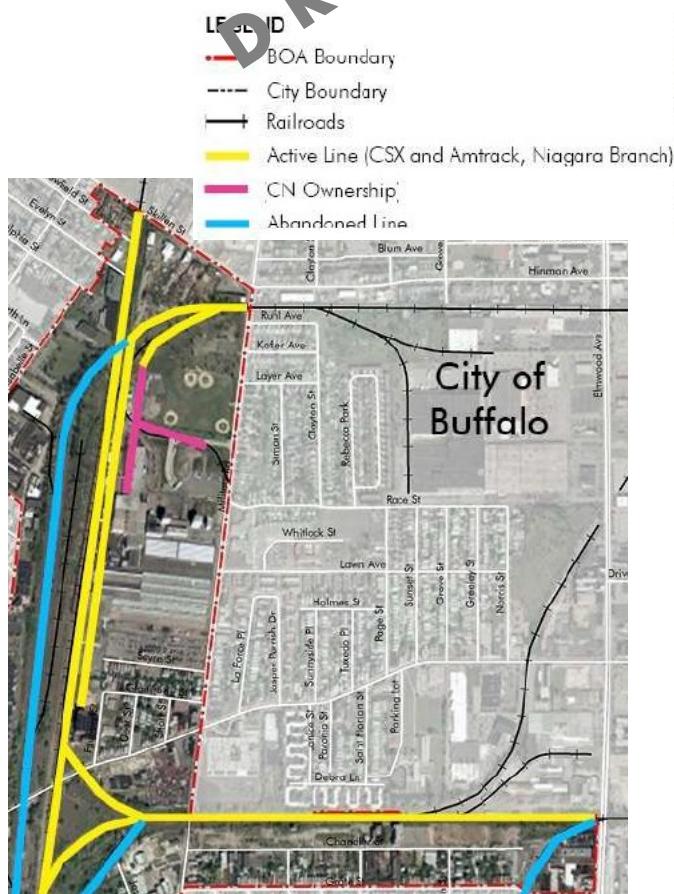


Figure 41: Active and inactive rail lines help form three of the four edges of the West Hertel neighborhood (north, south, and west), and represent interesting opportunities for both industrial development using greener transportation as well as recreational trails, and potentially both simultaneously with proper fencing. (Map source: Tonawanda St. BOA Nomination Document—Working Draft, July, 2014.)

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Brownfields Opportunity Area (TSC BOA) Nomination document. The BOA is a state-sponsored program to encourage the reuse of existing brownfields through inventory, analysis, and planning. At the end of this process, strategic sites are identified for remediation and reuse; however, even if a brownfield in the TSC BOA is not a strategic site, the inventory, analysis, and planning (as well as certain tax benefits) that it provides are of value to property owners as well as the host neighborhoods for those brownfields. West Hertel is one of those host neighborhoods; part of it is in the northeastern boundary of the TSC BOA. (see Figure 42)

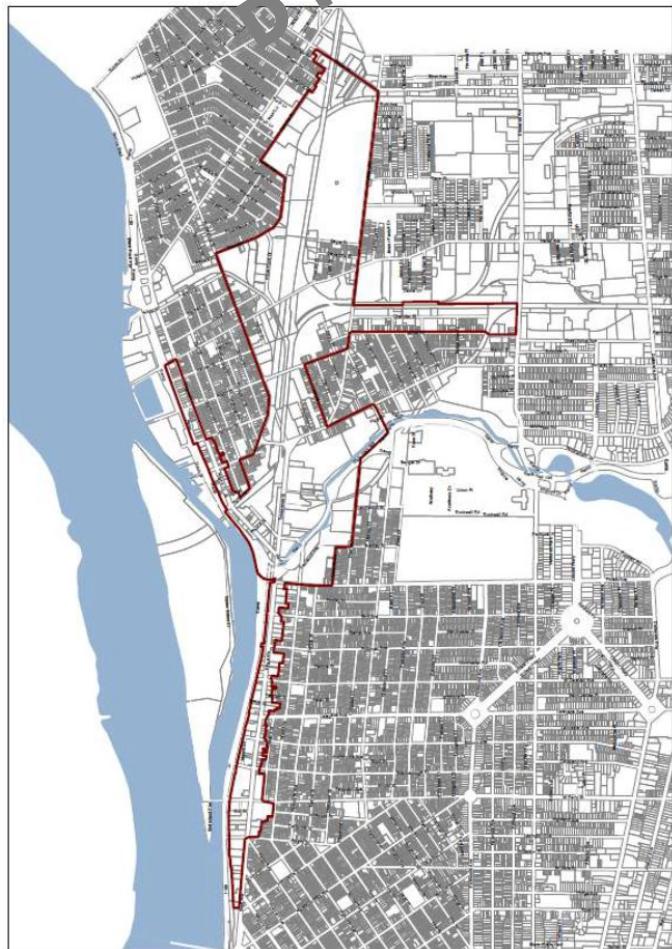


Figure 42: The boundary of the Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area (TSC BOA). Part of West Hertel (i.e. west of Military Road) is inside the northeast corner of the TSC BOA.

The TSC BOA encompasses 650 acres in the northwest section of the city. The document provides a planning overview, a community vision, goals and objectives, and useful assessment of the regional and local context and trends. It goes beyond that, however, to furnish an up-to-date inventory for properties within the TSC BOA boundary that can “provide a better understanding of existing conditions; clarify the regulatory framework; recognize opportunities and potential barriers to redevelopment; and identify assets and opportunities that can leverage investments.” The inventory includes: Natural Resources, Infrastructure, Transportation, Parks and Open Space, Archeological/Historical Resources, Land Use, Zoning, and Ownership, Key Buildings and Major Facilities (including the Aurubis complex), Vacant Structures (including those on the southwest side part of the Military-Hertel intersection and those on Skillen), Vacant Sites, Potential Brownfields, and Proposed Place Types and Zoning Changes. In addition, three Scenarios for future development are presented:

1. Industrial Expansion and Intensification
2. Employment Diversification
3. Campus, Mixed Employment, and Residential

These Scenarios are opportunities to further explore what different types of development may look like for parcels in the TSC BOA.

At this point, strategic areas within the BOA that were identified based on a number of criteria including existing land use, site access, and proximity to community assets do not include parcels within the West Hertel neighborhood. However, one of the strategic sites is the Free Trade Zone area along River Rock Drive and Rano St. These sites are just west of the West Hertel neighborhood and as such they do represent important nearby assets. And it is important to remember that all parcels within the boundary can benefit from BOA program tax advantages and the various analyses, including those that identify Aurubis as a Key Building and

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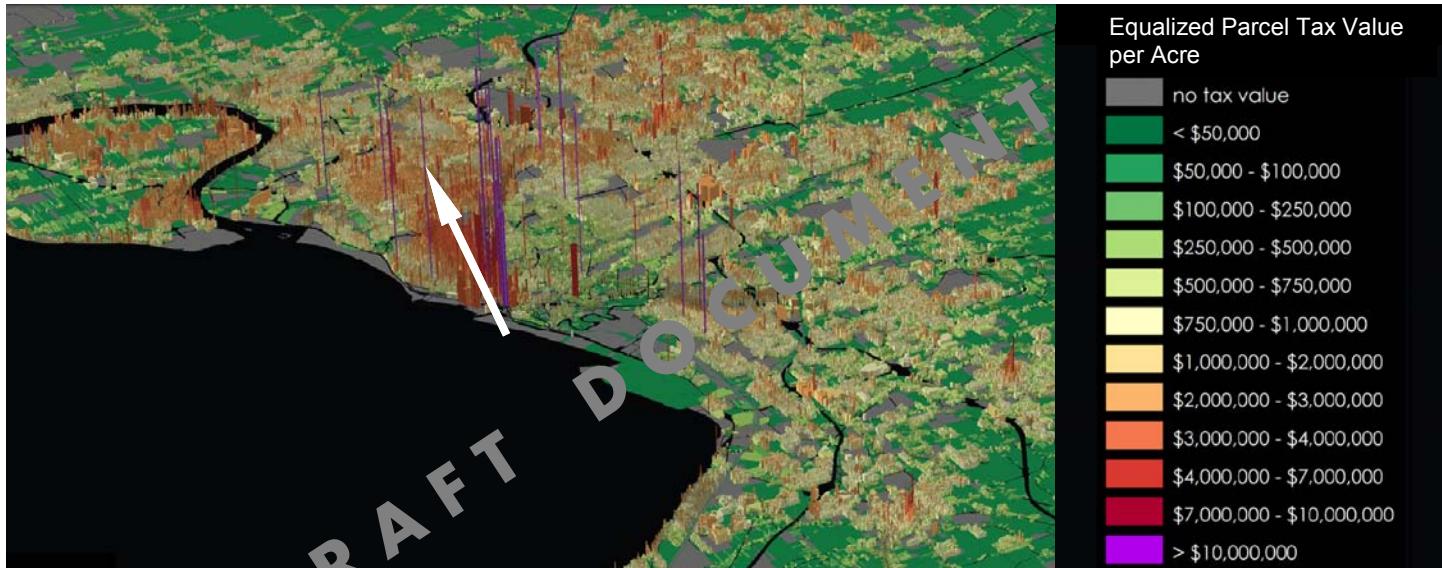


Figure 43: This map from the *Buffalo-Niagara Regional Report: The Dollars and \$ense of Development Patterns*, reveals that the North Elmwood shopping area is part of an economic corridor heading northwest from downtown Buffalo that generates tremendous tax value. (See arrow, added.)

Major Facility as well as the significant vacant structures on Skillen, Military and Hertel, can be of value in making the case for economic development planning going forward.

11. Retail

In Chapter 1—Overview, as part of the discussion of “Today’s Trends,” the West Hertel neighborhood was noted as “a leading center for large-scale retail offerings.” And it is not hard to see the key role that retail is seen as having by the community, as its citizen planners have associated “Business” in the logo on the top right of this page with a shopping cart.

These are more than planning assertions, however; they represent statistical fact. A recent study carried out by nationally-known development analyst Joe Minicozzi as part of the recent One Region Forward regional planning effort provides the statistics. Mr. Minicozzi issued a report in July 2014, titled, *The Buffalo-Niagara Regional Report: The Dollars and \$ense of Development Patterns*. In this report he analyzed tax systems, tax production, and tax density for Buffalo-Niagara.

As shown in Figure 43, West Hertel is part of a regionally-dominant economic corridor heading north from downtown Buffalo that generates tremendous tax value (see white arrow.) The North Elmwood area of West Hertel is a major contributor to this corridor’s prominence.

Figures 44 and 45 provide additional comparisons between the North Elmwood area and other parts of the region in terms of retail sales and, as a result, tax receipt generation. Zip Code 14207 includes West Hertel, while Zip Code 14216 is just east of West Hertel and includes North Buffalo. The former performs at the second highest level of retail sales, per the map in Figure 45, while 14216 is at the highest level, on par with downtown Buffalo, the Elmwood Village, Tonawanda, Amherst, and Niagara Falls. Clearly, the North Elmwood area is one of the most robust retail sales areas in Buffalo-Niagara.

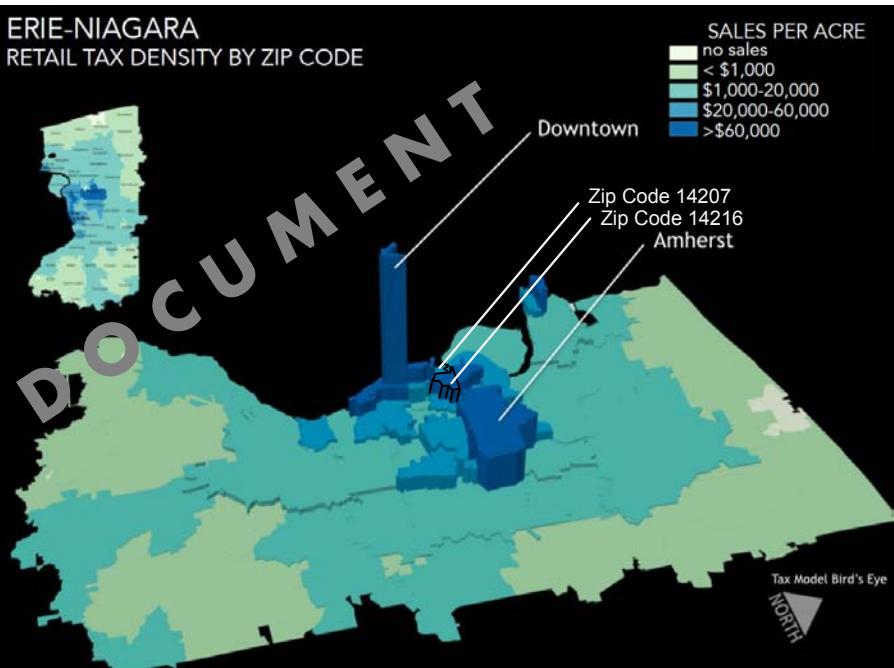
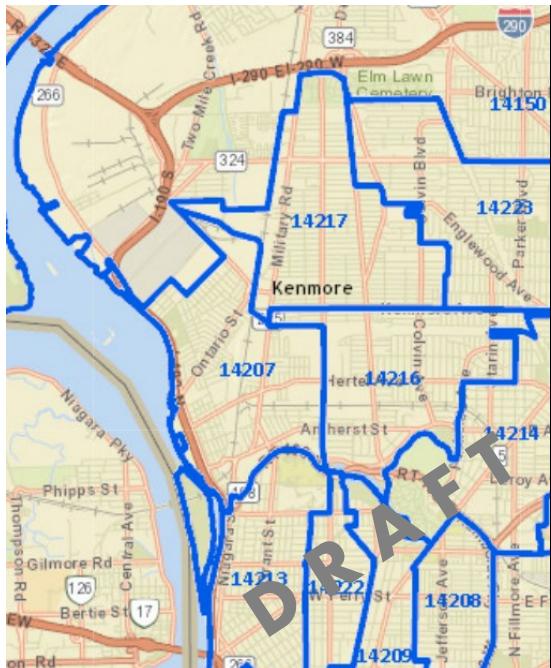
The North Elmwood area includes shopping destinations characterized by great magnetism from a retailing perspective: Home Depot, TOPS Markets, Aldi’s, and Target. In addition, there are many restaurants, entertainment venues, and smaller stores selling clothing, auto parts,

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CHAPTER 2—THE COMMUNITY TODAY



Figures 44 and 45: With a zip code map (left) providing reference points to West Hertel, we can see from the “Erie-Niagara Retail Tax Density by Zip Code: Sales per Acre” map (right) provided in *The Buffalo-Niagara Regional Report* that the North Elmwood area is one of the most robust retail sales areas in Buffalo-Niagara, rivalled only by downtown Buffalo, the Elmwood Village, Tonawanda, Amherst, and Niagara Falls. Zip Code 14216, just east of West Hertel is at the highest sales level, while 14207 including West Hertel is at the second-highest level. (Labels for 14207 and 14216 added.)

groceries, and convenience store items, as well as banks and health care facilities. This estimation of the health of the district is buttressed by the arrival recently of stores that represent new arrivals into

the retail scene, for example: Fitness21, LA Fitness, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Five Guys Burgers and Fries, Pep Boys, Auto Zone, NAPA-The Parts Store, and Pet Smart.



Figures 46: Car-centric retail in North Elmwood features big box stores and strip plazas around surface parking. The fact that new names in retail choose to locate here signals that the area is a healthy shopping district, meeting demonstrable consumer demand.

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CHAPTER 3—WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Community planning processes are best guided by robust public participation and input, as well as consultation with local leaders. Both have been used in preparation of the *2015 West Hertel Community Plan*.

1. Public Participation

To ensure interactive planning, the Members of the *2015 West Hertel Community Plan* Project Team created a community based survey and circulated it throughout the neighborhood to residents, workers and visitors in the community. The survey, Survey #1, was made available via the local paper (appearing in the *Riverside Review*), door to door solicitation and leaving copies in places of business. The survey resulted

in 128 responses.

In Section 1, 125 of respondents provided their “home zip code,” with 28% showing that they reside in zip code 14207, which corresponds roughly with North Common Council District, excepting that zip code 14207 extends eastward to Elmwood Ave. while the district continues to Delaware Ave. At Delaware Ave. 14216 begins, where an additional 16% of respondents to the survey live. Another 10% of respondents live in 14213 on the West Side. Results show that over half of survey respondents live in the host zip code of 14207 or in adjacent zip codes to the immediate south and east. Overall, these are impressive response numbers and they show continued commitment to improvement within the neighborhood.

When asked in Section 2 what businesses/services are currently shopped at or patronized, the following destinations were ranked in the Top 5:

1. Grocery Store: 101 responses
2. Church: 101
3. Restaurant: 91
4. Post Office: 83
5. Bank: 74

When asked in Section 3 what businesses/services would be shopped at or patronized if available, these destinations were ranked in the Top 5:

1. Restaurant: 95 responses
2. Coffee: 86
3. Outdoor Café: 84
4. Ice Cream: 76
5. Church: 72

Responses to questions in Section 4 about how well the Hertel Avenue business district is performing provide much insight into local trends and wants/needs. For the purpose of the survey, the applicability of the terms “local” and “business

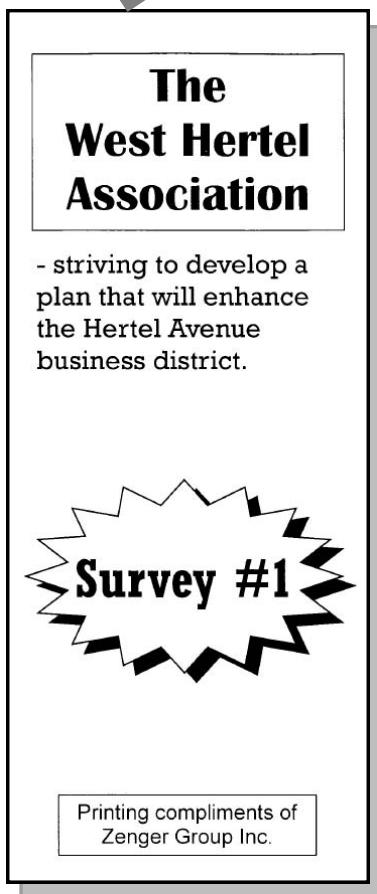


Figure 47: This is the cover of West Hertel Association's fold business district survey document. The 1-page survey yielded 128 responses, and the document is reproduced in the Appendix.

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CHAPTER 3—WHAT WE’VE HEARD

district" were defined as "Elmwood and Hertel Avenues within approximately one mile walking radius from the intersection of St. Florian Street & Hertel Avenue."

The percent of "Yes" answers to questions in Section 4, based on responses received (i.e. percent yes, of total of yes answers + no answers,) are provided below:

Safe in the day: 95%

Safe at night: 49%

Clean: 51%

Sidewalk snow removal satisfactory: 46%

Street snow removal satisfactory: 60%

Comfortable seating is available for shoppers/visitors: 54%

Are businesses open in the evening: 64%

Are businesses open on the weekend: 85%

Is there a good variety of businesses: 57%

Satisfy your retail needs: 50%

Sufficient space/places available for people to gather/socialize: 45%

Bicycle friendly: 46%

Easy access to public transportation: 94%

Transit stops are conveniently located: 91%

Transit stops or shelters are well maintained: 39%

Is there a reasonable amount of activity: 66%

Responses to Section 5's question, "If you could change one thing about the West Hertel area, what would it be?" were dominated by suggestions to have more safety, cleanliness, stores, and parks/playgrounds/gathering spaces, and fewer apartments.

An additional survey, Survey #2, adapted from the *Healthy Community Resource Guide* developed by the Centers for Disease Control, was also distributed. It yielded 10 responses, primarily by long-time, home-owning residents that rely on their own car for transportation.

Notable among the results of those responding were:

- Only 2 of the 10 respondents indicated they felt safe in the neighborhood.
- When asked "What improvements would you like to see added to West Hertel?" the answers ranked highly included street trees (8) and more police patrols (7).

When asked, "(How) I want to feel safer in my community," more street lighting (6) and less cars speeding down neighborhood streets (5) drew the most support.

It is possible to make some key observations from the survey results. For Survey #1, nighttime safety is a huge concern. Access to transit routes

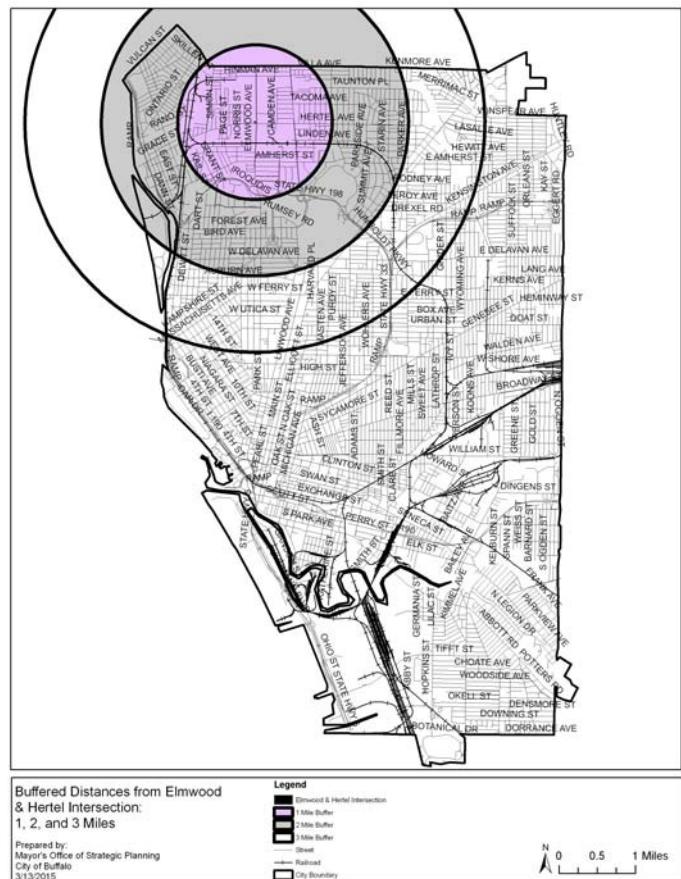


Figure 48: This map shows the many locational advantages of the West Hertel neighborhood, as represented by 1, 2, and 3 mile buffers around the Elmwood/Hertel intersection.

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CHAPTER 3—WHAT WE'VE HEARD

and stops is excellent, while the stops themselves and shelters need to be better maintained. Mixed opinions are given for most other variables in Survey #1.

Survey #2 further underscores the safety concern identified in Survey #1. Only two of 10 respondents felt safe in the neighborhood and police patrols, street lighting, and reducing speeding cars figured in later answers.

Overall, this was a very informative survey with relative consistency between the first and second survey. The need for an evolved streetscape seems to be a clear priority of the neighborhood. It also seems that the placement of the houses and the street width and placement allow city support services to be effective.

2. Consultation with Local Leaders

The West Hertel Association has gathered a knowledgeable contingent of local leaders to inform this planning effort: Several are lifelong residents of the neighborhood, others grew up in the area, and others still worked in West Hertel for decades. They are joined by partners with limited neighborhood experience but with a strong stake in its future who also represent broader community interests, with affiliations with the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning, and/or the North District in one capacity or another.

All local leaders recognize West Hertel as an engine for growth for Buffalo and Western New York. North Elmwood offers TOPS, Home Depot, Aldi's, Target, and more. Aurubis is one of the Buffalo region's oldest, largest, and best industrial enterprises. Innovative small businesses populate the Hertel Commerce Park and Hinman Ave. Essential community service assets include a police district headquarters, a large post office, an indoor skate park, Grabiacz School of Excellence and West Hertel Academy, Northwest Buffalo Community Center, and the Neighborhood Health

Center, a federally-designated Health Center that provides services to anyone regardless of ability to pay. Convenient and affordable living can be found in old-style homes and buildings with high character like Houk Lofts, Foundry Lofts, and the soon-to-open ARCO Lofts, all with excellent access to public transportation, highway routes, and higher-priced neighboring districts. Large tracts of developable land beckon investment.

A number of suggestions for specific improvements have come forth through several consultative meetings with these leaders. These, in coordination with the public input received through the survey efforts summarized above, have informed the recommendations in the following chapter. It is also important to note that the West Hertel Association has developed several bold development concepts, to transform



Figure 49: Elements from the Greeley Street Development Concept address an exciting infill opportunity on Hertel Ave.

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CHAPTER 3—WHAT WE'VE HEARD

key opportunity areas in the neighborhood. Three are profiled here, and included fully in the Appendix:

- The Greeley Street Development Concept (2008): This concept targets a mostly vacant, developable parcel of just over 1/2 acre across from the Hertel Commerce Center, proposing new mixed-use buildings with parking behind (see Figure 49)
- The Elmwood-Hertel Mixed-Use Development Concept (2007): This concept, shown in Figures 50-52 looks at current conditions, potential land uses, site layout, street

extensions, and massing for development near the key Elmwood-Hertel intersection, which is now generally under-occupied, although pockets of robust business activity exist and must be accounted for.

- The RailWorx Sustainable Business Community Proposal (2011): This concept shown in Figures 53-54 envisions 750,000 sq. ft. of commercial office and retail space at a prime intersection, Military & Hertel. In addition, 150,000 sq. ft. of light industrial space is possible. Finally, a commuter rail and possible high speed rail station could conceivably be sited just west.



Figures 50-52: The Elmwood-Hertel Mixed-Use Development Concept envisions rejuvenating an under-occupied area abutting a key intersection.

Figures 53-54: Nearly a million sq. ft. of new development is envisioned at Military-Hertel as part of The RailWorx Sustainable Business Community Proposal. In addition, a commuter rail and possible high speed rail station are part of the concept.

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CHAPTER 4—RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

A number of active planning initiatives have been undertaken by the City of Buffalo over the past two years. These have involved both City officials and expertise from outside consultants. All of the communities in the northwest Buffalo have been active participants in these initiatives. They include:

- The Buffalo Green Code and Unified Development Ordinance, a City initiative to update land use planning, zoning, and rules for future development. These advances will be relevant to this community as it attempts to develop new streetscapes and work on new commercial and industrial redevelopments.
- The Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) initiative presents an opportunity for joint planning between the Riverside and West Hertel communities as this BOA borders both areas. It will also identify strategic sites for priority economic redevelopment, advancing light industry as the area looks to expand its successful incubators.

This 2015 *West Hertel Community Plan* has complemented the above initiatives by allowing the community to voice its wishes in a very detailed, from-the-ground-up effort. The project team has used historical research, demographics, asset identification, windshield surveys, relevant plans and studies, stakeholder surveys, and focus groups with leaders to allow individuals to articulate both concerns and wishes for their neighborhood. The resulting information has proven to be informative, useful and quite frankly a very enjoyable experience. Key planning initiatives have been articulated to reflect these concerns and wishes:

1. **Housing:** Plan for additional housing to the northeast of Rebecca Park.
2. **Commercial Development:** Assist in redeveloping parcels in North Elmwood area and at key intersections: Military-Hertel's southwest corner and Elmwood-Hertel's west

side.

3. **Industry:** Aid Aurora in physical and market share expansion. Assist with additional industrial development and siting.
4. **Streetscapes:** Improve streetscapes along key routes.
5. **Recreation:** Improve recreation amenities on Lawn Ave., at Northwest Buffalo Community Center. Link community to Jesse Kregal Pathway and Riverwalk.
6. **Public Housing:** Help revitalize and update BMHA housing projects.
7. **Transportation:** Improve walkability, bikeability, transit, and drivability of Hertel Avenue. Do a traffic study for Elmwood-Hertel. Add aids for pedestrians like chirping signals. Add bike lanes. Improve bus shelters. Add smart technology to bus routes, like electronic notification of bus arrivals. Improve crosswalks. Reduce vehicle speeding. Add curb cuts where needed.
8. **Neighborhood Quality of Life:** Undertake micro-enhancements to the Deer St., Short St., Foundry St. area. Address absentee landlord situation community-wide.
9. **RR Bridge Beautification:** Improve look of rail overpasses and conditions underneath.
10. **Promote the Neighborhood:** Emphasize industrial heritage, residential choice, and convenient access to amenities. Develop a heritage trail, with markers and public sculpture and art installations.
11. **Transformational Change:** Explore Feasibility of Concepts in Chapter 3.
12. **Build on Incubators:** Expand on successful incubators on Riverrock and Rano.

These initiatives have been prioritized into the Quick Reference Priority Action Plan on Page 2.

2015 WEST HERTEL COMMUNITY PLAN



APPENDIX

Survey #1

The Greeley Street Development Concept (2008)

The Elmwood-Hertel Mixed-Use Development Concept (2007)

The RailWorx Sustainable Business Community Proposal (2011)

DRAFT DOCUMENT