



# Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance

## Draft Neighborhood Plan January 2007

### “Citizen Planning in Action”

The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance envisions its community as a place where people chose to live because of its attention to quality of life issues: the residents' public safety, low crime rates, affordable and well-maintained housing stock, and efficient city services. We understand that changes do not take place overnight, but we believe that small, incremental action steps will result in achieving this overall vision.

Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Contact Information:  
Richard Mack, Chair  
Review Publications • 215 Military Road • Buffalo, NY 14207  
Phone: 716-877-8400 Fax: 877-8742  
E-mail: [rich@buffaloreview.com](mailto:rich@buffaloreview.com)

---

**Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance**

**Building a Neighborhood of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan for the Riverside  
Planning Community**

**Draft Plan  
January 2007**

**Steering Committee:**

**Richard Mack, Chairman**

**Caleb Basiliko**

**Bill Buzak**

**Linda Chiarenza**

**Jackie Erckert**

**Warren Glover**

**Marsha Huard**

**Paul Johnson**

**Mary Ann Kedron**

**Doug McKenzie**

**Bill Parke**

**Dave Spinda**

**Margaret Szczepaniec**

**Evelyn Vossler**

---

## **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to these contributors to the December, 2004 version of this draft neighborhood plan, upon which much of the current document is based. Their efforts have helped make this plan the community resource it is today:

Paul Brunner

Marcia Huard

Black Rock Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services

Northwest Buffalo Community Center

Review Publications

Riverside Review

Erie County Legislator Al DeBenedetti

Council Member Joseph Golombek

Dale Zuchlewski

City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning's Jennifer DeRose and Joanna B. Rogalski

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Graphics.....	4
Maps of Planning Context .....	5
Vision for the Future.....	7
Organizational History and Highlights .....	7
Organizational Structure .....	13
Contact Information .....	13
Community Profile.....	13
Location .....	13
Community Character.....	15
History.....	15
Community Assets .....	19
Existing Conditions.....	21
Demographics .....	21
Economy .....	25
Housing.....	26
Community Facilities.....	32
Existing Land Use and Zoning .....	33
Urban Design .....	38
Transportation.....	41
Water/Sewer.....	45
Community Goals and Action Plans.....	46
Public Safety .....	46
Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design .....	58
Housing.....	72
Riverside Park.....	83
Buffalo Comprehensive Plan Context .....	87
References.....	93

### Appendices

Appendix A: 2002 Black Rock-Riverside GNPA: History, Short Term Goals, Mid-term Report Card / Analysis

Appendix B: March 2004 Vision Planning Session Handout, Entrance Survey Results, Community Vision Session

Appendix C: Powerpoint Presentation: “A New Concept: ‘Black Rock Canal Park’ (Currently Known as the Ontario Street Boat Launch)”

Appendix D: Images of Black Rock-Riverside’s Historic Relationship to the Niagara River Prior to Construction of the Niagara Section of the Thruway

## List of Graphics

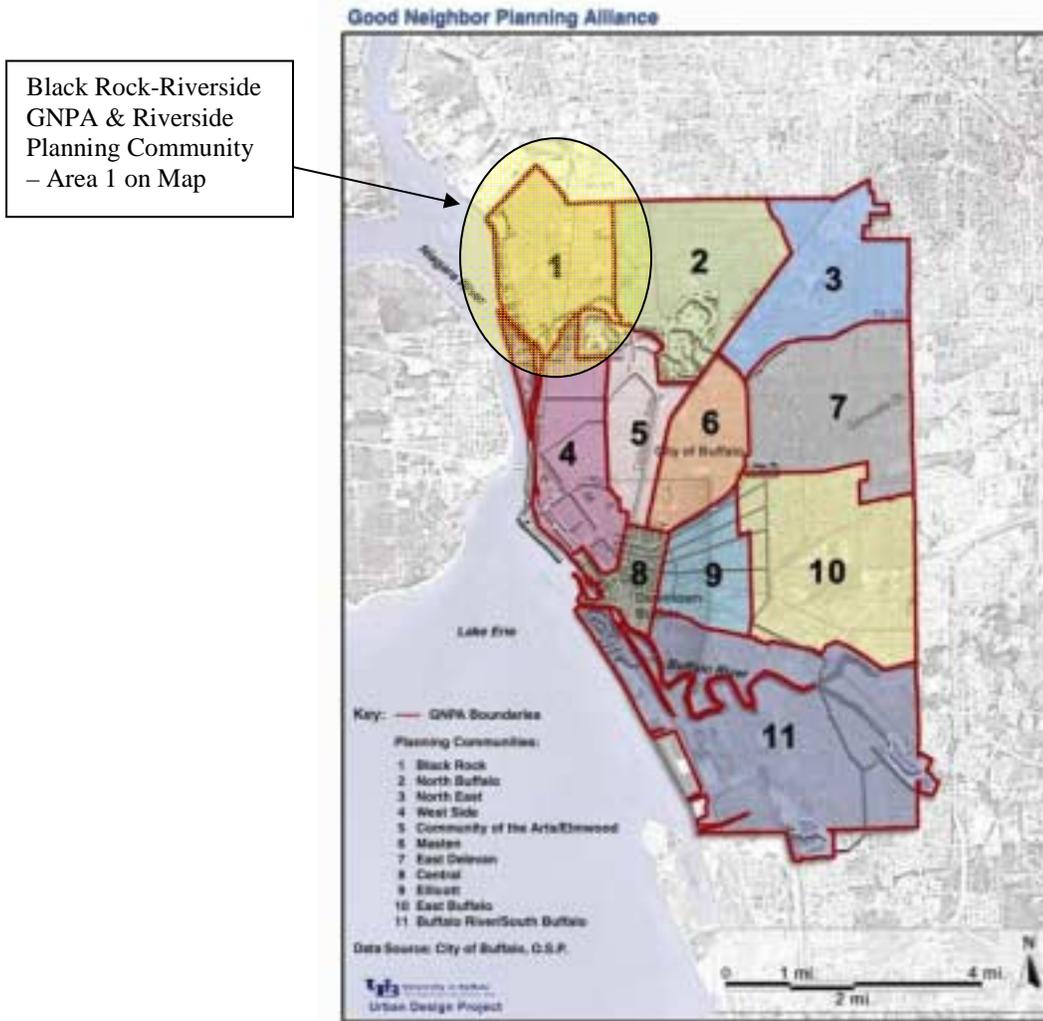
1. Map of Buffalo in Relation to New York and Canada.....	5
2. Map of Riverside Planning Community in Relation to Buffalo and Regional Context .....	6
3. 2006 Garden Walk Volunteers, at an Orientation Table .....	12
4. 2006 Garden Walk Entry, with Official Lawn Signs .....	12
5. Organizational Structure .....	13
6. Map of Black-Rock Riverside GNPA and Riverside Planning Community .....	14
7. Black Rock in 1825.....	15
8. Erie Canal, Mills, Factories, and Railway Along Black Rock’s Waterfront, circa 1888 .....	16
9. Lock #72 near Austin and Niagara Streets in the Late 1890s .....	16
10. Waterfront Transportation Infrastructure in Black Rock in 1900s.....	17
11. Building the Niagara Section of the Thruway Atop the Erie Canal Towpath, near Riverside Park, circa 1958 .	17
12. Map of Census Geographies .....	20
13. Population Trend for the City of Buffalo and the Riverside Planning Community, 1990 - 2000 .....	21
14. Racial Distribution in Erie County, City of Buffalo, and Riverside Planning Community Year 2000.....	22
15. Age Distribution 1990.....	23
16. Trend in the Riverside Planning Community Age Distribution , 1990-2000.....	23
17. Age Distribution 2000.....	24
18. Trend in Average Income, 1990-2000 .....	24
19. Percentage of Residents with Income Below the Poverty Level, 1990-2000.....	25
20. GNPA/Riverside Planning Community Major Employers .....	26
21. Zoning Map.....	27
22. Types of Housing Units in the Riverside Planning Community, 1990-2000 .....	28
23. Percentage of Housing Which Is Owner-Occupied, 1990-2000 .....	29
24. Change in Median Value of Owner-Occupied Houses, 1990-2000 .....	30
25. Trend in Renter-Occupied Housing, 1990-2000 .....	30
26. Trend in Median Gross Rent 1990-2000.....	31
27. Trend in Housing Vacancy Rates, 1990-2000.....	31
28. Public and Parochial Schools in the Riverside Planning Community .....	32
29. Public Facilities Other Than Public Schools in the Riverside Planning Community.....	33
30. Land Use Map.....	34
31. Land Uses in Year 2000.....	36
32. Riverside Planning Community Parks, Recreation, and Open Space .....	36
33. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Map .....	37
34. International Railroad Bridge.....	41
35. Transportation Map.....	42
36. Series of Photos Exploring the Riverwalk and Squaw Island Park.....	44
37. Cover Slide of Powerpoint Presentation for “Black Rock Canal Park” Proposal .....	63
38. Current and Projected Garden Walk Gardens and Foot Traffic, by Year .....	69
39. 2006 Garden Walk Web Site.....	70
40. Waterfront Corridor Initiative Project Boundary and LWRP Boundary .....	89
41. Brownfields and the Riverside Planning Community .....	90
42. Land Investment Areas and the Riverside Planning Community.....	91
43. Renewal Communities, Empire Zones, and the Riverside Planning Community .....	92

## Maps of the Planning Context



Graphic 1: “Map of Buffalo in Relation to New York and Canada.”  
This map shows Buffalo in its greater state-wide and bi-national context.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



Graphic 2: “Map of Riverside Planning Community in Relation to Buffalo and Regional Context” The Riverside Planning Community and the BRR GNPA share the same boundary. This map shows them in relation to the City of Buffalo’s 10 other GNPA areas, as well as Lake Erie and the Niagara River.

## **Vision for the Future**

*The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA) envisions a community where people choose to live because of its attention to quality of life issues: the residents' public safety, low crime rates, affordable and well-maintained housing stock, and efficient city services.*

As part of this vision we include:

- Reclaiming the waterfront, with increased and better quality river access and more recreational activities.
- Clean, well-maintained parks and more access to regional bike paths.
- Increased numbers of local businesses and business owners residing in the area.
- Building better quality Schools of Excellence.
- Reclaiming brownfield sites.
- Involving the youth in neighborhood development.
- Increased numbers of local job opportunities.
- A more diverse residential population which is more involved and less apathetic about the quality of the community.
- Clean, quiet, litter-free and graffiti-free neighborhoods.
- More responsible and responsive police force, which includes improving the relationships between residents and police officers, as well as crime-free and drug-free neighborhoods that promote a family-friendly environment.

The BRR GNPA has been empowered by the City of Buffalo to be an integral part of the planning process for the Riverside Planning Community, one of 12 official Planning Communities in the City of Buffalo and one which also matches the boundary of the BRR GNPA. As such, we envision changes in city law to recognize our citizen board as a necessary stakeholder and participant in the City of Buffalo planning process, whether it is residential and commercial infrastructure, city-services or business development. We see ourselves as the citizen group from which official citizen planning recommendations can be given to the City of Buffalo Planning Board.

These are our visions of our community into the future. We understand that changes do not take place overnight, but we believe that small, incremental action steps will help us achieve this overall vision.

## **Organizational History and Highlights**

Collaboration is at the core of the City of Buffalo Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance (GNPA) process; the city government is collaborating with its residents to make plans for the future of its neighborhoods. The Riverside Planning Community is comprised of three distinct neighborhoods: Black Rock, Military, and Riverside. As part of the GNPA process, these three neighborhoods are collaborating to create community based action plans and to officially inform the City's comprehensive planning process. They are

---

officially known as the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA). A brief history of the BRR GNPA inception and organization follows.

## **“Organization and Outreach”**

Starting in August 2001 and until December 2001, residents of the Riverside Planning Community worked toward organizing themselves into a functioning GNPA citizen advisory board.

### **Year 2001**

- In August, City of Buffalo Mayor Masiello introduced the GNPA as a Planning initiative; its ultimate goal is the creation of Community-Based Action Plans.
- Beginning of discussions of sub-committee formations. The residential group decides to wait to fine-tune the committee structure until a later time, i.e. upon appointment of chairs.
- GNPA members are encouraged to put on their creative thinking caps to come up with ideas for a GNPA logo and name for the planning area. The GNPA at this point is formally known as the “Riverside GNPA” or GNPA area Number 1.
- The citizen group decides to amend the GNPA name to the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA).
- The BRR GNPA participates in the GNPA sponsored Film Festival held at the Dipson Theater - Market Arcade in Downtown Buffalo. A special guest speaker from the City Rochester NY Planning Department comments on the community-based action plan citizen planning process.
- Community outreach and recruitment for GNPA membership is ongoing.
- Monthly meeting agenda includes GNPA activities but also includes “around the city news and information” (public meetings dates, opportunities, etc.).
- The BRR GNPA attempts to draft policies and procedures governing our GNPA (i.e. Statement of purpose, eligibility for membership, membership meetings, etc.). The BRR GNPA members not interested in completing this task at this time; many claim they do not know enough about the planning process to formalize the GNPA.
- A letter is mailed to area stakeholders seeking new members. Participation can take place on three levels, i.e. co-chair, steering committee or general membership.
- North West Community Center of Buffalo (155 Lawn Avenue) is designated as our official meeting place/site and the fourth Wednesday of each month is designated our general GNPA meeting day. Official letterhead is ordered which helps to identify the BRR GNPA as a legitimate community/neighborhood citizen-planning group.

- Dale Zuchlewski and Richard Mack sign-on as interim Co-Chairs of the BRR GNPA.

### **“Involving the Community”**

Beginning in January 2002, larger groups of residents in the Black Rock and Riverside neighborhoods became involved in the GNPA citizen planning process. The first neighborhood summit, held in January 2002, drew close to 200 residents and helped the BRR GNPA form its issue-related subcommittees.

#### **Year 2002 and Year 2003**

- First Neighborhood Summit was held in January, 2002 (see Appendix A for details).
- The BRR GNPA serves as a partner with the Interactive Citizen Response Process. This process allowed and encouraged city-wide citizen participation for those interested residents who could not attend our general meetings.
- Steering Committee and formal sub-committees are set-up.
- The Black Rock Riverside general membership (approximately 100 members) receives a monthly meeting notice/calendar in the mail.
- Committee and general meeting notices are published in the Riverside Review. This weekly publication also features articles about the GNPA and the quality of life agenda produced by the group. This community newspaper helps to promote the GNPA weekly and gets people involved in the community planning process.
- 14,000 copies of the Riverside Review are delivered weekly, door to door, to all residents in the Black Rock Riverside GNPA, as well as all businesses, churches and community based organizations including the Northwest Buffalo Community Center and Neighborhood Housing Services.
- Richard Mack, BRR GNPA co-chair, begins to maintain a scrapbook filled with articles, notices, and advertisements that the Riverside Review has printed to promote the GNPA to the general public.
- BRR GNPA hosts a city-wide Holiday (Christmas) social for all of the GNPA groups to meet and discuss the community planning process.
- BRR GNPA members start to tackle quality of life issues by devising and carrying out small action plans. Examples include: 1) the City Services subcommittee sponsors a Graffiti Clean-up for the Grant-Amherst Area, 2) Crime Tip Sheets are developed and disbursed by the public safety committee and 3) the housing subcommittee establishes a problem property list and cites responsible homeowners for maintaining their property.
- The BRR GNPA reading group is formed to educate its members about planning related strategies. A book is chosen every few months

and members meet approximately 4-5 times a year to discuss the theme of the book(s) and reaction, feedback, etc.

- Black Rock Riverside is a Class of 2003 Civic Empowerment Award Honoree.
- Richard Mack is elected to the Executive Committee of the City-Wide GNPA group.
- BRR GNPA responds to the City's questionnaire seeking information regarding basic training and support needs required by the group to continue with the planning process (see Appendix for details).
- The group prepares a BRR GNPA report card outlining the history to-date, short term goals and a mid term report/analysis of the GNPA process. See Appendix for details.
- Sub-committees continue to meet monthly to address quality of life issues. Activities and efforts include the clean-green campaign, graffiti removal, and identification of problem properties.
- In the previous two years, the BRR GNPA has had success with limited fund raising. The Erie County Legislator (Al DeBenedetti) has awarded the public safety committee funds toward the crime sheet and the GNPA has co-sponsored a very successful tree planting fundraiser (\$10,000). The group also was awarded a grant to purchase a power washer/blaster for graffiti removal. The City of Buffalo has also awarded the group \$5,000 to educate, provide supplies, technical assistance toward the ultimate goal, i.e. the publication of a neighborhood plan.
- In June 2003 the City Buffalo Comprehensive Plan Draft is released. The BRR and North Buffalo GNPA hold a joint meeting to discuss the document and prepare a response with recommendations to the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning (OSP).

### **“Drafting the Plan and Taking Action”**

#### **Year 2004**

- In January of 2004, the City of Buffalo OSP partnered with the University at Buffalo Department of Urban and Regional Planning to help the GNPA write its neighborhood plans. Interns were assigned to many of the 11 GNPA Planning Communities; their task was to help each GNPA citizen planning group assemble information to be put into a draft plan format. As work progressed on the Neighborhood and Community Based Action Plans, the BRR GNPA continued taking small action steps toward achieving the visions outlined in their Vision Statement.
- In January, Joanna Rogalski is introduced to the GNPA as its OSP intern.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

- In March 2004 a Community Vision Session is held at North West Community Center. About 50 residents attend to outline their visions for the future of their Black Rock and Riverside neighborhoods.
- Sub-committees continue to tackle quality of life issues.
- Joanna/GNPA sub-committees start writing a draft of the neighborhood plan.
- In August 2004, an Overview of the Neighborhood Plan is presented to candidates and residents at a Candidates' Night forum sponsored by the BRR GNPA.
- In September and October, the Ambassador Bridge Group acquires a copy the Overview Plan and approaches the BRR GNPA with a proposal for a new truck bridge between Canada and the US, to land in the BRR GNPA planning community. They use the Vision Statement to address how their proposed truck bridge would fit into the Community Vision for the future.
- Throughout November and December, the Neighborhood Draft Plan is fine-tuned for submission to OSP.

**Year 2005**

- In the spring and summer of 2005, the BRR GNPA housing subcommittee organized Neighborhood Walks in Grant/Amherst, West Hertel, Black Rock, Riverside-Niagara, Esser-Vulcan and Ontario Street areas.
- The first annual "Garden Walk" was held, an event sponsored by the BRR GNPA.
- General Meetings of the GNPA were the forum used for presentations on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters development proposal for Hertel Avenue between the D-District police station and the Cantalician Center, and Dollar General on Tonawanda Street. Also at General Meetings were presentations on Housing Court and Emergency Preparedness.
- Tree Planting in November was coordinated with Black Rock-Riverside NHS.

**"Promoting Good Planning and Community Pride"**

**Year 2006**

- A Block Club Form was hosted by the housing subcommittee on February 15.
- Plans for Riverside Park were reviewed at the February General Meeting on February 22.
- A free "Graffiti Removal Instructional Seminar" was sponsored by the BRR GNPA on March 18.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy presented a 20-year Management/Restoration Plan for Riverside Park at a General Meeting, resulting in the formation of a Riverside Park subcommittee.
- The Department of Citizen Services' Director Oswaldo Mestre was guest speaker at a General Meeting held in the spring.
- On May 10, the housing subcommittee hosted David Rutecki, former Councilman and now M&T Bank executive, for a presentation on the mortgage foreclosure process.
- On May 15, a meeting was held to share information about an application for a Brownfield Opportunity Program Grant for the Tonawanda Street Corridor being filed by the Office of Strategic Planning.
- On May 24, a proposed above-ground fuel storage tank/gas station concept was presented by Goetz Energy Corp. and Trillium Fueling Systems, to be located in the parking lot of Black Rock Plaza.
- On September 27, the General Meeting hosted information sessions on Towpath Park Phase 2 Improvements by Erie County's Department of Environment and Planning and Wolf Landscape Architects and also the proposed Ontario Street Boat Launch improvements, a project of the BRR GNPA Land Use, Zoning, and Historical Heritage subcommittee, to create "Black Rock Canal Park."
- On October 16, 20 and 21, neighborhood plan work sessions were held at the Riverside Review, with GNPA members and OSP Community Planner Bill Parke participating.
- Throughout the fall, presentations on the Black Rock Canal Park proposal are made to political representatives, including Bonnie Kane Lockwood (for Congressman Brian Higgins), Assemblyman Sam Hoyt, and County Legislator Maria Whyte, as well as Timothy Wanamaker, Executive Director of OSP.



Graphic 3: "2006 Garden Walk volunteers, at an orientation table"



Graphic 4: "2006 Garden Walk entry, with official lawn sign"

## Organizational Structure

The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance structure includes a Steering Committee and four main subcommittees.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>GNPA and Subcommittee Chairs</u>
Richard Mack	Riverside Review	GNPA Co-Chair
Margaret Szczepaniec	St. Florian / Pavonia Block Club	GNPA Co-Chair, and Chair, Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design Subcommittee
Linda Chiarenza	Black Rock-Riverside NHS	
Caleb Basiliko	Grant Amherst Block Watchers	
Marsha Huard	Resident	
Doug McKenzie	Riverside Alliance	
Dave Spinda	United Streets Block Club	Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee
Evelyn Vossler	St. Mark's Church	
Paul Johnson	Resident	
Jackie Erckert	Resident	Chair, Riverside Park Subcommittee
Mary Ann Kedron	Resident	Chair, Housing Subcommittee
Bill Parke	Office of Strategic Planning	
Warren Glover	Northern Construction	
Bill Buzak	Black Rock-Riverside NHS	

Graphic 5: "BRR GNPA Steering Committee (10/2006)."

## Contact Information

The Steering Committee is the first point of contact for a public or private entity to consult with regarding planning related issues involving the citizen planning group.

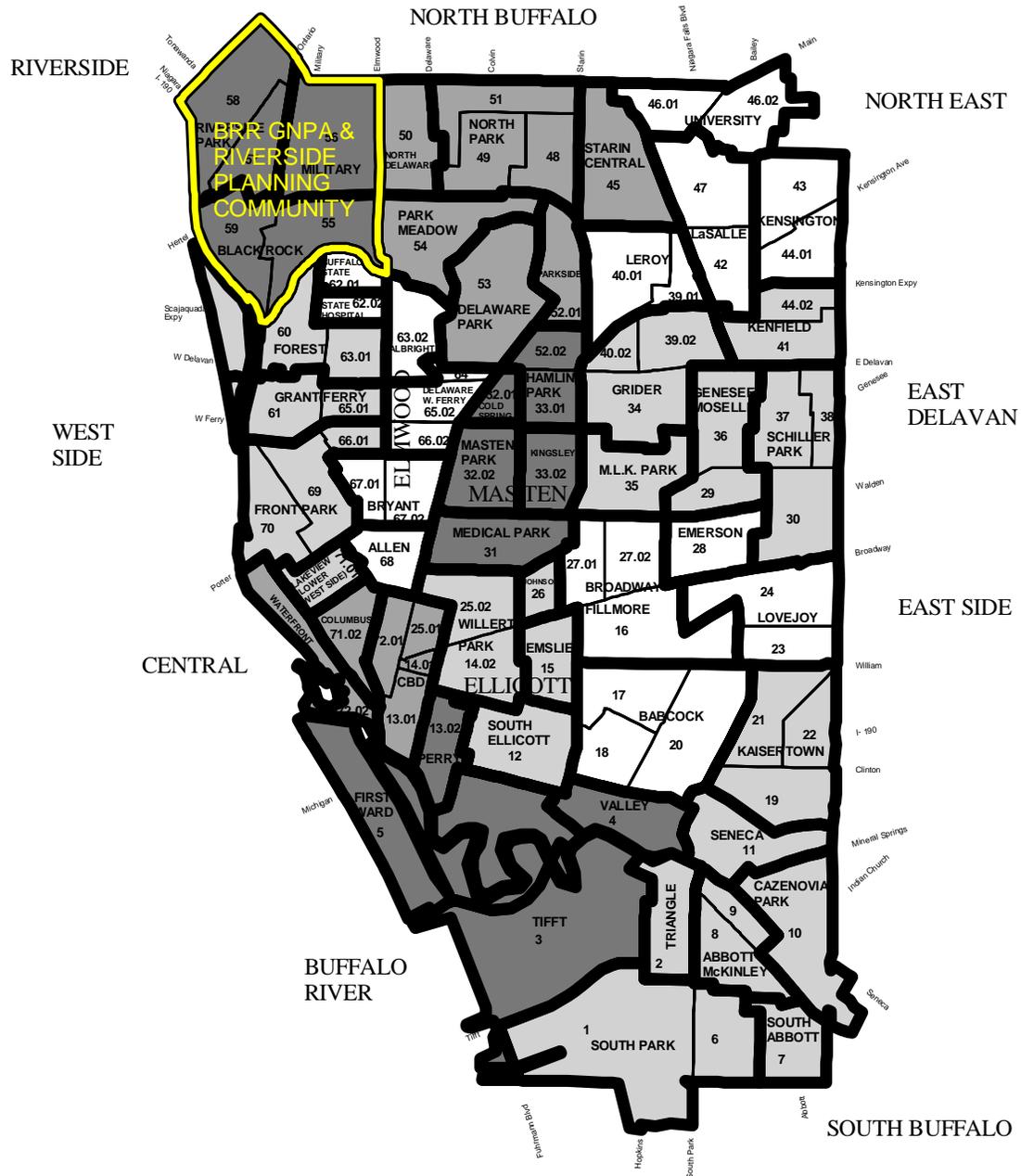
Media inquiries and all questions, comments and correspondence regarding the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA plan can be directed to Richard Mack, GNPA Co-Chair.

## Community Profile

### Location

The Riverside Planning Community is located in the northwest corner of the City of Buffalo. The community is bordered by the Town of Tonawanda to the north, Elmwood Avenue to the east, the Scajaquada Creek to the south, and the Niagara River to the west. (To understand the Planning Community's regional context, see Graphic 2 above.) Census Tracts 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59 cover the Riverside Planning Community.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



Graphic 6: “Map of Black Rock-Riverside GNPA and Riverside Planning Community.” This map shows the BRR GNPA in relation to the City of Buffalo’s Riverside Planning Community (they share the same boundary) and 11 other Planning Communities, plus the 55 Planning Neighborhoods and 90 Census Tracts in the City of Buffalo. There are ten other GNPA areas in addition to the BRR GNPA in the City of Buffalo.

## Community Character

The Riverside Planning Community has a waterfront location along both the Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek. The community's waterfront location offers views of the Niagara River and Fort Erie, Ontario. Once an industrial corridor, the River today serves as an important regional recreation resource. The Riverwalk trail links the community to Downtown and the Tonawandas; Riverside Park offers views of the water, and the shoreline features a mixture of parks, marinas, restaurants, apartment buildings, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Scajaquada Creek Trail connects the Riverwalk with Delaware Park, a historic Olmsted destination park.

The community has a strong industrial heritage, heavily influenced by the presence of the Erie Canal from the 1800s into the early-1900s and local railways. Several large industrial complexes remain and industrial rail corridors continue to define the community's residential areas.

Mixed-use, neighborhood commercial corridors offer area residents unique restaurants and shops. More recent big box commercial developments provide suburban style shopping opportunities.

## History

The Riverside Planning Community includes the historic Black Rock neighborhood. The actual "black rock" was located near where the Peace Bridge is now. At that place was a settlement, a ferry to Canada and Peter Porter's warehouse and transfer business. He lobbied for a nearby improved harbor area running from Bird Island to Squaw Island to the Scajaquada Creek to become the western terminus of the Erie Canal. He was unsuccessful. The actual black rock was blown up by workers digging the Erie Canal circa 1823, and Buffalo was determined to be the site of the western terminus in 1825.

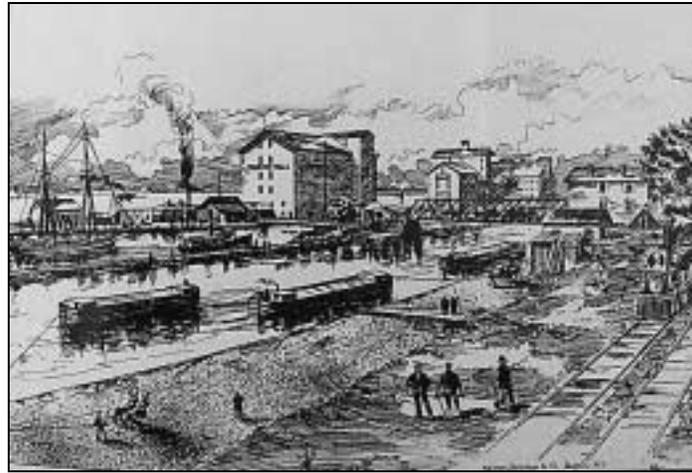


Graphic 7: "Black Rock in 1825."

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

Because the settlement near Ferry Street grew and established trade and Black Rock harbor, when the Village of Black Rock was founded in 1813, its geographic reach stretched south, from School Street (just north of the Peace Bridge) to Austin Street in the north. A lock (Lock #72) was built at the foot of Austin Street in 1833, which allowed the Black Rock community north of Scajaquada to also flourish. Mills and factories were located along the Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek, and German and Irish immigrants flocked to the area. The area north of what is now Hertel Avenue comprised mostly farms until the late 1800s.



Graphic 8: “Erie Canal, Mills, Factories, and Railway Along Black Rock’s Waterfront, circa 1888.”

Buffalo’s sustained growth and prosperity, due to the transportation advantages afforded by the canal and early railroads as well as booming industry, allowed the City to annex Black Rock in 1853. In later years, more developed railroad corridors further advanced the industrial presence in Black Rock, including the introduction of the Belt Line that offered commuter and freight service along a loop within the City. The Belt Line fueled both residential and industrial development adjacent to the line and contributed greatly to Black Rock’s economic base.



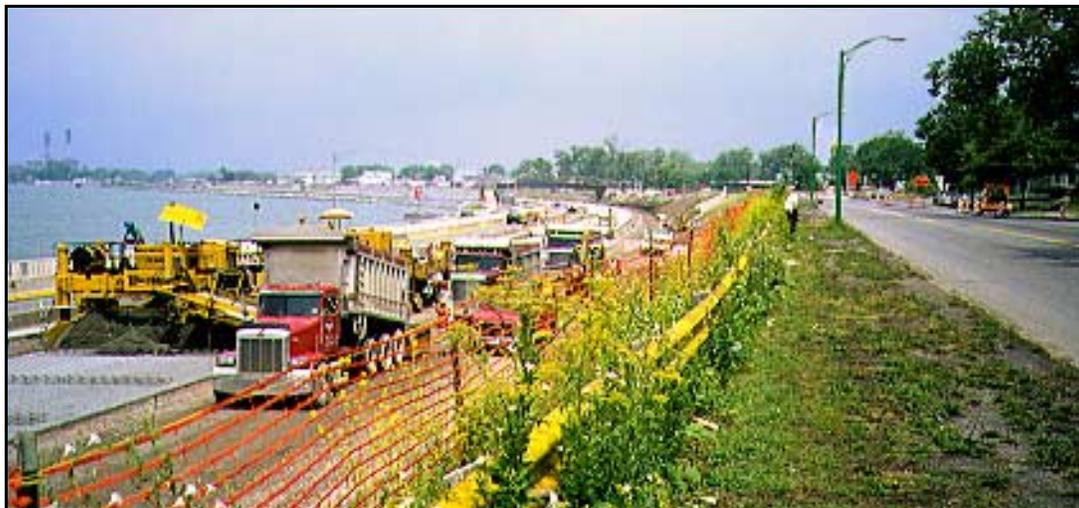
Graphic 9: Lock #72 near Austin and Niagara Streets in late 1890s

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



Graphic 10: “Waterfront Transportation Infrastructure in Black Rock in 1900s.”

When Black Rock developed as an industrial center, many families began moving to less industrialized areas to the north. The Riverside neighborhood offered a beautiful waterfront location that was a short trolley ride north of the Black Rock factories. Larger lots, curving streets and more suburban atmosphere created an attractive alternative for Black Rock employees. The Black Rock-Riverside area has faced several development challenges in the second half of the 20th century. Construction of the Niagara Section of



Graphic 11: “Building the Niagara Section of the Thruway Atop the Erie Canal Towpath, near Riverside Park, circa 1958.”

the Thruway severed the area's physical ties to the water while the separation of Riverside and Black Rock into different council districts limited the political influence of the area. Finally, the decline of industry during the 1970s resulted in large industrial vacancies, job losses and plummeting property values.

Significant Dates in the History of the Black Rock and Riverside Communities:

- Prehistory An actual black rock is deposited near where the Peace Bridge is now
- 1794 First settlers
- 1805 Peter B. Porter combines with partners to buy land between the actual black rock and Scajaquada Creek, and establishes a settlement. The area north of Scajaquada Creek was the Parrish Tract, mostly farmland.
- 1812 War of 1812
- 1813 Village of Black Rock founded, with geographic boundaries from School Street in the south to Austin Street in the north
- 1813 Buffalo and Black Rock burned
- 1823 The actual black rock is blown up to build the Erie Canal
- 1825 Erie Canal completed
- 1827 Jubilee waterworks incorporated, provides water to Black Rock until 1890's
- 1833 Austin Street lock opens, while settlement around Ferry Street is steadily absorbed into the West Side
- 1837 Black Rock incorporated, April 24th
- 1830s -1913 power supplied by lock at foot of Austin stimulates industrial growth
- 1853 City of Buffalo annexes Black Rock
- 1873 International Railroad Bridge completed
- 1883 Belt Line Railroad connects Black Rock with Buffalo and its downtown; spurs industrial development in Black Rock
- 1888 founding of Black Rock Land Company and passage of Hertel Avenue sewer bill stimulates development of Riverside
- 1901 Lumber from the dismantling of buildings at the Pan American Exposition is used to build hundreds of houses in Riverside.
- 1927 Peace Bridge opens
- 1958 I-190 Thruway is built. Docks, houses, social clubs demolished, remnants of Erie Canal filled in.
- 1961 Black Rock and Riverside split into separate political districts
- 1981 Black Rock and Riverside reunited as political districts

## Community Assets

A selection of community assets identified by neighborhood residents follows. (Note: To recommend community assets to be added to this list, send your suggestions to Richard Mack, BRR GNPA Co-Chair, 215 Military Road, Buffalo, NY 14207)

Major Area Employers and their relationship with the community, including: Luvata (former Outokompu/American Brass), GM, DuPont, Dunlop, Gibraltar Steel, Niagara Blower, Marlette, and American Axle

Northwest Community Center/Grabiarz School

Waterfront location and access

Charter School for Applied Technologies

Riverside Review

70 houses built before 1850

Oldest brick house in Buffalo- Dearborn Street

Riverside Heritage Museum

Tops Supermarket

Wegmans Supermarket

Unique Architecture of school buildings

Riverside Park

Grant-Amherst Business Area

Riverside Library

Squaw Island Park

Cornelius Creek Waterfront Park

Harry's Harbourfront Restaurant

Bike Trail – Scajaquada to Delaware Park, Riverfront to Erie Basin Marina

Ontario Street Boat Launch - One of few free boat launches in WNY

Many streets still brick roads

Flying Bison Brewery

Extreme Skate Park

Fed-Ex Import-Export location

International Railroad Bridge

Views of Niagara River and Canada

Niagara Street – above I-190

Towne Boys and Girls Club

Many area churches of various faiths

Proximity to Buffalo State College

Proximity to Delaware Park

Proximity to Albright-Knox and Historical Museums

Tight-knit Community

Buffalo Free Trade Zone

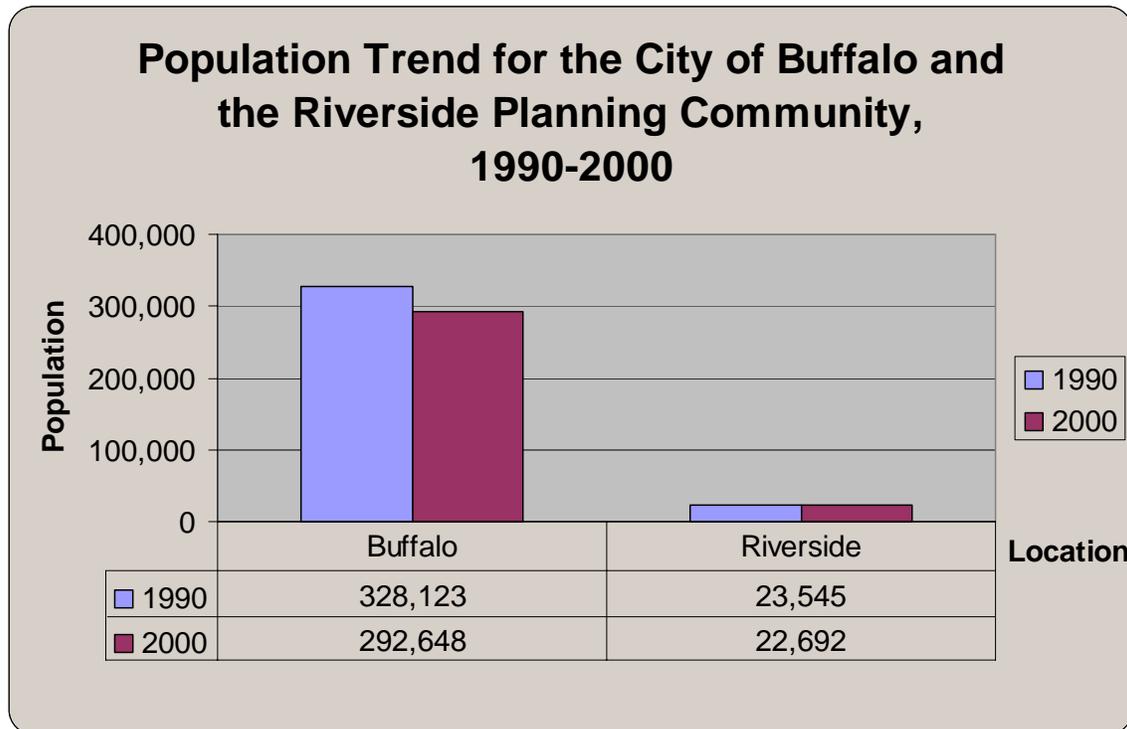
Proximity to Elmwood and Kenmore Avenue's shopping plazas



## Existing Conditions

### Population

In 1990, approximately 23,545 people resided in the Riverside Planning Community. The 2000 population was 22,692, and in 2010 there is projected to be 23,132 people (For a map of census geographies, see map on previous page.) There has been a 3.6% loss in population between 1990-2000; this is far less than the City of Buffalo as a whole, which experienced a 10.8% loss in population.



Graphic 13: “Population Trend for the City of Buffalo and the Riverside Planning Community, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

### Density

Population density in the Riverside Planning Community in 1990 was 12 persons per square acre, slightly lower than the average population density of 13 persons per square acre for the City. In 2000, population density remained unchanged at about 12 persons per square acre, whereas Buffalo’s population density decreased to 11 persons per square acre.

### Race

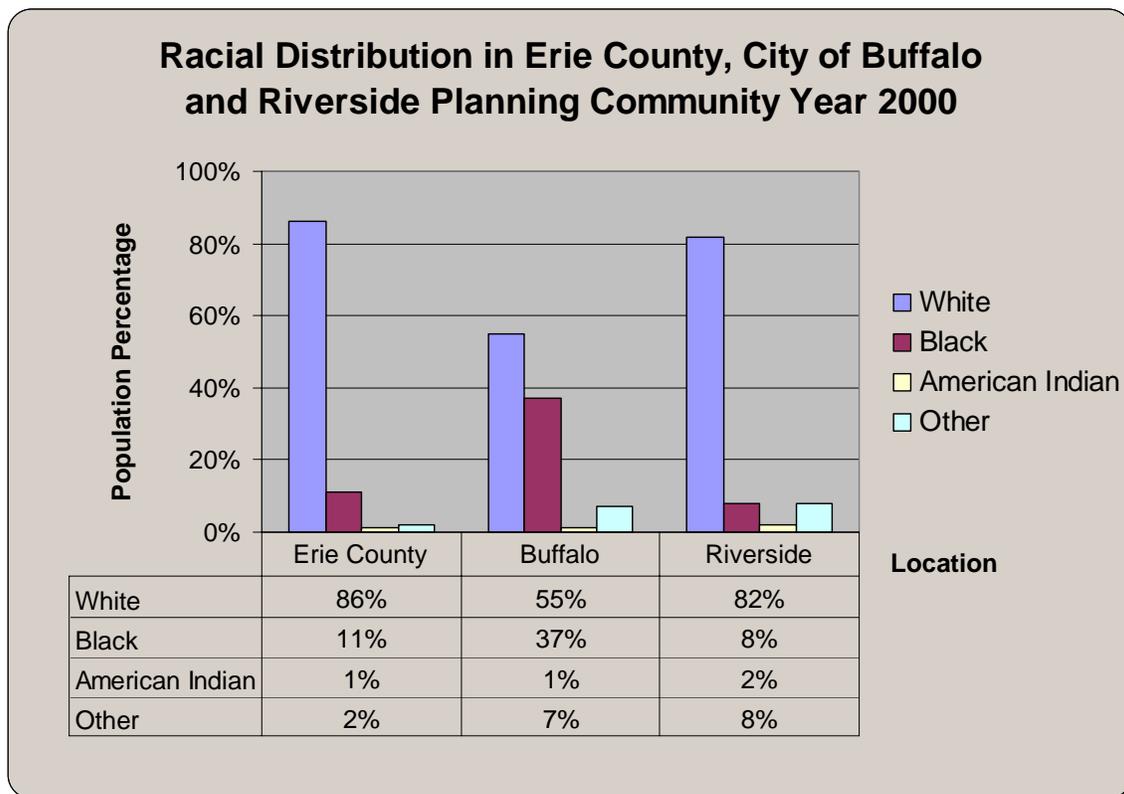
In 1990, Ninety-three percent of Riverside Planning Community residents were White, 3% of the population Black and 2% American Indian (Native American). Three percent

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

of the population was of Hispanic origin. In the year 2000, the White population decreased to 82%, the Black population increased to 8%, the American Indian percentage remained steady at 2%. In 2000, 9% of the community population claimed Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

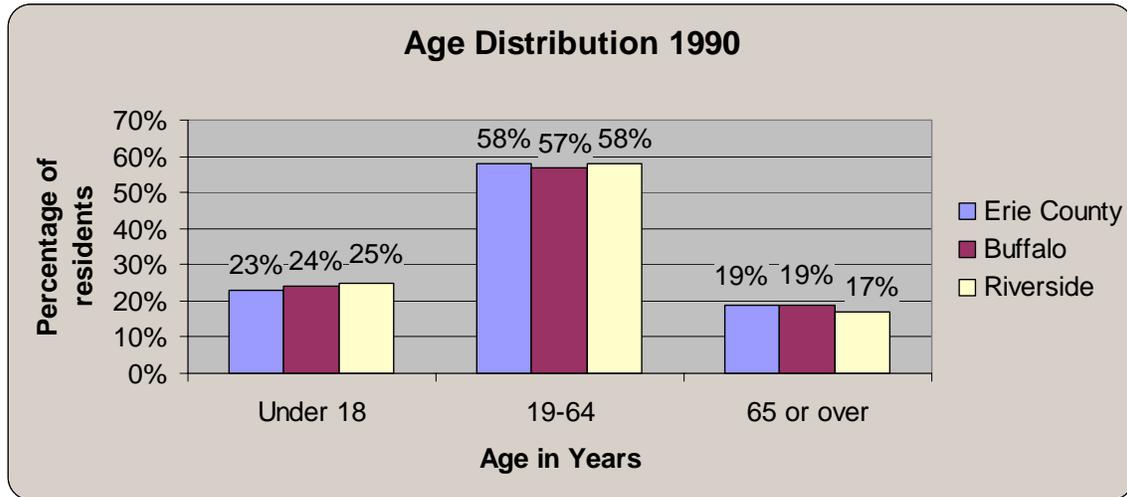
The City of Buffalo residents in 2000 were 55% White, 37% Black, 1% American Indian, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander and 4% other race. Seven percent of the Buffalo population is of Hispanic origin.

Erie County residents are 86% White, 11% Black, 1% American Indian, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander and 1% other race. Three percent of the Erie County population is of Hispanic origin.



Graphic 14: “Racial Distribution in Erie County, City of Buffalo, and Riverside Planning Community Year 2000.” Source: US Census.

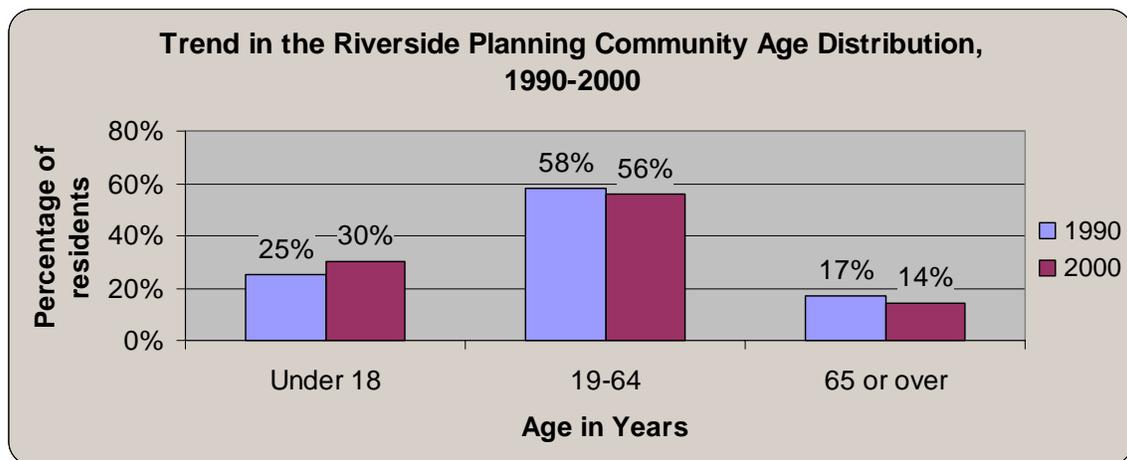
## Age



Graphic 15: “Age Distribution in 1990.” Source: US Census.

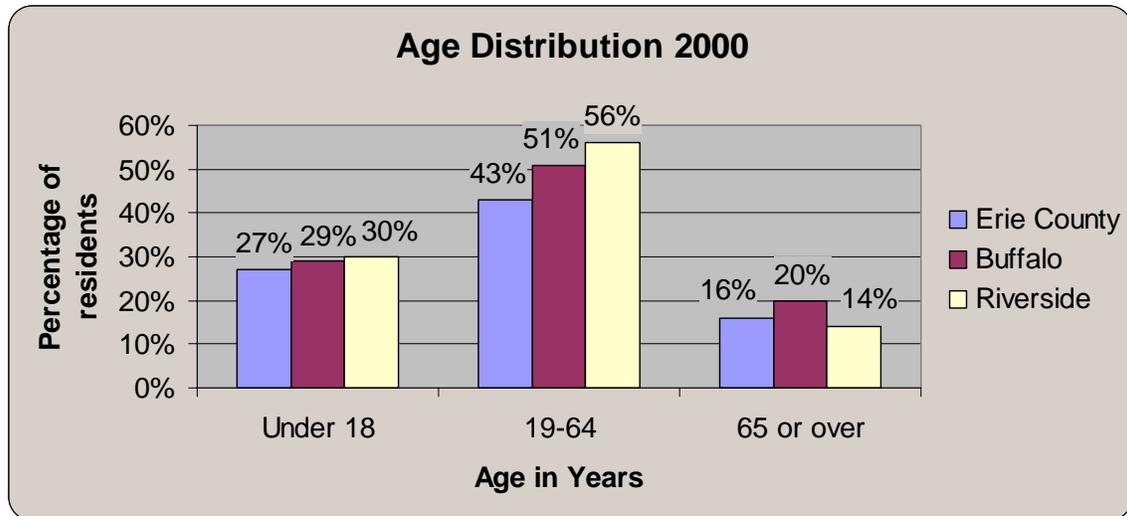
In 1990, 5,786 persons, or 25% of the Riverside Planning Community population were under the age of 18. This figure is slightly higher than the City of Buffalo (24%) and Erie County (23%).

In 1990, 3,933 persons, or 17% of the Planning Community’s population, were above the age of 65. The elderly population is 2% larger than that for the City and Erie County.



Graphic 16: “Trend in the Riverside Planning Community Age Distribution, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

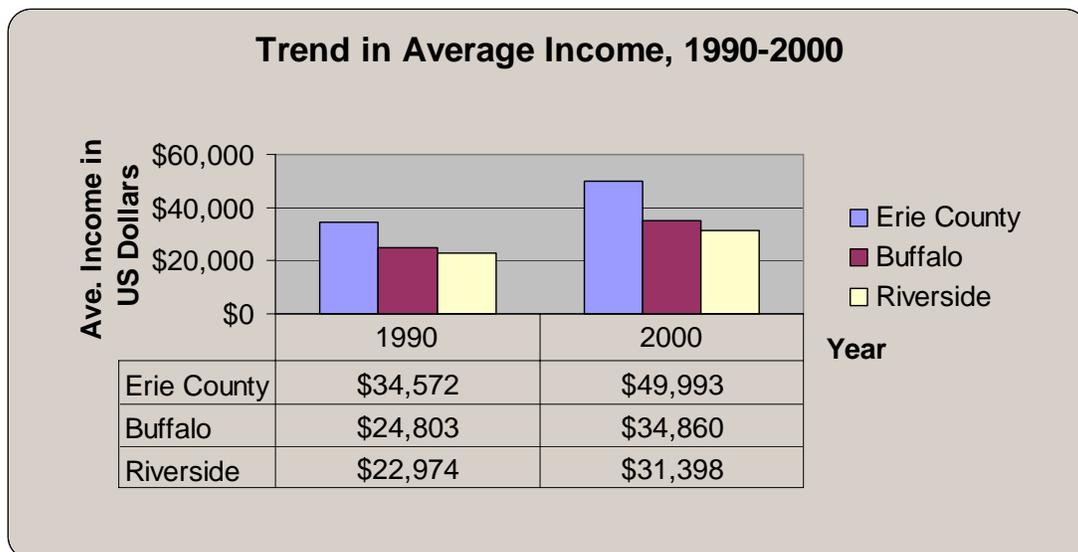
The trend in age distribution between 1990 and 2000 is as follows: in 2000, we see a greater percentage of young people under 18, a smaller percentage of elderly 65 or over, and the percentage age 19-64 are about the same.



Graphic 17: “Age Distribution 2000.” Source: US Census.

In 2000, 6,874 persons, or 30% of the Riverside Planning Community’s population, were under the age of 18. This figure is slightly higher than both the City of Buffalo (29%) and Erie County (27%). In 2000, 3,131 persons, or 14% of the Planning Community population, were above the age of 65. The elderly population percentage is 6% less than the City and 2% smaller than Erie County’s, which stood at 16%.

### Income & Poverty Levels

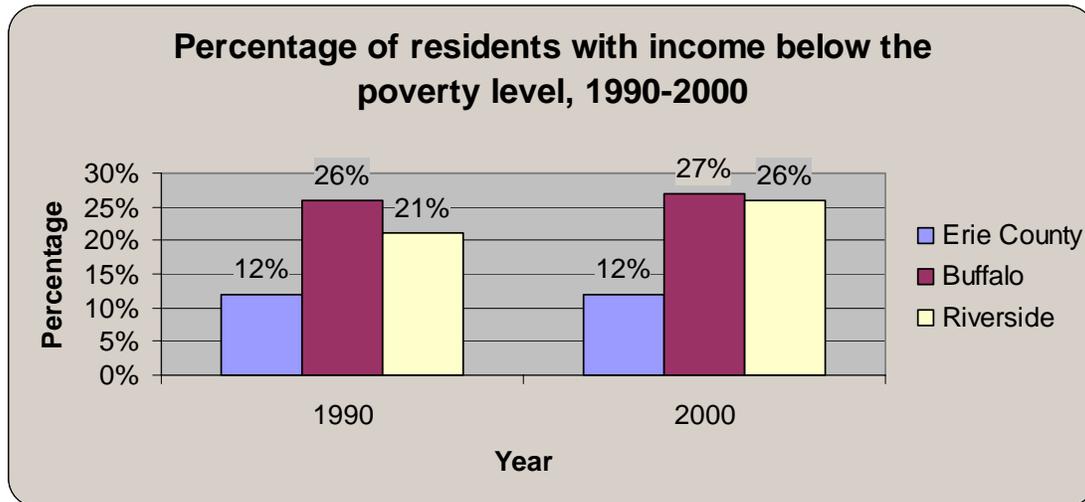


Graphic 18: “Trend in Average Income, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

Average household income in the Planning Community was \$22,974 in 1990; the figure was lower than the averages for the City of Buffalo (\$24,803) and Erie County (\$34,572). Twenty-one percent of the persons living in the Riverside Planning Community had

incomes below the poverty level. This was 5% lower than the City of Buffalo figure of 26% but higher than Erie County, for which 12% of persons were below the poverty level.

In 2000, the average household income was \$31,398; this figure was lower than the average for the City of Buffalo (\$34,860) and Erie County (\$49,993).



Graphic 19: “Percentage of Residents with Income Below the Poverty Level, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

5,817 people, about 26% of the persons living in the Riverside Planning Community, had incomes below the poverty level. This was about 1% fewer than the City of Buffalo as a whole (27%) but higher than Erie County, in which 12% of persons were below the poverty level.

## Economy

### Business Activity

Business activity in the Riverside Planning Community includes:

- Industrial/manufacturing sites located along the area’s railway corridors, Tonawanda Street between Niagara and Amherst and Skillen between Ontario and Military;
- Regional commercial enterprises including supermarkets on Amherst Street and the recent development of strip and big box retail developments along Elmwood Avenue between Amherst and Hinman;
- Traditional commercial corridors including Tonawanda Street, between Vulcan and Ontario; Ontario, between Tonawanda and Henrietta; and Amherst Street, between Tonawanda and Bush, with small-scale buildings that provide neighborhood services.

---

### Major Employers

The following table outlines the major employers located within the Black Rock-Riverside Planning Community.

Employer	Number of Employees
American Diamond Tool Co. Inc.	760
Marlette National Corp.	100
Metal Preparations Co. Inc.	25
American Brass Company	760
Robert-James Sales Inc.	60
Tops Friendly Markets	TBD
Wegmans	TBD

Graphic 20: “GNPA/Riverside Planning Community Major Employers.”

Source: DUNS Million Dollar Disc, second quarter 2004 and Reference USA/INFO USA 12 million Business Database (Referenced Summer 2004)

### Housing

Most of the housing in the BRR GNPA/Riverside Planning Community is single and double detached units with some multi-family apartment units. The majority of housing is well maintained, with isolated maintenance issues throughout the community.

As mentioned previously, the BRR GNPA/Riverside Planning Community is comprised of three neighborhoods: Black Rock, Riverside, and Military.

Within Black Rock, the Tonawanda Rail Corridor, which extends north-south through the middle of the entire GNPA/Planning Community, bisects the community into two areas, historic Black Rock and Grant-Amherst. So the four distinct residential areas are:

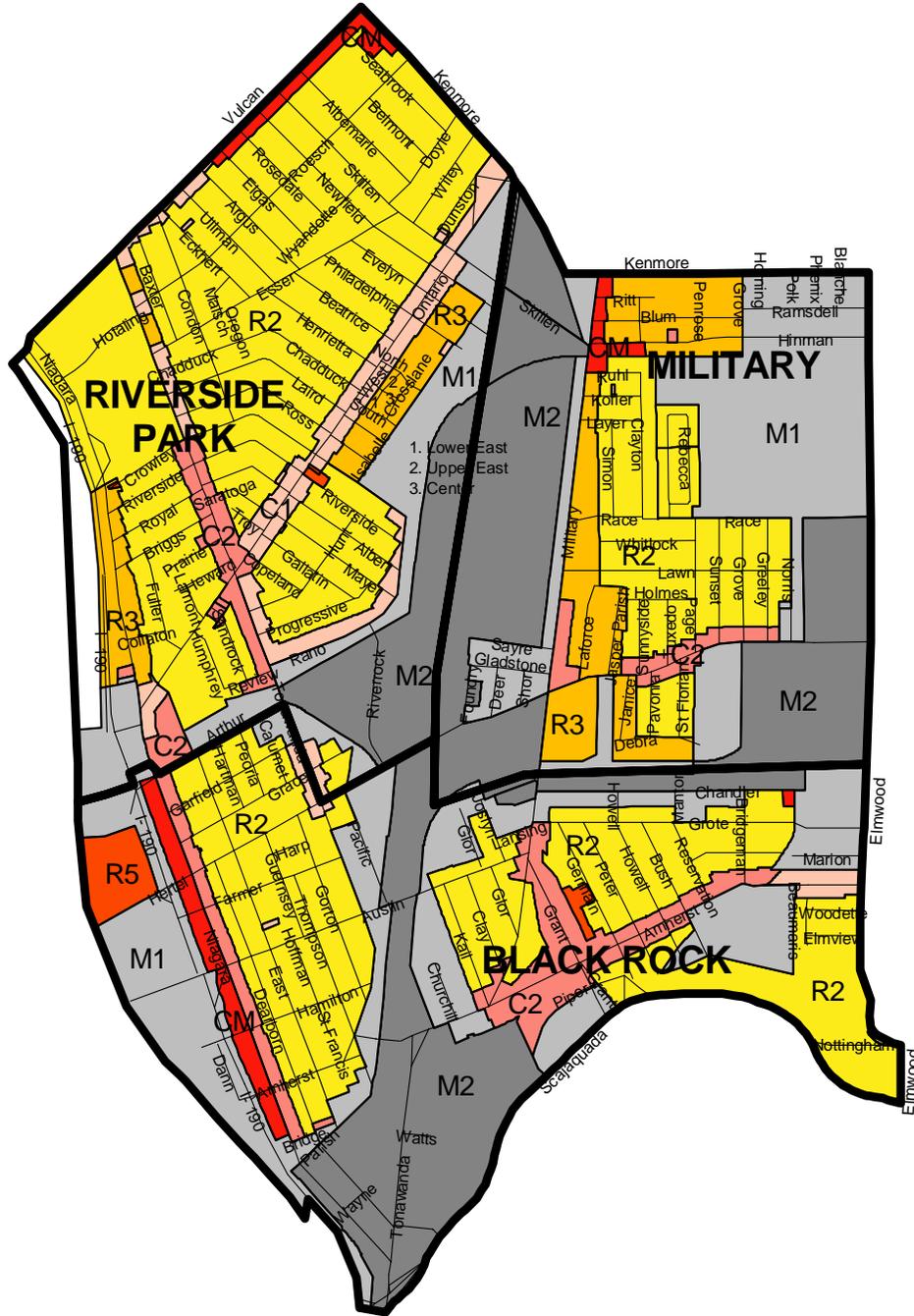


1. Riverside
2. Military
3. Historic Black Rock
4. Grant-Amherst

There is a strong industrial presence and continuing railroad activity in the area, and conflicts between incompatible industrial/transportation and residential land uses exist. (See Graphic 21 on the next page for a zoning map.)

The area east of the Tonawanda Rail Corridor and north of Hertel Avenue features a

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



**BLACK ROCK-RIVERSIDE GNPA - ZONING MAP**

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
8/9/2005

**LEGEND**

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

Source: Zoning information from Information and Data Analysis Section of OSP based on file prepared by True North Company, May, 2002. For display purposes only. Parcel-specific zoning is available from Land Use Administration Section of OSP.

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

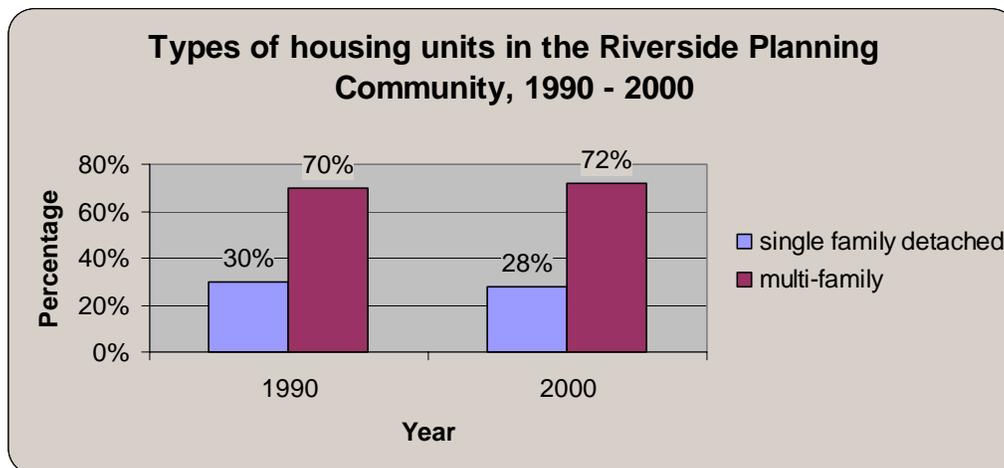
N

Graphic 21: "Zoning Map."

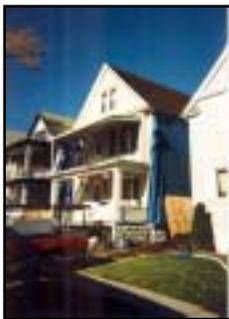
variety of housing types: public housing, a recent subdivision development with newer housing styles along Rebecca Park, smaller postwar housing and traditional older singles and doubles. The public housing appears to require rehabilitation work and the streetscape south of the public housing consists of a mixture of industrial sites and residential units. Additionally, the few streets west of Military Road are surrounded by large, active industrial sites and contain deteriorated housing stock with maintenance issues.

The housing stock located west of the Tonawanda Rail corridor and north of Hertel Avenue is well maintained, with isolated homes needing some sort of general maintenance. The area is near Riverside Park and offers views and limited Niagara River access.

In the area south of Hertel Avenue, there are several residential units requiring property maintenance and aesthetic improvements. Additionally, a large portion of the housing stock fronting the major traffic routes in the area is in fair or poor condition.



Graphic 22: “Types of Housing Units in the Riverside Planning Community, 1990-2000.”  
Source: US Census.



According to the 1990 Census, there were approximately 11,147 housing units in the Riverside Planning Community. As per the year 2000 census, there were 11,115 housing units, a less than 1% decrease in the number of housing units over ten years. In 1990, almost 70% of the residential units were multiple-family units; 30% of the units were single-family, detached homes. In the year 2000, 28% were single-family, detached homes and 72% were multi-family.

According to the 1990 and 2000 Census and statistics provided by the City of Buffalo Division of Planning:

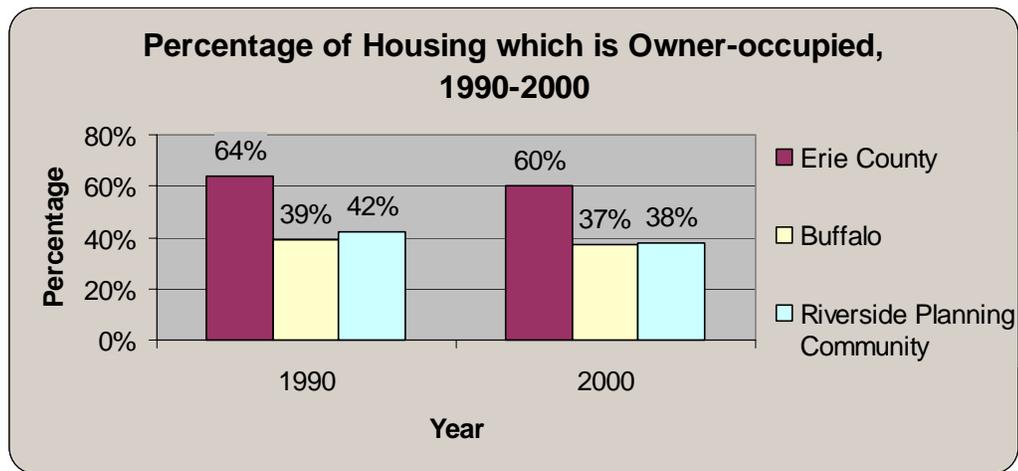
---

### Total Value of Housing Stock

- The total value of housing stock in the Riverside Planning Community is slightly less than the citywide average, with a range of .91 to 1.19 in the “Total Residential Assessed Ratio” in the Neighborhood Condition Index (where 1.00 represents the City average and lower numbers correspond to higher rankings).

### Owner-Occupied Housing

- In, 1990, forty-two percent of the residential units were owner-occupied in the Planning Community. In comparison, in 1990 thirty-nine percent of the residential units were owner-occupied in the City of Buffalo and 64% of the residential units were owner-occupied in Erie County. In 2000, 38% of residential units were owner-occupied. In comparison, in 2000, 37% of the residential units in Buffalo were owner occupied and 60% were owner-occupied in the whole of Erie County. Compared to the City of Buffalo as a whole, the Black Rock-Riverside planning community has 1% more owner-occupied housing units.

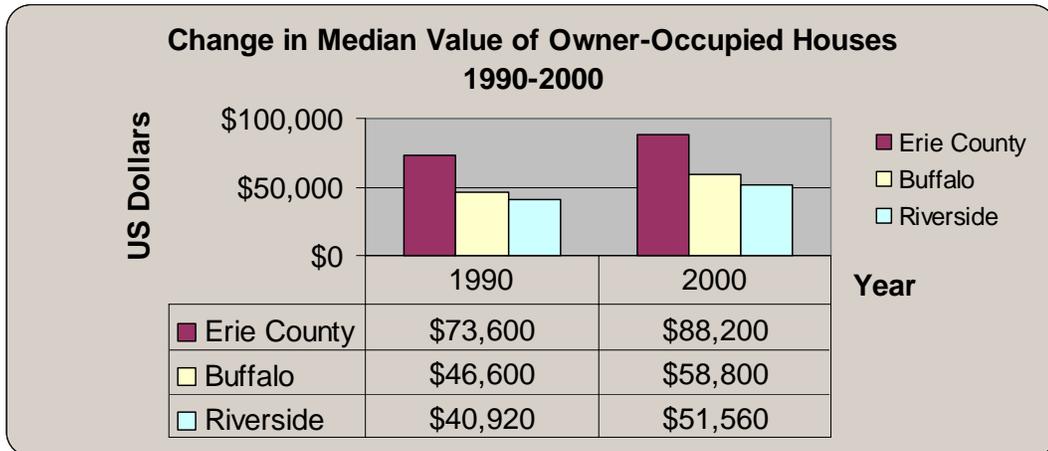


Graphic 23: “Percentage of Housing which is Owner-Occupied, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

### Median Housing Values

- In 1990, the median value for an owner-occupied house in the Planning Community was \$40,920, which was lower than the City median of \$46,600 and County median of \$73,600. In 2000, the Planning Community’s owner-occupied median value for a house was \$51,560, again lower than both the City’s median of \$58,800 and the County’s median of \$88,200. It is worth noting that over 1990-2000,

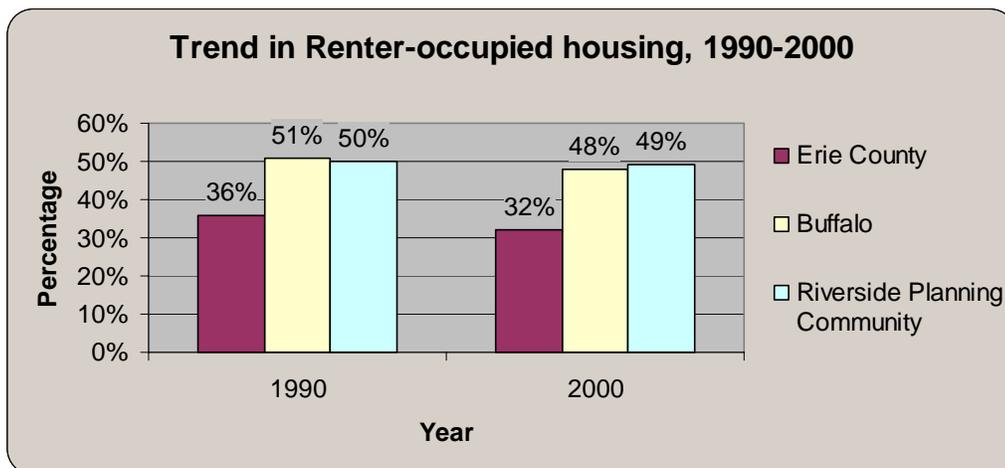
the gap between the Planning Community and City median owner-occupied house values increased from about \$5,700 to \$7,240.



Graphic 24: “Change in Median Value of Owner-Occupied Homes, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

### Renter-Occupied

- In 1990, fifty percent of the residential units were renter-occupied. In 1990, 51% of the residential units were renter-occupied in the City of Buffalo and 36% of the residential units were renter-occupied in Erie County. In 2000, 49% of the residential units were renter-occupied, only a 1% decrease in the amount of people renting in the Riverside Planning Community over this ten year period. In 2000, 48% of the residential units in the City of Buffalo and 32% of similar units in Erie County were renter-occupied; this shows that the Riverside Planning community matches the general renting trends of Buffalo as a whole.



Graphic 25 “Trend in Renter-Occupied Housing, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

### Median Monthly Rent

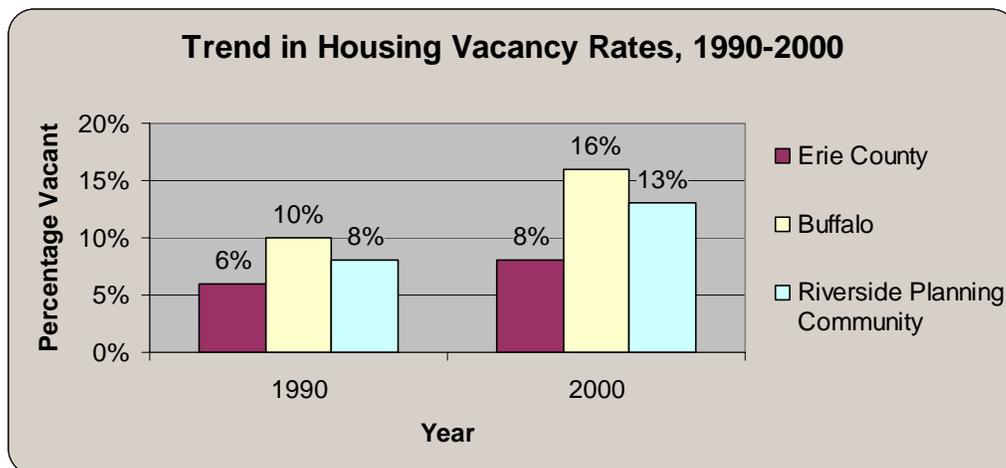
- In 1990, the median monthly rent of \$324 was lower than both the City median of \$352 and County median of \$384. In 2000, rent in the Riverside Planning Community had a median of \$438, still lower than the City median of \$472 and the County median of \$516.



Graphic 26: “Trend in Median Gross Rent 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

### Vacant Residential Units

- In 1990, eight percent of the residential units were vacant, a figure slightly lower than the City average of 10% but slightly higher than the Erie County average of 6%. By 2000, 13% of the Riverside Planning Community’s residential units were vacant, indicating an increase of six percent over 10 years. In 2000, the city and county vacant residential units numbered 16% and 8% respectively. Rising vacancy rates appear to be a growing problem in the city and community.



Graphic 27: “Trend in Housing Vacancy Rates, 1990-2000.” Source: US Census.

## Community Facilities

### Public and Parochial Schools

The Riverside Planning Community includes the following public and parochial schools:

Name	Location
P.S. 65 Roosevelt Academy	249 Skillen Street
P.S. 79 - PFC William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence	225 Lawn Avenue
P.S. 94 West Hertel Academy	489 Hertel Avenue
P.S. 205 Riverside Institute of Technology	51 Ontario Street
P.S. 305 McKinley Vocational High School	1500 Elmwood Avenue
Our Lady of Black Rock	16 Germain St.

Note: A Charter School operates at Kenmore and Vulcan Streets, just outside the boundary of the BRR GNPA

Graphic 28: “Public and Parochial Schools in the Riverside Planning Community.”

Source: Buffalo Public Schools website, accessed 12/2006 at

[www.buffaloschools.org/Schools/SchoolList.aspx](http://www.buffaloschools.org/Schools/SchoolList.aspx) and Margaret Szczepaniec 12/2006

In addition to the above facilities, the former Riverside Academy -Public School 60, located at 238 Ontario Street, is vacant, as is the former Blackrock Academy at 101 Hertel Avenue.

According to the 2000 State Education Department’s School District Report Card (The University of the State of New York State Education Department, The New York State School Quadrant Report Card for Buffalo City School Quadrant. February 2000),

- West Hertel Elementary School’s 4th and 8th grade students required extra help in order to pass the English and Mathematics Regents examinations;
- Riverside Academy and Roosevelt Academy’s 4th grade English, 8th grade English and 8th grade Mathematics students required extra help to pass the Regents examinations, while 4th grade Mathematics students met the standards for the Regents examination;
- Fifty-eight percent of the students tested for the English Regents exam and 44% of the students tested for the Mathematics Regents exam passed at McKinley Vocational High School; and
- Forty percent of the students tested for the English Regents Exam and 79% of the students tested for the Mathematics Regents exam passed at McKinley Vocational High School.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

New test results are available for 2002-03, and these figures will be updated with the new information.

Facility	Location
Buffalo District D Police Station	669 Hertel Avenue
Fire Station # 26	703 Tonawanda Street
Riverside Library Branch	820 Tonawanda Street
Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Service	203 Military Road
Riverside Senior Center	2607 Niagara Street
Northwest Buffalo Community Center	155 Lawn Avenue
U.S. Post Office	725 Hertel Avenue

Note: The new Engine 36/Ladder 13 Quarters, at 860 Hertel Avenue, was built in 2005/2006. While this building is just outside the Riverside Planning Community, it services a significant portion of it.

Graphic 29: “Public Facilities Other Than Public Schools in the Riverside Planning Community.” Source: Office of Strategic Planning and peter j. smith & company, inc.

### **Existing Land Use and Zoning**

#### Existing Land Use

As per year 2000 data, existing land uses within the Riverside Planning Community include the following: (See Graphic 30 for a Land Use Map)

#### *Residential*

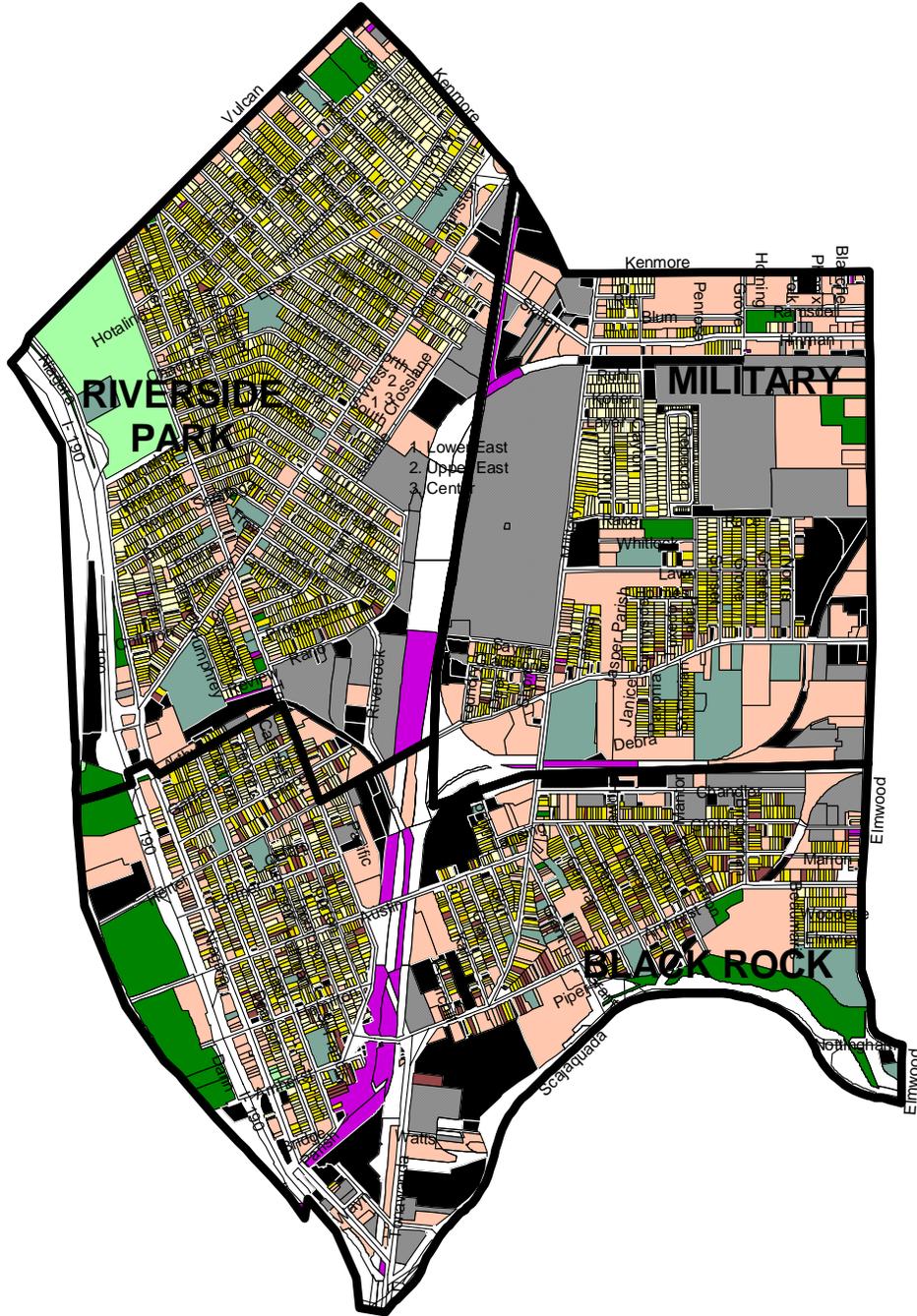
The Riverside Planning Community features a combination of residential, commercial and industrial uses. 45% of the land is dedicated to residential uses, consisting of single family and two family dwellings. There are also several public housing complexes. The housing stock appears to be in good to fair condition; homes are generally well maintained.

Within the City of Buffalo, 40% of the land is dedicated to residential uses.

#### *Commercial*

Twenty-four percent of the land is dedicated to commercial uses within the Planning Community. Most of the commercial uses in the community are located along Elmwood and Hertel Avenues, Niagara, Amherst, Ontario, Tonawanda and Grant Streets. The Tonawanda Street, Ontario Street and Amherst Street neighborhood commercial corridors feature two story buildings with small shops and restaurants on the first floor with apartments on the upper stories.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



**BLACK ROCK-RIVERSIDE GNPA  
- LAND USE MAP**

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
8/9/2005

**LEGEND**

	PLANNING NEIGHBORHOOD
<b>PARCEL LAND USE</b>	
	Residential single family
	Residential two family
	Residential three family
	Residential other
	Vacant
	Commercial
	Recreational
	Community Service
	Industrial
	Public Service
	Conservation Areas / Parks
	No Data
	STREET

Source: Parcel information from Information and Data Analysis Section of OSP based on EC Parcel Shapefile and City of Buffalo Assessment File, August, 2004.

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Graphic 30: "Land Use Map."

Businesses include professional offices, restaurants, small stores and car dealerships, banks and vehicle service stations. Recently, both the Tops and Wegmans supermarket chains have constructed large, super stores on the Amherst Street corridor. Elmwood Avenue between Amherst and Kenmore provides regional big box commercial opportunities.

Within the City of Buffalo, 18% of the land is dedicated to commercial uses.

#### *Industrial*

Industrial uses comprise 10% of the land in the Planning Community. Industrial uses in the community are mainly located along the corridors of Skillen, Tonawanda Street and Military Road. Along Amherst, Elmwood and Hertel, a mixture of industrial and newer, large commercial uses exist. The Buffalo Free Trade Complex, a light industrial office park, is located on River Rock Drive on a brownfield development site.

Within the City of Buffalo, 6% of the land is dedicated to industrial uses.

#### *Community Service*

Community service uses include educational, religious, health and governmental facilities and occupy 6% of the land area in the Riverside Planning Community.

Within the City of Buffalo, 10% of the land is dedicated to community service uses.

#### *Vacant Land*

Nine percent of land in the Planning Community is vacant. Most vacant land is located along abandoned railroad rights of way and near the intersection of Tonawanda Street and Military Road. Several vacancies are brownfield sites.

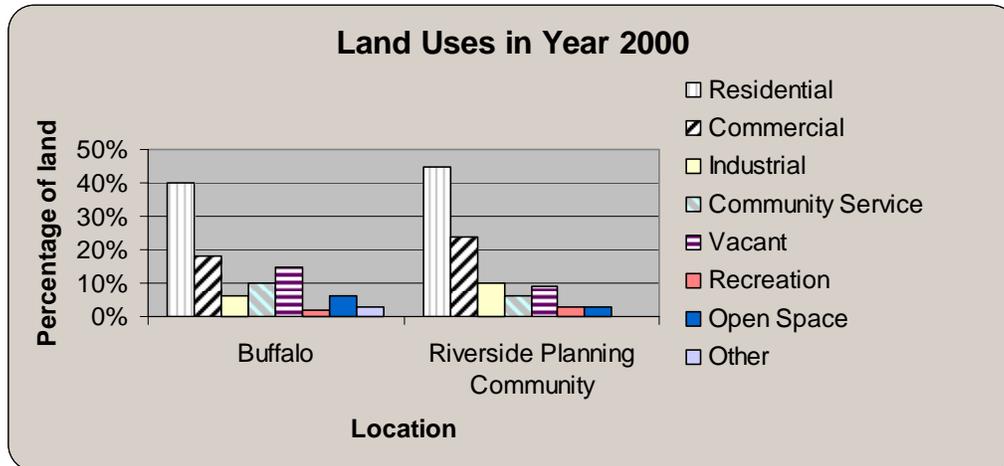
Within the City of Buffalo, 15% of the land is vacant.

#### *Recreation and Open Space*

Three percent of the Planning Community land area is dedicated to recreation or entertainment uses. These uses include performance and movie theaters, stadiums, arenas; indoor/outdoor sports facilities, marinas and playgrounds. 3% of the land area is wild, forested, conservation lands or public parks.

Within the City of Buffalo, 2% of the land is dedicated to recreation or entertainment uses and 6% of the land is dedicated to wild, forested, conservation lands or public parks.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



Graphic 31: “Land Uses in Year 2000.”

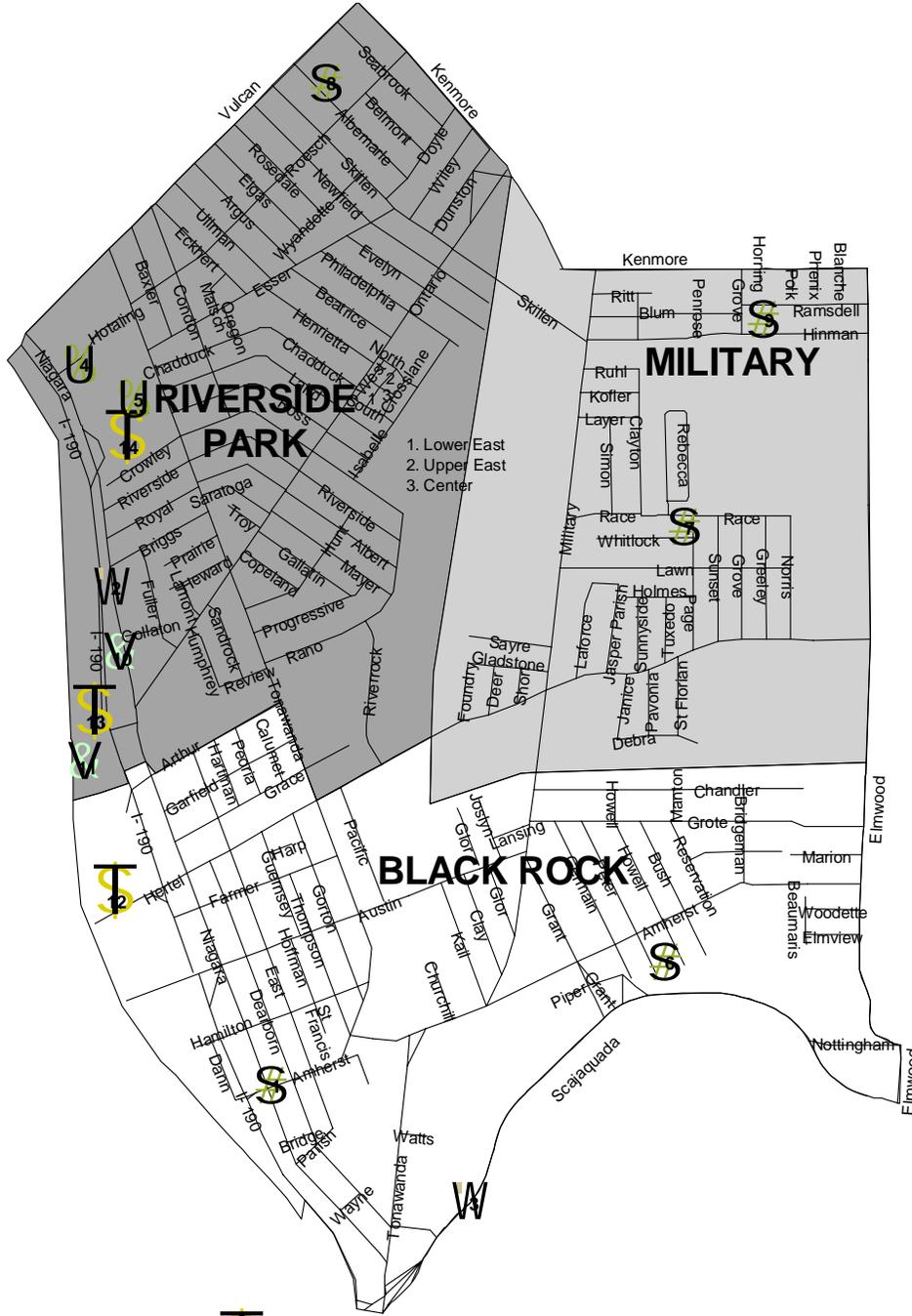
The following table lists public recreation facilities and parks within the Riverside Planning Community: (See also Graphic 33)

Facility	Type	Location
Market Square Park*	Neighborhood Park	Amherst St. at Niagara St.
Niagara Riverwalk	Walking and Biking Paths	Niagara Riverfront
Scajaquada Creek Pathway	Walking and Biking Paths	Scajaquada Creek
Riverside Wading Pool	Recreation Facility	Riverside Park
Riverside Ice Rink	Recreation Facility	Riverside Park
Peter St. Play Ground	Neighborhood Park	Between Peter St. and Howell St. at the Scajaquada Creek
Barrett	Neighborhood Park	Race St. at Page St.
J.H. Williams	Neighborhood Park	Between Albemarle St. and Seabrook St. at Vulcan St
Gay	Neighborhood Park	Between Hinman Ave. and Ramsdell Ave. at Grove St.
George Washington Park	Passive Park	Royal St. at Niagara River
Cornelius Creek	Passive Park	Arthur St. at Niagara River
Towpath Park	Destination Park	Hertel Ave. at Niagara River
Ontario St. Boat Ramp	Destination Park	Ontario St. at Niagara River
Riverside Park	Destination Park	Niagara St. at Crowley St.

Graphic 32: “Riverside Planning Community Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.”

Source: City of Buffalo City of Buffalo Master Plan Phase I: Community/Neighborhood Conditions Summary November 1998, except for \* from Erie County Interactive Mapping website, accessed August 2004

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



**BLACK ROCK-RIVERSIDE  
GNPA - PARKS,  
RECREATION, OPEN  
SPACE MAP**

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
8/9/2005

- Destination Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Passive Park
- Recreation Facility
- Walking/Biking Path
- Street
- Planning Neighborhood
- BLACK ROCK
- MILITARY
- RIVERSIDE PARK

Label	Name	Type	Location
1	Market Square Park*	Neighborhood Park	Amherst St. at Niagara St.
2	Niagara Riverwalk	Walking and Biking Path	Niagara Riverfront
3	Scjaquaqua Creek Pathway	Walking and Biking Path	Scjaquaqua Creek
4	Riverside Wading Pool	Recreation Facility	Riverside Park
5	Riverside Ice Rink	Recreation Facility	Riverside Park
6	Peter St. Play Ground	Neighborhood Park	Between Peter St. & Howell St. at the Scjaquaqua Ck.
7	Barrett	Neighborhood Park	Race St. at Page St.
8	J.H. Williams	Neighborhood Park	Between Albemarle St. & Seabrook St. at Vulcan St.
9	Gay	Neighborhood Park	Between Hinman Ave. and Ramsdell Ave. at Grove St.
10	George Washington Park	Passive Park	Royal St. at Niagara River
11	Cornelius Creek	Passive Park	Arthur St. at Niagara River
12	Towpath Park	Destination Park	Hertel Ave. at Niagara River
13	Ontario St. Boat Ramp	Destination Park	Ontario St. at Niagara River
14	Riverside Park	Destination Park	Niagara St. at Crowley St.

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Graphic 33: "Parks, Recreation, Open Space Map."

### *Zoning Regulations*

Zoning regulations within the Riverside Planning Community include the following categories. (The Zoning Map for the BRR GNPA/Riverside Planning Community can be found in Graphic 18 above.)

#### Residential

The Riverside Planning Community has primarily been designated as (R1-R3 and R5) residential districts. Permitted uses include single-family, two-family and multi-family dwelling units. Community, recreational and institutional facilities are also allowed. The districts also permit hotels, rooming houses, professional offices, nursing and convalescent homes. The residential districts are located throughout the Planning Community and are not concentrated in any specific area.

#### Commercial

The Planning Community also allows for commercial uses in several districts (C1, C2 and CM). These districts include neighborhood community and general commercial business districts. The businesses may be retail or service establishments including banks, restaurants, small stores, dry cleaners, contractor and auto repair shops. The districts are primarily located along or near the corridors of Elmwood and Hertel Avenues, Niagara, Amherst, Ontario, Tonawanda and Grant Streets.

#### Industrial

There are many light/general industrial use districts (M1-M2) located in the Planning Community. The districts are located along the arterials of Military, Ontario, Tonawanda, Chandler and Skillen Streets. There are no heavy industrial (M3) districts in the Planning Community.

## **Urban Design**

### *Major Urban Design Elements*

The major urban design elements of the Riverside Planning Community include major parks, landmark buildings, residential architecture, commercial buildings, highways, railroads, thoroughfares and street patterns that define the Planning Community. These are physical elements that define, shape and leave the lasting impression of being in the Black Rock, Riverside, and Military neighborhoods.

- Riverside Park, the Riverwalk Trail, marine service businesses and waterfront restaurants link the Riverside Planning Community with the Niagara River, despite the isolating effects of the Niagara Section of the Thruway.
- Gateway signs have been developed at the intersections of Amherst and Grant Streets, Amherst and Niagara Streets and Niagara and Ontario Streets.
- The Tonawanda Street, Ontario Street and Amherst Street neighborhood commercial corridors feature two story buildings with small shops and restaurants on the first floor with apartments on the upper stories. Recent street and landscape improvements to Amherst Street enliven and beautify this commercial district.
- Elmwood Avenue between Amherst and Kenmore provides regional big box commercial opportunities.

### *Residential Architecture*

Many of the homes in this area are worker's cottages: modest wood framed structures built to house the labor needed for industry. In addition, there are: False Front, Federal Style, Stick and Queen Anne, Georgian Revival Vernacular and Bungalow style structures. (Lester Walker, *American Shelter* Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1996.)

The Riverside Park section of this Planning Community was developed as a refuge from the industry in the rest of the Planning Community. Here, houses on tree-lined streets exist only a few blocks from the factories and jobs that surround them.

### *Significant Structures*

Historically/architecturally significant structures in the Riverside Planning Community include: (Francis Kowsky, et al., *Buffalo Architecture: A Guide*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981. p. 172)

- Black Rock Canal Lock (1909-1914)
- Buffalo Smelting Works (former) (1891) – Austin Street at Niagara River
- King Sewing Machine Company (1912) – Crowley Street at Rano Street
- Customs House and Canadian National Railway Office (1913)– Parish Street at Dearborn
- International Railroad Bridge (1873)– Niagara and Parish Street
- Howell House (1830) – 189-191 Dearborn Street
- Engine #26 Firehouse (1894) – Tonawanda Street at Progressive Street
- Former Hook & Ladder #12 Firehouse (1913) – 395 Amherst Street
- Church of Assumption (1914)– 435 Amherst Street
- St. Francis Xavier Church (1913)– 149 – 157 East Street

- Unity Temple (1905) – 1940 Niagara Street
- Former St. John the Baptist Church (1927)– 60 Hertel Avenue
- PAL Youth Center (1894) – 345 Austin Street

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, National Register Information System (National Park Service. <http://www.nr.nps.gov>. Accessed December 27, 2006), are:

- NASH (harbor tug)\* – 1776 Niagara Street
- Riverside Park\* - Bounded by Vulcan, Tonawanda, Crowley, and Niagara St.

### *Pedestrian Environment*

The Tonawanda and Ontario Street area has a pedestrian scale, creating an urban feel. Sidewalks, street furniture and landscaping make this area an asset.

Much of the Riverside Planning Community is linked with sidewalks and crosswalks, however many of these are in disrepair. Regional scale commercial developments on Elmwood between Great Arrow and Kenmore Avenue do not include sidewalks, or pedestrian access that is separated or protected from automobile traffic or parking.

The following streets do not have adequate pedestrian amenities:

- Tonawanda Street
- Niagara Street
- Ontario Street

### *Gateways*

A gateway is an entranceway leading into the City, a specific Planning Community or a special district within a Planning Community. Gateways can be enhanced with signage that informs travelers they are entering a new area and welcomes them into it. The Riverside Planning Community contains four sites for potential entrance gateways:

- Elmwood at Kenmore Avenue – an entryway into one of the City’s most prominent commercial districts from the Village of Kenmore;
- Elmwood and Hertel – the junction of two thriving commercial corridors that provides a gateway between the North and Riverside Planning Communities;
- Niagara at Ontario Street (Gateway signage is present) – a gateway between Black Rock and Riverside, and an entrance into the Planning Community from Interstate 190; and
- Niagara and Amherst Street (Gateway signage is present) – a gateway into the Black Rock neighborhood and an entrance into the Planning Community from Interstate 190.

### *Street Trees*

The City of Buffalo completed the process of conducting an inventory of trees in the City. This inventory includes an assessment of trees already in place, estimation of necessary removal, a detailed report on where trees are required and exactly how many needs to be planted. The inventory was completed in the Fall of 2001.

For the purposes of the Plan, a rough evaluation of City trees based on aerial photographs was completed. Although the evaluation did not take into account the quality of existing trees, major road corridors that could require new trees were identified. The Riverside Planning Community requires trees along:

- Ontario, in the north part of the community;
- Grant, which runs into Military and extends from the south border of the community to the north border; and
- Elmwood Avenue, at the eastern border of the community.

Within the Planning Community, Military Road and Niagara Street are undergoing streetscape improvements that include replanting of trees.

### **Transportation**

In 2000, 82% of residents drove or carpoled to work, 12% to public transport and 5% walked; 75% of those people not working at home commuted 24 or fewer minutes, with the largest percentage of residents, 22%, taking between 15 to 19 minutes.

Transportation infrastructure in the Riverside Planning Community consists of rail, local roads, highways, pedestrian access, bicycle, and boat. (See Graphic 35: “Transportation Map” below.)

### ***Rail***

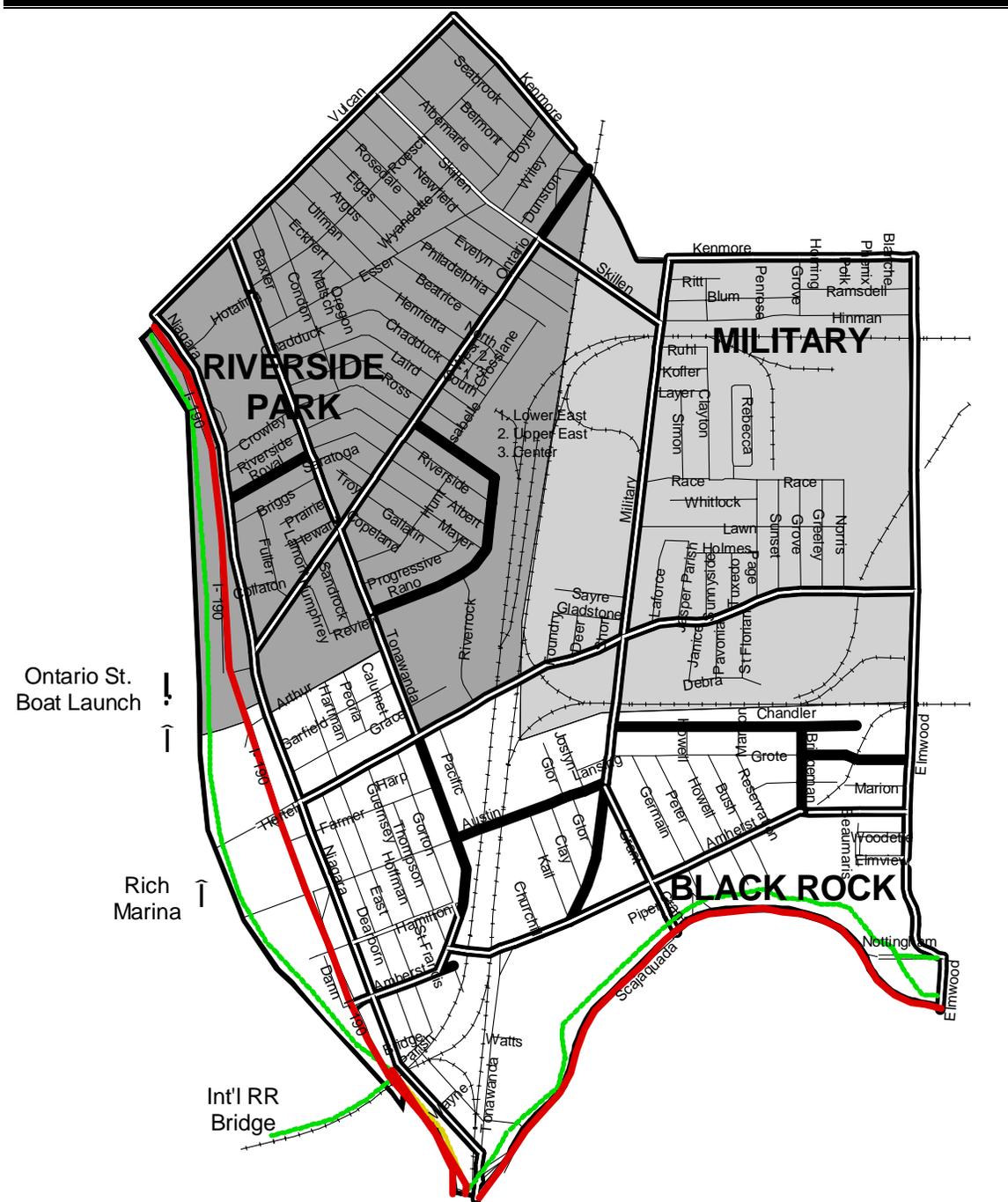
There are a number of rail lines throughout The Riverside Planning Community. West of Military Road, the Amtrak Line runs north-south. Conrail lines run from the Niagara River, crossing at the International Rail Bridge, north and east to Kenmore Avenue.

The former Conrail Cross Cut Branch cuts across the southeast portion of the community. The railway was abandoned in December 1984.



Graphic 34: “International Railroad Bridge”

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



**BLACK ROCK-RIVERSIDE GNPA  
- TRANSPORTATION MAP**

**LEGEND**

- ↓ Boat Launch    ↑ Marina
- Green line Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Yellow line Planned Multi-Use Trail
- Red line Highway
- Black line with white center Bus Route
- Black line with red center Truck Route
- Black line Street
- Black line with cross-ticks Rail Road
- Black line with white center Planning Neighborhood
- White box BLACK ROCK
- Light grey box MILITARY
- Grey box RIVERSIDE PARK

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
8/9/2005

Source: Bike Routes - GBNRTC "Bicycle Route Guide"; Rail Roads - FBNR Green Infrastructure Project, 2002; Truck Routes - Truck Route Map, Public Works, 2001; Bus Routes - NFTA, 2004; Marinas/Boat Ramp - Map Works, Inc., 1999.

0    0.25    0.5 Miles

N

Graphic 35: "Transportation Map."

### *Highways*

Interstate 190 and the Scajaquada Expressway (Route 198) serve the Riverside Planning Community.

Interstate 190 (also referred to elsewhere in this plan as the “Niagara Section of the Thruway”) is part of the New York State Thruway System and provides links to Route 5, Interstate 290, Interstate 90 and the Scajaquada Expressway. According to the City of Buffalo, Master Plan Phase I: Community/Neighborhood Conditions Summary (November 1998), there is a poor level of service along Interstate 190.

The Scajaquada Expressway extends from Route 190 on the Niagara Riverfront to Route 33, a major regional east-west corridor.

### *Local Road Corridors*

Amherst Street, Elmwood Avenue, Hertel Avenue, Kenmore Avenue, Military Road, Niagara Street, Ontario Street and Tonawanda Street are the major local road corridors that serve this area. According to the City of Buffalo, Master Plan Phase I: Community/Neighborhood Conditions Summary (November 1998), in general, these roads are in fair to poor condition. Elmwood Avenue, Hertel Avenue east of Tonawanda and Niagara Street south of Ontario are in fair condition, while Amherst Street, Tonawanda Street and Niagara Street north of Ontario are in poor condition. The roads have adequate capacity for current traffic volumes.

### *Transit*

According to the NFTA, 8 bus lines serve the Riverside Community: Niagara, Grant, Elmwood, Kenmore, Amherst, Grand Island, Riverside Express and the Tonawanda Express lines.

### *Bicycle Access*

There are multi-use trails, an amenity which includes off-road bicycle use, north-south along the Niagara River as part of the Riverwalk, from Riverside Park to the International Railroad Bridge, and continuing southward on Squaw Island on the western side of the island. A multi-use trail east-west extends along Scajaquada Creek from Elmwood Avenue to Niagara Street. A connection, linking the Scajaquada Creek multi-use trail at Niagara Street to the Squaw Island multi-use trail, is under construction as of 2006.

Based on traffic volume, road and lane width, speed limit and pavement, the major roads in the community have an average to slightly below average level of service for on-street bicycle traffic. There are no on-road bicycle facilities.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



1. The beginning of the Squaw Island portion of Riverwalk, located at end of Ferry Street on Buffalo's West Side, heading north toward the International Railroad Bridge.



2. The Riverwalk as it approaches the International Railroad Bridge from the south, nearing the northern end of Squaw Island.



3. The Riverwalk runs under the International Railroad Bridge to Squaw Island Park.



4. Squaw Island Park is just north of the bridge on the Squaw Island's northern tip.



5. The Riverwalk then crosses a bridge to Niagara Street and points north, parallel to the railroad. The bridge spans the Niagara Section of the Thruway.



6. The Riverwalk sign and map at the entrance on Niagara Street and Bridge Street, after crossing the highway bridge.

---

Graphic 36: "A Series of Photos Exploring the Riverwalk and Squaw Island Park." This new portion of the Riverwalk and the new Squaw Island Park are important new amenities for bicycling, walking and park-visiting residents of the Black Rock neighborhood.

---

### *Pedestrian Environment*

As an urban setting, much of the Riverside Planning Community is linked with sidewalks and crosswalks; however, many of these are in disrepair. The regional scale commercial developments on Elmwood between Great Arrow and Kenmore Avenue often do not have dedicated pedestrian links to sidewalks lining the street corridors.

Pedestrian access between the western and eastern portions of the community is limited and less safe due to industrial sites and rail corridors.

The Niagara Section of the Thruway severely limits pedestrian crossings to the Niagara River.

### *Boat Access*

Boat access to the Riverside Planning Community is facilitated by a few small marinas between the Niagara River and Niagara Section of the Thruway, and also by the Ontario Street Boat Ramp, one of the few free access points to the Niagara River in the Buffalo area.

## **Water/Sewer**

The Riverside Planning Community has good water pressure (50+ PSI).

The majority of the community has only limited sewer capacity. However, the area south of Amherst Street has normal sewage capacity, according to the City of Buffalo, Master Plan Phase I: Community/ Neighborhood Conditions Summary (November 1998).

Combined sanitary sewer overflows into the Niagara River are an issue during heavy rains. This degrades the biology of the Niagara River, reduces it as a recreational resource, and creates health risks for those who use the river as a fishing, swimming and wading amenity, even if regulations governing or prohibiting such uses exist.

## Community Goals and Action Plans

### Public Safety

The BRR GNPA Public Safety Subcommittee has implemented many successful programs in their quest to improve neighborhood safety. Among its notable accomplishments has been the establishment of a drug crime tip sheet, closer ties with the D-district police station staff, and their community education program. The education program has hosted guest speakers from across Buffalo's legal and crime prevention communities educating residents about their public safety choices and the importance of total community involvement. They are particularly interested in establishing youth programs in local community centers and parishes, offering safe, organized recreational options for the area's younger residents. In striving to improve the relationship between police officers and residents, the subcommittee stresses a need for a cooperative, mutual working relationship that fosters communication on both sides; this will help build trust between these groups.

Both residents and police officers want a safer neighborhood, but residents should realize sometimes police are dealing with long-term social problems which cannot be solved overnight.

### Public Safety Goals Summary

Goal	Description
PS1	Engage more adolescents in neighborhood life, development, the community and its quality of life goals
PS2	Increase presence and visibility of public safety officers
PS3	Improve the communication and relationships between residents and the police force
PS4	Reduce incidence of crimes
PS5	Encourage prosecution of more criminals
PS6	Police force more accountable to neighborhood residents; police force more responsive to residential calls for assistance.
PS7	Increase awareness of Homeland Security operations in the planning neighborhood, and encourage their siting here
PS8	Develop knowledge and support of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques so that they have a better chance of being implemented locally
PS9	Coordinate with businesses and business associations so that they can be more pro-active in their security measures.

The above goals are described in more detail on the following pages.

## **PS1 – Engage more adolescents in neighborhood life, development, the community and its quality of life goals**

The BRR GNPA recognizes that today's youth are the future homeowners of the Riverside Planning Community. With this realization in mind, the Public Safety Subcommittee would like to guide youth in becoming responsible citizens and open up a dialogue about public safety issues that affect youth on a day-to-day basis.

### **Strategy:**

- A. Work with local churches to develop faith-based youth programs. As of August 2004, a youth group at St. Francis Xavier church has been organized and is active.
- B. Northwest Community Center to work with local schools to develop after-school youth based programs. The goal is to keep youth engaged in legal, constructive activities instead of the opposite.
- C. Provide multiple Safe Haven environments and activities for youth at community centers, churches, schools, businesses, and other locations which could be opened for the community.
- D. Arrange debris clean-ups and graffiti paint-overs, including offering help to property owners.
- E. Contact programs for youth; get word out about youth safety initiatives when youths register for programs.

**Implementing partners:** West Hertel Academy, Grabiarz School, Northwest Community Center, Riverside Institute of Technology, Voice Buffalo, Holy Ground, Churches, Other Youth Programs

## **PS2 – Increase presence and visibility of public safety officers**

The presence and visibility of police officers serves as a deterrent to crime, increases the feeling of neighborhood safety and also increases the effectiveness of the police force. The BRR GNPA is a community that is receptive to better police service.

### **Strategy:**

- A. Return COPS (Community Oriented Police Satellite) stations to neighborhoods.
  - Research grants to fund operation of a COPS station; investigate possibility of obtaining Weed and Seed funding.
  - Investigate feasibility placing a COPS station back in the neighborhood. Towards Hertel and Tonawanda might be a possibility.
  - COPS station to listen to, address and advise upon lower police priority neighborhood problems.
  
- B. Introduce Police walking and pedal patrols, including in Riverside Park
  - Need cooperation of D-District Chief of Police.
  - Need manpower to enact.
  
- C. Investigate possibility of introducing Peace Officers into the neighborhoods, similar to South Buffalo.
  - Work with South Buffalo Peace Officers to understand their arrangements.
  - Include Police Union in plan.
  - Investigate feasibility of peace officers arranging their own bonding if insurance is not available to cover them.
  
- D. Include a railroad police force with the neighborhood public safety officers; work with existing CSX police force.
  
- E. Include the Buffalo State College public safety officers in the neighborhood public safety force.
  
- F. Coordinate with the Border Patrol at the International Railroad Bridge to increase and improve communication with the neighborhood.
  
- G. Coordinate a regularly scheduled meeting with Rail, NFTA and Buffalo State College police forces to exchange information and collectively address public safety issues.
  
- H. Increase amount of police officers assigned to the D-district police force.

**Implementing Partners:** Buffalo Police Department, Police Unions, South Buffalo Peace Officers, Buffalo State Public Safety, Railroad Public Safety, Border Patrol, Conrail, NFTA

---

### **PS3 – Improve the communication and relationships between residents and the police force**

Public safety issues often remain unaddressed because both the police force and the residents do not know how to effectively communicate their needs to each other. The importance of building trust between the residents and their police force cannot be understated, and it should include the youngest and oldest members of the neighborhood. Both residents and police officers want to have a safer neighborhood, but residents should realize sometimes police are dealing with long-term social problems which cannot be solved overnight.

#### **Strategy:**

##### **A. Develop an Education Program.**

- Bring across the point to residents that the police cannot be solely responsible for public safety; the community must be more involved in calling and reporting alleged crimes, and pressing charges.
- Educate both residents and police of the importance of building trust between them.
- Monthly resident meetings with local police officers, judges, public safety officers, district attorneys, crime victim advocates – arranged through BRR GNPA Public Safety Subcommittee.
- D-District Police Station to train Report Technicians to improve their manners with the public, oriented toward customer service philosophy.
- Educate residents on how to effectively use the 911 emergency system.
- Include a public safety curriculum for young children, beginning in grade one, which teaches how to respectfully interact with police officers.

##### **B. Advocate with political representatives to reinstate city residency requirement for new (2006 onward) permanently appointed Buffalo Police Officers.**

##### **C. Coordinate with city-wide civilian-based public safety programs to develop initiatives in the GNPA which support policing, which should include:**

- Citizens Action Group
- Crime Prevention Association
- Voice Buffalo
- Holy Ground

D. Develop a long-term system for residents to safely and anonymously report crimes

- Publicize TIPS sheets.
- Publicize Narcotics and Homicide tip lines.
- Organize the BRR GNPA Public Safety Subcommittee members as go-betweens for residents to report crime to the police.
- Bring attention to judges in court of the Citizen Protection Act, similar to the Witness Protection Act, which is meant to mitigate fear of retaliation for reporting crimes to the police.
- Ask judges to promote the Citizen Protection Act.

E. Organize/create more active Block Clubs.

- Work with Board of Block Clubs and City of Buffalo Office of Citizen Services to distribute information sheets on setting up block clubs and available training.

F. Work with block clubs to develop a system of communication whereby police officers give feedback to residents on what type of cooperation they need from them, and residents learn how to talk to police officers: state case, proper words, be specific, write what you will say ahead of time, listen to officer, and don't lose your cool. Additionally, give time for the police officer to answer your questions, bring across the message that you would like to cooperate with them, and don't lose your temper.

G. Police to provide more basic information about crime at the crime-scene to neighbors who ask questions if legally able to do so, and do so in a less defensive manner.

**Implementing Partners:** Buffalo School Board, D-District police station, BRR GNPA Public Safety Subcommittee, Police Union, Buffalo Board of Block Clubs, City of Buffalo Office of Citizen Services, Riverside Review, City Court, City District Attorney's Office

## **PS4 – Reduce incidence of crimes**

Work with law enforcement to reduce the gang violence, illegal weapons, drug deals and quality of life crimes that contribute to high levels of fear, and the perception that the Riverside Planning Community neighborhoods of Black Rock, Military and Riverside are unsafe for living, working, and physical activity.

### **Strategy:**

A. Work with law enforcement to reduce street level drug activity/drug trafficking to “weed” out offenders victimizing residents of the BRR GNPA community.

B. Work with law enforcement to reduce youth gang activity / violent juvenile crime causing fear among residents living in the BRR GNPA community.

C. Work with law enforcement to curb the gun violence corroding the fabric within the BRR GNPA community.

D. Encourage people to make calls and participate in crime prevention in the community, to reduce incidence of crime.

- People should call police.
- People should use Tip Sheets so that documentation is made through the 911 system. As a result, police develop crime sheets (“watch out on X location”).
- Develop a “Who to call for what” pamphlet for the community.

E. Improve the quality of life of residents by working with law enforcement to reduce incidences of: graffiti, vandalism, garbage dumping, littering, and other nuisance crimes like loud noise and loitering.

F. Take indirect methods of curbing crime, i.e. through altering the physical image of the neighborhood and running more frequent housing inspections. The message that is related is that the residents, City officials and the police force are watching the neighborhood and will not tolerate crime, including drug activity (including (i.e. assaults, robberies, prostitution).

### **Inspections:**

- Increase the number of housing inspectors in the planning neighborhood
- Run a Save-our-Streets sweep on problem blocks with assistance of Council Member
  - Arrange for a large group of housing inspectors run a blitz of inspections on one the crime ridden street
  - Inspectors ask to be let into the houses

Beautify the neighborhood, following Broken Windows Theory:

- Get rid of graffiti through a phone barrage of complaints to the Mayor's Call and Resolution Center.
- Work with the Housing and Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittees.

**Implementing Partners:** D-District Police Force, City of Buffalo Housing Inspectors, Council Member, Mayor's Call and Resolution Center , Block Clubs, BRR GNPA Housing and Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittees

## **PS5 – Encourage prosecution of more criminals**

More prosecutions will send a message to offenders and potential offenders that criminal activity will not be tolerated. These strategies are aimed at increasing the amount of prosecutions of criminals in the planning community and on convincing the judges that more prosecutions are welcome by the residents.

### **Strategy:**

- A. Work to increase the amount of assistant district attorneys focused on prosecuting criminals and work with Buffalo Police Department on efforts that will have the same result.
- B. Conduct a letter-writing campaign to the Assistant District Attorney, the District Attorney and Judges to pursue more prosecutions.
  - Coordinate efforts with block clubs

**Implementing Partners:** City of Buffalo District Attorney’s office - Community Prosecution Unit liaisons/Assistant District Attorneys, Block Clubs, victim assistance programs

**PS6 – Police force more accountable to neighborhood residents;  
police force more responsive to residential calls for assistance**

It isn't enough that the police force increases their presence; they must understand their accountability to the residents of the planning community. Accountability implies a vested interest in the welfare and quality of life of BRR GNPA residents. Through changes in police dispatch procedure and a more proactive approach to investigation of suspicious behavior, a more responsive police force will be fostered.

**Strategy:**

A. Encourage efforts which result in dispatchers entering data clearly, indicating the priority of all calls logged in the computer system. Encourage the identification of problems with calls being handled and ask for improvements.

B. Police and the Police Commissioner need to be more accountable to residents and more tied to the community. (There is a complaint form on the internet so that a complaint can be filed against a particular officer.)

C. Police need to be more aware of the importance of quality of life issues in the neighborhood.

- Work with Council Member to raise awareness among officers as to the importance of addressing quality of life crimes.
- List should include loud music, noise, loitering, blocking pedestrian traffic, foul language

D. Enforce city curfew for minors.

- Coordinate with the County Attorney as crimes involving minors are handled through family court, which is handled at the county level

E. Police to more conscientiously patrol the neighborhood and investigate rowdy activity which they witness on their watch.

F. Have a Juvenile Detention Center set up (a room with a bench and handcuffs that is adequate for this purpose), so that parents get involved in minimizing rowdy activity.

**Implementing Partners:** D-district police force, Buffalo Police Commissioner, Erie County Attorney's Office, City of Buffalo District Attorney's Office – Community Prosecution Unit, Council Member

**PS7 – Increase awareness of Homeland Security operations in the planning neighborhood, and encourage their siting here**

The planning community borders Canada at the Niagara River. As such, its residents and police force should be better informed of terror threats, safety precautions and Homeland Security operations.

**Strategy:**

A. Through pamphlets and other means:

- Educate residents and police officers about anti-terrorism measures by the county, state and federal authorities;
- Educate residents and police officers about buildings and other infrastructure that could be terrorist targets;
- Educate the residents about the strategic position of their neighborhood for Homeland Security operations (i.e. International Railroad Bridge as crossing point).

B. Advertise evacuation routes and evacuation plans.

C. Include Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training with Homeland Security measures.

D. Encourage the siting of Homeland Security and related public safety facilities in the GNPA and assist in the planning of these facilities.

**Implementing Partners:** Office of Homeland Security (County Regional Head), D-District Police Force, Riverside Review, Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee

**PS8 – Develop knowledge and support of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques so that they have a better chance of being implemented locally**

New developments in law enforcement and criminal activity occur frequently. The Public Safety subcommittee has a goal of staying abreast of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques, so that community support of them can be marshaled and they have a better chance of being implemented locally.

**Strategy:**

A. Subcommittee members will work to keep memberships in local community policing and law enforcement related organizations and groups. Examples:

- City of Buffalo Housing Court
- Crime Prevention Association of WNY
- Police Commissioner Citizens Advisory Group
- Graffiti Hurts Task Force

B. Subcommittee members will work with other planning agencies active in the GNPA to ensure that police and public safety efforts are appropriately linked with other community improvement efforts.

C. Subcommittee members will strive to understand community issues, new and old, so that they remain in touch with how the community works and what its needs are.

**Implementing Partners:** Other GNPA subcommittees, City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, local block clubs, local business associations, local community policing and law enforcement related organizations and groups

**PS9 – Coordinate with businesses and business associations so that they can be more pro-active in their security measures**

Businesses are important partners in creating an environment in which shopping, transportation, and community life can take place safely. Efforts of businesses and business associations to promote safety and discourage crime should be supported and strengthened.

**Strategy:**

- A. Businesses should hire extra security to patrol parking lots when possible.
- B. Safer ingress and egress from stores through landscaping and increased security presence when possible.
- C. Make presentations to businesses and business groups about public safety as needed.
- D. Work to discourage the sale of drug paraphernalia and other products that contribute to criminal activity at businesses.
- E. Reach out to businesses and police to address illegal activity that occurs on business premises.

**Implementing Partners:** All business associations, TOPS, Wegmans, Home Depot, all local businesses

## **Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design**

The BRR GNPA Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee developed out of an earlier subcommittee called City Services, which was very active from 2002 to 2005. The earlier committee's working philosophy was that smaller, more visible steps are most important for the community's pride and sense of neighborhood ownership, and in that vein, in coordination with block groups, they successfully installed temporary litter cans and devised a plan for more permanent receptacles to be placed along the main business arteries; worked on the issue of graffiti removal, and devised the Problem Property Tip sheets. In 2006, this committee evolved into the new Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee. The goal of this subcommittee is to identify strategic improvements needed in the BRR GNPA involving land use planning, zoning, and urban design to bring about physical long-term enhancements to the community.

### **Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Goals Summary**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>LUZUD 1</b>	<b>Keep shopping carts on store property</b>
<b>LUZUD 2</b>	<b>Promote graffiti free neighborhoods</b>
<b>LUZUD 3</b>	<b>Create and maintain clean, safe waterfront parks, with a special focus on Towpath Park, Cornelius Creek Park, the Ontario Boat Launch/Black Rock Canal Park (proposed), and access to same</b>
<b>LUZUD 4</b>	<b>Analyze neighborhood transportation trends and proposals, and provide recommendations consistent with the community's interests</b>
<b>LUZUD 5</b>	<b>Maintain and manage Problem Property Tip Sheet Program</b>
<b>LUZUD 6</b>	<b>Improve the image and cleanliness of main business streets</b>
<b>LUZUD 7</b>	<b>Instill a sense of neighborhood pride through the Garden Walk</b>
<b>LUZUD 8</b>	<b>Work with the City of Buffalo and community stakeholders to effect positive changes in land use, zoning, and urban design in the community</b>

The above goals are described in more detail on the following pages.

## **LUZUD 1 – Keep shopping carts on store property**

Removing shopping carts from store property is a theft crime. Although they may be a convenience for some, abandoned shopping carts add to neighborhood blight. This aim of this goal is not only to mitigate the blight but also offer alternatives for those who need extra help in transporting their groceries home.

### **Strategy:**

#### A. Educate the public

- Advertise store phone numbers to call in off-property shopping carts

#### B. Educate the stores

- Needs of individuals with no personal vehicle
- Set up a pull-cart program
- Work with store management to arrange a store-sponsored ride program

#### C. Change the law

- Ticket individuals who take carts off store property

#### D. Address reasons why there is a black market for shopping carts

**Implementing Partners:** Store managers of Tops Supermarkets (Grant St.) and Wegmans Supermarkets (Amherst St.), Buffalo Common Council, D-district police station

## **LUZUD 2 – Promote graffiti free neighborhoods**

Graffiti is a crime. Its presence is neighborhood blight, not art. The Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee supports efforts to systematically identify, document, and remove graffiti, as well as educate others to prevent future graffiti crime.

### **Strategy:**

A. Work with the Public Safety Subcommittee, City of Buffalo Mayor’s Office, the Office of Citizen Services, the Graffiti Hurts Task Force, and other proactive organizations to prevent graffiti crime:

- Promote the use of Problem Property Tip Sheets to report graffiti
- Take photos of graffiti as evidence for District Attorney
- Attend meetings, distribute literature, and promote and undertake activities that reduce graffiti crime within the GNPA
- Obtain power washers and chemical agents for paint removal
- Advocate for the City of Buffalo to have equipment and personnel dedicated to graffiti removal

B. Education Program

- Business Owners – share information with them about removal programs available, fines for graffiti, and encourage posting of “graffiti illegal” signs in paint stores
- Schoolchildren – Teach 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders about consequences of writing graffiti
- Judges – graffiti seriously compromises residents’ quality of life; encourage offenders to be sentenced to community service/graffiti removal

C. Enforce no-graffiti legislation

- Work with the Public Safety Subcommittee to solicit police cooperation, especially the Chief of Police, in charging offenders
- Work with City Hall inspectors to ticket graffiti property
- Work with the Public Safety Subcommittee to promote more prosecutions by the District Attorney

D. Remove graffiti on billboards

- Identify and contact billboard owners of those billboards where graffiti has been applied
- Request billboard owners to raise ladders to billboards by heights sufficient to prevent unauthorized access

**Implementing Partners:** City of Buffalo District Attorney, D District Police Chief, Graffiti Hurts Task Force, BRR GNPA Public Safety Subcommittee, City of Buffalo Mayor’s Office, the Office of Citizen Services, Neighborhood elementary and high

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

schools, Mayor's Response Team, Business Owners, City Hall Inspectors, Billboard Owners

### **LUZUD 3 – Create and maintain clean, safe waterfront parks, with a special focus on Towpath Park, Cornelius Creek Park, the Ontario Boat Launch/Black Rock Canal Park (proposed), and access to same**

As recreational resources, the waterfront parks are positioned to contribute significantly to the quality of life of the community. However, the waterfront is one of the Riverside Planning Community's greatest and most underused assets. This combination of circumstances is especially distressing because industry and transportation along the waterfront are historically responsible for the development of Black Rock and Riverside, and full access to the waterfront was one of the main recreational opportunities available to and used by residents before the construction of the Niagara Section of the Thruway in the late 1950s.

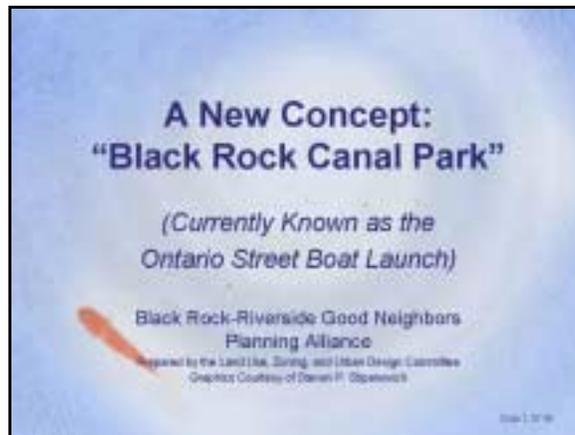
Reasons for the current state of underutilization of the parks are the poor access to and the condition of existing waterfront parks. This goal hopes to reinvigorate the parks, make them more family friendly and attract more residents, businesses and visitors to the parks as well as the adjacent neighborhoods.

#### **Strategy:**

A. Develop recommendations and concept plans for improving waterfront parks in the BRR GNPA, as resources allow, for: Towpath Park (improvements currently underway through Erie County); Cornelius Creek Park; and the Ontario Boat Launch/Black Rock Canal Park (proposed).

These recommendations and concept plans can help break old negative patterns of park usage and increase the number and diversity of people using the parks. Examples of strategies to be recommended in these proposals may include:

- The hiring of a full-time county employee to control boat launch usage
- Installing a playground and park benches
- Improving and increase lighting
- Adding jet ski docks
- Installing temporary speed bumps
- Improving signage for the park (on Niagara Street) and for rules of the park
- Painting the breakwall and rails more attractive colors (change from current yellow to green or other color which blends with the surroundings)



Graphic 37: “Cover Slide of Powerpoint Presentation for ‘Black Rock Canal Park’ Proposal” This proposal recommends exciting large-scale changes to the existing Ontario Street Boat Ramp to realize its full potential. See Appendix C.

B. Recommend ways to improve auto, pedestrian, boat, and bicycle access to parks to decision-makers.

C. Create a coalition of GNPA, block clubs, business associations and fishing/natural resource groups (e.g. Walleye Assoc., Trout fishermen, and Buffalo Aqua Club) to lobby for cleaner, safer parks with better boating and recreational facilities.

- Solicit political and funding support.
- Attend meetings about waterfront parks improvements and present ideas to them for BRR GNPA parks.
- Monitor disbursement of waterfront park funding.
- Create a list of improvements as per residents and help communicate them.
- Compare suburban waterfront parks to the current state of Cornelius Park and other BRR GNPA parks – photographic comparison to identify problems/possible solutions.
- Research costs for improvements.
- Present requests to Park commissioners.

D. In collaboration with the Public Safety Subcommittee, encourage increased police presence/surveillance at park. The Niagara Section of the Thruway isolates parks.

- Mounted patrols
- State police presence
- Erie County Boat Patrol
- Homeland Security/Border Control

E. Involve New York State for park maintenance and safety.

F. Ask judges to assign Community Service workers for park maintenance.

**Implementing Partners:** Block clubs in BRR planning community, Riverside Business Association, Walleye Association, Trout and other fishing/natural resource organizations, Council Member, Erie County Legislator, Erie County Parks Department, D-District Police, New York State Thruway police force, Erie County Boat Patrol, Homeland Security/Border Control

#### **LUZUD 4 - Analyze neighborhood transportation trends and proposals, and provide recommendations consistent with the community's interests**

Neighborhood transportation trends include the effects of new development on street traffic, truck traffic, rail traffic, waterborne traffic, and public transportation decisions. Proposals include the 2005 "NY Route 198/Scajaquada Corridor Study: Grant Street to Parkside Avenue", Ambassador Bridge proposal, pedestrian bridge proposals over Route 198, the planning of the Niagara River Greenway, the Tonawanda Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area grant application, and others. It is important that the community's interests be communicated in regards to these neighborhood transportation trends and proposals.

##### **Strategy:**

A. Analyze and monitor neighborhood transportation trends, and provide recommendations consistent with the community's interests. These trends include the effects of:

- new development on street traffic,
- truck traffic,
- public transportation decisions,
- rail traffic,
- waterborne traffic

B. Gather information about new proposals and participate productively in public reviews of them to promote the community's interest. These new proposals include:

- 2005 "NY Route 198/Scajaquada Corridor Study: Grant Street to Parkside Avenue",
- Ambassador Bridge proposal,
- pedestrian bridge proposals over Route 198 and Niagara Section of the Thruway
- the planning of the Niagara River Greenway
- the Tonawanda Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area grant application of the Office of Strategic Planning

**Implementing Partners:** Office of Strategic Planning, Transportation Planning Agencies (NFTA, GBNRTC, DPW, NYS Thruway Authority), Business Owners, Property Owners, Transportation providers

## **LUZUD 5 - Maintain and manage Problem Property Tip Sheet Program**

The Problem Property Tip Sheet Program provides an effective, anonymous way of addressing problem properties within the community.

### **Strategy:**

- A. Distribute blank Problem Property Tips sheets.
  - Search for funding to continue printing tips sheets in newspapers and other publications
  - Find printers in addition to the Riverside Review
  
- B. Devise a more efficient and systematic method of logging complaints through Tips Sheets.
  - Recruit a person or dedicated group of people who will regularly log complaints in a computer database.
  - Devise a system whereby tips are sent to the appropriate city departments or the Mayor's Resolution Center
  - Track city's responsiveness to submitted tips, give feedback to public.

**Implementing Partners:** Riverside Review, Mayor's Resolution Center, Office of Strategic Planning

## **LUZUD 6 – Improve image, cleanliness of main business streets**

The main business streets in the Riverside Planning Community include Elmwood, Amherst Street, Hertel Avenue, Military Road, Niagara Street, Ontario Street, and Tonawanda Street. It is important to undertake activities and programs which promote the image and cleanliness of main business streets.

### **Strategy:**

A. Encourage the development of urban design standards to maximize physical improvements that foster healthy and attractive business districts.

B. Help foster beautification and healthy business district activities.

- Install planters along main neighborhood business streets– Hertel, Amherst, Grant, Niagara, Ontario, and Tonawanda Streets.
  - Partner with Block Clubs that intersect the main neighborhood business streets in the area of the planters; block clubs can work with Business Associations to arrange installation and continued maintenance of planters
  - Solicit funding for planter containers, soil and plants, from organizations like the “Keep America Beautiful” program
- Install more litter cans along main neighborhood business streets and promote a litter-free community.
  - Solicit funding and/or organize volunteers to solicit funding and manpower to paint and install litter cans through local block clubs, churches, and business associations, and negotiate for maintenance of litter can and disposal of garbage with businesses where the litter cans are located.
  - John Szczepaniec has written and published a book addressing the importance of cleaning up litter. Secure funding to further distribute his book and continue his education program/campaign.
- Snowplow sidewalks.
  - Promote a fine or penalty for sidewalks covered with snow; ticket or letter of violation.
  - Contact the Mayor’s Impact Team – in past they have cleared snow from under viaducts – has 4 people dedicated to this task and use community service workers.
  - Residents conduct a thank-you letter writing campaign and calling campaign.

C. Encourage the creation of a Mayor’s Impact Team for each of the 11 GNPA’s.

- D. Enforce Greenspace Law of 1997 – 20% of parking lot devoted to green space.
- Research where this law is written, its exact wording and its parameters of enforcement.
  - Investigate how to enforce this law.
  - Address Planning Board with concerns for more green space.
- E. Monitor developments on regional business properties along Elmwood, the Tops Supermarket on Grant Street, and the Wegmans Supermarket on Amherst Street. Promote improvements which maximize their positive economic and community effects. For example:
- Monitor potential Tops Supermarket gas station proposal at Grant-Amherst store and its possible effects
  - Encourage positive commercial reuse of currently vacant and underutilized land in the Elmwood and Hertel area and other areas in the Riverside Planning Community

**Implementing Partners:** Erie County Legislator, Grant-Amherst Business Association, Riverside Business Association, local Block Clubs, Keep America Beautiful Program, Buffalo Planning Board, North District Council Member, Buffalo School Board, Mayor’s Impact Team, Business Owners, and Property Owners

## **LUZUD 7 – Instill a sense of neighborhood pride through the Garden Walk**

The Garden Walk is one of the signature events sponsored by the BRR GNPA. It allows people to show off the beauty of their homes and gardens in the community. It also draws people from outside the immediate area to see hidden treasures of area.

### **Strategy:**

A. Increase foot traffic of event every year and increase gardens participating by 10% every year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Gardens</b>	<b>Foot Traffic</b>
2005 (Inaugural Year)	61	400
2006	76	500-600
<i>2007 Projected</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>550-660</i>

Graphic 38: “Current and Projected Garden Walk Gardens and Foot Traffic, by Year”

B. Increase volunteerism in planning, executing and celebrating the event.

- New in 2006: Wine & Cheese Celebration, held in the fall

C. Continually work to develop innovative ideas to keep the interest of area residents:

- New for 2007:
  - Cover Contest
  - Starlight garden tour: Saturday night from 8:00pm to 9:30pm

D. Increase sponsorship and media coverage.

- New for 2007: Rename the Garden Walk to “Black Rock & Riverside Tour of Gardens” to avoid confusion with the Elmwood Avenue-area Garden Walk in people’s minds

**Implementing Partners:** Area residents, program sponsors

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community



Graphic 39: "2006 Garden Walk Web Site"

## **LUZUD 8 – Work with the City of Buffalo and community stakeholders to effect positive changes in land use, zoning, and urban design in the community**

The Subcommittee recognizes the importance of land use, zoning, and urban design decisions in shaping the future of the Riverside Planning Community. The Subcommittee pledges to work with the City of Buffalo and all community stakeholders to effect positive changes in the community in these areas.

- A. Participate in opportunities to meet with developers and other entities proposing development projects or significant modifications to the use of existing properties, as appropriate, to provide constructive feedback.
- B. Inventory land uses and assist in the undertaking of analyses to help in the identification of redevelopment opportunities. Identify significant community assets that are vacant or underutilized and promote their reuse. For example, vacant or underutilized former schools, community centers, public facilities, industrial and commercial properties.
- C. Promote zoning changes which strengthen the fabric of neighborhoods. The zoning of some parcels may need to be updated to reflect current or new uses to the benefit of the community.
- D. Work with the other Subcommittees of the BRR GNPA to effect positive land use, zoning, and urban design changes that relate to:
- Housing
  - Public Safety
  - Riverside Park
  - Other areas of community as appropriate (for example, Education, Business, etc.)

**Implementing Partners:** City of Buffalo Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Office of Strategic Planning, North District Council Member, Business and Property Owners, Other BRR GNPA Subcommittees

## Housing

The BRR GNPA Housing Subcommittee has been charged with assisting in maintaining and improving the integrity and livability of housing in the Riverside Planning Community. The goals of the committee include maintaining housing integrity, attracting new development, attending to historic preservation, and engaging in public relations related to housing. This work is closely tied to the initiatives of the Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services (BRR NHS). Density reduction through the development of more single family housing is a top priority.

### Housing (H) Goals Summary, October 2006

Goal	Description
	<b><u>Housing Integrity</u></b> Recognizes the need for maintaining integrity of current housing while planning for new organized development
<b>H1</b>	<b>Increase owner-occupied home ownership by creating strategy for home ownership of foreclosed properties and converting doubles to singles</b>
<b>H2</b>	<b>Hold absentee landlords accountable for property condition by working with inspectors and supporting BRR NHS's home repair program</b>
<b>H3</b>	<b>Reduce housing density and work with the Office of Strategic Planning to review housing standards</b>
<b>H4</b>	<b>Utilize the City of Buffalo Division of Real Estate's Urban Homesteading program in the eligible Black Rock planning neighborhood</b>
<b>H5</b>	<b>Participate in opportunities to collaborate with BRR NHS on targeting streets for housing programs</b>
	<b><u>New Development</u></b> Emphasizes new development that would provide increased stability to the community
<b>H6</b>	<b>Incorporate Tonawanda St., Elmwood, and Niagara corridor into housing developments</b>
<b>H7</b>	<b>Investigate faith-based or special needs development</b>
	<b><u>Historic Preservation</u></b> Sees the historic importance of the Planning Community and the need to improve its recognition and preserve it
<b>H8</b>	<b>Identify and produce a historic housing synopsis of the Riverside Planning Community to be used to incorporate future housing styles</b>
<b>H9</b>	<b>Promote the preservation of historic properties, including those in the Erie Canal Village and pre-1850 buildings</b>
	<b><u>Public Relations</u></b> Emphasizes the need for community self-promotion
<b>H10</b>	<b>Promote the Riverside Planning Community as a safe and up-and-coming group of neighborhoods of the City of Buffalo</b>

## **Housing Integrity**

Recognizes the need for maintaining integrity of current housing while planning for new organized development

### **H1 - Increase owner-occupied home ownership by creating strategy for home ownership of foreclosed properties and converting doubles to singles**

#### **Strategy:**

- A. Promote single family home developments.
  - Identify a program which would allow and facilitate purchase and conversion of two-family housing to single family housing.
- B. Loan programs for low income individuals and families.
  - Support the securing of funding through the BRR NHS to continue running loan programs which support single family home ownership.

**Implementing Partners:** Work with BRR NHS, Habitat for Humanity, City of Buffalo, HUD, local banks

## **H2 – Hold absentee landlords accountable for property condition by working with inspectors and supporting BRR NHS’s home repair program**

### **Strategy:**

- A. Document problem property complaints with city officials
  - Identify problem property owners
  - Encourage use of Problem Property Tip Sheets
  - Call Mayor’s Resolution Center
  
- B. Establish relationship with Judges in Housing Court, modeled on the work of Judge Nowak: Educate residents on use of CitiStat
  - Judge visits people’s houses
  - Connects people with loans for repairs
  - Faxes info. about Housing Court proceedings every Friday
  - Considers the context of the problem property
  - More lenient on homeowners residing in Buffalo
  - Considers goal to get property fixed
  - Sends offenders to community service work
  
- C. Establish a Housing Court liaison
  - Work with NHS to ensure representation at Housing Court hearings on properties in Planning Community
  - Monitor court cases
  - Inform Judge and community on status of problem properties
  - Support residents who have been appointed Housing Court liaisons
  
- D. Monitor housing inspections and encourage ever-greater numbers of inspections
  - Make inspections systematic
  - Encourage ever-greater numbers of inspections

**Implementing Partners:** North District Council Member, Riverside Review, BRR NHS, Other BRR GNPA Subcommittees and Members, City of Buffalo Housing Inspectors, Mayor’s Resolution Center

### **H3 – Reduce housing density and work with the Office of Strategic Planning to review housing standards**

**Strategy:**

A. Work with the Office of Strategic Planning to establish an ideal street or streets model that is sensitive to historic residential development and also addresses density and single family home development strategy.

B. Set up a task force to review current and possible future housing standard revisions with sensitivity to aesthetics and future community development

- Identify most common aesthetic issues in the Black Rock, Riverside and Military planning neighborhoods which comprise the Riverside Planning Community
- Understand the process used to establish neighborhood standards
- Work through the process to make changes to standards as needed

**Implementing Partners:** Office of Strategic Planning, BRR NHS

#### **H4 - Utilize the City of Buffalo Division of Real Estate's Urban Homesteading program in the eligible Black Rock planning neighborhood**

**Strategy:**

- A. Research the Comprehensive Code Enforcement (CCE) program of the Office of Strategic Planning and its application to the Riverside Planning Community
- B. Research the Division of Real Estate's Urban Homesteading Program and its application to the Black Rock planning neighborhood
- C. Identify areas where Urban Homesteading can help restore the fabric of residential neighborhoods in conjunction with other neighborhood housing efforts undertaken by the BRR NHS
- D. Develop an outreach program on Urban Homesteading with other agencies and city departments, to inform residents about the program, help them determine their eligibility, and implement urban homesteading in areas where it can have the best outcomes
- E. Research the extension of CCE to other areas of the Riverside Planning Community

**Implementing Partners:** Black Rock-Riverside NHS, Buffalo Housing Programs, City of Buffalo property inspections, Office of Strategic Planning, Division of Real Estate

## **H5 - Participate in opportunities to collaborate with BRR NHS on targeting streets for housing programs**

### **Strategy:**

A. Research the targeted area selection program of the Office of Strategic Planning and how the BRR GNPA Housing Subcommittee can help BRR NHS select streets to target

- Review the targeted area selection program application
- Meet with BRR NHS
- Help with research in support of targeted area selection

B. Share with the BRR NHS information on other aspects of planning for the neighborhood (i.e. opportunities for urban homesteading, historic preservation target areas, and new housing development, for example) so that they can use these to help inform their targeted street selections

**Implementing Partners:** Black Rock-Riverside NHS, Office of Strategic Planning, Buffalo Housing Programs, Other BRR GNPA Subcommittees

## New Development

Emphasizes new development that would provide increased stability to the community

### **H6 - Incorporate Tonawanda St., Elmwood, and Niagara corridor into housing developments**

#### **Strategy:**

A. Plan for a shovel-ready site for light industry, office parks, or housing in conjunction with the Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee

B. Pursue low density housing development

- Model on 197 housing plan for area off Austin Street, but at a lower density

C. Identify environmental hot spots to convert brownfields into usable property

- Coordinate with BRR NHS and the Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee
- Access EPA web sites and gather information on federal and local designations
- Help identify investors with projects which could be built upon land
- Encourage the City of Buffalo and state government to clean soil for new developments
  - Support the Tonawanda Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area grant process undertaken by the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning

**Implementing Partners:** North District Council Member, Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Subcommittee, Dale Zuchlewski, BRR NHS, City of Buffalo, New York State, EPA, Office of Strategic Planning

## **H7 - Investigate faith-based or special needs development**

### **Strategy:**

- A. Assess the density of faith-based and special needs housing currently present in the Riverside Planning Community
- B. Identify and compare this density to other areas with similar population demographics (i.e. elderly, etc.)
- C. Recommend types of housing
- D. Encourage and work with faith-based or special needs organizations to implement a housing strategy for faith-based or special needs populations

**Implementing Partners:** North District Council Member, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Office of Strategic Planning, faith-based organizations, special needs organizations

## **Historic Preservation**

Sees the historic importance of the Planning Community and the need to improve its recognition and preserve it.

### **H8 - Identify and produce a historic housing synopsis of the Riverside Planning Community to be used to incorporate future housing styles**

#### **Strategy**

- A. Identify historic building types, sub area distribution and dates built.
- B. Create synopsis document taking into account current needs of the community.
- C. Identify architectural resources, historic and current, to assist with recommendations for incorporating future developments into the housing fabric of the community.

**Implementing Partners:** BRR NHS, Preservation Board, Office of Strategic Planning, Preservation Coalition, Landmark Society, State Historic Preservation Office, other historic preservation agencies and organizations

## **H9 - Promote the preservation of historic properties, including those in the Erie Canal Village and pre-1850 buildings**

### **Strategy:**

- A. Increase public awareness of historic status of neighborhood properties
- Publish a historical column in the Riverside Review.
  - Organize historic walking and driving tours through the City of Buffalo architectural and preservation groups.
  - Implement a historic home recognition project.
- B. Target historic property investment through BRR NHS
- Identify historic properties
  - Find specific grants people can apply for if a property is designated as historic
  - Determine structural condition
  - Demolish if necessary
  - Set up a loan program for historic property renovation
- C. Designate historic district status to key historic neighborhoods and buildings
- Investigate possibility of National Historic Landmark designation for key buildings on Niagara Street and surrounding area like Erie Canal workmen's cottages, and the area surrounding Dearborn and Niagara Streets, site of the original Erie Canal Village
  - Investigate the possibility of getting special district status for historic areas in the Planning Community
    - Investigate generating an "Overlay Status" through the City of Buffalo
    - Investigate a local preservation district status
- D. Support local efforts to commemorate the local presence of historic War of 1812 sites in 2012

**Implementing Partners:** Riverside Review, City of Buffalo Parks Department, Buffalo Preservation Board, Preservation Coalition, Olmsted Conservancy, National Register of Historic Places, North District Council Member, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Friends of the UB School of Architecture and Planning, Landmark Society of Niagara Frontier, Campaign for Greater Buffalo

## **Public Relations**

Emphasizes the need for community self-promotion.

### **H10 - Promote the Riverside Planning Community as a safe and up-and-coming group of neighborhoods of the City of Buffalo**

#### **Strategy:**

- A. Work with realtors in the area to highlight the positive aspects of the area.
- B. Develop promotional brochure to establish positive neighborhood attributes and awareness of them.
- C. Assure inclusion in city-wide promotional materials.

**Implementing Partners:** Riverside Review, City of Buffalo Parks Department, Olmsted Conservancy, National Register of Historic Properties, North District Council Member, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Office of Strategic Planning

## Riverside Park

The Riverside Park Subcommittee is focused on identifying improvements to Riverside Park to enhance the quality of life within the community and the park.

### Riverside Park (RP) Goals Summary

Goal	Description
RP1	Promote safety in the park
RP2	Improve use of the park
RP3	Facilitate new improvements to park
RP4	Assist in Historic Preservation efforts at park

### RP1 – Promote safety in the park

#### Strategy:

- A. Work with police on getting foot patrols to walk in the park.
- B. Ask police to ride through the park at night to make sure everyone is out of the park after 10pm.
- C. Work on a grant for surveillance cameras in certain areas where there is the most vandalism and loitering taking place.
- D. Find funding for security improvements:
  - better lighting of the pathways
  - emergency phones
  - other security improvements as appropriate

**Implementing Partners:** Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Police, City of Buffalo, Erie County

## **RP2 – Improve use of the park**

### **Strategy:**

- A. Identify what governmental and non-governmental agencies are responsible for in the park:
- Olmsted Parks Conservancy
  - City of Buffalo
  - County of Erie
- B. Develop/Distribute a pamphlet of what phone numbers to call for various issues within the park:
- Renting a shelter
  - Fixing the playground
  - Maintenance of trees
  - Ice Rink use

**Implementing Partners:** Olmsted Parks Conservancy, City of Buffalo, Erie County

### **RP3 – Facilitate new improvements to park**

A. Identify who uses the park and what they use it for.

- John Fraces says it is the most used pool in the city.
- Popular events are held in the park
  - International Festival / 4<sup>th</sup> of July / Friendship Festival
  - Towpath Festival
  - Easter Egg Hunt

B. Poll residents through a survey to find out what our community would like to see happen with the park.

C. Update the crossover from the park to the river to make it more handicapped-friendly (currently it runs straight down, with brick pavers at the entrance).

**Implementing Partners:** Olmsted Parks Conservancy, City of Buffalo, Erie County, Local Block Clubs, Residents and Businesses

**RP4 – Assist in Historic Preservation efforts at the park**

- A. Work with Olmsted Parks Conservancy to use some of their ideas for the park in keeping with Frederick Law Olmsted’s views in various areas of the park

**Implementing Partners:** Olmsted Parks Conservancy, City of Buffalo, Erie County, State of New York

## **Buffalo Comprehensive Plan Context**

A neighborhood plan is workable only if it complements the existing city of Buffalo land use plans and zoning codes. If the Black Rock-Riverside neighborhood plan is contextualized within the *Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* document, Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan (BCP) for 2025, it will be more easily implemented.

The 'Queen City' comprehensive planning draft document was submitted for public review in June, 2003, and closed for review and comment on October 1, 2003. It was passed by the Buffalo Common Council on February 7, 2006. It is intended as a general guide for planning, with the intention that it be reviewed and modified every five years. The overall goal is to integrate community, economic and environmental objectives to redevelop Buffalo as a green regional center of the Buffalo-Niagara Region. Key development priorities include 'Fixing the Basics' and 'Building on Assets.' The Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Plan complements both these development priorities.

“The goal of the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan is to transform Buffalo as the Regional Center of New York through a process of managed physical change that integrates economic, social and environmental considerations, and restores the economic well-being, environmental health and population of the city.” (Queen City in the 21st Century – draft 3/26/03).

Urban revitalization is a core objective of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan states that “Growth should occur within the urbanized areas of the region first,” (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p.12). Growth projects focus on preparing “developable land for business expansion and attraction” (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 14).

The plan includes a discussion of community issues used to contextualize land use, with emphasis placed on the need to address social equity issues. “Neighborhood regeneration is not just a physical challenge. It is also a matter of economic necessity, social equity and environmental justice,” (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 90). Inter-group contact is essential to alleviate tensions over resource allocations:

“Without a strong set of institutions fostering cross-group interaction and deliberation, the social equity issues...are likely to hamper the region's ability to solve problems and find consensus over a range of regional concerns.” (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 19)

The Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance was created with this philosophy in mind.

Suggestions for addressing Public Safety issues include the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Situational Crime Prevention (administered through Buffalo's Good Neighbors Planning Alliance) techniques. Both strategies address the fact that safer neighborhoods are the result of action at the community level, involving a concerted effort between residents and local businesses.

Buffalo's green infrastructure is to be preserved through a City Greenway Plan. Although much of this plan involves the preservation of the Olmstead Parks System, lands that could potentially be added to existing green infrastructure are also identified. Potential green infrastructure sites include vacant residential, industrial and commercial properties. However, the plan goes on to state that in reality such properties will be redeveloped for uses other than green infrastructure (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 45).

As part of the City's community preservation goals, an annual \$ 3,800,250 is allotted for vacant land management over a ten year period (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 103).

The 'Building on Assets' developmental priority identifies many optimistic goals for the future. One envisioned result of a unified regional economic strategy for transforming Buffalo's economy would be a:

"Healthy, viable, sustainable core cities, financially sustainable governments, agricultural land retained and developed for agricultural purposes, and continued attention to environmental issues in all areas..."  
(Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, p. 69).

The BCP's vision extends into 2025. Its basic objectives include: interconnecting Neighborhood and Planning Districts to the Ellicott, Olmstead and Waterfront Plans, restoring and maintaining existing public infrastructure and reusing brownfields. The BCP aims to integrate many regional planning objectives, which include those of:

- The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo
- Framework for Regional Growth initiated by Erie and Niagara Counties
- Regional Economic Development Strategy (Erie County Industrial Development Agency, Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation, and the Office of Strategic Planning )
- The Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) and Waterfront Corridor Initiative (WCI)
- Buffalo's Joint School Construction Board's School Reconstruction Plan

All these plans and many others intend to guide investment and planning decisions toward a revitalized Buffalo and Western New York Region.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

BCP objectives to build on the region's assets by preparing land for new uses, as stated in the *The Queen City Hub* draft plan, include:

- “Redevelop (infill) vacant land and property
- Define opportunities for private sector involvement and investment
- Increase social integration
- Consider energy alternatives
- Changes in land use for some former industrial sites (brownfields) as their redevelopment provides for a broader diversity of uses including new industrial uses, commercial uses, open space and mixed use
- Changes in use for individual buildings and/or sets of buildings (blocks or precincts) where new uses are identified and implemented for buildings designated to be preserved under the City's forthcoming Preservation Plan
- Changes in use to accommodate the new Buffalo Waterfront, as the LWRP and Waterfront Corridor Initiatives are implemented”

As seen in the map below, the Black Rock-Riverside Planning Community is coincident with the LWRP project area:



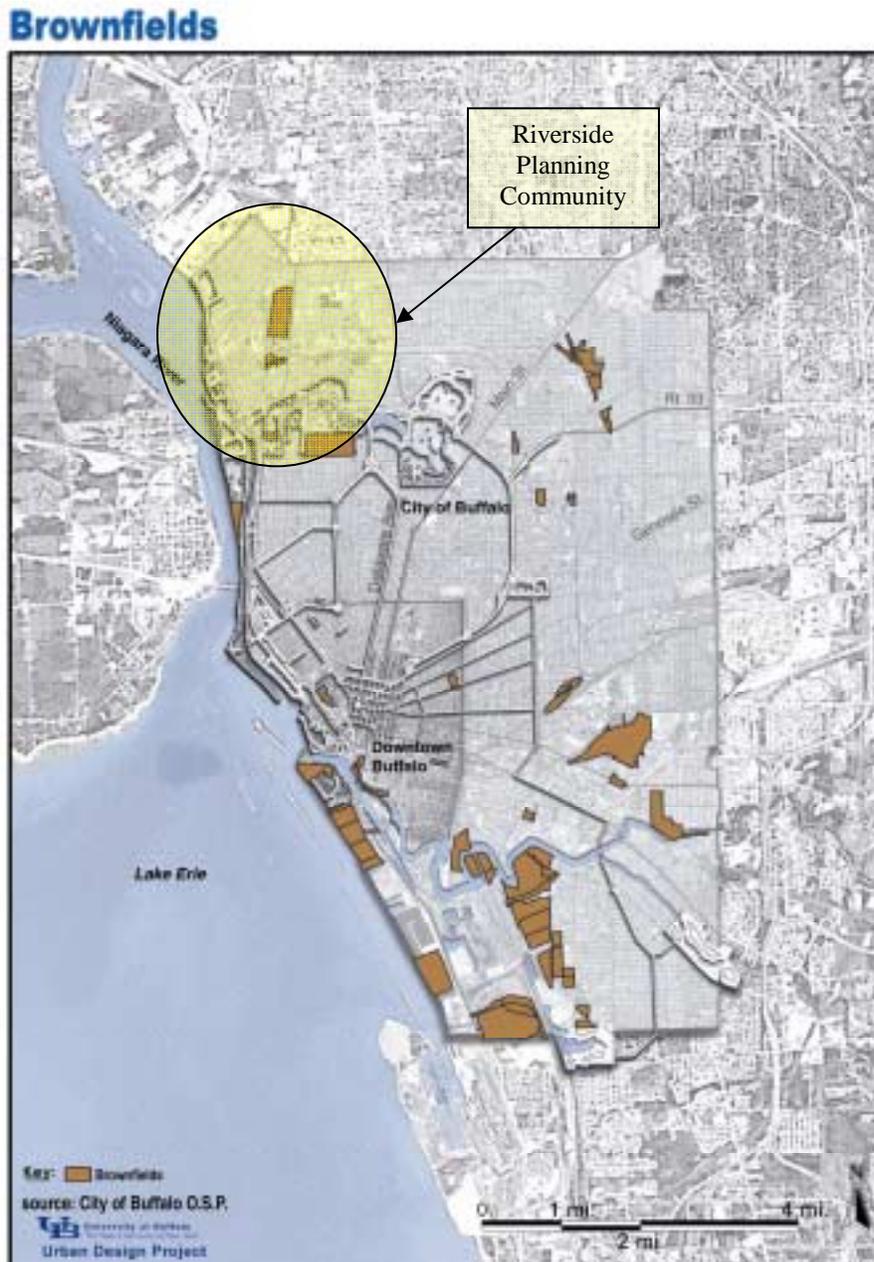
Graphic 40: “Waterfront Corridor Initiative Project Boundary and LWRP Boundary”  
Source: Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers, Inc. website

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

The WCI initiatives include: “1) Develop the economic strength of neighborhoods, the community, and the region; 2) Extend direct access to our waterfront from Riverside to South Buffalo and everywhere in between; 3) Revitalize our waterfront neighborhoods and connect them to the water and 4) protect and repair the health of our water, land, and wildlife along the waterfront ,” (www.urbandesignproject.org/).

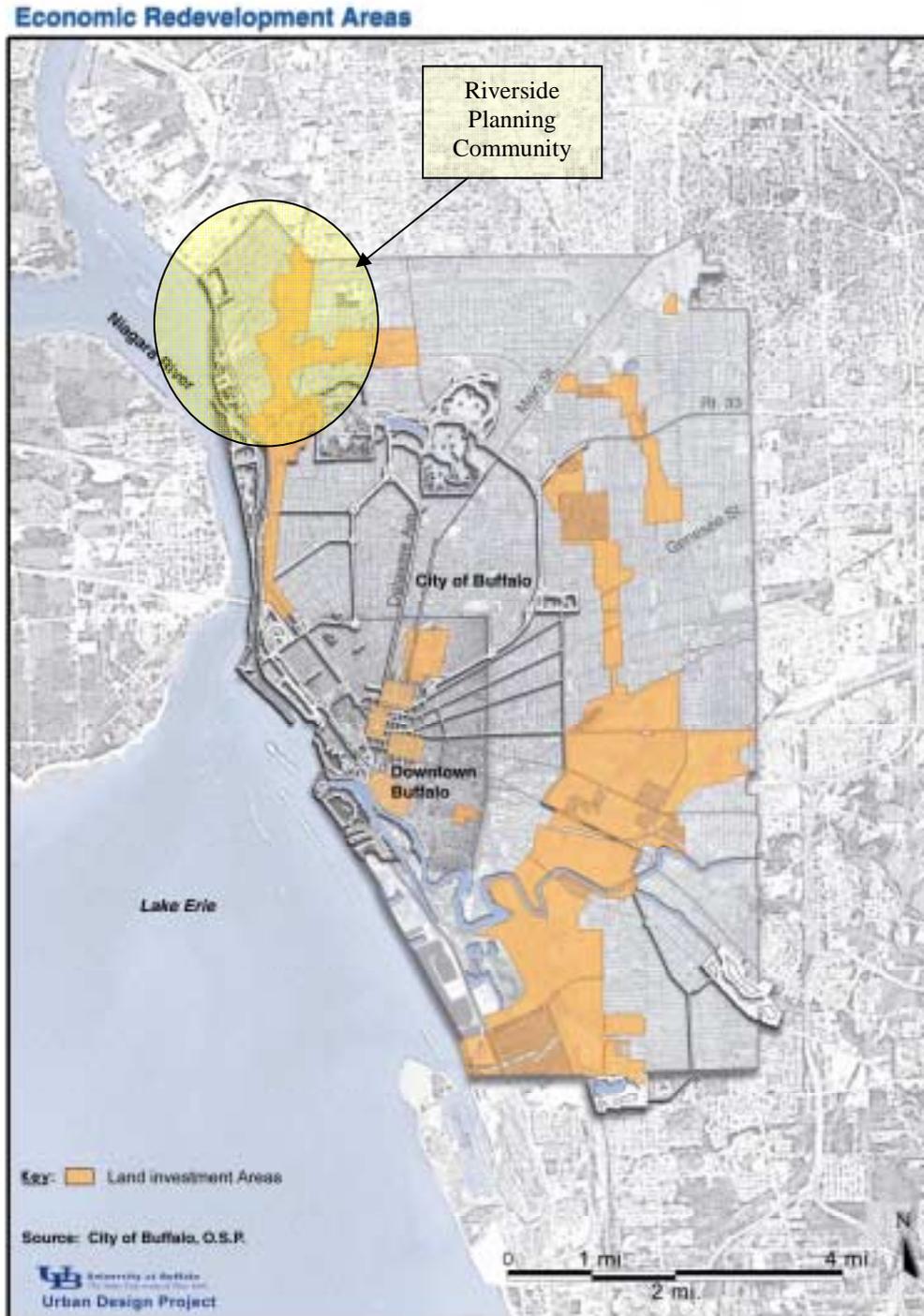
The Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Planning Community is situated on land that the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Development has designated as a Brownfield redevelopment area.



Graphic 41: “Brownfields and the Riverside Planning Community”

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

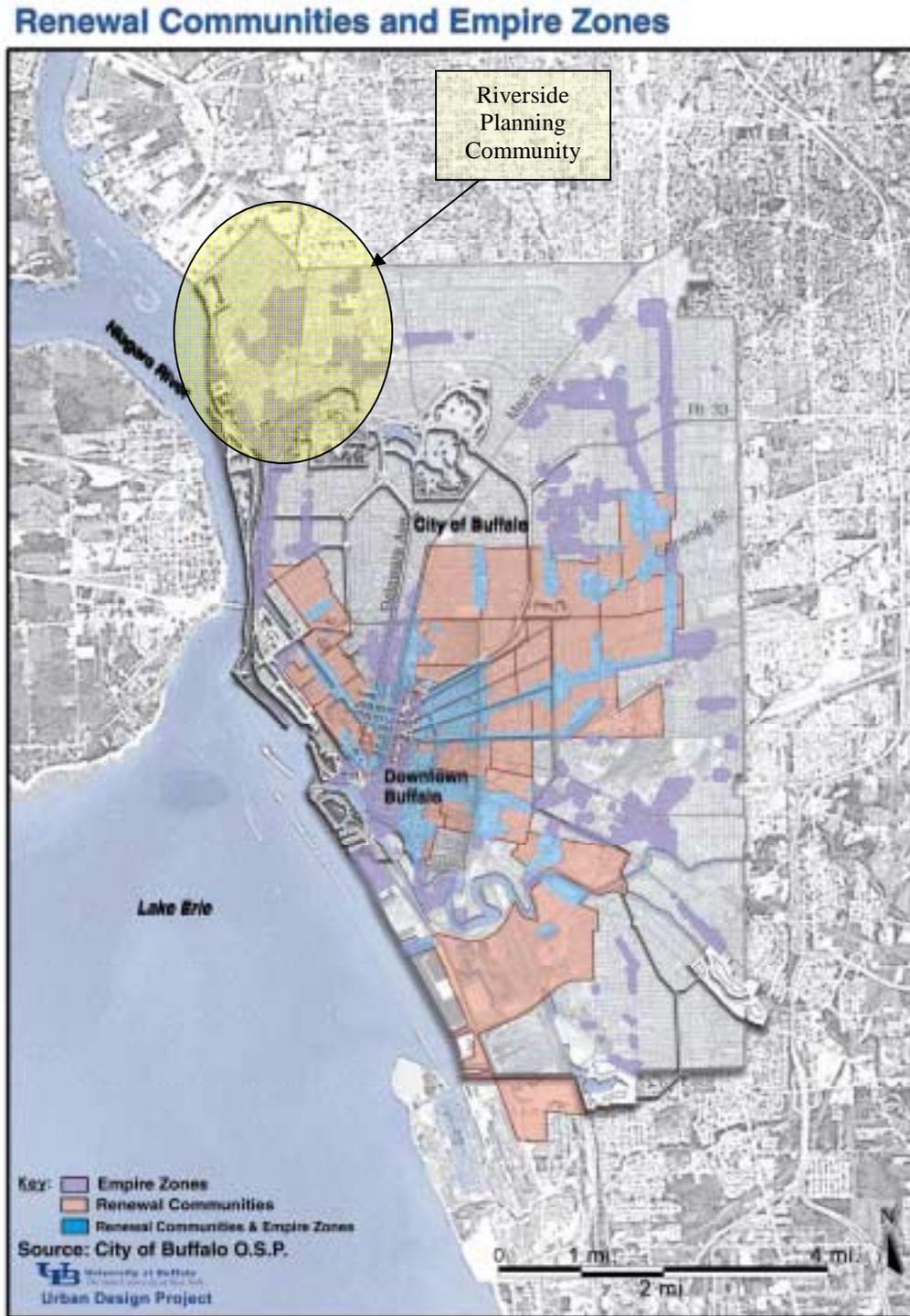
A large portion of the Black Rock-Riverside Planning Community is designated as a Land Investment Area, as seen below in the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning's Economic Redevelopment Areas map.



Graphic 42: “Land Investment Areas and the Riverside Planning Community”

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

In addition, several Empire Zone parcels are located within Black Rock-Riverside:



Graphic 43: "Renewal Communities, Empire Zones and the Riverside Planning Community"

## References

City of Buffalo, Master Plan Phase I: Community/ Neighborhood Conditions Summary. November 1998.

DUNS Million Dollar Disc, second quarter 2004 and Reference USA/INFO USA 12 million Business Database (referenced summer 2004)

Buffalo Public Schools website, accessed from the World Wide Web December 2006:  
[www.buffaloschools.org/Schools/SchoolList.aspx](http://www.buffaloschools.org/Schools/SchoolList.aspx)

Office of Strategic Planning

peter j. smith & company, inc.

US Census website [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Francis Kowsky, Mark Goldman, Austin Fox, John Randall, Jack Quinan and Teresa Lasher, Buffalo Architecture: A Guide. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981. p. 172.

National Register of Historic Places, National Register Information System (National Park Service). <http://www.nr.nps.gov>. Accessed December, 2006

City of Buffalo, City of Buffalo Community Summaries. May 1994.

Lester Walker, American Shelter Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1996

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. <http://www.nfta.com>. Accessed July 17, 2000.

Niagara Frontier Transportation Committee, Niagara Frontier Bicycle Master Plan: for Erie and Niagara Counties: Bicycle Level of Service. March 1998

## **Appendix A**

### **2002 Black Rock-Riverside GNPA History, Short Term Goals, Mid-term Report Card / Analysis**

**2002 Black Rock-Riverside GNPA  
History, Short Term Goals, Mid-term Report Card / Analysis**

Steering Committee:

Richard Mack co-chair

Dale Zuchlewski co-chair

Paul Brunner/Joan Barone Neighborhood Housing Services

Marty Grunzweig/Larry Pernick Northwest Buffalo Community Center

Caleb Basiliko Grant Amherst Block Watchers/ Business Association

Scott Brennan

Dennis Evchich Riverside Business Association

Doug McKenzie Riverside Alliance

Dave Spinda United Streets Block Club

Margaret Szczepaniec St. Florian/Pavonia Block Club

David Cofield St. Florian/Pavonia Block Club

Mary Washington Jasper Parrish Tenant Council

Evelyn Vossler St. Mark's

Rob Niemiec Grant Amherst Business Association

Wayne Tahara

Paul Johnson

Mike Oliver

Larry Gervasi Riverside Business Association

**“What I like most about my neighborhood”  
(from the 2002 Planning Session)**

“Closeness of neighbors and family”  
“Convenience of stores, churches, museums, waterfront, Canada, banks and schools”  
“Interesting architecture, historical neighborhood”  
“Friendly good natured people”  
“Good quality homes, homeowners, pride, responsible residents”  
“Special community festivals”

**A Cautious Start**

The Black Rock/Riverside GNPA began to organize in August of 2001 with a general mailing sent out by the Office of Strategic Planning. Monthly meetings were conducted through the month of November and the general atmosphere of the meetings was one of community interest, curiosity, and skepticism. Those attending wondered if they put in the time and effort into drafting a community plan, would city hall and other levels of government actually assist in implementing the plan? Questions were raised regarding the process, timetables and taking on more work when many of those in attendance already serve on other community boards and groups.

Once Mayor Anthony Masiello appointed co-chairs of the BRR GNPA, the planning process began in earnest. The results of the previous Mayor’s summit meetings in 1995 and 1996 were reviewed and discussed. It was decided that while the information gathered at these previous summit meetings was valuable and most likely still relevant, there was still a need to update community concerns before moving forward.

**Neighborhood Summit**

On January 23, 2002, the GNPA conducted a community planning session at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center, which was widely publicized through mailings, slingers, word of mouth and in the Riverside Review. Over 150 area residents attended this community meeting, which was more than expected. This overwhelming response generated excitement before the meeting even began. It also proved to be a valuable recruitment tool for getting more people involved in the planning process.

Upon entering the planning session, residents completed a survey (attachment 1) similar to the one given in 1995 in order to compare data. A general discussion of community concerns was conducted and used, along with the surveys, to determine the top concerns of the community. Housing and Public Safety finished in a virtual dead heat followed by City Services, Business/Jobs and Education/Youth.

After a short break, residents were asked to break into separate discussion groups determined by the concerns expressed. The discussions were lead by the Office of

Strategic Planning staff and volunteers. Only about 10% of those in attendance left during the break which meant 90% of the people stayed to actively participate in determining long and short term goals for each of the 5 listed categories (attachment 3). Citizen members of the discussion groups then presented the goals to the general audience.

Before leaving the meeting, residents were given 5 dots in order to “vote” on their top issues based upon those raised at the meeting. Those results were tabulated in order to further define community priorities.

There was skepticism expressed early in the meeting because residents didn’t believe anything was done as a result of the 1995 and 1996 summit meetings. However, by the end of the evening, there was an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment from the GNPA, Office of Strategic Planning and most importantly, from residents in attendance.

### **Citizen’s Response System**

The BRRGNPA was fortunate to have another mechanism to help gauge community concerns through an Interactive Citizen Response system. The ICR was set up by the Forum Foundation through the assistance of former Lovejoy Councilmember Norm Bakos. For 1 week after the planning session, area residents were able to call a dedicated phone line to participate in a 7-minute survey based upon the questions in the entrance survey. 255 people from Black Rock and Riverside called the ICR system to express their concerns and assist us in prioritizing our goals.

### **Analysis of Surveys**

Listed below is a comparison of the entrance surveys and Interactive Citizens Response survey for the question “The neighborhoods in my community are improving, declining or staying the same.”

	<b>1995</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2002 ICR</b>
<b>Improving</b>	24%	14%	13%
<b>Declining</b>	62%	70%	73%
<b>Same</b>	14%	16%	13%

The following is a comparison of survey results for the statement “Rate the future of your neighborhood.”

	<b>1995</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2002 ICR</b>
<b>Some/Great Deal Hope</b>	73%	47%	33%
<b>No/Little Hope</b>	16%	25%	51%
<b>Neutral</b>	11%	28%	16%

Listed below is a comparison of the aggregate numbers of issues people felt were important as listed on the entrance surveys, dot rankings and what they wanted done in 1995 and 2002

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>City Services</b>	<b>Human Services</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Parks</b>
<b>1995</b>	102	160	56	18	22	25
<b>2002</b>	120	110	24	31	36	7

The Interactive Citizens Response survey asked residents to rank Crime, Housing and Education in the order of their priority of concern. The results of the 255 responses are listed below:

	<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Crime</b>	51%	37%	11%
<b>Housing</b>	28%	38%	33%
<b>Education</b>	21%	23%	54%

The survey results show clearly that public safety and housing continue to rank number one and two on the community's priority lists. Their rank varies depending upon the survey; however, they are obviously the highest concerns among residents. City services, human services/education, and economic development rank as the next highest priorities.

The most telling statistics are the comparison of the entrance survey results from 1995 and 2002 when dealing with neighborhood decline and hope. Fewer people feel their neighborhood is improving, while a corresponding number feel the neighborhood is declining. A vast majority, 70-73%, feel the area is on the decline.

Probably the most troubling statistic is the declining feeling of hope in the area. While 73% of the people who attended the 1995 summit had some hope for the area, of the 2002 attendees, only 47% had hope and only 33% of the ICR respondents were hopeful. This is a drastic decline that demands the attention of the GNPA, and our elected officials on all levels.

In 2002, the people that attended the planning session were more hopeful than the ICR respondents, which shows the more active members of the community are more hopeful than those who are not.

Additionally, it would have been interesting to survey the planning session attendees before the meeting and afterwards. It is difficult, if not impossible, to place in a report the overwhelming feeling of accomplishment that prevailed after the planning session ended. More than one person commented on the positive attitude after the meeting. It was very uplifting.

The most telling response to the planning session was the attendance at the next general meeting of the GNPA in February. While the first sessions had approximately 12 people in attendance, the follow meetings in February and March had approximately 40-50 people ready to roll up their sleeves to begin work on short and long term plans and establish subcommittees based on the Planning Alliance's prioritized concerns. The feeling of hope and possible accomplishment had carried over to the general meetings.

## **Analysis of Comments**

In response to the statement “What I want to see done most in my neighborhood is,” the results were painstakingly similar to the 1995 comments. The answers to this question from residents are virtually indistinguishable from 1995 to 2002. People in Black Rock and Riverside want a greater police presence and response, response to drug activity and officers on the beat. Residents want well maintained homes, assistance or incentives for improvements, more owner-occupied units, better streets, sidewalks and curbs, clean streets, year-round recreational opportunities for youth and adults, and incentives for small businesses among other wishes.

The residents of Black Rock and Riverside want a clean, safe neighborhood that is well maintained, with small businesses, and recreational and educational opportunities.

All levels of government should pay close attention to these comments. Area residents aren’t asking for a lot, however, there seems to be little or no response toward delivering the necessary services that people want and expect. Greater attention to needs to be placed on delivering the most basic requests of residents.

## **Subcommittees Formed**

At the February 2002 meeting of the GNPA, approximately 50 attendees took the results of the January planning session and formed four subcommittees: Public Safety, Housing, Human Services/Education, and City Services. The Business/Economic Development subcommittee lacks a chairman.

The subcommittees were formed that evening and had their first meetings and monthly meetings since. The short and long term goals of the planning session were reviewed and revised.

Based upon the monthly subcommittee meetings and analysis of the summit and planning sessions, the subcommittees have identified the following short-term goals:

### **City Services Committee**

#### **Short Term Goals**

**Background:** Residents in every community forum have continually expressed a desire to improve basic city services. There are several elements that can make a community more livable. Most of all, residents have expressed a desire for a clean neighborhood.

#### **1. Beautification**

- a. Shopping carts - work with area stores to confine shopping carts to their property.

- b. Litter - working on an anti-litter campaign to include public service messages, youth education and promotional materials.
  - c. Blue trash barrels - looking at the placement throughout the neighborhood and a more effective trash pick up schedule.
  - d. Graffiti - looking to problem areas and a more effective method of removal.
2. **Recycling and Garbage pick up** -Consistency in picking up recycling and garbage. Communicating the benefits of recycling. Problem with yard waste, when separated, is not composted just added to regular trash.
3. **Alternate parking** - Looking at the insufficient hours of officers especially on weekends and during change over times. Better enforcement of no parking areas, fire hydrants and having police officers carry tickets guns for more expeditious tickets writing.
4. **Parks** - Ways to improve the enforcement of the “pooper scooper” law and leash law in all parks. Bike patrols to write (more) tickets and be seen more frequently.

## Housing Committee

### **Short-Term Goals**

**Background:** In the Mayor’s summit meetings of 1995 and 1996 and the Planning Session conducted by the GNPA, Housing has always been 1 or 2 of the priority concerns of neighborhood residents. One of the areas of greatest concern has been holding landlords and tenants accountable and responsible for property. The area has seen an increasing number of absentee landlords, some of whom are not as responsible as other homeowners and landlords. The GNPA wanted to concentrate on a few properties and areas for the short-term. We also wanted to be more positive about our area and recognize those who have made improvements and attempt to market the area to those outside the area but also within Black Rock and Riverside. There are many positive aspects to the community that often are overlooked or taken for granted.

1. Recognize homeowners and businesses that significantly improve their property by giving them an award or certificate. The GNPA doesn’t want to only point out problems but should also reward those who maintain the area.
  2. Begin a marketing program to promote the positive aspects of the community.
  3. Encourage our elected officials to continue the funding for the West Side-River Rock Housing Initiative. This program reduces the interest rate on mortgages, and loans for middle income homeowners and assists low to moderate-income families in purchasing homes.
  4. The GNPA needs to have an update on the plans for Jasper Parish. Several months ago, the BMHA hired a consultant to draft plans to improve this development. To date, no progress has been reported.
  5. The Housing Committee voted to support the efforts of the St. Florian/Pavonia Block Club in their efforts to convince Transitional Services Inc. to build their proposed
-

group home on Hertel Ave rather than on the Cantalician Center property behind the D-District police station.

In addition, the Housing Committee listed the following properties as priorities:

- Properties in need of demolition: 1847 Niagara St., 48 Doyle, 70 Arthur and 907 Tonawanda.
- Eyesores in the area: 2335 Niagara, 89 Bridgeman, 305 Vulcan, 317 Vulcan, 905,906 and 910 Tonawanda, 177 Esser and 976 Grant.
- Systematic Inspections: Amherst St. from Niagara to Elmwood with special attention given to those buildings that have covered their front with plywood.
- Skillen St. from Ontario to Military Rd.

The committee realizes these are not the only properties in the area that need attention, however, this is just a beginning.

### **Public Safety Committee**

#### **Long Term Goal**

To increase the quality of life in Black Rock / Riverside and adjoining areas, insure economic development, keep “good neighbors” in the area and attract new “good neighbors” to move into the neighborhood.

#### **Mid Term Goal**

Make streets and neighborhoods safe, allowing residents to feel comfortable about living, working, shopping and obtaining quality education and attending social functions in the Black Rock / Riverside and adjoining areas.

#### **Short Term Goals**

1. Increased Police presence - Policing should be proactive not just reactive.
  - A. Require officers to leave cars to investigate
  - B. Officers should become acquainted with residents of the neighborhood
  - C. Enforce vehicle and traffic law violations - example stopping a motorist for a broken tail light could yield an arrest for a more serious charge (drugs, outstanding warrant, etc.)
  - D. Mayor Masiello request patrols from the Sheriff’s Department and State Police
  
2. Stop Drug Sales and Use
  - A. A Narcotics and Vice Bureau Unit needs to be assigned to Black Rock / Riverside area
  - B. Residents need to WATCH - CALL - REPORT
  - C. Identify “Hot Spots” by use of Drug Activity - Complaint Form
  - D. Call 911 for immediate action, follow up with form to D- District and Public Safety Committee

E. Judges and Prosecutors need to be accountable for convictions, dismissals and adjournments

3. Stop Loitering

A. Arrests need to be made for loitering for sale of drugs and prostitution, laws are in effect

B. Arrests need to be made for drinking on the streets and sidewalks in front of stores, drinking establishments and in Riverside Park, law is already in effect

C. A General Loitering Law needs to be written and enforced that should prohibit loiterers from menacing, harassing, threatening or using obscenities at passersby

General Observation: When Police Patrols are visible, the numbers of loiterers dwindle

4. Stop Open Drinking

Open Container Law exists, but needs to be enforced. Open drinking is evident throughout Black Rock / Riverside and especially in Riverside Park where groups of underage youths assemble to drink and then break the bottles along the pathway.

5. Institute Active Neighborhood Watch

A. Educate residents to WATCH-CALL-REPORT

B. Residents to call 911 with as much information as possible

C. Fill out drug Activity - Complaint Forms and forward to D District and the Public Safety Committee

D. The Public Safety Committee will continue to formulate list of "Hot Spots" and continue follow up with Mayor's Office, Police Commissioner, City Councilmen, County Legislator, D District, Narcotics and Vice Bureau and other agencies as required.

## Report Card

*The successes of the Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance are many. We have tapped and encouraged the many talents and resources of individuals who have, as a unifying element, a desire to see our community change for the better. Identifying the needs and things that needed to be changed, Alliance members have shown that they can "make a difference". Essentially working through committees they created, the GNPA has begun to change the face of this community. Below is a summary of the thoughts of many members, in essence, a report card for the Black Rock Riverside GNPA, as well as the Planning Alliance concept as a whole.*

### Achievements

- Black Rock / Riverside GNPA has become a thriving catalyst for neighborhood renewal.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

- GNPA has brought together many of the neighborhood's most dedicated, concerned & caring residents and business people who are committing their time and efforts to the process of creating a better future, a rewarding experience.
- GNPA has become a rallying point for citizens to voice their concerns, and an active force to correct those perceived wrongs or bring about much needed immediate changes as well as plan for longer range improvements.
- There is sufficient momentum within the GNPA to keep it going. Another Community-wide meeting could help further recruitment.
- The tie-in with *Riverside Review* has been fantastic. Mr. Mack has made the group and its' efforts front page news.
- The organization of the GNPA by city staff and the follow-through by same is essential to keeping the hope alive.
- Joanne Kearns was instrumental in getting us organized from the very start. "She is terrific," wrote one member. Calls and emails always get a quick response. She follows up on requests, suggests great ideas, helps focus in on barriers and ways to overcome them. She is an all around excellent "tool" all committees need to utilize.
- In little time, subcommittees have achieved observable results, taking it upon themselves to get GNPA short-term goals realized.

- Housing subcommittee has: identified problem properties - followed one case through court system, committed to a mayor's hotline phone blitz on another, recognized and awarded positive property owners, influenced increased systematic inspections and demolition from city officials.

- Public Safety subcommittee has: identified drug activity hot spots, met representatives from ALL levels of levels law enforcement. With assistance from the *Riverside Review*, has developed and printed a Criminal Activity Complaint Form, received more than 40 responses and forwarded these tips to the proper law enforcement agencies. The committee has been enormously successful in fundraising to promote their efforts, collecting over \$1,000 from block clubs, businesses, government officials, and private individuals.

- City Services subcommittee has tackled problems including shopping cart containment, street clean-ups, beautification work sessions, and graffiti.

### **Room for Improvement**

- The downfall of the group is in its namesake: "Planning Alliance". There has yet to be much long-term planning. More direction should be given to the committee

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

chairs, to focus in on a plan(s). A real independent professional facilitator is necessary to focus the group on long-term planning.

- Due to the nature of the GNPA being a “super block club” as the result of the collaboration of some of the community’s most active individuals, ego can sometimes interfere. Because of this, there has been some instances of bias and conflicts of interest which can undermine the leadership of the Alliance.
- On some occasions, the mayor’s office has been slow to mail out monthly meeting notices and notices of Alliance events.
- The mayor’s office has also been slow in informing various department heads and commissioners about the existence of the “Mayor’s Good Neighbors Planning Alliance” and their need to work with them.
- Skepticism and fear that similar actions were started in the past and failed due to lack of follow-through by Mayor and staff.
- Need secretarial help to keep and disburse minutes and other written materials. Printing and mailing costs are a concern at present. (Much donated by Riverside Review & individual committee persons.)
- A reminder that when BRRGNPA letterhead is used, it represents all of us. If one committee has a negative encounter, it reflects on ALL of us. Strive to be diplomatic in all meetings and correspondence.
- Still waiting for promised finances from Mayor’s office to help facilitate some of these goals.

In summary, the GNPA is succeeding in directing this community’s residents to use their energies, creativity, and dynamic potential in positive, constructive ways. The cumulative results, we hope, will be felt for years to come.

## **Appendix B**

### **March 2004 Vision Planning Session Handout, Entrance Survey Results, Community Vision Session**

## March 2, 2004 Vision Summit Handout

**“Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision merely passes time.  
Vision with action can change the world.” –Joel Barker**

Welcome to the Black Rock-Riverside Community Visioning Summit, organized through the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor’s Planning Alliance (GNPA) and the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning. Tonight’s Visioning Summit will be asking Black Rock-Riverside residents how they want their community quality of life to be in 10 to 20 years from today. Your input will be used by the GNPA to create a Community Vision Statement, which will be printed in the Riverside Review in the next few weeks for your review.

A community vision statement will guide the GNPA in defining action steps to achieve the vision. These action steps will be included in Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan, an official city document that will direct how capital resources will be used over the next 20 years. The City of Buffalo values and respects your views about your community, and wants your input for Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan.

As we work in smaller groups this evening to develop a community vision, please keep these thoughts in mind:

- A vision provides a picture of how you want your community to look in the future.
- Visions are based on reality; they are not wishful thinking.
- They are about creating a positive, practical, possible future based on shared community values.
- A vision focuses action.

Please join us in taking the next step: creating long range action plans based on our vision. Attend a subcommittee meeting and voice your ideas for Black Rock-Riverside’s future.

- **Housing Subcommittee** – March 10, 2004 – 6:15 PM
- **Public Safety Subcommittee** – March 11, 2004 – 6:30 PM
- **City Services Subcommittee** – March 15 and March 22, 2004 - 6:15 PM
- **Business/Economic Development Subcommittee** – March 16, 2004 – 6:30 PM  
\*Meet at **Polish Cadets Hall**, 927 Grant Street, Buffalo, NY.
- **Human Services** – Call Sharon LeBron at 877-3912 or E-mail at [dalmation11@excite.com](mailto:dalmation11@excite.com)

All subcommittees meet at the **Northwest Community Center**, 155 Lawn Ave., Buffalo, NY, in the **Seniors Room**, unless otherwise noted.

For more information about the GNPA:  
Please phone the City of Buffalo, Office of Strategic Planning 851-5035; fax 854-0172  
E-mail: [planning@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us](mailto:planning@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us)

## **March 2004 Entrance Survey Results, Community Vision Session**

**Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance  
Black Rock/Riverside  
Vision Planning Session – March 2, 2004  
Northwest Community Center**

### **Entrance Survey – 26 Responses**

Survey respondents reside or have a business address on the following streets:

Albemarle (1)  
Gallatin (1)  
Riverside/Ontario (1)  
Amherst (1)  
Grant/Amherst/Bflo.State (1)  
Roesch Ave. (2)  
Baynes (1)  
Grote (1)  
Rosedale (1)  
Belmont (2)  
Jasper Parrish (5)  
Skillen (2)  
Dearborn (1)  
Laird Ave. (1)  
St. Florian (1)  
Doyle (1)  
Military Rd. (2)  
Tonawanda (1)

### **The neighborhoods in my community are:**

Greatly Improving:	0
Improving a Little:	15
Staying the Same:	2
Declining a Little:	5
Declining a Lot:	4

### **Rate your view of the future of your neighborhood:**

I have a great deal of hope:	11
I have some hope:	9
In the middle:	2
I have little hope:	3

I have no hope: 0  
No response provided 1

**Comments –**

- Although I've stated improving a little, the reality is that it is declining a little.
- (Neighborhoods) Improving a little-Staying the same because of the efforts of approx. 15 people.
- The city needs to wake up! Enough studies – do it! If you don't do your job, fire them! Police live where they patrol.

**Survey Statements**

Answers were compiled in response to the following survey statements. When reading each statement, the number in the ( ) after a response indicates the number of people who responded with the same statement, or a closely worded statement.

“What I like most about my neighborhood is...”

Clean and quiet (neighborhood) – mostly no trouble area – no problems (4)  
My house  
(Proximity/Location) Close to the amenities, river, church, parks, schools, shopping, family, thruway (14)  
Drug store delivers medicine  
(Friendly) Neighbors/People (15)  
Riverside Review  
Inexpensive Housing  
Older (long-time) residents that take care of their properties  
Architecture  
Diverse People  
Owner-occupied businesses  
Sense of community

“What I want to see done most in my neighborhood is...”

Cars not to park in front of #65 school blocking Skillen (2)  
Neighborhood school #51 reopened  
Kids with respect for education, themselves  
Garbage men clean-up (the garbage) that they dump on (the) street  
Garbage service improved (cans left in street) – unable to get them back over the piles/reduce garbage/debris on streets and sidewalks (3)  
Clean it up, litter graffiti, improve quality of life, loud music, speeding cars (3)  
More police patrols/police protection (3)  
Maximum enforcement of all laws

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

Less crime and violence in the whole neighborhood (4)  
Make landlords responsible for maintaining properties and grounds/comply with codes and keep tenants responsible/fine landlords (5)  
More tolerance of other people living in public housing  
Housing renovations/new housing (2)  
Houses torn down  
New housing/more owner/occupied homes (2)  
Clean-up the housing – get the drug dealers out  
Increased housing values  
Building inspector involvement – we’ve had 5 (inspectors) in the last 4 years!  
See more small (legitimate) businesses (personal) open in empty store fronts and more attractive and inviting atmosphere (facades) (4)  
Homestead credit for owner-occupied businesses  
Water front improvements  
Street, sidewalks and curb repairs  
Neighbors getting involved  
People get along the outside neighborhood  
Waterfront part clean-up  
Parking ramp in Buffalo State College  
(Winter time) Topes and other corporates (need to) plow snow off sidewalk  
(Summer time) Everyone needs to get off their lazy \*\*\* and pick-up some trash /Write tickets for littering (2)  
Plow the snow in the city-owned lot at Military and Grote

“The top 3 issues facing my neighborhood are...”

Noisy/Speeding cars (4)  
Not enough police patrols (1)  
Absentee landlords (2)  
Housing Values/Housing quality decline (5)  
Crime/drugs/vandalism/violence (13)  
Fear of gangs/kids roaming the streets (3)  
Slum landlords/lack of inspections on slum properties/absentee landlords/renters (8)  
Three housing public BMHA in area  
Moving (from Jasper) – and help the older people (2)  
Demolition of Jasper Parrish and many families losing their homes  
I-190 cutting off Niagara River access  
Business district decline  
Apathy  
Getting jobs for our young people  
Beautification  
Parking – municipal lots  
A two or three tier parking ramp at Buffalo State – crucial for safety and traffic flow

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---

Declining neighborhood business  
Garbage and Noise - Quality of Life  
Filth and getting property owners to clean-up  
Need more block clubs/neighborhood watch  
Quality of Life issues  
Garbage totes on street to be emptied instead of on driveway, skirt, apron or sidewalk  
Demolishing (demolitions)/replacement (4)  
Screening possible tenant(s) moving in  
It's (our neighborhood) very close to becoming a full-blown ghetto  
Horrible student performance  
Bums-panhandlers – approx. 3 years from now same ones  
Possibility of fumes from vehicles at possible bridge location (international bridge) – this happens time to move!  
Education  
Housing  
Crime  
Perverts  
Cleanliness – building and rubbish  
Bums!  
Loud neighbors  
Shopping carts

## **Appendix C**

### **Powerpoint Presentation**

**“A New Concept:  
‘Black Rock Canal Park’  
(Currently Known as the  
Ontario Street Boat Launch)”**

**Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance**

**Prepared by the Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Committee  
Graphics Courtesy of Stevan P. Stipanovich**

©2006

# A New Concept: “Black Rock Canal Park”

*(Currently Known as the  
Ontario Street Boat Launch)*

Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors  
Planning Alliance

Prepared by the Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Committee  
Graphics Courtesy of Stevan P. Stipanovich

Slide 1 of 38

## The Concept

- Refurbish and enhance current Ontario St. Boat Launch located at Ontario and Niagara Streets
- Increase parkland along the riverfront
- Increase park usage among diverse groups
- Present a site for improved Homeland Security river access

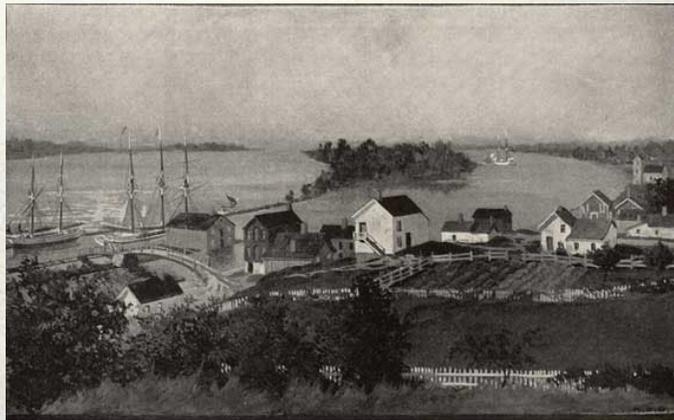
Slide 2 of 38

## Q: Why Is This Area Important? A: Black Rock History

- Established 1802
- Important War of 1812 site:
  - Black Rock Harbor used for building of Sir Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet used in the Battle of Put-in-Bay, September 1813
- Competition between Black Rock and Village of Buffalo for the western terminus of the Erie Canal
- Merged with City of Buffalo in January 1854

Slide 3 of 38

## Black Rock - 1825



BLACK ROCK IN 1825.  
DRAWN BY MILDRED C. GREEN FROM THE ORIGINAL SKETCH MADE BY GEORGE CATLIN, 1825, OWNED BY HON. PETER A. PORTER.

Slide 4 of 38

## Erie Canal in Black Rock



Slide 5 of 38

## Erie Canal Lock #72 – Late 1890s Area of Austin St. and Niagara St.



Slide 6 of 38

# Context Map



Ontario Street Boat Launch

Area of  
Erie Canal Lock #72

Slide 7 of 38

# Current Conditions: Aerial View



Slide 8 of 38

## Current Conditions: Site Specifics

- Limited uses:
  - Fishing
  - Bike Access
  - Boat Launch
- Limited users
- Poor maintenance
- Isolated
- Limited security



Slide 9 of 38

## Current Conditions: Site Specifics



Boat Launch

Little Turks  
(Snack shack)

Trailer Parking

Slide 10 of 38

## Current Conditions: Site Specifics



Slide 11 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: An Overview

- Add to New York State Park system
- Increase river usage. Enhanced uses include:
  - Boat Launch - Refurbish existing launch
  - Fishing - Improve access, aquatic habitat
  - Scuba - Provide shower facilities
  - Jet-ski - Floating docks
  - Windsurfing - Launch facilities
  - Charter fishing - Dedicated dock
  - Kayaking and Canoeing - Improve access

Slide 12 Of 38

## **Black Rock Canal Park: An Overview**

- New location for Homeland Security
- New mixed-use facility:
  - First floor – 3200 sq. ft. – Year round concessions, public restrooms, shower facilities, visitors center, meeting room
  - Second floor – 3200 sq. ft. – Park staff office, Homeland Security offices
  - Third floor – 2000 sq. ft. – Homeland Security
  - Fourth floor – 1000 sq. ft. – Building operations systems, server room and observation deck

Slide 13 Of 38

## **Black Rock Canal Park: An Overview**

- Increase usable parkland, adding:
  - Passive recreation - Boardwalk and greenspace addition
  - Raised deck - Concrete deck over river
  - Playground - Currently no existing playground
  - Improved Bikeway - Bring to water's edge, dedicated ROW
  - Picnic facilities - Tables, and lockable shelters
  - Dog park - Completely fenced in facility
  - Buffalo Blue Bicycles station - Bicycle access program
  - Wi-fi access - Wireless access point
  - Fishing hut/weigh station - Amenity for fishermen
  - Parking - Reconfiguration increases usable greenspace

Slide 14 Of 38

# Black Rock Canal Park: A New Aerial View



Slide 15 Of 38

# “Welcome to Black Rock Canal Park”



Slide 16 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Mixed-use Facility

- Homeland Security agencies:
  - Erie County Sheriff
  - Coast Guard
  - Border Patrol
  - DEC
  - Buffalo Underwater Rescue Unit
- Located centrally to state waterfront parks:
  - Beaver Island
  - Strawberry Island
  - New Outer Harbor State Park
- Located centrally to Niagara River Bridges:
  - Peace Bridge
  - International RR Bridge
  - Grand Island Bridges
  - Niagara Falls Bridges

Slide 17 Of 38

## BRCP Mixed-Use Facility



Slide 18 Of 38

## **BRCP: Mixed-Use Facility**



Slide 19 Of 38

## **BRCP: Mixed-Use Facility**



Slide 20 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Watercraft Facilities

- Dedicated slips for Homeland Security
- Jet-ski docks
- Additional recreational boating dock along boardwalk
- Boat launch:
  - Boats
  - Jet-skis
  - Windsurfers
- Scuba access improved
- Kayaking and Canoeing



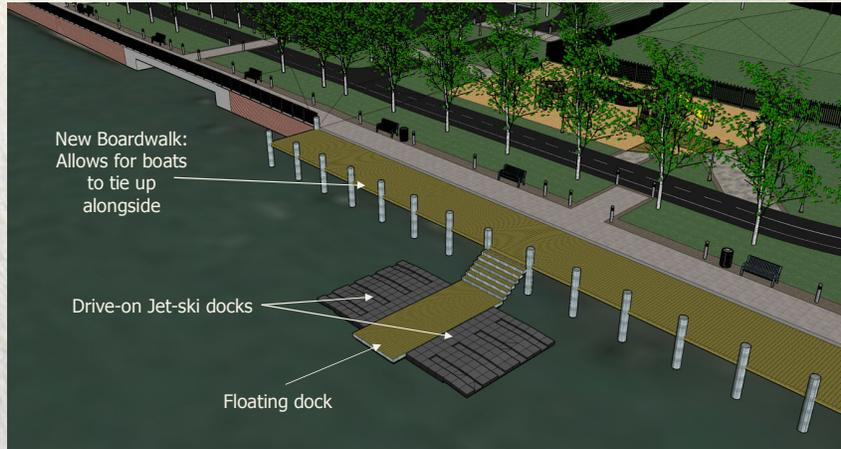
Slide 21 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Watercraft Facilities



Slide 22 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Watercraft Facilities



Slide 23 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Floating Jet-ski Dock



Slide 24 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements

- Increase in usable parkland – concrete deck built over river
- Boardwalk along riverfront – improves fishing accessibility and boat docking
- Bring bikeway to water's edge
- New scenic overlooks
- New picnic facilities
- Waterfront dog park
- Continuous pedestrian access to water's edge



Slide 25 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



Slide 26 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



View from north to south

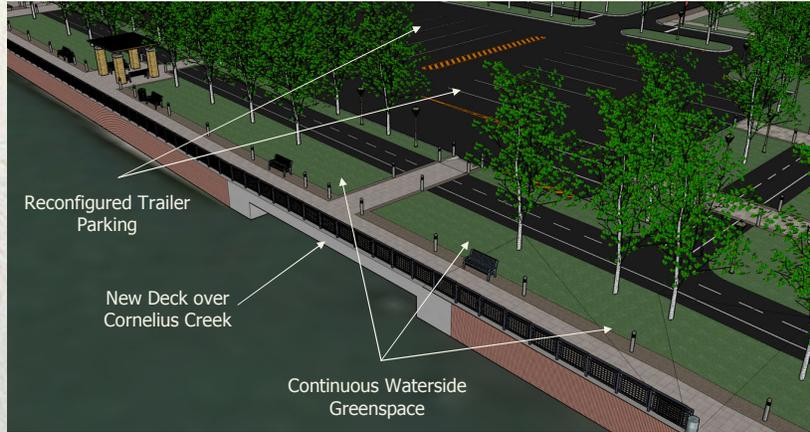
Slide 27 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



Slide 28 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



Slide 29 Of 38

## Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



View of Parking Area

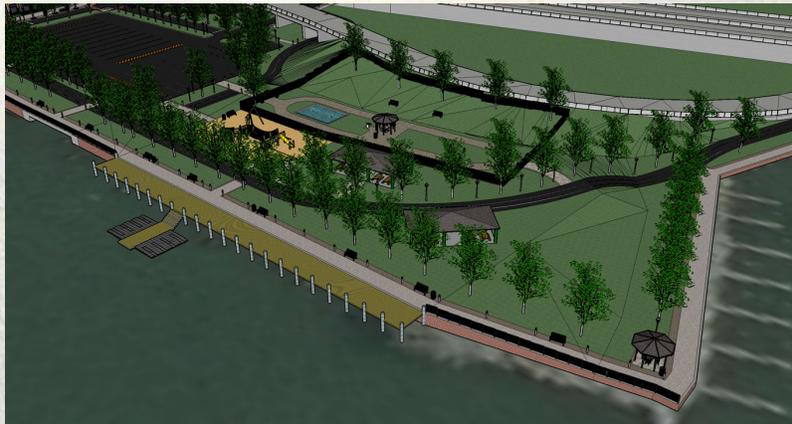
Slide 30 Of 38

# Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



Slide 31 Of 38

# Black Rock Canal Park: Recreational Improvements



Slide 32 Of 38

## **Black Rock Canal Park: New Activities**

- Fishing tournaments
- Wind-surfing tournaments
- 5k runs and bike races along bikeway from Erie Basin Marina
- Group meeting facilities
- Charter fishing
- Sailing Regattas

Slide 33 Of 38

## **Black Rock Canal Park: Major Site Changes**

- Concrete deck built over river – greenspace placed on top
- Boardwalk
- Pier extension
- Deck over mouth of Cornelius Creek
- Angle parking, new trailer parking area
- New walkways, bikeway re-routing
- Planting trees
- Dog Park
- Planters, lighting, trash receptacles, benches

Slide 34 Of 38

## BRCP: Current v. Proposed



Slide 35 Of 38

## A New Way of Thinking

- Add to New York State Park system
- Sources of revenue:
  - Leases on office space/concessions
  - Tournaments
  - Picnic shelter rentals
  - Meeting room use
  - Charter fishing
- Locating Homeland Security to the site increases public safety
- Create a family friendly environment by adding popular amenities that will draw people to the northernmost point of Buffalo's waterfront, Black Rock Canal Park

Slide 36 Of 38

## **What is the next step?**

- Securing funding for a professionally conducted feasibility study that will:
  - Check for consistency with other plans
  - Identify land ownership
  - Determine physical site improvements
  - Assess site impediments and regulatory issues
  - Calculate cost estimates
  - Develop preliminary construction timetable

Slide 37 of 38

## **A New Way of Thinking**

Thank you

Slide 38 of 38

## **Appendix D**

### **Images of Black Rock-Riverside's Historic Relationship to the Niagara River Prior to Constuction of the Niagara Section of the Thruway**

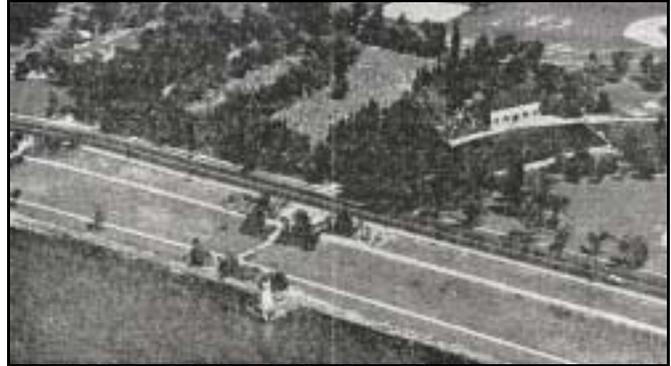
**Images Courtesy of Warren Glover, 2006**

## Images of Black Rock-Riverside's Historic Connection to the Niagara River Prior to Construction of the Niagara Section of the Thruway

Images Courtesy of Warren Glover, 2006



1. The old casino in Riverside park.  
Demolished in the late 1950s.



2. Aerial photograph showing landscaped grass riverfront across along Niagara Street, with a walkway leading to a lighthouse attraction in the Niagara River.



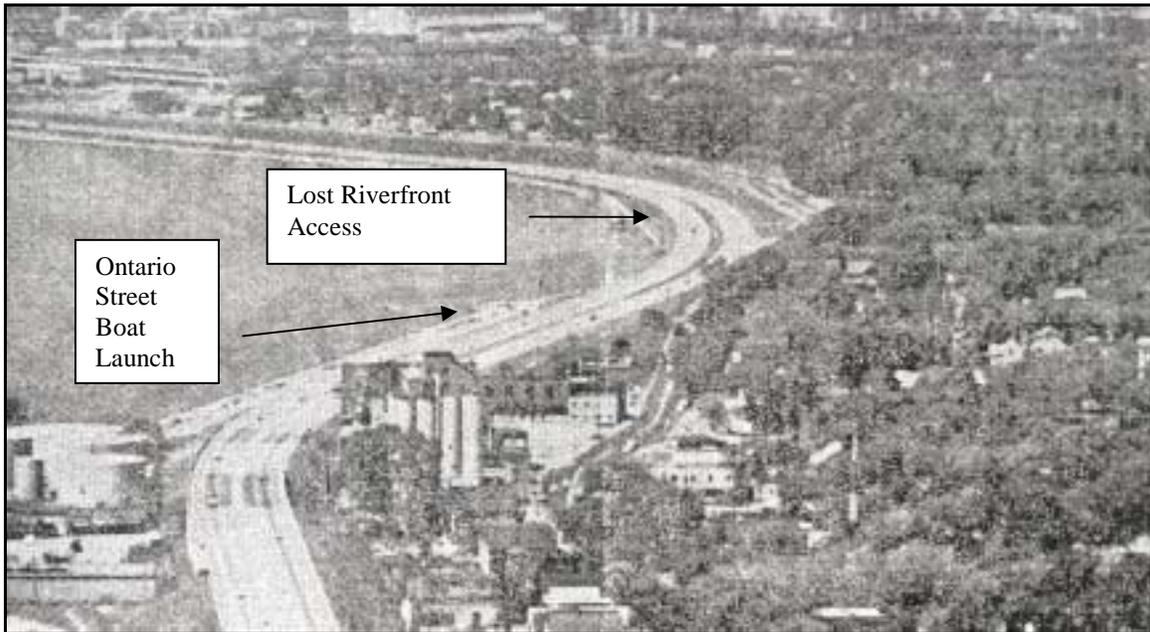
3. Stairs that led down to the Niagara River from Niagara Street, in the early 1950s.



4. Houses on the towpath at Riverside which provided summer retreats.

Building A Neighborhood Of Choice:  
A Neighborhood Plan For The Riverside Planning Community

---



5. Niagara Section of the Thruway in 1966