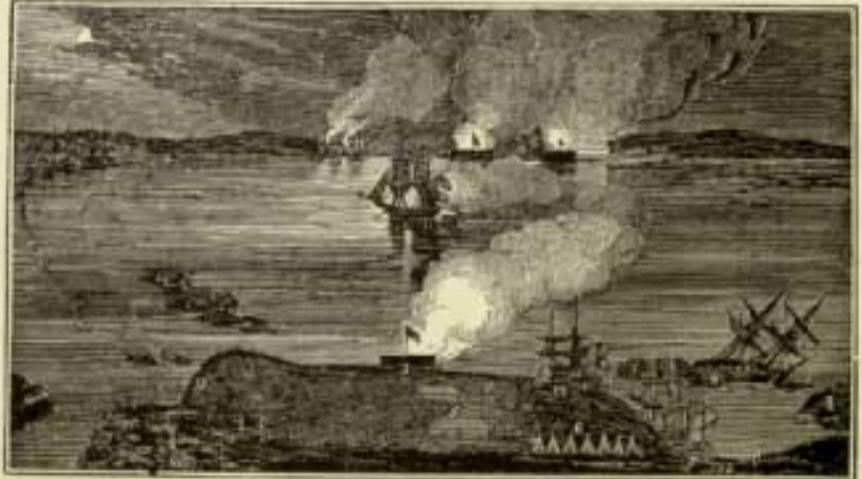


# War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan

## HISTORIC BLACK ROCK

*Among Buffalo neighborhoods, in Historic Black Rock you'll find:*

- The Best Waterfront Access,
- The Best Highway Access,
- Historic and Architectural Character, with a War of 1812 Legacy and the Most Pre-Civil War Historic Homes in the city,
- Affordable, Quality Housing, and
- An Enjoyable, Walkable Waterfront Community



THE SECOND OLDEST VIEW OF BUFFALO.  
STRIKED BY BOMBARDMENT, THE 1800 AN ORIGINAL SCENE BY ST. JOHN B. BACOT, ACCORDING TO HIS REPORT TO THE  
COMMANDER OF THE NAVY ON THE CAPTURE OF THE DETROIT AND CALEDONIA, WHICH WERE BURNED, OCT. 8, 1812.



*The second oldest view of Buffalo (top), according to the Picture Book of Earlier Buffalo, shows the capture of the British brigs Detroit and Caledonia on the night of October 8, 1812 during the War of 1812. The Detroit ran aground on Squaw Island (far right), and how the area looks today (bottom).*

**DRAFT DOCUMENT**

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

## DEDICATION

*This plan is dedicated to all who work tirelessly toward the improvement of Historic Black Rock.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

~ With appreciation to ~

The Honorable Byron Brown, Mayor City of Buffalo  
Joseph Golombek, Jr., Councilman, North Council District  
Brian Reilly, Executive Director, Office of Strategic Planning  
Andrew M. Eszak, City Planner, Office of Strategic Planning  
Steve Woroniak, CAD Specialist, Office of Strategic Planning  
Bill Parke, Community Planner, Office of Strategic Planning

Co-Chairs Richard Mack and Evelyn Vossler, the Membership, and the Steering Committee of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRRGNPA):

Sharon Adler	Mary Ann Kedron
Caleb Basiliko	Liza McKee
Bill Buzak	Bill Parke
Beverly Eagen	Larry Pernick
Jackie Erckert	Marge Price
Warren Glover	Margaret Szczepaniec
Joe Golombek	

Dearborn Street Community Association

Chris Brown, ErieCountyNY1812 Working Group  
Karl Frizlen, Design Committee, Elmwood Village Association  
George Grasser, Partners for a Livable Western New York  
Phil Haberstro, Buffalo Wellness Institute  
Wende Mix, PhD, Associate Professor of Geography, Buffalo State College  
Riverside Review  
St. John's United Church of Christ  
Stevan Stipanovich  
Wendel Duchscherer Architects & Engineers, PC  
Cassie Wilson

## YOUR COMMENTS

Your opinions regarding the ideas and proposals in this plan are important. So is your involvement in improving Historic Black Rock. To share your opinion or get involved in helping the community, contact Richard Mack, co-chair of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance, at 716.877.8400.

Prepared by the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance in partnership with the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning as a component (proposed) of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*.  
December 29, 2008—DRAFT DOCUMENT

Front Cover Images:

1812 woodcut titled "The Second Oldest View of Buffalo" (source: Picture Book of Earlier Buffalo, <http://www.archive.org/stream/publications16buffuoft>)

1894 City of Buffalo Atlas (source: [http://www.erie.gov/atlas/buff\\_94/city\\_atl\\_90.html](http://www.erie.gov/atlas/buff_94/city_atl_90.html))

2006 Photo by Bill Parke

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## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

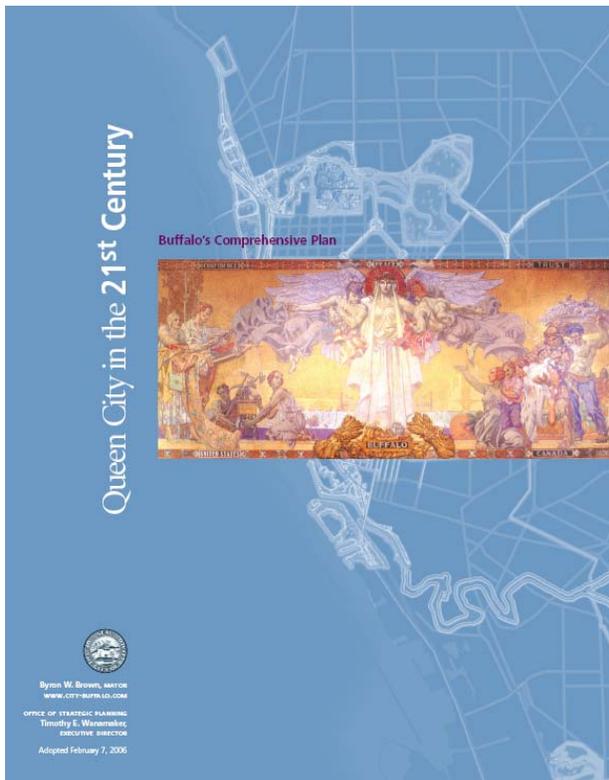


Figure 1: Cover page for *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan*.

### Introduction

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

With strong Council Member support, in 2007 the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA began a process of creating neighborhood plans in partnership with local block groups, leading to the current document, *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan*. This plan is guided by the following community vision for Historic Black Rock, arrived at by the Dearborn Street Community Association, a prominent block club in the area:

### Vision for Historic Black Rock

*Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home*

*values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.*

This vision is adapted from the document, "Draft Shared Vision for Historical Black Rock's Dearborn Street Community Association", created with the block club in Summer, 2008, with assistance from Phil Haberstro, director of the Buffalo Wellness Institute.

### Planning Context

In February, 2006, the City of Buffalo adopted the *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan*, which set forth the planning principles and guidance for future prosperity and development in the City of Buffalo. (See Figure 1.)

One of the key principles in the plan is to "Plan with Neighborhoods: The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad framework for neighborhood redevelopment



Figure 2: Aerial view of Historic Black Rock created during construction of Squaw Island Park.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW



Figure 3: The Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance is in northwest Buffalo

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

ning Alliance (GNPA) to support this process of neighborhood planning. Residents have been invited to participate in planning for eleven Planning Communities or districts around the city. Staff from the Office of Strategic Planning (OSP) provides guidance and technical assistance to create usable plans consistent with city-wide policies. All neighborhood plans produced through the GNPA will be submitted to the Planning Board for review and then forwarded to Common Council for adoption.” (*Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo’s Comprehensive Plan*, page 86.)

The Black Rock-Riverside GNPA recognized the need to plan locally, first by drafting a broader, GNPA-wide draft plan in January, 2007, and then deciding to augment that effort with more localized “mini-plans” that could address the special circumstances present at a more localized level in five areas that comprise the BRR GNPA (See Figure 4):

- Black Rock/Niagara St. Commercial
- Grant-Amherst

“The City has created the Good Neighbors Plan-

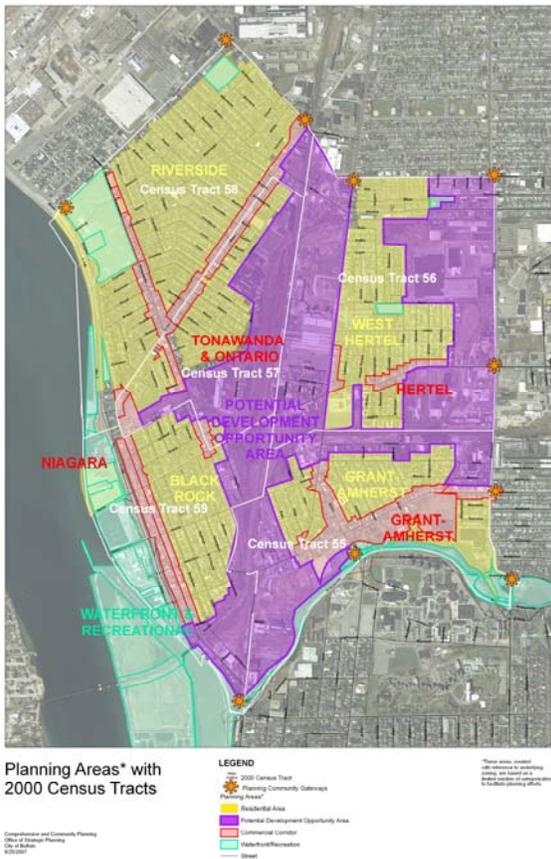


Figure 4: Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Planning Areas with 2000 Census Tracts.

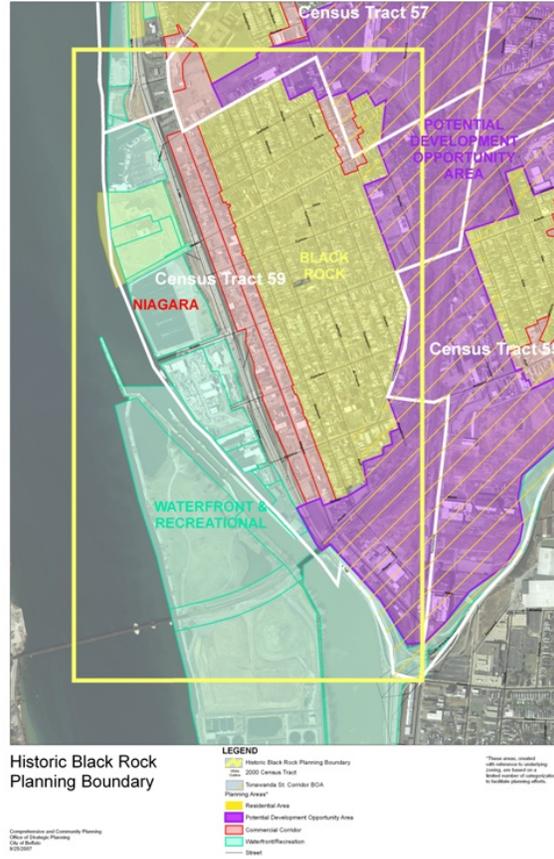


Figure 5: Historic Black Rock’s planning boundary (yellow box) is comprised of Census Tract 59 and the Niagara St. commercial corridor.

## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

- Riverside/Tonawanda-Ontario Commercial
- West Hertel/Hertel Commercial
- Tonawanda-Chandler Rail Corridor and North Elmwood Avenue/Potential Development Opportunity Area

During this time, Black Rock-Riverside GNPA planners developed a growing appreciation for the irreplaceable historic and architectural legacy of Historic Black Rock. In addition, Black Rock-Riverside GNPA facilitated or otherwise became aware of several initiatives recently launched in the area; for example, the Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) Targeted Streets initiative, where Dearborn and East were targeted for home rehabilitation funding in a process that included a community meeting in support of that designation. Additional reasons led to Historic Black Rock being chosen as the focus of the first mini-plan:

1. Historic Black Rock was built out first of all the parts of Black Rock-Riverside, in mid-1800s, and other areas relied on the prosperity of Historic Black Rock to get their start,
2. Historic Black Rock continues to have the most historic, prominent buildings in Black Rock-Riverside and offers many significant regional assets along the waterfront,
3. Historic Black Rock has been recently challenged. The area was the subject of several major developments that highlighted the growing fragility of this historic community, including the 2004 Ambassador Bridge proposal, the 2007 proposal for sex offender housing at 31 Tonawanda Street (a property now slated for student housing), and the 2007 closure of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church (later to become the Buffalo Religious Arts Center in 2008). In addition, rising numbers in certain types of crime, vacant properties, vacant lots, and other issues affecting quality of life demand a community-wide response now, before the problems become intractable and change the character of the community.
4. Historic Black Rock is surrounded by major geographic features on three sides, including rail, creek, and river/highway, and in light of these features, it is of great strategic importance from a geographic perspective: Strengthening Historic Black Rock can form the basis of strengthening in neighboring communities to the north and east, while weakening in Historic Black Rock would make it hard to maintain progress made in other

areas. Simply put, Historic Black Rock represents both the past and the future of Black Rock-Riverside.

5. Historic Black Rock has an active block club, the Dearborn Street Community Association, and this block club recognizes the value of neighborhood planning and as a result it has partnered effectively with the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA. This was essential in bringing successful neighborhood planning to fruition, as represented by this, the *War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan for Historic Black Rock*.

6. Historic Black Rock is on the move! Many key initiatives are presently underway in the community, making it a place where existing work can be leveraged and turned into momentum for a brighter future. Several of these initiatives are highlighted in Chapter 2, titled "Why Black Rock Now?"

## Geographic Area

Historic Black Rock is comprised of census tract 59 in the City of Buffalo, NY, plus the Niagara Street commercial/industrial area from Niagara-Tonawanda to Niagara-Ontario as defined by local zoning. It had 3,784 residents in 2000, down from 4,195 in 1990. (See Appendices 4, 5, and 6 for Land Use and Zoning maps and selected demographics.)

## The Public Vision

The strength of this plan is its connection to the people who live and work in Historic Black Rock. Throughout the planning process, the reality that residents and businesses in Historic Black Rock



Figure 6: *Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* sets forth a series of guiding planning principles that integrate the Community, Economy and Environment to form a cohesive blueprint for Buffalo's future. The vision for Black Rock is consistent with this comprehensive approach to planning.

## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW



Figure 7: Evelyn Vossler, BRR GNPA Co-Chair, makes a presentation on “Why Black Rock Now” to 50 attendees of a Nov. 12, 2008 Community Visioning Meeting for this plan, hosted by the Dearborn Street Community Association.



Figure 8: Meeting participants mark up a base map in order to give suggestions specific to the geographic features and neighborhood characteristics of Historic Black Rock.



Figure 9: A group of BRR GNPA Housing Committee members, led by Chairwoman Mary Ann Kedron, survey housing conditions along Tonawanda Street in April, 2008, an example of first-hand fieldwork research conducted for this plan.

are the key to both the development of the plan and its successful implementation has been essential premise.

The plan draws inspiration and guidance from the citizen-conceived “Shared Vision for Historical Black Rock’s Dearborn Street Community Association.” This vision (see page 1) was developed in meetings with the residents of Dearborn Street Community Association with the assistance of Phil Haberstro, Executive Director of the Buffalo Wellness Institute in the summer of 2008. It guided the formulation of the geographic boundary of the study area as well as key priorities in the plan. In addition, its comprehensiveness and focus on healthy living make it consistent with the guiding principles of the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*.

### Consultations of Experts and Best Practices

However, vision needs to be backed up with excellence in strategy, and this was obtained through many months of consultation with experts in the fields of architecture, historic preservation, planning, urban design, and real estate. Representatives from organizations like the Partners for a Livable Western New York, the Elmwood Village Association, Clinton Brown Associates, Buffalo State College, Wendel Duchschere Architects & Engineers, PC and the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning contributed ideas in support of excellence in strategy.

### Public Participation

Significant public participation in the formulation of the plan was achieved through a widely-publicized Community Meeting on November 12, 2008 at St. John’s United Church of Christ, at 85 Amherst Street right in the heart of Historic Black Rock. With 50 attendees and using a well-organized program of presentations and roundtable discussions, significant public input was obtained. Finally, transparency and open communication was guaranteed by the process of placing all documents from the November 12 meeting online and inviting comment on them from interested parties via a public internet web site: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_black\\_rock/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_black_rock/) After the November 12 meeting, additional comments were received. (See Appendices 1-3.)

## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

### First-Hand Fieldwork Research

In addition to expert and local community consultations, first-hand fieldwork research was undertaken to analyze housing, commercial, parks and recreation, community facilities, and problem properties.

### Background Studies

Existing proposed or completed plans were identified and assessed, so that this community plan could coordinate with upcoming and established planning initiatives. (See Appendix 7)

### Community Knowledge

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

### Goals of the Planning Process

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

- Keeping the community's vision for itself at the forefront of plan work and recommendations.
- Identifying the future strength of the area as being in the "Historic Black Rock" brand name.
- Basing the image of the community on its historic past, for which innovation, industry, a waterfront orientation and a sense of community are the main characteristics.
- Working with complementary initiatives and organizations active in Historic Black Rock, to sustain recent gains and transform that energy into a successful plan.
- Preserving, restoring and promoting the area's historic assets.
- Taking a fresh look. This community has existed a long time and it lives on within the context of a city which has experienced significant social and economic change in the recent and

enduring past. Rather than relying on long-held assumptions, the planning process has consistently followed a "show me" approach to planning analysis — i.e. "Why Black Rock Now?" — seeking out new ideas and fresh interpretations of existing conditions.

- Supporting interventions resulting from this plan that promote a vital urban neighborhood experience for all who live, work, visit, and play in Historic Black Rock.
- Using the I-190 and Scajaquada Expressway highways as resources for commercial development, not merely obstacles, until the day when this infrastructure is replaced by transportation features that are community-friendly.
- Making the neighborhood safe and easy for people to get around in.
- Creating new housing opportunities while strengthening rehabilitation of existing and frequently historic homes and buildings.
- Addressing the presence of negative influences on quality of life, like vacant properties, blight and crime.
- Acting in concert with the sound planning principles found in *Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan* and in strong collaboration with the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA process.

### Outline of the Plan

This plan has five chapters and seven appendices. This chapter, Chapter 1 - "Overview", provides the Vision for Historic Black Rock, the planning context and related topics, and the Goals of the Planning Process. Chapter 2, "Why Black Rock Now," details why Historic Black Rock is worth preserving and improving. Chapter 3, "Recommendations," put forth a series of action steps to guide stabilization and future growth in Historic Black Rock. Chapter 4, "Plan Implementation," sequences future actions, identifies key partners, and sets forth next steps for each action. Chapter 5, "Funding," identifies funding sources and programs which may help implement the recommended actions. Finally, a complete Appendix provides key documents on publicity, public participation, maps, demographics and other plans and projects.



Figure 10: "You Is Are My Best Friend", a child's sidewalk chalk message found during the April, 2008 survey of housing conditions.

## CHAPTER 2: WHY BLACK ROCK NOW?

The previous chapter provided a number of reasons, from a planning perspective, that Historic Black Rock is important: it was built first, it has assets of regional significance, several recent developments have highlighted its growing fragility, its geographic placement makes it strategic, it has an active block club, and it is on the move. This last point — the fact that Historic Black Rock is on the move — is worth expanding upon as we full address the question, “Why Black Rock Now?”

In selecting a first community to initiate planning activities among many worthy ones in Black Rock-Riverside, it was advantageous to be able to identify and leverage existing programs and projects, first so that planning recommendations can be integrated into a wider whole, but also so that these recommendations could be fed by the progress of additional efforts, which can create the momentum needed for successful implementation. In planning, an important, real-world dynamic is always present, involving the community, funding partners, government, and it is simply this: Everyone wants to see resources committed be successfully and effectively implemented. The presence of existing programs and projects makes solving that equation successfully easier.

Among the notable existing programs or projects in or near Historic Black Rock are:

**Buffalo Weed & Seed Black Rock-Riverside, through U.S. Department of Justice = \$100,000 (status: application pending)** This is a U.S. Dept. of Justice grant program to fund increased law enforcement and community policing to “weed out” criminal activity, and then support community programs to “seed” community revitalization. It does its work thorough partnerships involving multiple agencies and local residents. It is coordinated through the City of Buffalo Office of Citizen Services.



**Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfields Opportunity Area Program = \$425,000 (status: grant pending)** The NYS Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program, made possible by the Superfund/

**REDEVELOPMENT**

**7 brownfield projects OK'd for state funding**

Seven brownfield cleanup projects in Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua and Wyoming counties have received a state designation, bringing them more than \$1.3 million funding.

The sites, tapped as Brownfield Opportunity Areas, are among 50 statewide named in the latest round of awards.

The City of Buffalo and Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper will receive \$472,500 for the second phase of cleanup in the Buffalo River corridor. The city will also receive \$382,500 for the second phase of work in the Tonawanda Street corridor.

The City of Lackawanna will receive \$202,500 for a project in its 2nd Ward, while the Town of Tonawanda is getting \$60,480 for the first phase in a River Road project.

In Niagara County, the City of North Tonawanda will be receiving \$175,000 for the second phase of a Tonawanda Island cleanup.

Elsewhere, the City of Jamestown has been awarded \$53,093 for work on the Chadakoin riverfront, while the Village of Perry will receive \$21,159 for the first phase of a project on Washington Boulevard.

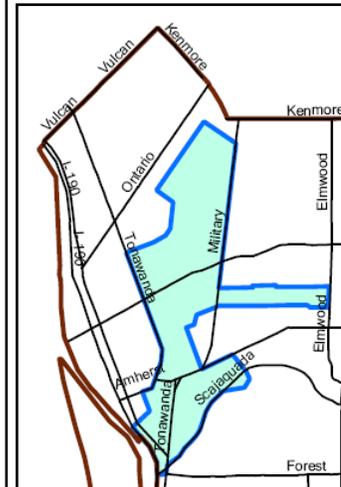


Figure 11: “7 Brownfield Projects OK'd for State Funding”, Buffalo News, March 9, 2008, C-3.

Figure 12: Boundary of the proposed Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area.

Brownfield law in October 2003, provides municipalities and community based organizations with assistance, at up to 90 percent of the eligible project costs, to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for areas or communities affected by the presence of brownfield sites and to do site assessments for strategic brownfield sites. Step 2 Activities (i.e. planning and analysis leading to recommendations involving strategic properties) will be undertaken with this grant. 514 acres in the Tonawanda Street Rail Corridor and Chandler Street area are the focus, and much of this area comprises the eastern border of Historic Black Rock.

**Historic Sites, Including War of 1812** Historic Black Rock has more pre-Civil War buildings than any other area of its size in Buffalo. Among these are the Samuel Howell House at 189 Dearborn (1830) and the Jacob Smith House at 73 Amherst Street (1835). Also, it has significant late 1800s-early 1900s structures like the North Buffalo Building at 1920 Niagara Street (1873), St. John's United Church of Christ at 85 Amherst Street (1890), and former St. Francis Xavier Church (now the Buffalo Religious Arts Center) at 151 East Street (1911). Further, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Historic Restoration Committee is discovering the local War of 1812 legacy in Historic Black Rock, identifying sites and participating in the Erie

## CHAPTER 2: WHY BLACK ROCK NOW?

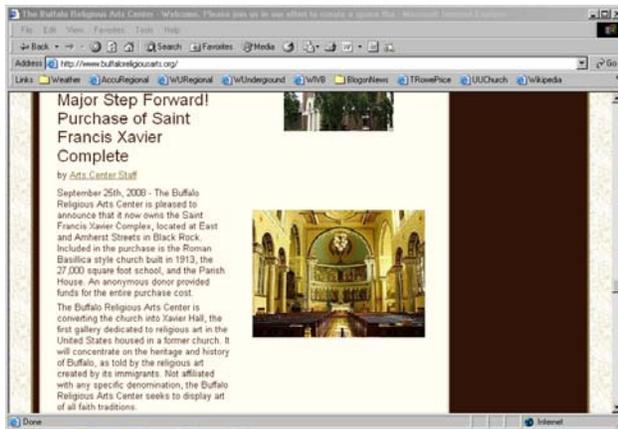


Figure 13: Excerpts from the web site of the Buffalo Religious Arts Center announcing purchase of St. Francis Xavier properties in September, 2008.



Figure 14: The new Buffalo Religious Arts Center at 157 East Street in Historic Black Rock (formerly St. Francis Xavier Church)

County War of 1812 Planning Group led by local historian and neighborhood advocate Chris Brown. As part of this group's work, it is meeting with the Binational Tourism Alliance and the 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council to coordinate local efforts with city-wide and international ones. Significant War of 1812 events in the Historic Black Rock area include:

- October, 1812 Capture of the Brigs Detroit and Caledonia,
- December, 1812 British Landing for the Burning of Black Rock and Buffalo,
- May, 1813 Site of the Naval Ship Yard of Commodore Perry, and
- August, 1814 Battle of Scajaquada Creek.

The area has historic significance for other times as well.

**Purchase of the Closed St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church by the New Buffalo Religious Arts Center.** This new museum/information

center is an outstanding example of adaptive reuse of a historic church building, while at the same time providing a valuable public service, by creating a home for artifacts and art from closed houses of worship throughout Western New York.

### **Black Rock-Riverside NHS - Various Programs**

Black Rock-Riverside NHS is a full-service neighborhood housing agency serving the area and its headquarters are located nearby at 203 Military Rd. In addition to providing housing programs in Historic Black Rock that are also offered throughout the rest of its service area, the agency is involved in several initiatives with a special geographic emphasis that includes Historic Black Rock. These include Judge Nowak's Black Rock Vacancy Initiative, the 2008 Block by Block AHC Program (One-half of the \$100K budget is for five houses on Dearborn), and a CHDO project at 77 East St. The agency also maintains a contractors list (licensed, insured contractors) and offers other referral services, which are important as homeowners endeavor to maintain their historic homes.

### **North West Buffalo Community Center - Various Programs**

North West Buffalo Community Center is a comprehensive community center serving the area, located nearby at 155 Lawn Ave. For more information, visit: <http://www.nwbccinc.org/>

### **Significant Parks Improvements at Squaw Island Park and Tow Path Park, and Proposed Improvements at the Ontario Street Boat Launch and Cornelius Creek Park**

Squaw Island Park has been created by converting a 60-acre municipal landfill with an innovative closure concept approved by the NYSDEC and the heavy use of new plant massing and wildflower mixtures. It is linked to the Riverwalk. Phase I and Entrance Improvements are completed. Phase II is contingent on funding. Total project cost: \$12.6 million.

Tow Path Park is located along the Niagara River at the foot of Hertel Avenue. It is linked to the Riverwalk and has been absorbed by the County Park system. Phase I improvements included basic re-grading, seeding, walkway amenities and park furniture. Phase I is complete. Phase II involves incorporating into the park an interpretative historic sign, improved access/egress via Hertel Ave, improved fencing/landscaping adjacent to Rich Marina, some new picnic tables, lighting, and new plantings throughout the park. Phase II is about 90% complete. Total project cost: \$826,000.

CHAPTER 2: WHY BLACK ROCK NOW?

Squaw Island Park



**Project Summary:**

Squaw Island Park is located at the north end of Squaw Island, between the Niagara River and the Black Rock Locks.

The Park is being created by converting a 60-acre municipal landfill with an innovative closure concept approved by the NYSDEC and the heavy use of new plant massing and wildflower mixtures. The southern portion of the site will be used for a combination of passive and active recreation. The northern portion of the site will be used for more passive recreational uses, such as hiking and fishing. The Park is linked to the regional shoreline trail system through the Riverwalk.



**CITY OF BUFFALO**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
PARKS AND STREETS

**Project Budget / Cost:**

Costs:

Site closure and remediation	\$7 million
Park Improvements	\$4.5 million
Entrance Improvements	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$12.6 million</b>

**Project Contact:** Steven Stepniak, Com.

**Status / Schedule of Project:**

Closure/remediation	<b>Completed</b>
Phase I Park Improvements:	<b>Completed</b>
Entrance Improvements:	<b>Completed</b>
Phase II Park Improvements:	Contingent on funding

Figure 15: Slides regarding improvements at Squaw Island Park from the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation "Buffalo Waterfront Projects: Project Summary and Update", October, 2007.



Figures 16-17: Excerpts from the presentation for the Black Rock Canal Park proposal, which would combine the Ontario Street Boat Launch with adjacent Cornelius Creek and bring added facilities and recreational amenities to the area.

## CHAPTER 2: WHY BLACK ROCK NOW?

The Ontario Street Boat Launch and Cornelius Creek Park (see Figures 16-17) are the subject of an award-winning conceptual vision which specifies specific improvements to these properties that will lead to their transformation into “Black Rock Canal Park,” featuring new and expanded facilities and recreational amenities.

facilities and provide an opportunity for sporting events at the school with spectators drawn from miles around, including football games featuring the Riverside Frontiers, who in 2008 had a 10-1 record and won the 105th Harvard Cup football championship at All High Stadium.

### Completion of the Scajaquada Pathway Phase III Linkage to International Railroad Bridge/ Army Corps of Engineers

Completion of three critical gaps along the pathway from Delaware Park to the Riverwalk at the Niagara River have been achieved, including a segment west of Niagara Street from Forest Avenue to the International Railroad Bridge/Army Corps of Engineers parking lot and I-190 pedestrian bridge. Total overall project cost: \$1.7 million.

**Renovation of Riverside High School** Located near the northern border of Historic Black Rock, the renovation of Riverside High School is an over \$30 million Joint Schools Construction Board project with completion slated for April, 2010.

Renovation of the school will occur in two phases, and will include construction of a new Pavilion Addition and Synthetic Football Field. These exciting, new features will vastly improve the recreational

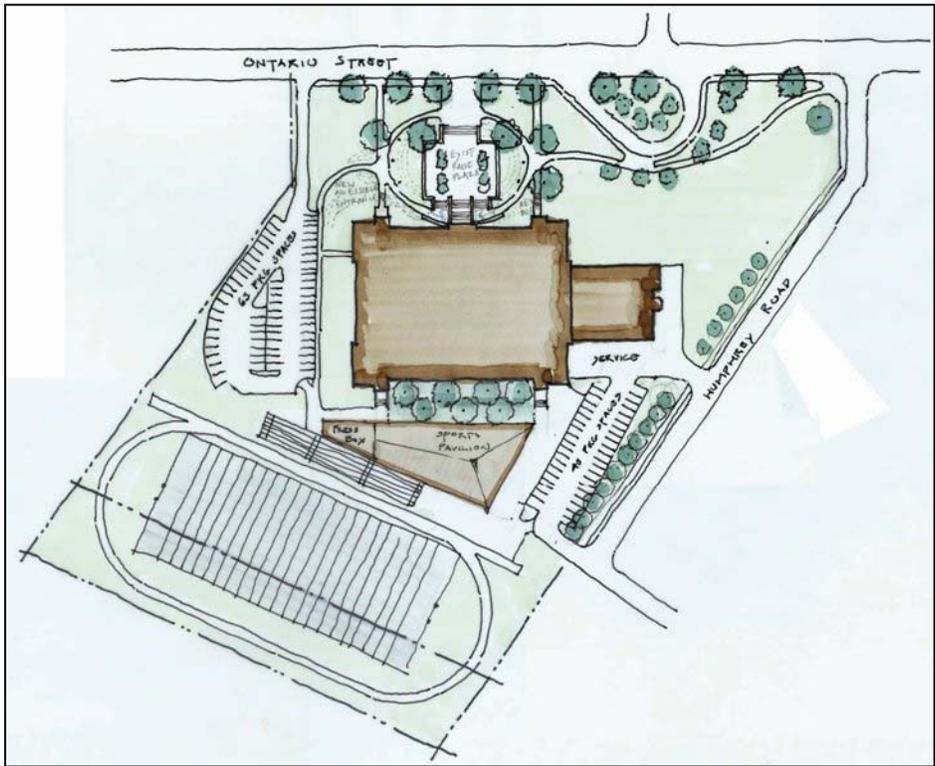


Figure 18: Riverside High School proposed site plan.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Preserve and Strengthen Community Identity

*From the Vision Statement:*

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and **real history unique to their community.** Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

#### CHALLENGES

Changes in economic fortunes at all levels — government, business, family and individual — have led to either the loss of some historic buildings to demolition or to decay due to low maintenance. This trend will continue into the future if proactive steps are not taken, and it threatens the architectural and historic character of the area.



Figure 19: Excerpt from "Map of the Parish Mile Square as Surveyed in 1830 by R. Chapin, Esq."

At the same time, new arrivals attracted by low cost housing have a pivotal role to play in preserving and strengthening the community's identity. Community pride — established by increasing awareness of the areas historic and architectural attributes — can lead people to invest their private funds in good design for new buildings and to use appropriate materials and design in the renovation of existing buildings. It is essential to build up Historic Black Rock using all the resources at its disposal, including new and old residents and businesses alike.

#### CURRENT STATUS

Several attempts at surveying the area to aid historic designations have been made over the years, in 1979 and in 1995. However, deterioration continues. Fortunately, the historic and architectural legacy is still in evidence, and it continues to recognition: tour operators are drawn to the area. For example, the Campaign for Greater Buffalo advertised "The Architectural and Industrial Heritage of Black Rock and Riverside" in 2008, a 2-hour tour for \$20 held twice during the summer.

#### What is the History? Black Rock — Then and Now

Black Rock was originally known as a village in an area near the Peace Bridge, where a long rock, black in color, was situated along the Niagara River. Over time, this area — also known as "Upper Black Rock" due to the flow of the Niagara River northward from the Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, so that this area was perceived as being "upriver" — became absorbed into the City of Buffalo.

Lower Black Rock — the area north of Scajaquada Creek — kept its identity and its name over time because the Creek served as a natural boundary between it and Buffalo's downtown, political subdivisions kept the area cohesive, and the huge economic prosperity. Lower Black Rock comprised the area of what we call Historic Black Rock today.

#### Settlement

Going back to its earliest days, Historic Black Rock originated from the interaction of Native Americans and European settlers. A community calendar published in 1979 excerpted here serves as a guide: "Two square miles lying north and west of

### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

the Scajaquada Creek became known as the Parrish Tract, and was the land upon which the Lower Rock developed. The land was given to Jasper Parrish and Horatio Jones by the Iroquois, in gratitude for their help with the treaties (between the Iroquois and settlers).” With the completion of the American Revolution and ensuing treaties, the area became safe to settle in. As early as 1800 the U.S. Army had been building in the Parrish Tract, and the Battle of Scajaquada Bridge, spanning the Creek at Niagara St., marked the last hostile British advance during the War of 1812.

Following the War of 1812, the divisions which became known as Upper Rock and Lower Rock came into being. “The state presented General Peter Porter with a gift for his service and that gift, a part of the mile strip laid out as a safety measure against waterfront attacks in wartime from about Ferry St. north to Lafayette, became known as the Ferry Lot. All land south of the Ferry Lot to Porter Ave. was known as the South Village. Together, this land became the Upper Rock and the Parrish Tract, lying between the Scajaquada Creek and the Farm of W.A. Bird, became known as the Lower

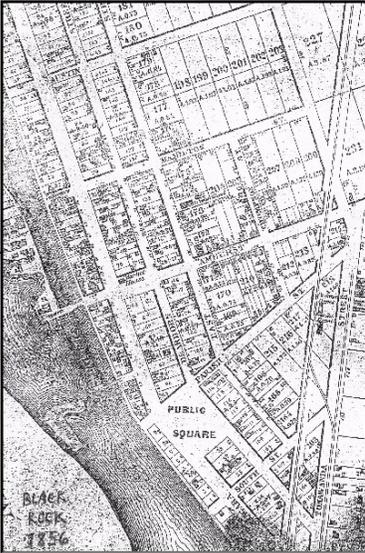
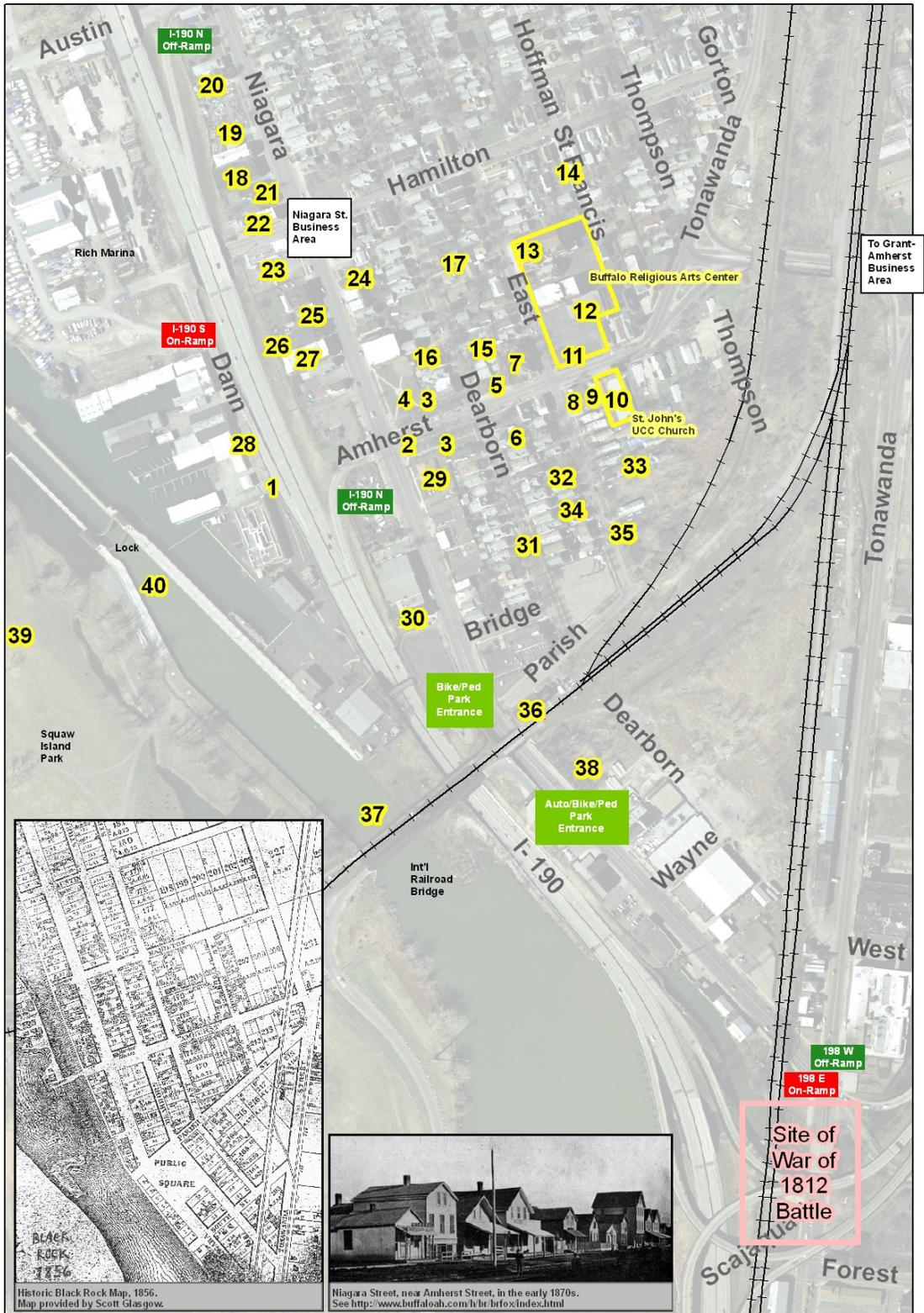
Rock, or the Black Rock Dam.”

With the arrival of Erie Canal, and water power from Black Rock Dam, milling and other industrial operations flourished in the years to come. A document produced by the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier titled “Black Rock Chronicle” illustrates the trend, “In 1830, Samuel Howell and his Irish wife built a stone house and store at the southeast corner of Dearborn and Amherst Streets (still standing). Below the falls of the harbor dam, he established a successful milling works. Independent local merchants and millers like Howell and his solid German neighbors became the bedrock for the community. In addition to distinct physical boundaries, such as the Creek to the south, and early political self-control through Twelfth Ward dominance, the role of The Dam’s institutions and organizations was vital to the evolution of a neighborhood consciousness. The Black Rock Businessmen’s Association, founded in 1886, worked to foster prosperous corner-store enterprise. And during that time, larger industrial operations along the waterfront and inland along Tonawanda Street were established. For example,



Figure 20: A photographic image of Historic Black Rock, with highlights of certain historical features. Image courtesy of Caleb Basiliko and Margaret Szczepaniec.

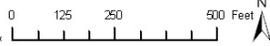
# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



## Representative Historic Buildings and Landmarks and Cultural Resources (See Corresponding List)

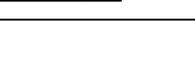
Comprehensive and Community Planning  
 City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning  
 7/15/2008

- Legend**
- 22 Historic Building or Site
  - Cultural Site
  - Railroad
  - Street
  - Site of Battle of Sojaquada Creek



Figures 21-22: Map showing selected historic resources in Historic Black Rock (see accompany photos and descriptions on following page). Also shown are a 1856 map courtesy of Scott Glasgow (lower left) and an early 1870s view of Niagara Street.

## NUMBERED SITE DESCRIPTIONS FOR CORRESPONDING MAP

Number	Address	Description
	1 Foot of Amherst	1000 British Troops landed here Dec. 30th 1813 and proceeded to burn Black Rock and Buffalo. - Newcomb's canal store operated here for twenty or thirty years beginning in 1840. Store was open 24 hours 7 days to serve the busy canal trade. The docks at Amherst St. were home to many of the pleasure boats serving the resorts on Grand Island during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.
	2 Amherst & Niagara	Niagara Street through Black Rock was originally the roadbed of the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Railroad in operation by 1836 (very early for railroads).
	3 1851 Niagara	Market Square - These linear parks were the public marketplace for the village and were laid out in 1830.
	4 1859 Niagara	Site of old brewery in 1870s.
	5 52 Amherst	Black Rock Savings and Loan 1912.
	6 189 Dearborn	Stephen W. Howell house and store. - Built in the federal style about 1830. The front is of cut and coarsed stone (squared blocks) with the remaining walls built of stone rubble (irregular). The wing to the right was an addition around 1870. The house contains much of the original woodwork and doors. - The store stood on the corner lot and was demolished. - Stephen W. Howell built the Frontier Mills in 1832. - Alderman, 12th Ward. - Original trustee of Erie Co. Savings Bank. - Built up Buffalo docks and shipping. - Owned Eagle Iron Works.
	7 64 Amherst	Engine #15. - Built in 1912 in the Arts & Crafts style. Now is a home and apartments.
	8 71 Amherst	Jacob Smith House. - Built in the 1830s as a tavern and home. - The window on front far right was the tavern door. Federal style with Greek Revival doorway. The house was saved from demolition in 1969 and restoration continues.
	9 81 Amherst	John Esser House. - Built in 1867. Italianate and Gothic style. Esser was the County Treasurer and owned Banner Milling Co.
	10 83 Amherst	St. John's Church. Founded 1847. Present structure 1891; built utilizing the older tower.
	11 157 East	Site of School 20. School appears on 1850 map. Grass lawn still exists in original form.
	12 157 East	St. Francis School. Built 1893.
	13 157 East	St. Francis Xavier Church. 1911-13. Architect Max G. Beierl. Romanesque style.
	14 St. Francis Place	St. Francis Place. "Smallest street in Buffalo."
	15 217 Dearborn	Greek Revival - About 1840-1850. Note doorway pediment and temple-like foundation.
	16 218 Dearborn	Victorian Cottage. 1880s or 1890s.
	17 243 Dearborn	Early brick house built in federal style, brackets/comic added.
	18 1932 Niagara	Jubilee Library. Affixed with sign: "Erected for the Jubilee Water Commissioners of the Parish Tract by the Bureau of Building Dept. Public Works, Frank X. Argus Chairman, David H. Justin, Henry H. Guenther."
	19 1940 Niagara	Unity Temple. 1905 Green & Wicks. Classical Revival style.
	20 1966 Niagara	Early brick house.
	21 1924 Niagara	Old hotel. French 2nd Empire. Late 1860s.
	22 1920 Niagara	North Buffalo building. Brick commercial building, 1870s Italianate. Rear addition was stable. Note old sign on rear.
	23 1910 Niagara	Brick commercial building. Note front brick is larger. The older building (1830s) was modernized with a new facade probably 1870s.
	24 1901 Niagara	Ebertz Tin Shop. Building and business date to 1898. Note interior.
	25 1896 Niagara	Old stable. Now office.
	26 1888 Niagara	Department store 1906. Owner's 2nd floor elaborate Victorian home was recently restored.
	27 1884 Niagara	Jubilee Show.
	28	Site of Early Water Powered Mills. (not pictured)
	29 1835 Niagara	Site of early building owned by George W. Jonson - Abolitionist. Demolished on a Sunday in 1999. (not pictured)
	30 1792 Niagara	Schimper House. 1897-1990s. Bar and rooms.
	31 Dearborn St.	Dearborn Street. The biggest homes in Black Rock (the Delaware Ave. of Black Rock.)
	32 98 East	Brick house 1870s.
	33 91 East	Small Timber-Frame house appears on earliest maps.
	34 92 East	Two early Post-and-Beam structures joined to create this house.
	35 Coal Pockets	Coal pockets (not pictured)
	36 100 Inter Bridge	Customs House and Canadian National Railroad Office. 1913
	37 Int'l Railroad Bridge	International Railroad Bridge. 173. Casimir S. Gzowski
	38 1733 Niagara	Porter Square 1930. Town Square of Black Rock. Sold to private owner 2003 for \$16,000.
	39 Squaw Island	Squaw Island. Squatter colony: cottages, drinking and carousing. Became dumps for City of Buffalo 1960s. Now a beautiful park.
	40 Black Rock Lock	Black Rock Lock 1909-14. Necessary to get past Black Rock rapids.

Note: A listing of Landmarks in Buffalo, NY at <http://www.buffalooh.com/landmarks/landmk56.html> indicates that the Nash harbor tug, believed to be stored at 1776 Niagara St., Buffalo, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Work is underway to verify this information.

Site and historical information above provided by Scott Glasgow, owner of Site #8, the Jacob Smith House. Assistance provided by Warren Glover, Chair, Historical Restoration Committee of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, (716) 835-2803. Most of the photos were taken 7/2008 by Bill Parks.

### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Pratt and Letchworth's foundry facilities were expanded on Tonawanda Street in 1883.

#### STRATEGIES

##### Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)

1. Support completion of an expert historic resources survey for Black Rock and undertake next steps of creating a State and National Register historic district and preserving historic resources. A historic resources survey identifies the historic assets of an area. It can lead to a State and National Register historic district nomination. A State and National Register historic district does not impose restrictions on exterior alterations. It does enhance community character and makes more buildings eligible for grants and funding and tax credits.
2. Prepare a timeline of historical events in Black Rock and vicinity.
3. Promote historical event anniversary celebrations/exhibits and reenactments (for example, the War of 1812 anniversary, etc.).
4. Obtain funding for preservation-related activities from foundations and other sources.

##### Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)

1. Develop promotional programming and materials, for example, tours, heritage trails, brochures, a community map, markers, a plaque program, and historical narrative boards like those put in place by the Landmark Society at Niagara Square.
2. Encourage the development of a historical photo and artifact library, including supporting

- the photo-gathering efforts of Fundalinski Studios.
3. Do a virtual or real local history museum; start with a website and perhaps a movable display gallery, to help identify and interpret the history.
  4. Take steps to commemorate and celebrate ties to other history related to the area, including the area's Native American history as part of the Iroquois Confederacy, the outfitting of the Griffon, Abolitionist/Underground Railroad legacy, role in water power and electrical power innovation, railroad history, and multicultural past.

#### 2. Improve Housing

##### From the Vision Statement:

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, **stable home values**, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

#### CHALLENGES

Historic Black Rock is an area of low cost housing which is also historic and architecturally distinctive. One challenge for areas like this is having home improvements that are sensitive to their historic context. The cost of labor and materials have risen. At the same time, historic structures need



Figure 23: On the left is the Jacob Smith House at Amherst & East Sts. It was built in 1835 and was saved from the wrecking ball in 1989 by new owner Scott Glasgow. On the right is how it appears today, thanks to Scott's efforts. This is an example of how local residents and businesses can find character and bring new life to historic, low cost housing in Historic Black Rock.

**CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BLACK ROCK HERITAGE VILLAGE**

**NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT**

BLACK ROCK-RIVERSIDE GNPA HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE  
AUSTIN-TONAWANDA-AMHERST-DEARBORN STUDY AREA



Figure 24: An example, for illustrative purposes only, of a housing concept which incorporates, into the existing urban fabric, the following features: new housing, housing rehabilitation, traffic calming and road access, green spaces, and new community spaces. In the housing section of this plan, Key Immediate Strategy #5 is “Create concept plans for new housing development and facilitate their implementation.”

more frequent maintenance than new ones and money is tight. An example of how this plays out in the community is the area of window replacement. Windows that fit into existing window openings on historic structures can be hard to obtain and purchase. Instead, many property owners modify the openings or use easy-to-find and less expensive generic window frames.

Changing fortunes and property ownership has led to more vacant and problem properties than in the past. The vacant housing rate was 7.6% in 1990 and was 13.9% in 2000. Not only does this trend threaten the community’s character, it also dilutes the quality of life for local residents and businesses. Some of these properties are in prominent locations, for example along the Niagara Street commercial corridor or on corner lots within the residential area. Connecting these properties to new owners and tenants, facilitating rehabilitation, and encouraging responsible maintenance are key to solving the vacant and problem property problem and making the area’s low cost of housing an asset now and in the future.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that, for certain homebuyers, modern building features are needed and new housing can provide them.

Finally, to realize the area’s true potential as a walkable community, finding goods and services, including community services like libraries and teen centers, in or near the neighborhood is important. Therefore, a Life Learning Center is proposed for a currently empty, prominently located, city owned property. (See Figure 25.)

**CURRENT STATUS**

The neighborhood benefits from a strong relationship with city officials and the local housing agency, Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services, which offers many housing programs are focused on the area that address information and referral, loans, grants, code compliance, and housing rehabilitation.

In the case of new housing, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA’s Housing Committee, in collaboration with the Dearborn Street Community

### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Association, has done housing condition surveys, neighborhood tours, and mapping analysis. As a result of these efforts, they have not only identified key neighborhood housing trends and issue, but they have led the way in developing an exciting concept plan, titled *Black Rock Village Neighborhood Redevelopment* (see Figure 24), which serves as an example of how new housing, housing rehabilitation, traffic calming, new roads, greenspace, and new community spaces can fit into the existing urban fabric of the neighborhood. More concept plans, and implementation of them, are needed.

At the same time, many committed members of the community are already in evidence (see the story in Figure 23) and this is a strength to build on. They lead by example in showing that Historic Black Rock is an interesting and beneficial place to own or rent a home and run a business.

#### STRATEGIES

#### Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)

1. Support the strengthening of BRR NHS programs that promote better housing opportunities and conditions.
2. Help create new block clubs where needed.
3. Take advantage of code enforcement opportunities and support existing or new approaches to address problem properties.
4. Support Judge Nowak housing court initiative.
5. Create concept plans for new housing development and facilitate their implementation.
6. Work with Historic Restoration Committee to develop/enhance a service for handyman/contractor referral and review in partnership with BRR NHS, so that historic structures can be better maintained by private owners.
7. Work with BRR NHS to connect home-seekers with potential properties.
8. Work with BRR NHS on targeted streets program and housing-related planning.
9. Create a Life Learning Center, with 69 Hamilton as a possible location.

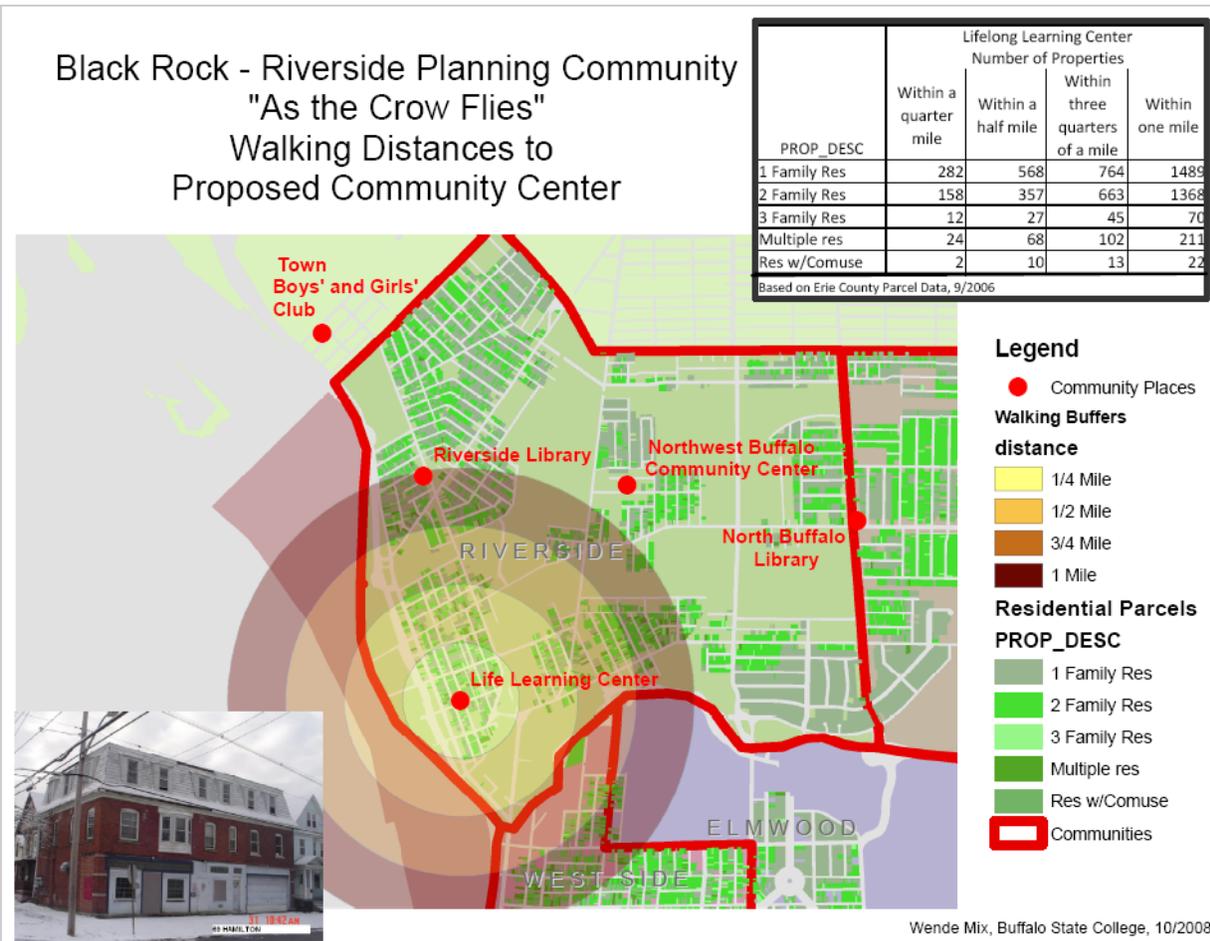


Figure 25: A Life Learning Center would be a satellite for many community services located elsewhere — and some unique to Historic Black Rock — and by doing so accomplish multiple objectives: reuse of a city-owned brick building located on a corner site while improving access to services and contributing to the walkability of the neighborhood. Map courtesy of Wende Mix.

# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



## Housing-Related Initiatives

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
 City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning  
 10/15/2008

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  Black Rock Heritage Village Focus Area |  Comprehensive Code Enforcement (CCE) Area                          |  Highway_Ramp |  Niagara St. Commercial/Industrial Area per Underlying Zoning |
|  BRR NHS Targeted Street - Phase 1      |  Block Club April 2008 (Note: Niagara-Amherst Block Club not shown) |  Highway      |  Street   |
|  |  |  Railroad     |  |

Figure 26: Map of housing-related initiatives in Historic Black Rock shows lots of activity, from a variety of sources: government, NHS, block club, and the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA. It also shows that more block clubs (in light blue shading) are needed.

### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):

1. Monitor local property status with the help of block clubs.
2. Encourage homesteading.
3. Develop an inventory of infill lots and procedure for keeping it updated.
4. Support conversion of upper floors of commercial buildings to private apartments, urban lofts, and artistic spaces for all of the performing or static arts and other compatible uses.
5. Track owner occupancy ratios, in an effort to keep owner occupancy at 75% or above.

### 3. Improve Public Safety

*From the Vision Statement:*

Enjoy a **safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood** with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

#### CHALLENGES

Historic Black Rock is an urban neighborhood that is densely settled, featuring low cost housing. Resident income levels are mixed, with the incomes falling in recent decades with shifts downward in the city's economic fortunes. In census tract 59 median household income in 1989 was \$17,250, and in 1999 it was \$19,167, while, if it kept pace with inflation, it would have been \$23,176 in 1999. (See Appendix 6 and [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm))

In some ways, dense settlement and low cost housing serve as neighborhood advantages. In others, they are disadvantages, and these characteristics, plus falling family incomes, have contributed to significant challenges in the area of criminal activity. Fortunately the neighborhood is not plagued by the most serious of crimes: murder and rape. However, crimes like robbery, burglary, prostitution, sex offenses and drug crimes appear to be increasing, based on recent crime statistics (see Figure 27), and these trends warrant particular attention from residents, businesses, elected officials, and law enforcement. There is additional concern in the community about the spread of crime. Decreases in some types of

	2008 TO 11/30	2007	2006	2005
Murder	0	1	0	0
Rape	4	1	2	2
Robbery	24	18	19	17
Assault	27	34	26	30
Burglary	87	81	94	68
Larceny	84	111	131	103
Vehicle Theft	39	37	48	38
Arson	1	0	1	3
Kidnapping	1	1		1
CPCS	26	30	26	17
Dangerous Weapons	2	2	3	2
Bribery	0	0	0	0
Sex Offenses	10	3	4	7
Extortion	0	0	0	0
Forgery	1	2	3	5
Prostitution	4	0	0	0
Stolen Property	1	4	3	3
Coercion	0	2	1	
Criminal Mischief	62	102	119	108
Fraud	4	6	11	11
Gambling	0	0	0	0
Off. Against Pub Order	0	0	0	0
Embezzlement	0	0	0	0
Simple Assault	54	68	69	55
Off. Against Family	0	0	0	1
DWI	1	0	1	2
UUV	0	2	2	
Poss. of Burglar Tools	0	1	2	1
Liquor Law Violations	0	0	0	0
Disorderly Conduct	0	2	1	2
Loitering	0	0	1	0

Figure 27: Recent Part I and II crime statistics for Census Tract 59/Historic Black Rock from the Erie Crime Analysis Center show noteworthy recent increases in robbery, burglary, prostitution, sex offenses and drug crimes.

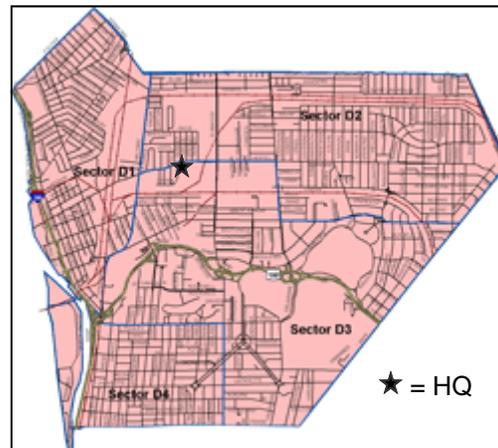


Figure 28: Historic Black Rock is in D-District, Sector D1. D-District headquarters are just east of the neighborhood at 669 Hertel Avenue.

crime in other areas of the city due to improved police effectiveness and neighborhood revitalization can result in corresponding increases elsewhere like Historic Black Rock. The community fabric of Historic Black Rock is particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon, as an

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

area of low cost housing and mixed incomes which has not suffered widespread blight and crime to the extent that some other areas of the city have and, as a result, may be “fertile ground” for increased criminal activity as other areas experience better police effectiveness and neighborhood improvement.

Also of special importance to this densely-settled neighborhood are quality of life crimes. Ranging from noise violations to the effects of prostitution, these crimes intimidate residents, visitors, and business patrons, make it more difficult to live and work in the area, and contribute to the rise of additional criminal activity. As a result, it is essential to address these crimes as part of an overall crime prevention and abatement strategy. Part of addressing these crimes is establishing an ongoing partnership between the police department and the community that is effective at addressing various crime problems .

It is also important to keep in mind that public safety is not limited to business districts or residential areas. Historic Black Rock has significant waterfront parks, recreational trails, industrial property, and railway corridors in or near to it. These areas require their own policing attention. In parks and trails, vandalism and nuisance behavior like public drinking are major concerns. In industrial areas and railway corridors, crimes to property in the form of dumping are a concern, as well as crimes to persons who use these stretches of land as shortcuts to other parts of the area.

Historic Black Rock is also host to the International Railroad Bridge to Canada as well as the



Figure 29: A Steering Committee meeting of the Lower East Side Weed & Seed program site. A similar effort is proposed for Black Rock-Riverside.

international border along the Niagara River, leading to a continuing need for local emphasis on homeland security and disaster preparedness.

Finally, public safety includes not only criminal activity and border issues, but also involves crime prevention and abatement of other problems in society that contribute to the rise of crime.

### CURRENT STATUS

D-District Police, in partnership with the City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, Black Rock-Riverside GNPA, and other organizations, has applied in 2008 for a U.S. Department of Justice-funded grant to establish a “Buffalo Weed & Seed Black Rock-Riverside” project site. This site, to be coordinated through the city’s Office of Citizen Services, will if funded serve as a strategic alliance of law enforcement, elected officials, community agencies, residents and businesses to “weed out” criminal activity and “seed” the area with effective community-based programs. Buffalo has had several Weed & Seed sites, including one currently based in the Lower East Side (see Figure 29). Even if funding is not received, many of the initiatives detailed in the application, if pursued effectively, can bring about improvements various areas of public safety in Historic Black Rock.

In addition, recent police work involving D-District, the Buffalo Police Narcotics Unit, and State Police has yielded a significant crackdown in the drug problem in and around Historic Black Rock. A 10-month investigation was recently completed in the entire Black Rock-Riverside area dubbed “Operation Trick or Treat.” According to a published report in the *Buffalo News* (10/31/08), 18 search warrants led to the confiscation of \$1 million in cocaine, smaller amounts of heroin and marijuana, \$30,000 in seized cash, 27 guns, and dozens of arrests. Drug peddling in public housing areas was one of the activities targeted. Common Council Member Joseph Golombek Jr. of the North District said he received phone calls and e-mails from grateful residents. “People were just thrilled,” he said. It is important to note that the vast majority of persons arrested came from addresses outside of the Historic Black Rock neighborhood.

Area block clubs and community organizations and the Public Safety Committee of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA continue to work with law enforcement personnel to effectuate improvements in public safety in the area.

**CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Your Life.  
Your Community.  
Your UB.



Dear UB Neighbor:

As a member of this community, we believe, as you do, that everyone is responsible for keeping our neighborhoods safe, clean and vibrant. To promote safety in our community, please remember:

- Report any crime or suspicious activity to Buffalo Police:
  - **Call 911**
- For help with nuisance issues (drinking, parties, noise, etc.) involving UB students:
  - **Call 851-4416** (E District Station supervisor)\* **AND Call 311** (Buffalo Mayor's Resolution Line)\*

*\* The E District will contact the UB Police if necessary. To follow up, call Mayor's Resolution Line at 311 or UB Office of Community Relations at 829-3099.*

Together, as neighbors, we can build partnerships that will benefit our entire community.

[www.buffalo.edu/YourUB](http://www.buffalo.edu/YourUB)



WHOM TO CONTACT			
Buffalo	Area Code (716)	UB	Area Code (716)
<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	<b>911</b>	University Police	645-2222
Non-emergencies	851-4416	Anti-Rape Task Force	829-2584
Crisis Services (24 hrs/day)	834-3131	Community Relations	829-3099
<b>CITIZEN SERVICES</b>	<b>851-5323</b>	Counseling Services	645-2720
<b>MAYOR'S COMPLAINT LINE</b>	<b>311</b>	Health Services	829-3316
Animal Control	851-5790	Sub-Board I	
Anti-Graffiti & Clean City	851-4348	Legal Assistance	645-3056
Building Code Review	851-4111	Off-Campus Housing	829-2224
Garbage/Trash Pick Up	851-5987	Student Affairs	645-2982
Parking	851-5183		
Plowing/Streets	851-5805		
Water Emergency (24 hrs)	851-4747		

**STRATEGIES**

**Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years):**

1. Support Buffalo Weed & Seed Black Rock-Riverside Site application and its Law Enforcement, Community Policing, Prevention/ Intervention/ Treatment, and Neighborhood Restoration goals.
2. Raise community awareness of ways to reduce crime.
3. Develop knowledge and support of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques so that the best ones can be implemented locally. (for example, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Community Oriented Policing, Situational Crime Prevention, and Problem-Oriented Policing).
4. Develop awareness of crime trends and incidences so that better crime information can facilitate crime prevention strategies.
5. Explore community partnerships that can influence crime reduction.
6. Increase awareness of Homeland Security operations in the planning neighborhood, and encourage their siting here.

**Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):**

1. Engage more adolescents in neighborhood life and its quality of life goals. One way to do this would be to hold police sponsored events that include collaborations with local groups that celebrate local cultural groups and promote community spirit.
2. Increase presence and visibility of public safety officers.
3. Improve the communication and relationships between residents and the police force.
4. Encourage prosecution of more criminals.
5. Police force more responsive to residential calls for assistance.
6. Coordinate with block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association so that they can be more pro-active in their security measures.

Figure 30: A door knob flyer distributed around UB's South Campus helps local residents, both owner and renter, learn ways to promote public safety. A similar effort is being considered by the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Public Safety Committee.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4. Revitalize Niagara Street Commercial Area, and Develop and Market the Area's Positive Attributes

*From the Vision Statement:*

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is **widely admired**. Vibrant churches, stable home values, **a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district** and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

#### CHALLENGES

The Niagara Street commercial area is a key component of Historic Black Rock. From the earliest days of settlement, the Niagara Street commercial area has provided income, jobs, goods, services, and enhancements to the quality of life of visitors and residents alike.

#### Infrastructure Changes Affect Community Character Over Time

However, the Niagara Street commercial area is not the same as it was in the 19th or 20th centuries. Major transportation infrastructure has been added to the neighborhood, especially with the 1950s addition of the I-190 between Niagara Street and the waterfront. Its impact on community life as a barrier between the community and the waterfront has been mitigated somewhat in recent years by recent waterfront park and recreational trail development. However, the area has not appeared to realize a long-time goal of using the highway's presence as a way to increase local business activity.

Along Niagara Street itself, the street has evolved

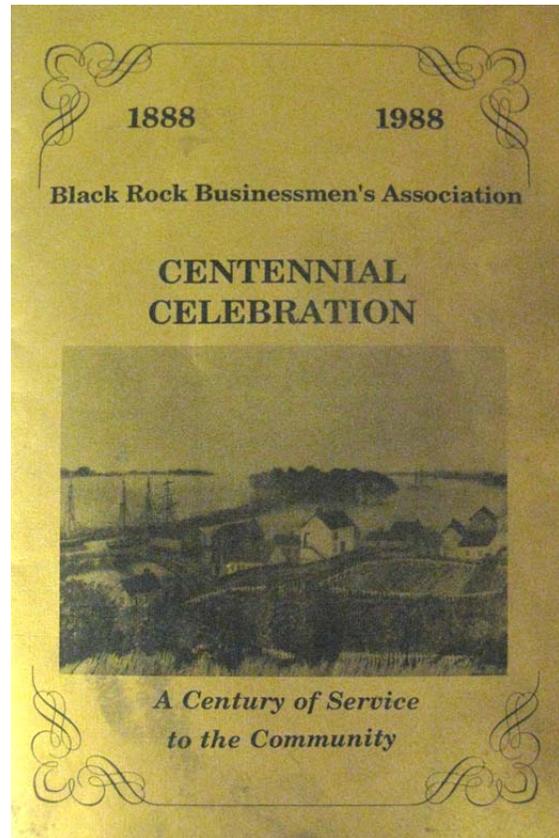


Figure 31: Twenty years ago, the Black Rock Businessmen's Association celebrated 100 years of service to the community, as one of the area's oldest known business associations. However, it no longer meets regularly. A revitalized business association can help create the organizational and planning capacity needed to bring improvements to Niagara Street.

from its origins as a dirt street into a major thoroughfare, with two lanes in each direction running north-south separated by a double yellow line. Niagara Street now serves as a snow evacuation route, bus service route, truck route, and "principal arterial" for the purposes of road classification. However, speeding traffic and a need for street features to help enhance multiple modes of travel on Niagara Street are community concerns based on feedback from the November



Figure 32: A series of photos were taken in front of the Riverview Restaurant to create this panoramic view showing healthy business enterprises amidst the rich architectural legacy of Historic Black Rock.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS



Figure 33: Litter and overgrown weeds on a sidewalk in this photo taken in November, 2008 illustrate a need for a beautification activities along Niagara Street.

12, 2008 Community Meeting. Suggestions included reconstructing Niagara Street between Bridge and Arthur Streets and incorporating bike lanes, lighting, old-style street lamps, curbs, sidewalks, planters, traffic calming measures, reduced lanes, signage, and coordinated traffic lights, all to keep the business district “walking friendly” and bike friendly.

### Need for Active Business Association

Commercial activity on Niagara Street trends upward and downward. Based on a January, 2008 inventory of properties, Niagara Street can be characterized as a healthy neighborhood business zone with many opportunities for improvement. It is a mixture of small, midsize, and larger commercial enterprises, some local and some part of national corporations.

However, it appears that there is no current regularly-meeting business association for Niagara Street in Historic Black Rock. This is a key weakness that should be immediately addressed. A functional business association will make it possible for improvements for Niagara Street in Historic Black Rock to be planned effectively with adequate community support. It will also help individual businesses work together to attract and retain business customers to Niagara Street. Part of attracting and retaining customers is giving them an interesting place to be as they conduct their business. This plan recommends that, in addition to re-establishing an active business association along Niagara Street, businesses work together to first assess business strengths along Niagara Street, then segment the street into identifiable and marketable parts (see Figure 34 for a Preliminary

Segmentation Study), and then build within the business association the organizational and planning capacity to bring about urban design and infrastructure improvements to Niagara Street, as well as ensuring simple but critical tasks like sidewalk cleanliness are taken care of. (For more discussion of urban design and infrastructure improvements for Niagara Street, see the next section, “5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages.”)

### CURRENT STATUS

Several major employers are located along the Niagara Street commercial corridor in Historic Black Rock, defined as being between Tonawanda and Ontario Streets. These include DiVal Safety and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. DiVal Safety has its headquarters at 1721 Niagara Street and identifies itself as “a premier safety distributor in the United States.” The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Buffalo District employs approximately 300 people in seven offices across three states and has a campus of offices and operations facilities in Historic Black Rock at 1776 Niagara Street. The Buffalo District is one of the corp’s 41 subordinate districts throughout the US.

Local businesses are also prominent. Examples include: professional offices like peter j. smith & company, a full service urban design, urban and regional planning, and economic development firm with offices at 1888 and 1896 Niagara Street; marine retailers like Brobeil Marine and Obershiemer’s Sailor Supply; restaurants like Angie’s Pizza House and Restaurant and the Riverview Restaurant; and long-standing family-owned businesses like “Peter W. Eberz & Son, Est. 1898” at 1901 Niagara Street.

However, Niagara Street can certainly be a stronger commercial corridor than it is today. The potential to draw additional customers is evident, in light of the architectural, historical, and recreation/waterfront assets of the area and the busyness of the nearby highway, which averages a daily traffic count of 70,000 vehicles and offers easy on-and-off ramps to Niagara Street. This plan suggests a number of ways to strengthen the commercial corridor and market the area to visitors, residents, and customers alike.

### STRATEGIES

#### Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years):

HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



**Commercial Area - Preliminary Segmentation Study**

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
 City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning  
 11/13/2008

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkred; border:1px solid black;"></span> Commercial - Historic	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Mixed Use Residential-Commercial	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Commercial - Industrial
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> Commercial - Plaza		
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Currently Commercial (North of Bridge St.) or Industrial (South of Bridge St.)		

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Highway	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> Highway_Ramp
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:gray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Street	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:gray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Railroad

Figure 34: This preliminary segmentation study of Niagara Street commercial corridor divides it into 4 major segments, from north to south: Commercial-Plaza, Mixed Use Residential-Commercial, Commercial-Historic and Commercial-Industrial.

**CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Commercial**

1. Revitalize business association activities on Niagara Street and encourage participation of local businesses.
2. Hold educational sessions/distribute brochure-newsletter/do articles on good practices like the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Four-Point Approach™, Why Elmwood Works initiative, the Erie Niagara Framework for Regional Growth, local economic development-related programs, and area advantages like demographics and neighborhood recreational and cultural attractions. For example, storefront businesses should have attractive, appealing signage above the street windows, which should be maximum open to show displays of the goods and/or services available in that store. Other examples: cleanliness, beautification, promoting/marketing the district to outside patrons, nourishing a sense of community within the neighborhood, façade improvements, and repairing the urban fabric.
3. Explore the benefits of looking at Niagara Street in terms of market segments.
4. Support transportation-related improvements that will positively impact Niagara St. (see the next section, “5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages.”)
5. Address public safety needs of visitors (see section 3)

**Marketing**

1. Start community public interest activities, eg garden walks, health fairs, farmer’s markets,

home buyer seminars, business days with discounts, school and community center open houses.

2. Seek funding. A 501c3 corporation can receive loans and grants.
3. Develop branding. If Black Rock is to return to its original village layout, the community must have its own identifying brand as is the case of the Allentown or Elmwood communities.
4. Market Niagara St.’s easy highway access and being minutes to downtown.
5. Build off of opportunities presented by Ed Hogle’s project (Rock Harbor Commons at Rock Harbor Village)

**Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):**

**Commercial**

1. Open up more storefront businesses with attractive signage.
2. Research existing programs. promote development of new programs, and help in implementation of programs that help finance improvements that encourage business development and growth. Examples include signage, low interest loans, tax abatement, and façade improvement.
3. Encourage development/expansion of commercial services that accommodate incidental business that arrives from visitors so it can become destination business.

**Marketing**

1. Sponsor community festivals in parks or along one or a series of closed-off streets with community service groups and businesses renting tables.



Figure 35: Walkability: On the left is a photo of Niagara Street in the 1870s, with travel slow and difficult for both pedestrians and horse and buggy. On the right is Niagara Street in 2008; travel is greatly improved for cars, but pedestrians and bicyclists receive insufficient protection due to factors like the absence of traffic calming measures, faded crosswalks, and no bike lanes.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Promote maritime activities: boating, birding, fishing, etc.
3. Use multicultural past and present as an impetus to organize events, festivals, goods and services that bring the neighborhood together.
4. Leverage direct bike path/multi-use trail connections to downtown, Tonawandas, and Scajaquada Pathway.
5. Take steps to attract immigrants, yuppies, risk-takers, students, artists, musicians, craftspeople.

### 5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages

*From the Vision Statement:*

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and **walkable neighborhood with a sense of community** that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

### CHALLENGES

Previous discussion (see page 21) has described the addition of major transportation infrastructure in Historic Black Rock and its effect on the community. This trend may not be over. The Ambassador Bridge has been proposed for this neighborhood and it is important to note that such a facility will include many negative impacts should it be built as proposed. (For more on this, see "Private international bridge stalled by lack of government support" in the 10/14/08 *Buffalo News*.)

It is important to also address local street improvements. Recent legislation passed by the Buffalo Common Council emphasizes the need for "Complete Streets" to be incorporated as part of improvements to street infrastructure in the City of Buffalo in the future. Complete Streets are defined as "facilities that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Persons with disabilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders are able to safely move along and



Figure 36: This map and article from a 2007 newsletter of the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Transportation Council (GBNRTC) describes the impact of the removal of the tolls at Black Rock: highway traffic volume has increased. This may lead to lower traffic volume on local roads like Niagara Street..



Figure 37: Traveler services are advertised for Exit 15 on the I-190, just one exit north from those for Historic Black Rock, but not for Historic Black Rock's Niagara St. exits, even though fuel, dining, and boat launch services are available. Adding these traveler services signs for Historic Black Rock's exits should be investigated.

**CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS**

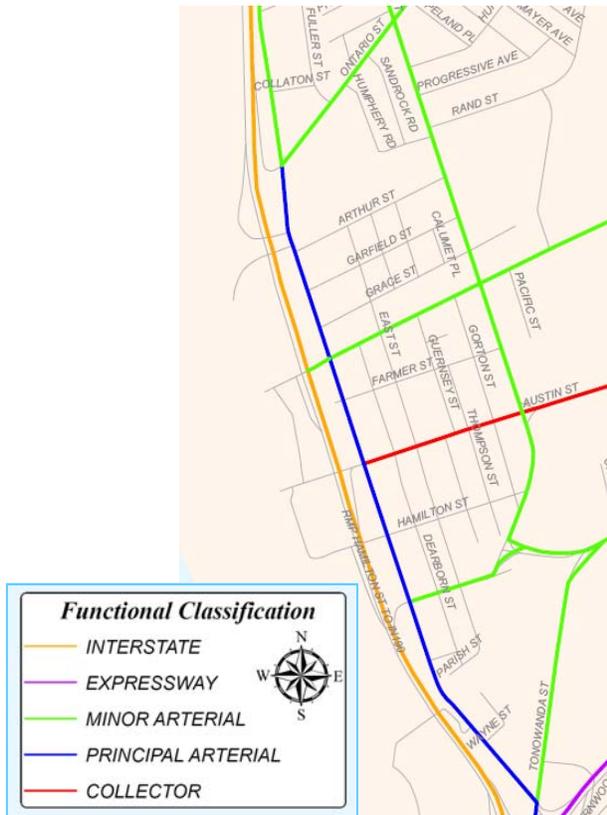


Figure 38: Niagara Street has a functional classification of “Principal Arterial” based on this September, 2007 map prepared by GBNRTC; however, the opportunity to calm traffic due to lower traffic volume caused by removal of the Black Rock tolls should be investigated.

across a complete street.” Such features contribute to a walkable neighborhood, which is one of the advantages of Historic Black Rock and its Niagara Street commercial corridor. However, as illustrated in Figure 35, improvements are necessary to Niagara Street and other streets in Historic Black Rock to meet this standard of travel.

To further enhance the walkability and community-oriented features of the area, many streetscape improvements are needed as well.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Removal of the Black Rock toll barrier has resulted in higher highway traffic volumes on the I-190, as illustrated in Figure 36. This may make measures to calm traffic on Niagara Street more feasible from a transportation planning perspective, because the shift of traffic to highway may result in lower traffic volumes on local streets like Niagara Street.

With increasing costs for vehicle fuel, maintenance,

and the vehicles themselves, an intact urban housing and commercial fabric is becoming more widely recognized as desirable assets.

Encouraging a variety of transportation choices, and putting infrastructure into effect that supports those choices, is more important today than ever.

Historic Black Rock is well-positioned to lure new “cultural tourism” visitors who will come to see and enjoy local history, culture, architecture and waterfront recreational opportunities. At the same time, excellent highway access and traveler services offered by the many entrances and exits for the highway in Historic Black Rock presents an opportunity to marketing convenience to travelers-by on the highway.

**STRATEGIES**

**Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years):**

1. Support research into the feasibility and positive transformative effects of changing Niagara St., or portions of it, “from a 4-lane route to a 3-lane street”. This would calm traffic, improve walkability, and stimulate shopper activity in the business corridor. Design alternatives include adding a turning lane in the middle along with bike lanes at each curb or angled parking or median or other appropriate configuration. Niagara Street is managed and maintained by the City of Buffalo, while at the same time serving as a NYS numbered route, truck route, snow emergency route, and bus route. A request for a traffic simulation study should be made to the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Transportation Council, so that a study can analyze the effects of changes to the design of Niagara St. or portions of it in early 2009.
2. Explore additional traffic calming measures in the neighborhood, for example by timing traffic signals, posting speed limit signs, incorporating textured crosswalks in paving, developing roundabouts.
3. Plan and implement streetscape improvements at key intersection, gateway, and commercial and cultural corridors in Historic Black Rock:
  - ✓ Key Gateway Intersection: Niagara & Amherst
  - ✓ Other Gateways: Niagara & Tonawanda, Tonawanda & Amherst, Tonawanda & Hertel, and Niagara & Ontario.
  - ✓ Commercial Corridor: Niagara Street

# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



Figure 39: A map of existing transportation features which also shows suggested improvements to enhance community walkability while leveraging existing transportation advantages.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Cultural Corridor: Amherst Street
- 4. Block grant funds can provide an improved street infrastructure, consisting of brighter street lighting, plantings, trees, benches, 5. gardens, sidewalks, security cameras, and perhaps a clock on alternate corners.
- 6. Integrate a public art component into streetscape improvements.
- 7. While planning improvements, keep existing streetscape and transportation infrastructure maintained to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 8. Add highway signage to the I-190 that advertises traveler services in Black Rock. (See Figure 37. ) With approximately 70,000 vehicles travelling the highway past Historic Black Rock, these signs could let travelers know of convenient services while also bringing business to Niagara St.
- 9. Black Rock-Riverside GNPA has voted against erecting the Ambassador Bridge at this site.
- 10. Add signage to effectively inform travelers as to highway entrances, neighborhood gateways, park entrances, historic and cultural attractions, and other neighborhood amenities.

### Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):

1. Converting Niagara Street to a 3-lane street may create a need for more off-street parking. Investigate use of vacant lots, out-of-business commercial lots, and recent demolitions sites as possible off street parking opportunities.
2. Investigate the feasibility of relocating the I-190 inland to the Tonawanda Rail Corridor.
3. Encourage the use of mass transit.

## 6. Realize the Potential of Existing Recreational Assets and Seize Opportunities for New Ones within the Neighborhood (Parks, Recreation, Waterfront)

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and **easy access to the and the Riverwalk** provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in **neighborhood life** sustains the community's harmonious quality of life.

### CHALLENGES

Matching up the community to its parks, trails,

Riverwalk and Seaway Trail, recreational resources, and waterfront is an imperative for Historic Black Rock. While the park, trail, and scenic route development has improved access to the waterfront for the community since the placement of the I-190 on the old Erie Canal and towpath in the 1950s, some planning issues remain. As of this writing, park projects remain incomplete at each of the three major park sites: Squaw Island Park, Tow Path Park, and the Ontario Street Boat Launch/Cornelius Creek Park. In addition, the Riverwalk and Seaway Trail appear to be underutilized opportunities to promote the scenic beauty of the area. Wayfinding signage could be improved in many areas leading to the parks.

It is also important to continue the planning process to seize opportunities to further create existing recreational assets in the community. Zoning guidelines associated with the Smart Code movement, for example, support the creation of neighborhood greenspaces/parks at a higher level of density within residential neighborhoods than is seen in Historic Black Rock today. Such innovations are implementable as vacant parcels become available due to demolition of problem property: For example, create a Black Rock Heritage Park at Dearborn & Hamilton within the residential fabric of the community. (See Figure 42.)

Finally, it is important that upcoming projects for land along the waterfront adhere to local, state, and federal plans and regulations.

### CURRENT STATUS

Improvements are 90% complete at Tow Path Park, awaiting funding for Phase II at Squaw Island Park, and proposed for the Ontario Street Boat Launch/Cornelius Creek Park. Buffalo Riverkeepers is anticipating funding to revitalize the Riverwalk area, including the former toll plaza site, the Naval Yard site, and Rich Marina. Anticipated funding will also support preparation of a feasibility study for the improvements proposed as part of the Black Rock Canal Park concept for the Ontario Street Boat Launch/Cornelius Creek Park.

### STRATEGIES

#### Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years):

1. Support completion of planned improvements to Squaw Island Park, Tow Path Park, and the Ontario Street Boat Launch/Cornelius Creek Park.

# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



**Existing Parks, Playfields and Recreational Land, and Waterfront Land Uses**

Lock	Park	Niagara St. Commercial Industrial Area per Underlying Zoning
Apartment Building	Recreation Area	Highway
Army Corps of Engineers	Roadway	BR_Highway_Ramps
Bridge	Inland Park/Playfield/Recreational Land	Street
Marina	Bike Path	Railroads

Comprehensive and Community Planning  
City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning  
11/12/2008

0 125 250 500 Feet

N

Figure 40: A map of existing parks, playfields, and recreational land, and waterfront land uses.

### CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2. Support creation and maintenance of clean, safe parks and microparks, and access to same: For example, establish Black Rock Heritage Park at 269 Dearborn at Dearborn & Hamilton, within the residential fabric of the community.
- 3. Have successful community volunteer involvement in maintenance of parks and their features.
- 4. Promote waterfront development that is consistent with local, state, and federal plans and regulations.
- 5. Add desirable community features into parks, microparks, scenic trails, etc., like lighting, seating furniture, wi-fi, game tables, skate spots, bubblers, water fountains, etc., without creating neighborhood nuisance behavior.

#### Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):

- 1. Promote safety in the parks.
- 2. Improve use of the parks.
- 3. Facilitate new improvements to parks.
- 4. Support new recreational trails/bike paths and greenway connections, and expansion and improvement of existing ones, like the Sca-

jaquada Creek Bike Path, Seaway Trail, Riverwalk, to link parks/recreational assets to themselves and to other neighborhoods.

### 7. Make Distinctive Gateways and Street Themes, Leverage Land Development, and Improve Urban Design

Enjoy a safe, clean, diverse, and walkable neighborhood with a sense of community that is widely admired. Vibrant churches, stable home values, a prosperous nearby Niagara Street business district and easy access to waterfront parks and the Riverwalk provide amenities and real history unique to their community. Active citizen participation in neighborhood life sustains the community's **harmonious quality of life**.

#### CHALLENGES

From a planning perspective, a harmonious quality of life can be facilitated by improvements to the



Figure 41: This building at Hamilton and Niagara Streets has an interesting sign on its back wall harkening back to the days of the Erie Canal, when the building was an all-purpose hardware store. If legal and feasible, restoration of this sign would improve awareness of the Erie Canal heritage of Historic Black Rock to passersby on the I-190, which was built atop the Erie Canal ROW.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

built environment as well as the social environment. However, just as more neighborhood planning is needed for communities like Historic Black Rock to realize their full potential, so is good design in the built environment. Projects involving architecture, engineering and design should work themselves in complementary ways into the existing urban fabric. Context is key, and in Historic Black Rock the context is historic architecture of good quality. However, a tour of the neighborhood yields many examples, with increasing frequency of late, of non-contextual design and work incorporating inexpensive materials of modest quality. Further, vacant lots create an appearance of blight. Finally, unutilized brownfields along the rail corridors present both untapped land development opportunities and public safety problem areas.

### CURRENT STATUS

There are many gateways into Historic Black Rock, and Niagara Street is a major local thoroughfare. Interesting opportunities can even be found along the Thruway to showcase Historic Black Rock to visitors and passers-by on the I-190 (see Figure 41). In addition, efforts underway to recognize the historic character of the area, plus the preponderance of buildings constructed in eras of strong design and quality materials, help make the case that creating attractive buildings and other community features are worth the trouble and investment.

A number of prominent organizations responsible for planning in strong local commercial corridors (Elmwood Village Association), neighborhoods (East Delavan Good Neighbors Planning Alliance), and project areas (The Larkin District) have all advocated for design guidelines and improved zoning regulations. While site plan review by the Zoning and Planning Boards is part of the existing rules and regulations governing development in the city, innovative tools like design guidelines and improved zoning regulations are also available and are not currently used in Buffalo. These could serve to further protect neighborhood character and themes while also making it easier to build with any eye toward context. In a similar manner that other parts of Buffalo seek to use these tools, they and other special district designations should be used to protect the historic and architectural fabric of Niagara Street and Historic Black Rock.

### STRATEGIES

#### Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years):

1. Advocate for the development of design standards, zoning regulations, and special designations that protect the neighborhood character of Historic Black Rock. Work with the City of Buffalo and community stakeholders to effect these positive changes.
2. Plan streetscape and infrastructure improvements along the Niagara Street commercial corridor, at key gateways, and along the cultural corridor on Amherst St. between Niagara and Tonawanda Sts. (See section 5: "Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages".)
3. Add and customize, to the extent practicable, wayfinding signage, transit shelters, street furniture, bike racks, to leverage visual cues emanating from the neighborhood and its history.
4. Support Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project, so that developable land along the Tonawanda and Chandler Street rail corridors can be created and employment growth and demand for local goods and services follows.
5. Expand park, garden and greenspace opportunities, taking advantage of emerging vacant lots.
6. Develop a vacant lot beautification program in residential areas that incorporates topsoil, trees, grass and attractive fencing.
7. Monitor major planning initiatives and promote public participation opportunities involving them.
8. Ensure plan provisions are consistent with the *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan* and City initiatives and policies.

#### Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):

1. Develop partnerships with Department of Economic Development, Permits and Inspection Services and Office of Strategic Planning on problem properties, demolitions, foreclosed properties, and maintenance and reuse of vacant properties.
2. Monitor land development so that complementary projects can be built into them at an early stage. For example, as roads are rebuilt, add bike lanes and other features where appropriate to facilitate multimodal transportation choices.
3. Promote sustainable improvements that are practicable when existing resources are improved and new assets are developed. (See page 46 for examples.)
4. Suggest universal accessibility be considered in all planning and design activities.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**SECTION 1: GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE**

There are many actions recommended in the preceding pages. The question may be asked, “How will they fit into the neighborhood?” The graphic below offers a “glimpse into the future,” by overlaying several of the actions recommended in this, the *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan*, onto an image of one section of Historic Black Rock — the area around Niagara and Amherst Streets — as a way to illustrate how many of the strategies in this plan will lead to realizing the vision of area residents for a higher quality of life and bright future. Illustrated in the graphic are:

- A **strong business association and district** for Niagara Street (starting at upper left of the graphic),
- **Improved streetscape and traffic calming** on Niagara Street,
- Niagara and Amherst Sts. as a **key gateway** intersection to the neighborhood,

- Market Square park’s northeast corner as a space which could be utilized as a **play area for neighborhood children**,
- **New and renovated homes** throughout the area,
- Amherst Street as a **Cultural Route**, connecting Niagara Street’s waterfront and business corridor to a new mural at Amherst and Tonawanda Sts., with attractions located in-between,
- A new **Black Rock Heritage Park** at Dearborn and Hamilton,
- A new **Life Learning Center** at East and Hamilton,
- Recognition of the new **Buffalo Religious Arts Center** in the former St. Francis Xavier church,
- The opportunity for a new **Public Market, Arts and Culture Center** at Amherst and East Sts.,
- The entire area as a National Register Historic District,
- A new “**Life at the Time of War of 1812**” mural at Amherst and Tonawanda Sts., and
- **Historic 1830 and 1835 houses** (amongst others).

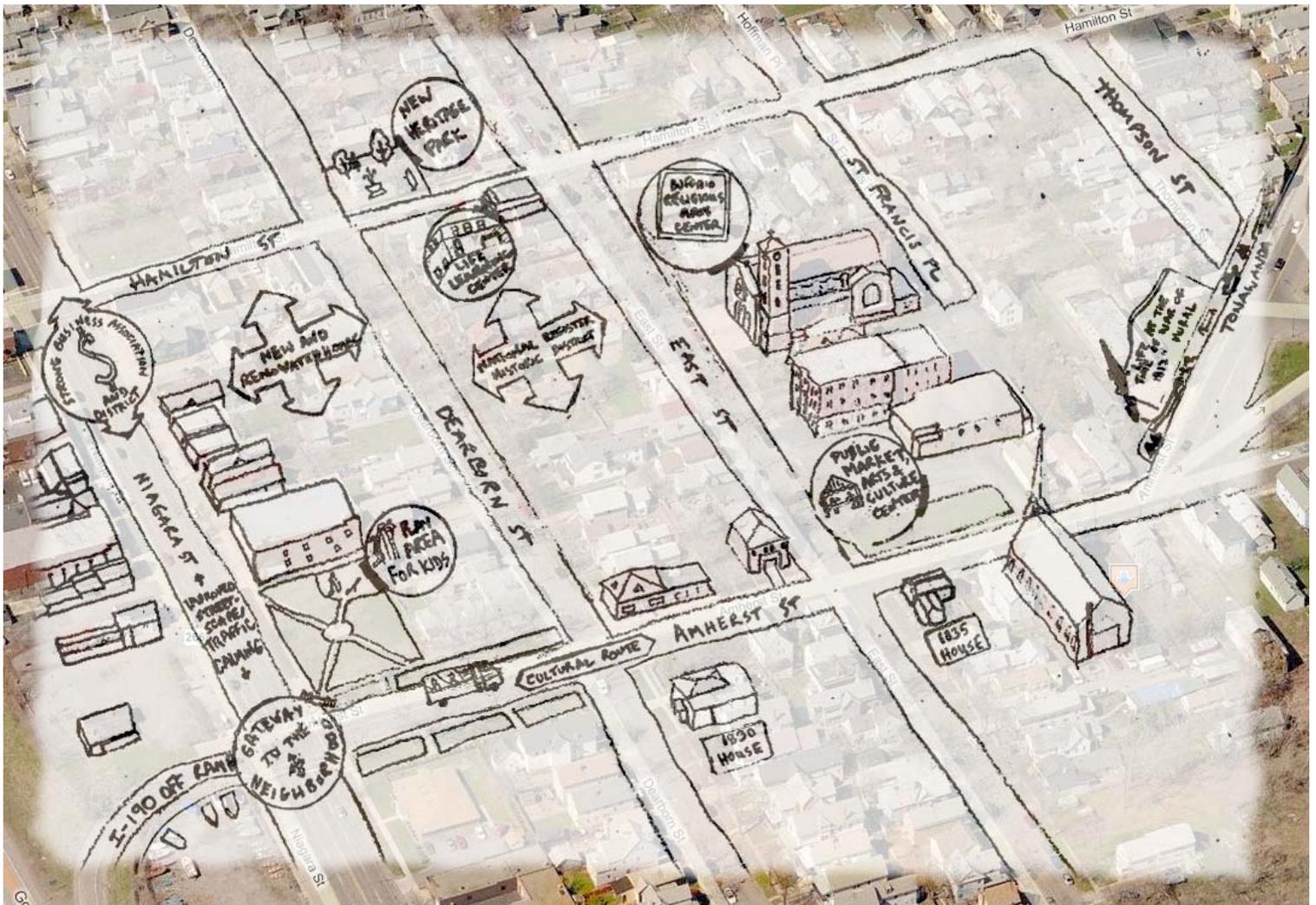


Figure 42: This is a graphic illustration of how, in one small area of Historic Black Rock, several actions recommended in this, the *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan*, will work together to realize the vision of area residents for a higher quality of life and bright future.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**SECTION 2: NEXT STEPS**

Actions recommended in the preceding pages of Chapter 3 were divided into Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years) and Longer Term Strategies (2-5

Years). This chapter identifies key partners and next steps for each. Key Immediate Strategies should be considered to be of immediate importance to community development and should be initiated in Year One after completion of this plan.

**Goal: 1. Preserve and Strengthen Community Identity**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Support completion of an expert historic resources survey and undertake next steps of creating a State and National Register historic district and preserving historic resources.	City of Buffalo, BRR, GNPA	Assist the City of Buffalo's Senior Planner - Historic Preservation in raising funds for a consultant to undertake the survey project and hiring a consultant. Establishing a National Register historic district will help people appreciate the historic character of Historic Black Rock while avoiding the burden on property owners of a review of exterior changes by local authorities that would be in effect if a local historic district were to be established.
2. Prepare a timeline of historical events in Black Rock and vicinity.	BRR, GNPA	Work with BRR GNPA Historic Restoration Committee and local historians.
3. Promote historical event anniversary celebrations/exhibits and reenactments (for example, the War of 1812 anniversary, etc.).	BRR, GNPA	Work with BRR GNPA Historic Restoration Committee to tie into War of 1812 commemorative efforts.
4. Obtain funding for preservation-related activities from foundations and other sources.	Local Foundations, Businesses	Continue to apply for foundation funding and follow through on reporting for funds received. Four grants were applied for in 2008. Reach out to businesses in area.

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Develop promotional programming and materials.	Local artist, Businesses	One suggestion might be to hold a fundraiser by developing and selling a community map that conveys the community character identified in this plan, and using the funds for this purpose.
2. Encourage the development of a historical photo and artifact library.	Fundalinski Studios	Work with Fundalinski Studios to support these efforts.
3. Do a virtual or real local history museum; start with a website and perhaps a movable display gallery.	Local web talent	Connect with residents who maintain a community blogs/website.
4. Take steps to commemorate and celebrate ties to other history related to the area,	BRR, GNPA	Use timeline project to identify different aspects of area history.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal: 2. Improve Housing**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Support the strengthening of BRR NHS programs that promote better housing opportunities and conditions.	City of Buffalo, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association	Work with BRR NHS on program development. Continue to provide strategic planning assistance to BRR NHS by serving as directors of the organization. Continue neighborhood support to tours and outreach to funding agencies. Finally, continue to facilitate community relationship between the Dearborn Street Community Association and BRR NHS in support of BRR NHS initiatives like the targeted streets program and Block-by-Block program.
2. Help create new block clubs where needed.	City of Buffalo, Board of Block Clubs, Riverside Review, Dearborn Street Community Association	Work with the Office of Citizen Services and Board of Block Clubs to make residents aware of the benefits of having a block club, perhaps through publicizing them in the Riverside Review.
3. Take advantage of code enforcement opportunities and support existing or new approaches to address problem properties.	North District Council Member, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association	The Black Rock Planning Neighborhood is a Comprehensive Code Enforcement area. Work with Council Member and BRR GNPA Housing Committee to assess this program and its benefits.
4. Support Judge Nowak housing court initiative.	North District Council Member, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association	Finalize and distribute this plan for the benefit of Judge Nowak and his staff to use with funding partners.
5. Create concept plans for new housing development and facilitate their implementation.	City, BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, UB, local architects, local developers, real estate professionals	Key parcels are available for redevelopment. Work with the City to identify ownership, site conditions and funding programs and with housing and design partners to create concept plans, so that implementable projects can proceed.
6. Work with Historic Restoration Committee to develop/enhance a service for handyman/contractor referral and review in partnership with BRR NHS, so that historic structures can be better maintained by private owners.	BRR GNPA, BRR NHS, Dearborn Street Community Association	Some elements of this program are in place at BRR NHS and review of it with neighborhood input could make it an effective housing improvement service.
7. Work with BRR NHS to connect home-seekers with potential properties.	BRR GNPA, BRR NHS, Dearborn Street Community Association	Marketing materials are being revised and improved.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal: 2. Improve Housing  
(continued)**

- 8. Work with BRR NHS on targeted streets program and housing-related planning. BRR NHS, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association Continue collaborative efforts as Phase I expands to Phase II.
  
- 9. Create a Life Learning Center, with 69 Hamilton as a possible location. North District Council Member, BRR NHS, NWBCC, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association Work with the North District Council Member and City of Buffalo's Senior Planner - Historic Preservation to preserve 69 Hamilton from demolition so that a feasibility study can be conducted. Other cities and neighborhoods have effectively reused storefronts (example: Seneca Babcock) for community services (teen center, free tax advice.)

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Monitor local property status with the help of block clubs.	City, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association	Surveying conditions has been a key initiative of the BRR GNPA/Dearborn Street Community Association in 2008. New survey techniques like taking digital camera movies from the dashboard of autos can make surveying easier and lead to more frequent surveys.
2. Encourage homesteading.	North District Council Member, BRR NHS, NWBCC, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association, Homesteaders	Successful examples of homesteading in Black Rock-Riverside are in evidence. These homestead leaders could do presentations on their experience to community groups.
3. Develop an inventory of infill lots and procedure for keeping it updated.	City, BRR GNPA, Dearborn Street Community Association	City Office of Strategic Planning personnel have computer mapping software and parcel information including vacancy. When updates to parcel information arrive (about twice a year), create new maps. Expand with field research to detail infill opportunities.
4. Support conversion of upper floors of commercial buildings to private apartments, urban lofts, and artistic spaces for all of the performing or static arts.	BRR NHS, Community Preservation Corp., Funding Agencies	Research successful examples of this being done, and match up programs and developers to available properties.
5. Track owner occupancy ratios, in an effort to keep owner occupancy at 75% or above.	City, BRR GNPA, BRR NHS	Use computer mapping to assess owner occupancy ratios, and share results with BRR NHS for planning purposes.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal: 3. Improve Public Safety**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Support Buffalo Weed and Seed Black Rock-Riverside Site application and its Law Enforcement, Community Policing, Prevention/Intervention/ Treatment, and Neighborhood Restoration goals.	City, D District, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA	Application has been filed and a decision on funding is expected shortly (early 2009). Should it be funded, significant community involvement will ensue. If the application is not funded, many Public Safety strategies detailed within it can still be implemented.
2. Raise community awareness of ways to reduce crime.	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA	Meet with D District police to strategize effective ways to reduce crime, and in a collaborative effort undertake a project together to build teamwork.
3 Develop knowledge and support of community policing and law enforcement best practices and techniques so that the best ones can be implemented locally. (for example, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Community Oriented Policing, Situational Crime Prevention, and Problem-Oriented Policing).	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA	D District police, block clubs, business groups, and BRR GNPA can work together with the City to analyze crime problem areas and develop innovative solutions towards addressing them.
4. Develop awareness of crime trends and incidences so that better crime information can facilitate crime prevention strategies.	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA	Meet with D District police to strategize effective ways to share crime statistics and work with partners to map/analyze.
5. Explore community partnerships that can influence crime reduction.	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA	Gather advice from Community Policing officers and facilitate community partnering.
6. Increase awareness of Homeland Security operations in the planning neighborhood, and encourage their siting here.	North District Council Member, BRR GNPA	The BRR GNPA Black Rock Canal Park has taken a lead role in this strategy and is in an active phase that should be supported. Tours of local facilities also creates linkages between the agencies and neighborhood.

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Engage more adolescents in neighborhood life and its quality of life goals. One way to do this would be to hold police sponsored events that include collaborations with local groups that celebrate local cultural groups and promote community spirit.	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA, Riverside HS, City	This is a multi-dimensional issue. Identify local cultural groups or police-related programming that will appeal to youth. Riverside HS's rebirth also provides new opportunities for youth involvement, as do proposed Life Learning Center and youth-oriented park amenities. Continued support on the part of the community — including businesses — of Mayor Browns Summer Youth Jobs Initiative would also be beneficial.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**Goal: 3. Improve Public Safety (continued)**

2. Increase presence and visibility of public safety officers.	City, D District police	One suggestion may be to work with community policing officials on creating more community outreach activities.
3. Improve the communication and relationships between residents and the police force.	City	Funding of the Buffalo Weed and Seed Black Rock-Riverside Site application would certainly promote this strategy.
4. Encourage prosecution of more criminals.	D District, block clubs, business association, BRR GNPA	More block clubs, a stronger business association, and activities boosting community pride will lead to less acceptance of criminal activity and more criminals being turned in for prosecution.
5. Police force more responsive to residential calls for assistance.	D District	Recently, local police have participated very enthusiastically in the preparation of the Buffalo Weed and Seed Black Rock-Riverside Site application, and local and state police also have been very active in responding to residential concerns by mounting “Operation Trick or Treat” in 2008. (see page 19) Continued work together can yield more progress.
6. Coordinate with block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association so that they can be more pro-active in their security measures.	Block clubs, property owners, businesses, and business association, BRR GNPA	As the number of block clubs and business association activities expand, consultations with police about security measures can be added to meeting programs.

**4. Revitalize Niagara Street Commercial Area, and Develop and Market the Area’s Positive Attributes**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
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**Commercial:**

1. Revitalize business association activities on Niagara Street and encourage participation of local businesses.	Businesses, Black Rock Businessmen’s Association Members, North District Council Member, Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation	Several local examples of successful business associations exist. Hold an organizational meeting with a guest speaker from one to develop a preliminary list of initiatives that can garner wide support.
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**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**4. Revitalize Niagara Street Commercial Area, and Develop and Market the Area’s Positive Attributes (continued)**

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| <p>2. Hold educational sessions/distribute brochure-newsletter/do articles on good practices.</p> | <p>Businesses, business association, North District Council Member</p> | <p>Just as neighborhood planning has evolved into an effective civic activity, so has business corridor management, and this information can be shared effectively in the context of a business association planning meeting.</p>                                |
| <p>3. Explore the benefits of looking at Niagara Street in terms of market segments.</p>          | <p>Businesses, business association, North District Council Member</p> | <p>Banner programs based on street themes can reflect the identify of segments of Niagara Street in exciting, visual ways. Perhaps the city and businesses could partner to raise funds for such an effort in the context of the War of 1812 commemorations.</p> |
| <p>4. Support transportation-related improvements that will positively impact Niagara St.</p>     |  | <p><i>See the next section, “5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages.”</i></p>  |
| <p>5. Address public safety needs of visitors.</p>  |  | <p><i>See the previous section, “3. Improve Public Safety.”</i></p>  |

**Marketing:**

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| <p>1. Start community public interest activities.</p>                             | <p>Block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association</p> | <p>Examples: BRR Tour of Gardens, health fairs, farmer’s markets, home buyer seminars, business days with discounts, school and community center open houses. An excellent opportunity might be to get the Income TAXi to come for a visit. This is a new mobile tax-preparation and financial education service designed to bring free help to low-income people and neighborhoods around Western New York. Contact Diane R. Bessel, director of the Creating Assets, Savings &amp; Hope (CASH) coalition, sponsored by the United Way.</p> |
| <p>2. Seek funding. A 501c3 corporation can receive loans and grants.</p>         | <p>Business association</p>  | <p>Continue grant –seeking with assistance from BRR NHS and NW Buffalo Community Center.</p>   |
| <p>3. Develop branding.</p>   | <p>Block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association</p> | <p>“Historic Black Rock” relates back to the community vision statement and the neighborhood’s strengths. That name might be used, along with a new logo.</p>  |
| <p>4. Market Niagara St.’s easy highway access and being minutes to downtown.</p> | <p>Business association</p>  | <p>This could be part of promotional material developed by a revitalized business association.</p>   |

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**4. Revitalize Niagara Street Commercial Area, and Develop and Market the Area’s Positive Attributes (continued)**

5. Build off of opportunities presented by Ed Hogle’s project (Rock Harbor Commons at Rock Harbor Village).	Block clubs/ property owners/ businesses and business association	Slated to open in 2009, this is a major project which could bring customers to several area businesses. The project’s effects on housing should also be anticipated and guided to positive outcomes.
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Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years):	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
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**Commercial:**

1. Open up more storefront businesses with attractive signage.	Business association	Business district development will lead to more storefront businesses; the first step is organizational. Revitalize business association so the area is ready to seek public funds.
2. Research existing programs, promote development of new programs, and help in implementation of programs that help finance improvements that encourage business development and growth. Examples include signage, low interest loans, tax abatement, and façade improvement.	Business association, Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation, elected officials	Again, revitalize business association so the area is ready to seek public funds. For an idea of what programs are available, visit: <a href="http://www.berc.org">www.berc.org</a>
3. Encourage development/expansion of commercial services that accommodate incidental business that arrives from visitors so it can become destination business.	Businesses and business association	As business district development makes progress, new customers will enter the area; local stores should be ready for them.

**Marketing:**

1. Sponsor community festivals in parks or along one or a series of closed-off streets with community service groups and businesses renting tables.	Block clubs, property owners, businesses and business association	The community has open space available at Market Square Park and at Amherst and East Sts. Outdoor festivals are more noticeable to travelers-by and easy to clean up after.
2. Promote maritime activities: boating, birding, fishing, etc.	Businesses and business association	This could be part of promotional materials developed by a revitalized business association.
3. Use multicultural past and present as an impetus to organize events, festivals, goods and services that bring the neighborhood together.	BRR GNPA Historic Restoration Committee	The area has a multicultural past worth researching, starting perhaps with the native american history that led to the naming of Scajaquada Creek.
4. Leverage direct bike path/multi-use trail connections to downtown, Tonawandas, and Scajaquada Pathway.	Business association	This could be part of promotional materials developed by a revitalized business association.
5. Take steps to attract immigrants, yuppies, risk-takers, students, artists, musicians, craftspeople.	Business association	Conduct a market analysis, to match up area assets with different constituencies, including the “Creative Class.”

## CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### 5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Support research into the feasibility and positive transformative effects of changing Niagara St., or portions of it, “from a 4-lane route to a 3-lane street” to calm traffic, improve walkability, and stimulate shopper activity in the business corridor.	Local businesses, business association, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA, City of Buffalo, GBNRTC	A request for a traffic simulation study should be made to the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Transportation Council, so that a study can analyze the effects of changes to the design of Niagara St. or portions of it in early 2009.
2. Explore additional traffic calming measures in the neighborhood, for example by timing traffic signals, posting speed limit signs, incorporating textured crosswalks in paving, developing roundabouts.	City of Buffalo, GBNRTC	Work with City of Buffalo and GBNRTC to develop effective strategies for traffic calming measures concurrent with a traffic simulation study.
3. Plan and implement streetscape improvements, recommended at: Niagara & Amherst as the key gateway intersection, other gateways at Niagara & Tonawanda, Tonawanda & Amherst, Tonawanda & Hertel, and Niagara & Ontario; Niagara Street commercial corridor; and Amherst Street cultural corridor.	City of Buffalo, GBNRTC	Block grant funds can provide an improved street infrastructure, consisting of brighter street lighting, old-style street lamps, plantings, trees, benches, gardens, sidewalks, security cameras, and perhaps a clock on alternate corners. Seek block grant funding to be used in coordination with traffic calming measures described above.
4. Integrate a public art component into streetscape improvements.	City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, Other Business District associations	Elmwood Village Association has recently added artistically-stylized components to its streetscape, including recycling containers, brackets for hanging planters, and the like. Work with the City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, and organizations like these to determine how to develop opportunities, obtain funding, and engage artists in these public art improvements.
5. While planning improvements, keep existing streetscape and transportation infrastructure maintained to ensure pedestrian safety.	City of Buffalo, GBNRTC	A recent report in the Buffalo News highlighted the need for keeping key aspects of the streetscape and transportation infrastructure in good condition (See Buffalo News 10/06/08.)
6. Add highway signage to the I-190 that advertises traveler services in Black Rock. (See Figure 37.)	North District Council Member, City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, NYS DOT, business association	Contact the state Transportation Department Region 5 Director to determine if signs could be added for food/restaurants, gas/diesel, boat launch, and any other applicable services on Niagara Street that meet the criteria for highway notices.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**5. Enhance Community Walkability while Leveraging Existing Transportation Advantages (continued)**

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| 7. BRR GNPA has voted against erecting the Ambassador Bridge at this site.  | BRR GNPA  | For more information on the anticipated negative effects of the Ambassador Bridge proposal for areas in and nearby Historic Black Rock, see “Private international bridge stalled by lack of government support” in the 10/14/08 Buffalo News.  |
| 8. Add signage to effectively inform travelers as to highway entrances, neighborhood gateways, park entrances, historic and cultural attractions, and other neighborhood amenities. | North District Council Member, City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, NYS DOT, business association | In an area with as many highway ramps, waterfront access opportunities, and neighborhood amenities as Historic Black Rock, it is important for signage be in place to make getting around and enjoying the area’s attractions and amenities easy to do. Signage can accomplish this task, as it does in other municipalities and parts of the City of Buffalo. Transportation planners/designers should be consulted to make sure signage meets area needs. |

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Converting Niagara Street to a 3-lane street may create a need for more off-street parking. Investigate use of vacant lots, out-of-business commercial lots, and recent demolitions sites as possible off street parking opportunities.	North District Council Member, City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, business association	Work with GBNRTC and Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets staff so that, if a need for more off street parking may result from a switch to a 3-lane Niagara Street, reuse of available sites for this purpose can be effectively considered.
2. Investigate the feasibility of relocating the I-190 inland to the Tonawanda Rail Corridor.	North District Council Member, City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, NYS DOT	Feasibility of this has been the subject of prior transportation studies and further investigation is required. (See “Buffalo Waterfront Corridor Initiative: A Strategic Plan for Transportation Improvements”, page 35.)
3. Encourage the use of mass transit.	BRR GNPA, NFTA	The area is well-served by bus routes; however, bus bike racks, more numerous and attractive bus shelters, availability of bus schedules through electronic communication, and implementation of ridership programs can further encourage the use of mass transit.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**6. Realize the Potential of Existing Recreational Assets and Seize Opportunities for New Ones within the Neighborhood (Parks, Recreation, Waterfront)**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
<p>1. Support completion of planned improvements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Squaw Island Park,</li> <li>• Tow Path Park, and the</li> <li>• Ontario Street Boat Launch/ Cornelius Creek Park</li> </ul>	<p>City of Buffalo, Erie County, BRR GNPA, Elected Officials</p>	<p>Squaw Island: Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks &amp; Streets and elected officials to fund and implement final improvements. Tow Path Park: Final improvements are underway. Ontario Street Boat Launch/ Cornelius Creek Park: Work with elected officials to fund the feasibility study based on community-supported vision for “Black Rock Canal Park.”</p>
<p>2. Support creation and maintenance of clean, safe parks, microparks, and greenway connections, and access to same.</p>	<p>North District Council Member, BRR GNPA, Buffalo Riverkeepers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish Black Rock Heritage Park at 269 Dearborn at Dearborn &amp; Hamilton, within the residential fabric of the community.</li> <li>2. Buffalo Riverkeepers is anticipating funding to revitalize the Riverwalk area, including the former toll plaza site, the Naval Yard site, and Rich Marina. Anticipated funding will also support preparation of a feasibility study for proposed improvements associated with the Black Rock Canal Park concept for the Ontario Street Boat Launch/ Cornelius Creek Park.</li> </ol>
<p>3. Promote waterfront development that is consistent with local, state, and federal plans and regulations.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Significant planning efforts are either underway or recently completed that will help determine the future look of our shared Buffalo waterfront. These include the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2006) and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (currently in draft form). The next steps in ensuring beneficial waterfront development are to develop a familiarity with these plans, take advantage of future opportunities for public participation in shaping their provisions, and then see to compliance with them.</p>

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**6. Realize the Potential of Existing Recreational Assets and Seize Opportunities for New Ones within the Neighborhood (Parks, Recreation, Waterfront) (continued)**

4. Have successful community volunteer involvement in maintenance of parks and their features.

City of Buffalo, Erie County, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups like block clubs, gardening groups, local funding sources, business association, schools

Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, Erie County, and park interest groups to develop an adopt-a-park program and other volunteer opportunities.

5. Add desirable community features into parks, microparks, scenic trails, etc., like lighting, seating furniture, wi-fi, game tables, skate spots, bubblers, water fountains, etc., without creating neighborhood nuisance behavior.

City of Buffalo, Erie County, North District Council Member, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups like block clubs, gardening groups, local funding sources, business association, schools

Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, Erie County, and park interest groups to review existing and help create new plans for parks, microparks, scenic trails, etc., and work cooperatively to identify desirable community features which can be added.

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Promote safety in the parks.	City of Buffalo, Erie County, North District Council Member, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups	Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, Erie County, and park interest groups to assess safety in parks and strategize how to improve it.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**6. Realize the Potential of Existing Recreational Assets and Seize Opportunities for New Ones within the Neighborhood (Parks, Recreation, Waterfront) (continued)**

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| 2. Improve use of the parks.  | City of Buffalo, Erie County, North District Council Member, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups | Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, Erie County, and park interest groups to strategize ways to improve use of the parks.   |
| 3. Facilitate new improvements to parks.  | City of Buffalo, Erie County, North District Council Member, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups | Work with Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, Erie County, and park interest groups to continually improve the parks with new improvements.   |
| 4. Support new recreational trails/bike paths and greenway connections, and expansion and improvement of existing ones, like the Scajaquada Creek Bike Path, Seaway Trail, Riverwalk, to link parks/recreational assets to themselves and to other neighborhoods. | City of Buffalo, Erie County, North District Council Member, Buffalo Riverkeepers, BRR GNPA and park interest groups | Park connectivity is one of the keys to a healthy park system. Proposals for trails/bike paths and greenway connections should be developed, studied and, if they warrant, publicly supported. Recent proposals include extending the Scajaquada Pathway northward along the I-190 and revitalizing the Riverwalk area, including the Naval Yard site and Rich Marina. |

**7. Make Distinctive Gateways and Street Themes, Leverage Land Development, and Improve Urban Design**

Key Immediate Strategies (1-2 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
1. Advocate for the development of design standards, zoning regulations, and special designations that protect the neighborhood character of Historic Black Rock.	City of Buffalo, BRR GNPA	Work with the City of Buffalo and community stakeholders to effect these positive changes.

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**7. Make Distinctive Gateways and Street Themes, Leverage Land Development, and Improve Urban Design (continued)**

<p>2. Add, and customize, to the extent practicable, wayfinding signage, transit shelters, street furniture, and bike racks to leverage visual cues emanating from the neighborhood and its history.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, GBNRTC, NFTA, Other Business District associations</p>	<p>Elmwood Village Association has recently added artistically-stylized components to its streetscape, including recycling containers, brackets for hanging planters, and the like. Work with the City of Buffalo and organizations like these to determine how to develop opportunities, obtain funding, and implement improvements that add to the character of the area while providing needed conveniences.</p>
<p>3. Support Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project, so that developable land along the Tonawanda and Chandler Street rail corridors can be created and employment growth and demand for local goods and services follows.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member</p>	<p>Seek assistance from city officials and the North District Council Member to accept Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project funding and initiate project activities.</p>
<p>4. Expand park, garden and greenspace opportunities, taking advantage of emerging vacant lots.</p>	<p>BRR GNPA, Buffalo Riverkeeper, interest groups</p>	<p>Brownfield sites and vacant lots provide opportunities for new parks, gardens, and greenspaces. Work with the BRR GNPA and interest groups to continually survey the neighborhood for these opportunities and participate in planning to realize them.</p>
<p>5. Develop a vacant lot beautification program in residential areas that incorporates topsoil, trees, grass and attractive fencing.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Review the Buffalo News article, "Green Strategy Works to Increase Property Values", 11/14/08. Philadelphia's Green Strategy program works in partnership with City Hall to improve and maintain vacant lots, "We want to send a message that this space is psychologically owned by someone, and, believe it or not, that works."</p>
<p>6. Monitor major planning initiatives and promote public participation opportunities involving them.</p>	<p>North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Keep strong partnerships with North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>
<p>7. Ensure plan provisions are consistent with Buffalo Comprehensive Plan and City initiatives and policies.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA, community groups</p>	<p>This plan has been checked against the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan (see page 87 of that document). City initiatives and policies change, so work in partnerships to keep abreast of new developments.</p>

**7. Make Distinctive Gateways and Street Themes, Leverage Land Development, and Improve Urban Design (continued)**

Longer Term Strategies (2-5 Years)	Key Partner(s)	Next Steps
<p>1. Develop partnership with Department of Economic Development, Permits and Inspection Services and Office of Strategic Planning on problem properties, demolitions, foreclosed properties, and maintenance and reuse of vacant properties.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Develop a tracking mechanism to identify, report, and assess progress on addressing problems related to these properties, while also developing strategies for their reuse.</p>
<p>2. Monitor land development so that complementary projects can be built into them at an early stage. For example, as roads are rebuilt, add bike lanes and other features where appropriate to facilitate multi-modal transportation choices.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Develop a list of planning initiatives and projects in Historic Black Rock, and explore how tie-ins to them can maximize their local impact.</p>
<p>3. Promote sustainable improvements that are practicable when existing resources are improved and new assets are developed.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Identify opportunities for incorporating sustainable practices and publicize successes in the local media. For example, rain gardens on vacant lots, sustainable materials and design in rehabilitated and new buildings, landscape elements to reduce combined sewer overflows, permeable pavements where possible, raised planters, container gardens on roofs and as bollards, vertical green walls, etc.</p>
<p>4. Suggest universal accessibility be considered in all planning and design activities.</p>	<p>City of Buffalo, North District Council Member, BRR GNPA</p>	<p>Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible. Recommendations for universal design can be part of recommendations made during the public participation phase of planning and design. Universal access is well-illustrated by the Complete Streets legislation recently passed by the Buffalo Common Council. (See page 25.)</p>

**CHAPTER 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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

**Action Step 1: Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Project** (see page 31)  
 Support Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project, so that developable land along the Tonawanda and Chandler Street rail corridors can be created and employment growth and demand for local goods and services follows.

**Action Step 2: Historic Resources Survey** (see page 14)  
 Support funding and completion of expert historic resources survey and undertaking of next steps to create a State and National Register historic district and preserve historic resources.

**Action Step 3: Traffic Simulation Study** (see page 26)  
 Support request for a traffic simulation study to the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Transportation Council (GBNRTC) in early 2009, so that changes to the design of Niagara St. or portions of it “from a 4-lane route to a 3-lane street” to calm traffic, improve walkability, and stimulate shopper activity in the business corridor can be studied in early 2009.

**Action Step 4: Business Association** (see page 22)  
 Assist in revitalizing business association on Niagara Street and encourage participation of local businesses.

**Action Step 5: Streetscape Improvements** (see page 26)  
 Assist planning, funding and implementation of streetscape improvements at:

<p><b>1. Niagara Street commercial corridor, from Amherst to Arthur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resurface street</li> <li>• Demarked lanes: 2 lanes each way plus a center turning lane</li> <li>• Demarked bike lanes</li> <li>• Plantings, trees, benches, banners, wayfinding signage</li> <li>• On-street parking</li> <li>• Traffic calming measures</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Niagara &amp; Amherst as the key gateway intersection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced crosswalk</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Improve Market Square Park with a children’s play space</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Niagara &amp; Tonawanda, Tonawanda &amp; Amherst, Tonawanda &amp; Hertel, and Niagara &amp; Ontario Gateways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced crosswalk</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Amherst Street cultural corridor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demarked bike path</li> <li>• Enhanced crosswalk</li> <li>• Plantings, trees, benches, banners, wayfinding signage</li> </ul>
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**Action Step 6: Highway Signage for Traveler Services** (see page 28)  
 Help add highway signage to the I-190 that advertises traveler services in Black Rock.

**Action Step 7: Planned Improvements to Major Waterfront Parks** (see page 28)  
 Support completion of planned improvements to Squaw Island Park, Tow Path Park, and the Ontario Street Boat Launch/Cornelius Creek Park

**Action Step 8: Protect Neighborhood Character** (see page 31)  
 Help establish design standards, zoning regulations, and special designations that protect the neighborhood character of Historic Black Rock. Support creation of a vacant lot beautification program.

**Action Step 9: Black Rock Heritage Park** (see page 30)  
 Support establishing Black Rock Heritage Park at 269 Dearborn at Dearborn & Hamilton, within the residential fabric of the community.

**Action Step 10: Life Learning Center** (see page 16)  
 Help create a Life Learning Center as a satellite for community services in Historic Black Rock, with 69 Hamilton as a possible location.

**Action Step 11: New and Renovated Homes** (see page 16)  
 Support the strengthening of BRR NHS programs that promote better housing opportunities and conditions. Create concept plans for new housing development and facilitate their implementation.

## CHAPTER 5: FUNDING

As a comprehensive neighborhood plan, *Historic Black Rock: War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan* includes many categories of action and strategies; each will either involve funding that may be shared with others, or may have funding particular unto themselves.

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

### **Action Step 1: Tonawanda Street Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Project**

*Funding Sources:*

- New York State Department of State
- City of Buffalo

### **Action Step 2: Historic Resources Survey**

*Funding Sources:*

- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning planning funds and in-kind contribution
- Preservation League of NYS
- Local Foundations

### **Action Step 3: Traffic Simulation Study**

*Funding Sources:*

- GBNRTC in-kind contribution

### **Action Step 4: Business Association**

*Funding Sources:*

- City of Buffalo Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation in-kind contribution

### **Action Step 5: Streetscape Improvements**

*Funding Sources:*

- Federal Funds through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), administered locally by Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council and the New York State (NYS) Department of Transportation
- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo

### **Action Step 6: Highway Signage for Traveler Services**

*Funding Sources:*

- NYS Department of Transportation

### **Action Step 7: Planned Improvements to Major**

### **Waterfront Parks**

*Funding Sources:*

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

### **Action Step 8: Protect Neighborhood Character**

*Funding Sources:*

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

### **Action Step 9: Black Rock Heritage Park**

*Funding Sources:*

- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo
- New York State New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- New York State Local Initiatives (member item) grants through local legislators
- North District Council member item
- National, State and Local Foundations

### **Action Step 10: Life Learning Center**

*Funding Sources:*

- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal
- North District Council member item
- National, State and Local Foundations

### **Action Step 11: New and Renovated Homes**

*Funding Sources:*

- Federal Funds through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant Program, administered locally by the City of Buffalo
- New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal
- Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services programs

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

## APPENDICES

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- Appendix 1 Publicity Leading Up To and Following the November, 12, 2008 Community Meeting
- Appendix 2 November 12, 2008 Community Meeting and Comments
- Appendix 3 Comments Received from November 12 to December 1, 2008
- Appendix 4 Land Use Map
- Appendix 5 Zoning Map
- Appendix 6 Selected Demographics
- Appendix 7 Relevant Plans and Projects

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1** PUBLICITY LEADING UP TO AND FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER, 12, 2008  
COMMUNITY MEETING

## **Publicity leading up to and following the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting**

### **Publicity leading up to the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting**

#### Mailings:

All property owners with a parcel land use code other than residential and vacant (i.e. Commercial, Recreation and Entertainment, Community Services, Industrial, Public Services, Public Parks) received an invitation letter.

All members of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA received a postcard (~120 persons).

All block clubs within the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA received an invitation letter (18 Block Clubs with a total of 27 persons as contacts).

All members of record of the Black Rock Businessmen's Association received an invitation letter.

Community stakeholders received an invitation letter: Brian Reilly, Catherine Palko, Drew Eszak, Carla Kosmerl, State Senator Antoine Thompson, Michael Mogavero, Principal—Riverside HS, Wende Mix— Buffalo State College, Mayor Byron Brown, Hon. Henry Nowak, Michelle Barron—BERC, Phil Habestro—Buffalo Wellness Institute, Captain Gregg Blosat and Chief Anthony Barba—D-District Police, Antwan Diggs—Office of Citizen Services, Paula—Hair Oasis, Northwest Buffalo Community Health Care Center Director, Postmaster of Northside Buffalo Post Office, Tony Williams and Larry Pernick—Northwest Buffalo Community Center, Bill Buzak and Linda Chiarenza—Black Rock-Riverside NHS, John Fell, Allita Steward, Erie County Legislator Maria R. Whyte, Assemblymember Sam Hoyt, Julie O'Neill— Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers

Postcards were distributed as a flyer in the neighborhood by the Dearborn Street Community Association

#### Newspaper Articles:

An article titled, "Residents Urged to 'Envision' Neighborhood Miniplan," appeared on November 12, 2008, in the Riverside Review, a Northwest Buffalo weekly newspaper with a circulation of over 14,000.

An article titled, "Residents Urged to 'Envision' Neighborhood Miniplan," appeared on November 5, 2008, in the Riverside Review, a Northwest Buffalo weekly newspaper with a circulation of over 14,000.

## **Publicity leading up to and following the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting**

### **Publicity leading up to the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting (continued)**

An announcement titled, "Black Rock Bicentennial Plan to be Unveiled," appeared on November 12, 2008, in the Riverside Review.

### **Publicity following the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting**

#### Online:

A webpage is maintained at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_black\\_rock/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_black_rock/) to keep interested parties up-to-date on key planning documents and key milestone dates. 45 preapproved invitations to join this Yahoo! Group were sent to community stakeholders between 11/17/08 and 12/16/08. This address was also publicized at the November 12, 2008 Community Meeting.

#### Newspaper Articles:

An article titled, "Residents 'Envision' Black Rock Bicentennial Plan," appeared on November 19, 2008, in the Riverside Review, a Northwest Buffalo weekly newspaper with a circulation of over 14,000.

An announcement titled, "Comments Sought for Black Rock Plan," appeared on November 26, 2008, in the Riverside Review.

An article titled, "Planning Alliance Welcomes Visitors Tonight: Neighborhood Plans and Riverside High Reconstruction Lead Agenda," appeared on December 10, 2008, in the Riverside Review.

## Invitation Letter



# Black Rock - Riverside Good Neighbor Planning Alliance

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

*Meetings Monthly at the  
Northwest Buffalo Community Center*

155 Lawn Avenue, Buffalo

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

**Join a Committee: Public Safety • Housing • City Services • Human Services • Economic Development**

Dear Neighbor:

Please mark your calendar for an important event November 12, 2008 in Historic Black Rock, at St. John's United Church of Christ, 85 Amherst Street, between 6:30PM and 8:30PM. You are invited to help us, in a neighborhood planning effort, to assess what's happening, share your ideas for Historic Black Rock, build community partnerships, and join in a discussion about how to improve the community with your neighbors and representatives of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA). This effort will serve as the basis for a neighborhood plan to be submitted for incorporation into the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. The Dearborn Street Community Association is our host for the evening.

Historic Black Rock can be viewed as the area between the intersection of Niagara & Tonawanda Streets and the intersection of Niagara & Ontario Streets, from the waterfront to the rail corridor. This area has many of the building blocks experts say can lead to a strong community. The area's "cool factor" is growing, with concerts being held at 31 Tonawanda Street and a new bike path connection from the International Railroad Bridge to Scajaquada Creek in place. St. Francis Xavier has found an exciting new future as the Buffalo Religious Arts Center. Park improvements are underway at Squaw Island Park and Towpath Park. Many strong businesses and dedicated homeowners are in evidence.

At the same time, the area faces serious challenges. Awkward development proposals seem to spring up with regularity. Some of the area's historic buildings are experiencing ongoing deterioration in their physical condition, and some have been demolished over the years. Problem properties, vacant properties, and demolitions are increasingly sources of concern.

The award-winning Black Rock-Riverside GNPA has been working to build bridges between city government, agents of neighborhood change, and Northwest Buffalo residents to improve the community. During this time, it also became clear that to ensure a bright future for our neighborhoods – Black Rock, Grant-Amherst, West Hertel, and Riverside – citizen involvement in the creation of neighborhood-level plans is needed.

Come see the quality planning work that has been done so far. Join us on November 12<sup>th</sup> as we partner with Community Planner Bill Parke from the Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning to seek your feedback and ideas for this, our first neighborhood planning effort, with Historic Black Rock as the focus. This effort will serve as a model for neighborhood planning efforts in Grant-Amherst, West Hertel, and Riverside to get underway in the coming year. Feel free to share this invitation with others who may find it of interest. Look for updates in the *Riverside Review*, or attend a regular monthly General Meeting of the BRR GNPA at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center. Also, feel free to call Mr. Parke before or after the event with questions, at 851-5123; otherwise we will see you on the 12<sup>th</sup>!

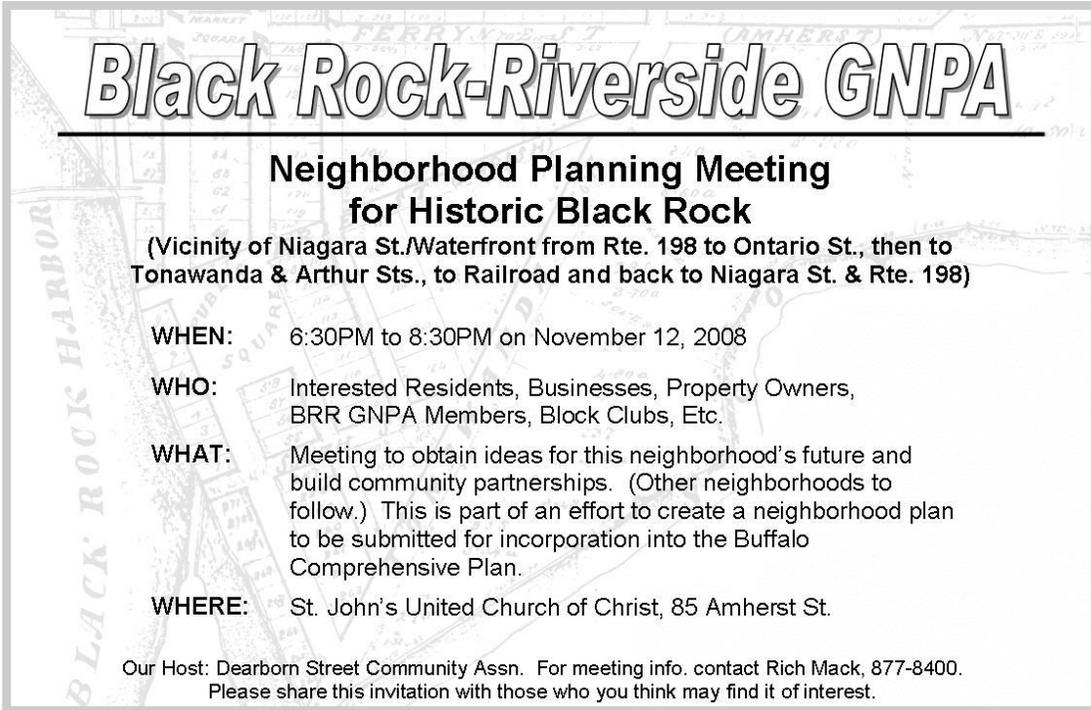
Signed,

Evelyn Vossler, BRR GNPA Co-Chair

Richard Mack, BRR GNPA Co-Chair

Organized Under the Auspices of:

Mayor Byron Brown's Office of Strategic Planning - GNPA, 920 City Hall, Buffalo, NY 14202;  
call 851-5035; fax 854-0172; or e-mail: [planning@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us](mailto:planning@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us)



**Black Rock-Riverside GNPA**

---

**Neighborhood Planning Meeting  
for Historic Black Rock**

(Vicinity of Niagara St./Waterfront from Rte. 198 to Ontario St., then to  
Tonawanda & Arthur Sts., to Railroad and back to Niagara St. & Rte. 198)

**WHEN:** 6:30PM to 8:30PM on November 12, 2008

**WHO:** Interested Residents, Businesses, Property Owners,  
BRR GNPA Members, Block Clubs, Etc.

**WHAT:** Meeting to obtain ideas for this neighborhood's future and  
build community partnerships. (Other neighborhoods to  
follow.) This is part of an effort to create a neighborhood plan  
to be submitted for incorporation into the Buffalo  
Comprehensive Plan.

**WHERE:** St. John's United Church of Christ, 85 Amherst St.

Our Host: Dearborn Street Community Assn. For meeting info. contact Rich Mack, 877-8400.  
Please share this invitation with those who you think may find it of interest.

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November 5, 2008  
Vol. 85 No. 45

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

## Operation Trick or Treat

On Wednesday, October 29, 2008 the Buffalo Police along with the New York State Police wrapped up a ten month long investigation into street level drug dealing in and around the Riverside area.

The Operation dubbed "Operation Trick or Treat" concluded with the execution of 18 search warrants, which resulted in 23 arrests for felony possession of a controlled substance (crack cocaine & heroin).

These raids were conducted by the Buffalo Police Narcotics unit, State Police Narcotics, MRU Officers, along with SWAT teams from the Buffalo, Amherst and the Erie county Sheriffs Department. The Cheektowaga PD also assisted with members of their K-9 Patrol.

Since the beginning of the investigation and including yesterday's numbers, the investigation resulted in a total of:

- 54 arrests (13 more to come)
- 40 search warrants
- \$30,000 cash seized

- 27 guns seized; 10 handguns, 9 long guns and 8 assault rifles
- 26 suspects indicted on hand to hand sales with undercover Officers (13 have been taken into custody and 13 are still outstanding).
- About 5 kilos of cocaine, 6 oz. of heroin and 4 pounds of marijuana were seized during this operation.

This was the latest successful joint operation by the Buffalo Narcotics Unit and the New York State Police. So far this year they have conducted major narcotics operations in every section of the city; North, South, East and West. Police officials promise to continue to aggressively enforce the Mayor's



Zero Tolerance crime policy, with a major focus on narcotics trafficking. Streets where arrests were made included: Grove, Grote, Amherst, Ontario, Jasper Parrish, Condon, Laird, Roesch, Crowley and Herkimer.

Councilman Joe Golombek applauded the effort, and urges residents to remain diligent, reminding them to call 911 whenever they witness suspicious activity.

## Residents Urged to "Envision" Neighborhood Mini-Plan

**Black Rock Plan a Sign of Good Things to Come for All Northwest Buffalo Neighborhoods**

Mark your calendar for an important event November 12, in Historic Black Rock, at St. John's United Church of Christ, 85 Amherst St., 6:30-8:30pm. Help in neighborhood planning effort to assess what's happening, share your ideas for Historic Black Rock, build community partnerships, and join in a discussion about how to improve the community with your neighbors and representatives of the Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRR GNPA).

This effort will serve as the basis for a neighborhood plan to be submitted for incorporation into the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. The Dearborn Street Community Assoc. is our host for the evening.

Historic Black Rock can be viewed as the area between the intersection of Niagara & Tonawanda Streets and the intersection of Niagara & Ontario Streets, from the waterfront to the rail corridor. This area has many of the building blocks experts say can lead to a strong community. The area's "cool factor" is growing, with concerts being held at 31 Tonawanda Street

and a new bike path connecting from the International Railroad Bridge to Scajaquada Creek in place. St. Francis Xavier has found an exciting future as the Buffalo Religious Arts Center. Park improvements are underway at Squaw Island Park and Towpath Park. Many strong businesses and dedicated homeowners are in evidence.

At the same time, the area faces serious challenges. Awkward development proposals seem to spring up with regularity. Some of the area's historic buildings are experiencing ongoing deterioration in their physical condition, and some have been demolished over the years. Problem properties, vacant properties, and demolitions are increasingly sources of concern. Drug crimes, quality of life crimes and nuisance behavior seem to be on the rise. Many people feel that Historic Black Rock is at a crossroads.

The award-winning Black Rock Riverside GNPA has been working to build bridges between city government, agents of neighborhood change, and Northwest

Continued on Page Four

## Local Neighborhood Housing Services Awarded State Grant for Significant Housing Rehabilitation

Black Rock - Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and West Side NHS, Inc., a NeighborWorks® Charter Member, have named the recipient of a grant from the Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC) and New York State's Division of Housing & Community Renewal (DHCR).

The approximately \$800,000 grant will help families west of Main Street rehabilitate their homes, with half of the grant targeted to homes on Parkdale, Hoyt, Baynes and Dearborn Streets.

"I'm very pleased that New York State is making this significant commitment to rebuilding Buffalo's West Side," said Mayor Brown. "With my Administration's commitment to increasing the rehabilitation of 500 residential units over the next five years across the city, as well as our collaborative efforts with PUSH Buffalo, Inc., we are forming the necessary partnerships to successfully transform city residential

neighborhoods that have suffered from neglect and vacant properties. I encourage anyone who lives in these areas to take advantage of this unique opportunity."

WSNHS/BRNHS applied for the grants through the Block by Block program and other DHCR programs to secure the funding for this important project. The streets selected to receive the Block by Block grant are already part of a targeted redevelopment area on Buffalo's West Side. The area also includes Ferguson Ave., which has been rebuilt thanks to collaboration between the City of Buffalo, WSNHS, Habitat for Humanity and Westminster Church. Ten of the houses are in targeted neighborhoods in the Grant Ferry area and on Dearborn Street; others will be selected scattered sights throughout the West Side, Riverside and Black Rock.

"In light of all the bad news we are receiving these days on the economic front, we are excited to offer how to moderate families' the funds needed to rehabilitate their homes," said Linda Chirensa, Executive Director of WSNHS/BRNHS.

"This is another great example of how the City of Buffalo, WSNHS/BRNHS and New York State are working together to rebuild our neighborhoods and help people make needed repairs to stay in their homes. I want to thank DHCR for their commitment to the City."



NHS Exec. Director Linda Chirensa & Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown make grant announcement

Residents can contact West Side NHS at 885-2344 to see if they qualify for the grant programs.

## Boys and Girls Club Town Hall

by Dawn Schaffer

On Wednesday, October 29, the Black Rock Boys and Girls Club held a "Kids Town Hall Meeting" on crime and crime prevention. The meeting, sponsored by Senator Antoine Thompson, allowed the children of the club to ask questions, make comments or share experiences with crime they've had or their local community leaders.

Among those in attendance were: Senator Antoine Thompson, Mayor Byron Brown, Legislator Maria Whyte, Senior Detective Dennis Rozansky and Councilman Joe Golombek. Dave Spinda a local community crime advocate and members of the board of block clubs were also present.

The event began one week earlier with a poster contest held at the club. Children were invited to draw a poster about a crime they witnessed, read about or a crime prevention tip. One poster about rain-drip water fountains with "whites only" sign above it and the words just say no to racism. Another mentioned a baby being left in the garbage.

Winners of the poster contest in age category 5-11 were: ARIAN M.

Community Newspaper November 5, 2008

## Residents Urged to "Envision" Neighborhood Mini-Plan

**Black Rock Plan a Sign of Good Things to Come for All Northwest Buffalo Neighborhoods**

Continued from Page One

Buffalo residents to improve the community. During this time, it also became clear that to ensure a bright future for our neighborhoods - Black Rock, Grant-Amherst, West Hertel, and Riverside - involvement in the creation of neighborhood-level plans is needed.

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year. Feel free to share this invitation with others who may find it of interest. Look for updates in the *Riverside Review*, or attend a regular monthly General Meeting of the BRR GNPA at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center. Also, feel free to call Mr. Parke before or after the event with questions, at 851-5123; otherwise we will see you on the 12<sup>th</sup>!

**RUMMAGE SALE**  
Saturday, November 8  
1845 Kenmore Avenue  
10:00am-2:00pm  
Admission \$1.00  
Refreshments available for purchase!  
Sponsored by the Community Services LEADERS Group

ANCIE'S PIZZA HOUSE



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

## N.W. Community Center Teams With Bills to Visit Local Schools

On Sunday November 2nd, Duke Preston, Offensive Linemen for the Buffalo Bills teamed up with the Northwest Buffalo Community Center and Mr. Tony D. Williams to take three lucky students from

York Jets. This is the second act of kindness by Preston who, along with Williams, goes to various schools each Tuesday and speaks to students about making good choices



Future's Academy and their Principal Dr. Debra Stevenson and faculty to watch the Bills take on the New

and developing good character. According to Preston, this is a labor of love for him to be able to

give back to the youth of this community. So far this year, Preston and Williams, Director of Operations at the Community Center, have visited Pinnacle Charter School, Future's Academy (twice), Harvey Aulin PS #97 and most recently Mr. Preston and fellow offensive line mate Derrick Dockery paid a visit to the Charter School for Applied Technologies Elementary School speaking to 5th and 6th graders at an assembly put on by their Principal Andrew Lyle.

They talked with them about choices and friendship as it applies to good character. According to Lyle, this was a great moment for students and staff to hear members of the Buffalo Bills talk about how they got to where they are and the sacrifices that they made (choices) to get there. After meeting with the 5th and 6th graders, Preston and Dockery surprised a class of 4th grade students and shared the same

*Continued on Page Four*

## Congratulations Black Rock - Riverside Little League Cheerleaders!



Raiders Cheerleaders - 2nd Place



Knights Cheerleaders - 2nd Place



Mustangs Cheerleaders - 3rd Place

**THE TYRO CHEER SQUAD COMPETITION** was held on November 9, 2008. The River-Black squads, overall, met it with great success. The coaches and parents are very proud of all who participated.

The Knights, under Coach Deborah Cery and assistant, Tammy Davidson and Alyssa Garbuck, took second place in their division. The Raiders, under Coach Lisa Ashby and assistant Lynn Cruz and Amber Garbuck, took second place in their division. The Mustangs, under Coach Jessica Garbuck and assistant Tina Diego and Jillian Ayala, took third place in their division. Just missing out were the Rams, under Coach Michelle Christensen and assistant Jen Carpenter, Francine and Jamie Andre. They didn't place, but that's not to say they didn't do a great job! You'll get them next year.

Thanks are offered to all the girls for their hard work at practice and for supporting each other in competition. Also, thanks to the fans for their support.

*In first person*

## Food Pantry Needs Your Help!

by Al Cooper

Recently overheard at the Black Rock Riverside Food Pantry, a young child questions, "Mother could you please give me a cookie

"I'm hungry," or "Mommy, are we going to have some food to eat tonight," or a child is seen opening a package of cereal and eating it dry while waiting. These are some of the things that the volunteers at the Black Rock Riverside Emergency Food Pantry see and hear all the time.

More and more families are coming to the pantry for help and it just emphasizes the fact that for the last three months we have had a difficult time trying to meet the demand placed on them for food assistance. Clients are allowed to visit the food pantry twice a month, receiving approximately four days food supply for each visit.

Many families are new to the neighborhood, but they have either no income or very low income. Everyone associated with the pantry is constantly picking up a bag of food here, or a box of food there. Yes, we do get food from FEMA and the State of New York, but it is a small amount and doesn't last very long, but we take it and are thankful for every bit.

We are experiencing high pantry usage and a decreasing amount of donations. This we must change with your help. We must purchase a large percentage of food from the supermarkets and pay the vast amount of money that you do. I am

urging you, your friends, and local businesses to please, please do not pass one of our Coin Jars without putting something in. If you do not see our Coin Jar, please ask for it and if the site does not have one, let them know how important they are to our operation ask that they please obtain one.

The pantry has 23 volunteers that are dedicated to making sure that no family runs out of food and that no child has to go to bed on an empty stomach. Every bag of food is nutritionally balanced and will provide at least three days food supply, however usually it turns out that there is a good four days food supply. We make sure that the amount and type of food is certain to provide children with what they need to permit them to grow physically and mentally.

We want to remind everyone that we have never charged for any of the food we give out, and also that there is no paid staff. Everyone is strictly a volunteer.

I want to implore upon you the tremendous task facing us each month and we hope that you will come to our rescue.

The pantry is open on Mondays and Fridays from 9:30am to 12:30pm, and on Wednesdays from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. The telephone number is 875-1323.

### Black Rock Centennial Plan To Be Unveiled

TONIGHT, November 12th, a plan for Historic Black Rock will be unveiled at 50 Rock's United Church. The unveiling will coincide with the War of 1812 bicentennial commemoration.

Come help in a neighborhood planning effort to assess what's happening, share your ideas for Historic Black Rock, and join in a discussion about how to improve the community with your neighbors and representatives of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance.

This effort will serve as the basis for a neighborhood plan to be submitted for incorporation into the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. The Clear Lake Street Community Assoc. is one force for the evening.

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

## Residents "Envision" Black Rock Bicentennial Plan

Over 50 people participated in a Historic Black Rock neighborhood planning meeting at St. John's United Church of Christ last Wednesday, November 12th.

Residents, businesses, representatives of elected officials, and other community stakeholders gathered to give suggestions to representatives of the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) in support of an effort to create a plan for the future of the Historic Black Rock neighborhood, which stretches from Niagara and Tonawanda Streets to Niagara and Ontario Streets, from the waterfront to the rail corridor.

Upon receiving a list of preliminary neighborhood planning ideas upon entering the meeting, attendees of the evening's events reviewed a series of presentations, each informed by meetings with local residents, consultations with experts, and research into Historic Black Rock.

First, an introduction to the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA and how citizen planners are making the area a better place to live, work, and play was given by GNPA co-chair Richard Mack.

Following was a presentation

by Bill Parke from the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning. He spoke on how neighborhood-planning fits in to planning city-wide as detailed in the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. The goal is to have the Black Rock neighborhood plan submitted as an addendum to the City of Buffalo Master Plan, and then move on to another neighborhood covered by the planning alliance.

Then, a well-researched perspective was delivered on "Why Black Rock Now?" by GNPA co-chair Evelyn Vossler. She highlighted the area's many advantages and constructive responses to current challenges.

Advantages include: ease of travel, historic buildings and sites, walkable features, a strong sense of community, and outstanding waterfront parks and access were identified. Representatives also discussed pending funding applications to reuse local brownfields through the NYS Brownfields Opportunity Area program and establish a U.S. Department of Justice-funded Weed & Seed site, to fight blight and crime and strengthen the neighborhood through collaboration with law enforcement, public agencies, local educational institu-



Over 50 people participated in a Historic Black Rock neighborhood planning meeting at St. John's United Church of Christ last week.

tions and community and grassroots organizations.

These presentations led to a "Bicentennial Plan" concept for the Village of Black Rock "in celebration of the War of 1812 and 200 years of village life in Black Rock". This was given by MaryAnn Kedron, Housing Committee Chairperson of the GNPA.

Elements of the vision include new and revitalized housing, new greenspaces, a new community space, initiatives to aid commercial properties and local business, and

new waterfront recreation activities.

After a short break, attendees gathered in small groups to discuss the questions of: What makes for a strong community?; What do you want in your neighborhood?; and What do you want gone from your

neighborhood?

This valuable community participation and feedback will be the basis of a draft neighborhood plan to be shared at the December 10 General Meeting of the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA at Northwest Buffalo Community Center at 6:15pm.

Comments on the draft neighborhood plan will be welcome from December 10, 2008 to January 1, 2009. The latest information on the draft plan is available at: [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_black\\_rock/](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_black_rock/). Comments, suggestions, and questions can be sent to the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA, P.O. Box 382, Buffalo, NY 14207 through January 1, 2009.

The evening ended with thanks expressed by all to the generosity of St. John's United Church of Christ for providing meeting space and to the Dearborn Street Community Association for their role as co-host organization for the meeting.

## Seasonal Parking Restrictions in Effect

Mayor Byron Brown announced the implementation of a seasonal parking restriction for specified streets in the City of Buffalo. The parking restriction began Saturday, November 15 and continues nightly through April 1, 2009.

"The City of Buffalo enforces this restriction to guarantee that snowplows will have ample room to clear streets of excess snow and

ice," said Leonard Sciolino, Director of Parking. "This is especially important for streets that see high traffic or are included in bus routes."

The parking restriction will be in effect from 1:30am to 7am, nightly until Wednesday, April 1. Signage is posted in all restricted parking zones, and violators will be ticketed if parked illegally.

☆☆☆☆

## JCPenney Afterschool Funds Awarded to Boys and Girls Clubs

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is awarding grants to the Boys & Girls Club of the Northtowns to increase access for youth currently without access — or on the verge of losing access — to after school programs due to a lack of financial resources.

Recent studies show that 14.3 million children in the U.S. are unsupervised between the hours and 3pm and 6pm each day. These grants will allow children, who could otherwise be at risk for destructive behavior, access to safe, enriching and educational after school

programs.

Funds from the grants will cover the expense of attending a Club, including staff supervision by full-time, trained youth development professionals; exposure to tried and proven programs; access to community service initiatives; transportation; snacks; and time spent in a safe, "up-to-cool", youth-centric building.

Additionally, each mini-grant recipient will receive a \$50 JCPenney gift card, courtesy of J.C. Penney Company, Inc., to help with the purchase of clothing and supplies for the school year.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America has received funding and support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund for ten years. High-quality after school programs keep children safe and produce life-changing, lasting benefits, including healthier lifestyles, improved social skills and enhanced academic performance.

In its continuing effort to ensure that every child in America has access to quality after-school programs, the JCPenney Afterschool Fund has given \$2.7M to Boys & Girls Clubs of America for the 2008 - 2009 school year.



THE RIVERSIDE HOME MAKERS met on Monday, and keeping in the Holiday Spirit, worked on Christmas Wreaths. Lucille Gual (center) shows her latest creation to some potential vendors for their marketplace. Next week, the same workshop will work on a project for the trays delivered by Maria On Woods, assisted by "no-ones-who". The kitchen will be "sponsored" by Joyce Bryson, Delana Grolowski, and Garry Skara.

## Recently Remodeled Wilson Farms Store Hosts Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Wilson Farms executives along with local dignitaries marked the official grand opening of the recently remodeled Wilson Farms store, located at 584 Ontario St., near Skillen St., with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday morning, Nov. 14.

The store has nearly doubled in size with this renovation, bringing it to a total of 4,628 square-feet. It now features a full-service deli with fresh meats and cheeses and freshly-made subs, sandwiches and salads. An expanded produce, dairy and frozen line as well as an overall increase in product variety for customers to enjoy.

The location will also introduce brand-name product lines including Staples, Occidental, Harris and Roadhouse. "This project represents our commitment to give back and to invest in the Western New York region," said CEO and President of Wilson Farms, Paul Namula.

"We welcome the residents of the Buffalo community and nearby neighborhoods to visit the Ontario

Street Wilson Farms, which has been expanded to better suit the needs of our customers. The increased product variety matched with our consistent quality customer service will make this store a shopping destination for people of all ages."

Just as the construction for the remodeling began on the local store, company representatives worked with neighborhood residents through the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance and the City of Buffalo Planning Board to make an already good plan even better.

Stop by to check out the store's new design. For more encouragement, check out their flyer inside this week's Riverside Review.

Wilson Farms Neighborhood Food Stores, established in 1969, currently operates 192 convenience store and gas station locations across New York State.

For more information, visit [www.wilsonfarms.com](http://www.wilsonfarms.com).

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www.buffalorivreview.com

## Bud Bakewell Hockey Celebrates 50 Years

*by Kyle DeLuca*  
In his 16<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Bud Bakewell Hockey Club, Andrew Bientas continues to provide the youth hockey organization with faithful dedication.

Serving his fourth consecutive year as the president of Bud Bakewell Hockey, Bientas' main objective as president of the organization is keeping the price of hockey participation as reasonable as possible and making sure the children are the most important thing, not just wins and losses and championships.

Bud Bakewell is a local youth hockey organization which plays at the Riverside Ice Rink, around Western New York and participates in tournaments both in the United States and in Canada. The organization holds teams for players from ages 19 and younger. The program is celebrating a state

championship from 2007 from the efforts of the Pee Wee team, which is ages 12 and younger.

Although championships are nice to have, the main goal of Bud Bakewell is to teach children sportsmanship, promote physical exercise and enhancing moral character. Another aspect of Bud Bakewell that is serving the community, is the participation of Hasek's Heres.

In its seventh year with the Riverside Ice Rink, Hasek's Heres provides under-privileged children of all ages with an opportunity to learn and play the game of ice hockey. You do not have to be a full-time player at Bud Bakewell to participate in these services either. The program is held through the beginning of November to the middle of March.

For more information about the program contact Sean Green at (716)



**HOCKEY ORGANIZATION FOUNDER and "Wall of Fame" - the late Bud Bakewell.**

875-4820  
Bill Kiblin, a parent of a former Bud Bakewell skater who now plays at the Riverside Ice Rink for high school hockey had nothing but good things to say about the

Hasek's Heres program and the Bud Bakewell organization itself.

"I have been very impressed with the organization for the past eleven years. They teach the right things to the kids and have good coaches, it's a great organization," he said.

Another concern that Bientas has as president is keeping the solid reputation of the Bud Bakewell Hockey organization as positive as it can be.

Bientas does this by making the expenses of a pricey sport, a bit more manageable for area families trying to put their children through ice hockey and trying to involve new people with new ideas for the promotion of the program.

"I know when Bud (Bakewell) started the club, he had the community children in mind. None of this would be possible had it not been for his dedication and that's what I am striving for," he said.

The Riverside ice rink does not only host Bud Bakewell hockey, but also Buffalo Public School Explorer League hockey, the Skating Association for the Blind and Handicapped (SABAH), the Buffalo Sabres sled hockey organization and is also available to the public through open skate.

The ice rink, located at 2607 Niagara Street is open seven days a week beginning the first week of August and ending the first week of April. The open skate schedule varies from week to week, due to the schedules of the youth hockey leagues and high school hockey.

leagues. The public skate schedule can be found in this week's *Riverside Review* on page six.

Secretary Mark Major, serving on the board of directors at Bud Bakewell as a secretary agrees that Bientas is the right man for the job.

"He is a dedicated volunteer, he doesn't have any children in the program anymore and he is still out there trying to make things run as smooth as possible. He is really keeping the Bud Bakewell pride alive and strong," said Major.

Bientas, a middle-aged father of two has watched his children grow up and learn the game of hockey through the organization. Even without his children skating for Bud Bakewell anymore Bientas is still a mainstay at the rink. His dedication to the organization and those it reaches out to is evident in the fact that his position is completely voluntary.

It is important to understand that Bientas is not paid for his efforts at Bud Bakewell. What Bientas does for the organization is done out of a love of the sport, and a keen interest in keeping the programs true moral guidelines striving.

Keeping the Bud Bakewell motto alive is good for the organization itself, but also good for the Riverside and Black Rock community to which it has positively served for the past 50 years.

"Just like Bud, I want to make sure the community children are the focus of the programs we offer at Bud Bakewell," Bientas said.

## "Rediscover Riverside" Group Is Meeting with Enthusiasm

During the month of November, "Rediscover Riverside" was honored to have two community leaders speak at their meetings on Wednesday evenings held at the Amvets Post on Revere Place.

Their first guest was Nancy Cote, former agent in charge of the Buffalo Office for the DEA. She spoke concerning awareness and what to do to help local law enforcement to be in-tune with drug traffic in the neighborhood.

Antwan Diggs, director of

"Weed and Seed", an ex-con who through Sr. Karen Klimczak and the HOPE House, taught how his life was turned around and away from crime.

Weed & Seed is a positive Department of Justice program with a goal of control violent crime, drug trafficking, and to show that when people work together they can achieve a healthier, safer place to live. Currently, there is a "Weed and Seed" application submitted by the Black Rock Riverside Good Neigh-

bor Planning Alliance (GNPA) in hopes of receiving funding for crime prevention programs.

"Thank you to both Nancy and Antwan for educating our community," said Bonnie Eschborn.

The importance of youth involvement in the community will be, in part, the topic for the December 3rd and 17th meetings. The guests for the December 3rd meeting will be Virginia Clark from Xtreme Wheels and GNPA co-chaus Evelyn Vossler from St. Mark's Church and Richard Mack, editor of the *Riverside Review*.

The meetings will start at 6:00pm sharp.

## St. John Eudes Knights of Columbus Spreading a Little Community Service

On November 19, 2008, St. John Eudes Knights of Columbus sent gift boxes to our troops in Iraq.

The group received a lot of donations and they want to thank the boys and girls of Our Lady of Black Rock School for the letters they wrote to the troops and the items they donated.

They also received a donation of reading material from the Assumption Block Club and donations from the Eudets - the Knights ladies auxiliary, plus extra donations from the Knights.

"Thank you all for your help,"

said Donald Striwell. "I am sure the troops will enjoy them. We need to let the troops that we support them and pray for their safe return home."

On November 22, 2008, the St. John Eudes prepared and served a Thanksgiving dinner at the troop kitchen of Assumption Church.

"We served over 100 meals of turkey with all the trimmings. I just want to thank all those who donated turkeys and those who help make our dinner a great success," said Striwell. "Thank you for supporting The Knights of Columbus. HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL."

## Comments Sought For Black Rock Plan

On November 12, the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, with assistance from neighborhood partners, held a community meeting to share planning ideas for Historic Black Rock.

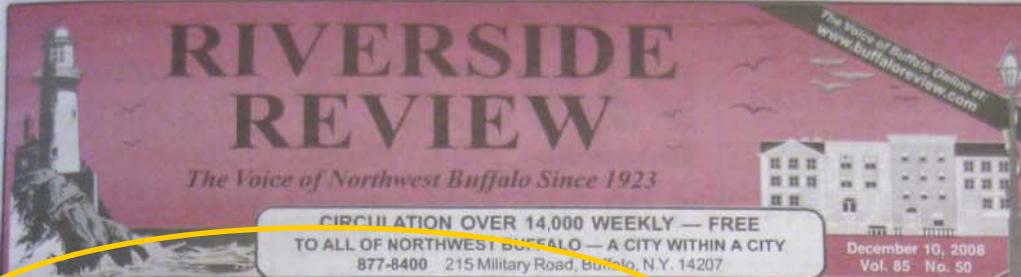
A "Plan Black Rock" Yahoo! Group can be found at: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_black\\_rock/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_black_rock/) to review the local planning documents.

If you wish to share ideas or comments, email them to Bill Parke at [bparks@city-buffalo.com](mailto:bparks@city-buffalo.com) before December 1, 2008.

## Northwest Seniors Elect New Officers



THE NEWLY ELECTED Northwest Seniors Advisory Board (2008-2010) from the Northwest Buffalo Community Center were all sworn in by North District Councilman Joe Golorbek on Thursday November 20th. Also present in the ceremony was Northwest Buffalo Community Center Executive Director Lawrence Perneck.



**RIVERSIDE REVIEW**  
The Voice of Northwest Buffalo Since 1923

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December 10, 2008  
Vol. 85 No. 50

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

## Planning Alliance Welcomes Visitors Tonight

Neighborhood Plans and Riverside High Reconstruction Lead Agenda

By Evelyn Yostler  
The local Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (GNPA) will hold its annual meeting tonight at 6:15pm in the new Citizens Meeting Room inside the Northwest Buffalo Community Center on Lawn Avenue off Military Road.

There is excitement in the air as we plan to review comments made about the Mini-Plan that was presented to the community on November 12<sup>th</sup> at St. John's United Church of Christ. This is only the first of what should be four mini-plans for our entire planning district. The GNPA is actively assessing which specific neighborhood will be focused on next.

With that in mind, GNPA chairpersons, Richard Mack, and myself were guests at the Rediscover Riverside meeting last Wednesday at Am Vets Post 13. This fairly new group had a very good showing of interested residents.

Bonnie Eschborn led the group with great enthusiasm, emphasizing the need for positive thinking. They had a local businessperson, Virginia Clark from Extreme Wheels Skate Park, speak to the group about the type of business they run and what they bring to the neighborhood. The presentation was very informative. Clark explained that there is a

charitable side, not to mention the benefit to our community to have a place that serves the younger generation in their genre. Besides the various sporting venues, they also hold concerts in a safe environment that brings in youth from all over the Western New York area. The conversation led to forward thinking of what new businesses might benefit from this kind of "traffic" to our area.

Richard Mack then spoke, first about his position in regards to serving the neighborhood through his newspaper, but secondly about the commitment that he and many others have made to Planning for our future through the City Charter, GNPA.

I spoke about the Black Rock Mini-Plan, from inception to presentation, how the plan took form for that particular area because of community involvement factors. As we have been trying to stress, we are looking for the next neighborhood and the criteria for our search has much to do with availability of residents, community groups, and leaders to be willing participants.

Richard gave a similar but much shorter explanation to members of the Grant-Amherst Business Association on Monday night. We look forward to doing the same in the

West Hertel neighborhood in the near future.

The first plan took about 12 months to put together. There is research to be done, surveys to be made, lots of walking the area, and much data to compile. A plan needs to consider all views, meaning the participation of those who know best what they need added or removed to make a better quality of life for all. It is expected, with our newly gained experience and help from neighborhood residents, that future mini-plans will be completed in a much more rapid pace.

I encourage residents interested in seeing their neighborhood "jump on the bandwagon" to attend tonight's meeting. If you can't be there, but would like Richard and I to attend a group function, we would be glad to do that as time allows. We are charged up about what can happen so don't be left out.

Additionally, Councilman Joe Golombek has arranged for us to have Amber Dixon from Buffalo School's Superintendent, William's office come and explain to us what is happening with the reconstruction of Riverside High School.

This meeting is in place of the usual fourth Wednesday of the month for November and December. We look forward to your visit.

## Grant-Amherst Business Assoc. Hosts Mayor's Visit



The Grant-Amherst Business Association held its monthly meeting on Monday, December 8th at Polish Cadets Hall. Byron Brown, Mayor of Buffalo was the guest speaker. He heard about business district projects and fielded comments from GABA members. The Mayor assured business members that one of the City's new surveillance cameras would be up soon at the corner of Grant and Amherst streets. The mayor also discussed issues including property tax assessments, the intermunicipal parks agreement with Erie County, and the devastating effect the New York State budget woes could have on local government. He did explain, however, that the City of Buffalo should be able to operate fine because of a "Rainy Day" fund the city has accumulated. The meeting was followed by a joint Christmas party with the Forest District Association. Pictured above with Mayor Brown are Councilmembers Joseph Golombek and David Rivera, County Legislator Maria Whyte (and her son), and GABA officers Caleb Basiliko, Mark Kubiniec, and Joanna Dickinson.

## December Art Market on Amherst Street

by Newell Nussbaumer

When Sue "Frenchy" Cholewa first purchased the old Howie's Appliance building on Amherst Street, she knew it was going to be an uphill battle to get people to believe in her decision. Why would shoppers go to Amherst Street when Hertel Avenue and Elmwood Avenue were both right around the corner?

Those questions didn't stop her from purchasing the building, and those questions didn't stop her from testing out a few different scenarios. First, the thought was to host some artistic parties in order to draw attention to the space. That worked. It wasn't long before the folks from Lightmakers were scurrying. Eventually Lightmakers bit and set up shop, it was just for a year

After that first year in which the shop became more of a storage unit than an actual interactive operating business, Frenchy and Lightmakers went their separate ways and once again the storefront was empty. It was then that Frenchy decided to take advantage of the growing artistic community in the neighborhood. She sent out a call for artists and opted to turn her old world storefront into a cooperative art market. Thankfully, she has been overwhelmed with responses and over the last few days she has enlisted the artists, her friends and students in her North Tonawanda high school French class, to help pull the art market together.

I pipped in recently to see what all of the fuss was about. Do you remember when Tom Sawyer enlisted his friends to help him paint the fence (his choice) by making it look like the job was fun? Well, Tom was sitting under a nearby tree while his friends painted. The fence that was

the scene that I came across when I walked into the whirlwind of activity - except that Frenchy was right there helping, alongside all of her friends. The crew was working hard to prepare for Saturday evening's opening reception of the December Art Market. I took a look at the art and the handmade gifts and was honestly impressed with the quality of the items for sale.

I would imagine that the overall intention of this art market is twofold. The more visitors that get to visit the space the better. It's a beautiful interior that people just need to see and the added exposure for Amherst Street is key. As a matter of fact, the market is located next door to Artisphere Studio and Gallery. Second, I would hope that a few of these artists decide to call this gallery their "home" in the future. The location is perfect as an artist incubator one. And now that I have seen it as an art market, I can't imagine it as anything else.

The gallery is located at 464 Amherst Street between Elmwood and Grant.

Hours through December 20th:  
Tuesday-Friday 11am-7pm, Satur-  
day 10am-5pm and Sunday 11am-  
5pm. [www.buffaloreview.com](http://www.buffaloreview.com)



## St. John's Church Hosts Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Service

St. John's United Church of Christ hosted the Erie County Council of Anvets for their Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on Sunday, December 7, 2008. The purpose of the annual commemoration of Pearl Harbor is to ensure that it is "never forgotten".

Erie County Council Commander, Ron Dantelwicz stated, "As the years go by we have new memories from other conflicts which must also be remembered and especially taught in the schools for generations to come. History should never be forgotten."

The day started with different Anvets posts and Auxiliaries, Erie County Council, State Veterans Dept., Buffalo Veterans Assoc., Korean War Veterans, Navy-Marine Corps Assoc., Greater Buffalo DAV and Auxiliary, Niagara Falls Junior Military League Cadets, U.S.N., the Sullivan Division Sea Cadets, Emergency Medical Services of Tonawanda, Tonawanda Firelighters War Veterans, Tonawanda Veterans

Commission, Toronto Civic Honor Guard, Byron Byng Branch 142 and Auxiliary, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 11 and Auxiliary, Branch 22 and Auxiliary, Branch 322 and Auxiliary, District "D",

and the congregation of St. John's met in the social hall for refreshments before going upstairs to the sanctuary.

The service began with the traditional "Posting of the Colors" and the singing of "O Canada" and the "Star Spangled Banner". It was followed by a moving service led by Pastor Elaine Urish.

After the service, the veterans groups left for another service at the Servicemen's Park, after which everyone was invited to a luncheon and program sponsored by the local Anvets Post 13 and the Auxiliary. The program consisted of recognizing the different groups in attendance and special guests, members of Pearl Harbor, and Gold Star Parents.



Generational Vets Embrace PEARL HARBOR DECEMBER 7, 1941

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 2 NOVEMBER 12, 2008 COMMUNITY MEETING AND COMMENTS**

## November 12, 2008 Meeting Summary of Posters and Maps from Interactive Session

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### QUESTION 1: WHAT MAKES FOR A STRONG COMMUNITY? (Be specific)

List from Interactive Table 1:

- Pride in Home Ownership
- Forming block clubs/knowing your neighbors
- kids/neighbors helping community
- Safety, lighting, pride
- Communication between neighbors
- Supporting local businesses
- Police presence (bike/foot patrol)
- Community/cultural centers

List from Interactive Table 2:

- Porches
- Clean community
- Shared vision
- Meeting security concerns (bring the people to the street)
- Communication between groups (porch lights)
- Crime watch
- Community events
- Know your neighborhoods/neighbors
- Incorporate children into neighborhood

List from Interactive Table 3:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| - Churches                       | - Historic preservation                          |
| - Owner-occupants                | - Law enforcement                                |
| - Community interaction          | - The arts                                       |
| - Block clubs                    | - Street cameras                                 |
| - Quality schools (neighborhood) | - Parent who parent                              |
| - Educated residents             | - Mutual respect                                 |
| - Vibrant businesses             | - More problem solving                           |
| - Pride of ownership             | - Infrastructure: Roads, sidewalks,<br>utilities |
| - Community pride                | - Civic minded residents                         |
| - Community identity             | - Cleanliness                                    |
| - Families/children              | - Adequate health facilities                     |
| - Health club                    |  |

## November 12, 2008 Meeting Summary of Posters and Maps from Interactive Session

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### QUESTION 2: WHAT DO YOU WANT GONE FROM YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD? (Be specific)

#### List from Interactive Table 1:

- Streets need repair (Dearborn, Niagara St. – sidewalks)
- Tree maintenance/Removal (Dearborn, Austin)
- (Add) Historic/pedestrian friendly street lamps
- (Add) garbage cans on street/bus stops
- (Add) snow removal at bus stops
- Get kids off street at night (police enforcement)
- Garbage in lots

#### List from Interactive Table 2:

- (*Named Commercial Establishment*) (drug activity, under investigation)
- Drug dealers
- Boom boxes (loud music, bass)
- Bus school stop on Dearborn (take back to Niagara)
- Graffiti
- Irresponsible landlords
- Identify good landlords

#### List from Interactive Table 3:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Drug dealers</li><li>- I-190</li><li>- Absentee landlords</li><li>- Graffiti</li><li>- Abandoned houses</li><li>- Speeding traffic (Niagara Street)</li><li>- Running stop signs</li><li>- Garbage dumping</li><li>- Apathy (lack of community involvement)</li><li>- Overgrown vacant lots</li><li>- Prostitution</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- (<i>Unnamed Commercial Establishment</i>)</li><li>- Littering</li><li>- Coordinated traffic lights</li><li>- Ambassador bridge</li><li>- Vacant store fronts</li><li>- Vacant houses</li><li>- Cats (Strays)</li><li>- Dog poop</li><li>- Poverty (poor families)</li><li>- Uneducated children</li><li>- Quality of life issues (loud music, etc.)</li></ul> |
|--|---|

## November 12, 2008 Meeting Summary of Posters and Maps from Interactive Session

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### QUESTION 3: WHAT DO YOU WANT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD? (Be specific)

#### List from Interactive Table 1:

- Owner-occupied residences
- Business involved in community
- Community gathering places (BBQ pits, Pool)
- Slow traffic on Niagara Street, Make it Pedestrian friendly
- Neighborhood yearly social event to meet neighbors
- Better use of vacant lots (gardens, playground)
- City should donate vacant lots to homeowners
- Neighborhood kids to stay in local schools

#### List from Interactive Table 2:

- Small businesses (local owned)
- More police presence
- ACTIVE neighborhood watches
- Married student housing
- More rehabilitation (grants, loans)
- Advertise accomplishments
- Signs (tourism)
- Intense energy efficient rehab (LEED standards, straw bale code acceptance)

#### List from Interactive Table 3:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tennis courts</li><li>- More businesses</li><li>- Safety after dark</li><li>- Retail</li><li>- Infrastructure (sidewalks, curbs)</li><li>- School</li><li>- Lighting</li><li>- Crosswalks</li><li>- Increased home ownership vs. renting</li><li>- Housing inspection enforcement</li><li>- Police walking a beat</li><li>- Community center police substation</li><li>- Dry cleaners</li><li>- Infill housing</li><li>- Curfew enforcement</li><li>- Music festival/art fest</li><li>- Youth center</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Movie night outdoors (Market Square)</li><li>- Nice parks</li><li>- Slow down Niagara Street/Tonawanda Street</li><li>- Bikes on Niagara Street</li></ul> |
|--|---|

## November 12, 2008 Meeting Summary of Posters and Maps from Interactive Session

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MAPS: Each Interactive Table marked up a base map showing streets, highways and highway ramps, and railroads on top of an aerial photograph.

Map from Interactive Table 1:

- Drug dealer in proximity to Tonawanda and Hertel
- Drug dealer on Dearborn between Austin and Hamilton
- Tennis courts for Gordon and Austin
- Heritage garden for Dearborn and Hamilton
- Prostitutes on East near Bridge
- Reconstruct Niagara Street between Bridge and Arthur
  - Bikepath
  - Lighting
  - Curbs
  - Sidewalks
  - Planters
  - Traffic Calming Measures
  - Reduced Lanes
  - Signage
- Signs on I-190 Advertise Neighborhood
- New Neighborhood within the Neighborhood? indicated for waterfront land west of I-190
- Houseboat Community indicated for waterfront land west of I-190
- Tennis courts for Squaw Island Park
- (*Unnamed commercial establishment*)

Map from Interactive Table 2:

- Move 190 to here?! (with arrows indicated for ramps into neighborhood)
- (Markup lines at elevated I-190 and 33 interchange)
- No Thru Truck Traffic for Austin and Niagara
- Walkable Small Business District for between Amherst and Arthur
  - Slowing traffic
  - Sidewalk improvements
  - Lighting
- Recreation indicated for waterfront land west of I-190
- Pocket parks indicated for Hamilton at Dearborn, midblock Gordon between Farmer and Austin, Thompson near Farmer, Niagara and Farmer
- Black Rock Canal Park

Map from Interactive Table 3:

- Need more developed recreation on Squaw Island
- (*Nnamed commercial establishment*) GONE
- 190 Dearborn at Amherst and Dearborn must be developed: Visible well kept invitation to the neighborhood
- 269 Dearborn Heritage Garden
- Hamilton –Learning Center

**November 12, 2008 Meeting**  
**Summary of Posters and Maps from Interactive Session**

---

- Bring small business to Niagara Street
- Keep business district walking friendly
- Art festival: Advertise!!
- Market Square Park: Stalls around music in park
- “Black Rock Days”

Transcribed from Originals November 24, 2008

Other questions that need to be asked -

What is this community's demography?

What is this community's economic, income distribution?

Based on the answers to those two questions -

- ① what is needed by the population now?
- ② what population can be expected within the next 10, 20, 30 years?
- ③ what economic, demographic groups are missing and wanted or need to be increased?
- ④ what is going to draw and keep those groups here?

1. Look to the North Tonawanda Canal heritage area as an example of leveraging canal history in Black Rock

2. We need a Community Map, paid for advertisements of local services

Comments given by attendee at Nov. 12, 2008 meeting, Transcribed 12/3/2008

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 3 COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER NOVEMBER 12 TO DECEMBER 1, 2008**

## Parke, Bill

---

**From:** Kraft, Renata [rkraft@BERGMANNPC.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2008 1:46 PM  
**To:** plan\_black\_rock-owner@yahoogroups.com  
**Cc:** Jason McCarthy; jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org; Parke, Bill  
**Subject:** RE: Historic Black Rock waterfront mini-plan - comments due today!!!

Oops, forgot to add a couple important items:

1. Sustainability: This could be a separate heading that lists sustainable ideas or these ideas could be included in each section: Rain gardens on vacant lots, rehabs, new builds and conversions and in re-habbed parking lots such as at Tops and Riverkeeper; bioswales in medians or in snow storage areas; encourage green roofs, flow through planters and rain barrels, structural soil under pavement restorations; permeable pavements where possible; raised planters with healthy soils that double as seat walls; community garden spaces, including container gardens on roofs and as bollards; vertical green walls, etc.
2. Universal accessibility: Should be kept firmly in mind in all planning and design activities.

**Renata Niedzwiecka Kraft, RLA, ASLA**  
SENIOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

### **Bergmann Associates**

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---

our people and our passion in every project

**From:** Kraft, Renata  
**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2008 12:51 PM  
**To:** 'plan\_black\_rock-owner@yahoogroups.com'  
**Cc:** 'Jason McCarthy'; jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org; 'bparke@city-buffalo.com'  
**Subject:** FW: Historic Black Rock waterfront mini-plan - comments due today!!!

Comments from my brief review:

1. Great overall mini-plan!
2. Under LandUse, Zoning and Urban Design add:
  - a. "Emphasize walkability with pedestrian scaled improvements and enhancements to the streetscape" and
  - b. "Integrate public art participation in planning, design, and implementation of streetscape development"
3. Under Historic Restoration add: "Promote and interpret the multi-cultural legacy of the Black Rock Community"
4. Under Transportation add:
  - a. "Utilize percent for art funding to include artists on design teams and to fund unique artistic interpretation and enhancement of the Corridor" and
  - b. "Explore the use of bump-outs and roundabouts for traffic calming and pedestrian improvements"
  - c. "Use visual cues including integrated art and wayfinding methodologies to emphasize connections to the waterfront and to inland landmarks"
  - d. Add custom transit shelters and bike racks
5. Under Commercial add:
  - a. "Emphasize or encourage "maritime" businesses and industries"
  - b. "Encourage more ethic food markets, bakeries, fish stands, restaurants"
  - c. "Provide incentives to attract the arts: lofts, studios, venues, workshops...use a broad net to include all trades in keeping with the historic character that includes metalsmiths, boatbuilders, etc.
6. Under Parks, Recreation and Waterfront add:

12/01/2008

- a. Incorporate the concept of adding "Placitas" and "Promenade" opportunities" that promote both passive gathering and high activity locations. These microparks should be developed in fully visible locations that encourage and support community on-street presence including seating areas, wi-fi, game tables, skatespots, nighttime luminosity, street music and street dancing venues, etc."
7. Under Public Safety add:
  - a. Encourage police sponsored events that include collaborations with local groups to provide activities such as street dancing or skateboarding demonstrations, streetside latin dance instruction, fashion shows, festivals, etc.
8. Under Marketing add:
  - a. Attract list.. add artists, musicians and craftsmen
  - b. Promote maritime, including great fishing, commercial and recreational
  - c. Emphasize multi-cultural, both historical and continued influence
  - d. Promote easy and important connection to Canada
  - e. Highlight and develop as walkable proximity to CBD
  - f. Promote safety of corridor
  - g. "Niagara Street is the City's urban waterfront Corridor"

**Renata Niedzwiecka Kraft, RLA, ASLA**  
SENIOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

**Bergmann Associates**

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---

our people and our passion in every project

**From:** Kate Scott [mailto:kscott@bnriverkeeper.org]

**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2008 10:45 AM

**To:** harveyagarrett@gmail.com; Catherine schweitzer; Aaron Bartley; Amy Kedron; Bill Banas; Brendan Mehaffy; Tim Tielman; Charles Grieco; Chuck Banas; Chuck LaChiusa; Cynthia Van Ness; Dennis Galucki; Don Erb; Doug Swift; Elissa Banas; Gary Richmond; GEORGE Grasser; Jason Miller; Jeff Belt; Jim Rozanski; Joan Photiadia; Joseph Finnerty; Judy Metzger; Julie O'Neill; Justin Azzarella; Justin Booth; Karl Frizlen; Kathleen Mecca; Lynda Schneekloth; Mark Mitskovski; Michael Kearns; Nathan Neuman; Pat McNichol; Phil Haberstro; Richard Baer; Richard Lippes; Robert Ciesielski; Martin Wachadlo; ptaylor@huntrealestate.com; Mark Mortenson; klinder@city-buffalo.com; jcatalano@business.buffalo.edu; pochron@gmail.com; aarmstrong716@yahoo.com; dcurtis@adelphia.net; barbara.rowe@verizon.net; twocupsofdecaf@adelphia.net; jason.mccarthy@gmail.com; Kraft, Renata

**Subject:** Historic Black Rock waterfront mini-plan - comments due today!!!

Dear Waterfront Coalition Members,

Please see the email below and respond accordingly. The comments are due today. Let me know if you need any further assistance.

Thank you,  
Kate S.

--  
Kate Scott  
Executive Assistant  
Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper  
1250 Niagara Street  
Buffalo, NY 14213  
Phone: 716-852-7483  
Fax: 716-885-0765  
[www.bnriverkeeper.org](http://www.bnriverkeeper.org)

12/01/2008

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**Historic Black Rock waterfront mini-plan - send out to the waterfront coalition - comments due today!!!

**Date:**Mon, 01 Dec 2008 10:00:20 -0500

**From:**<[jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org](mailto:jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org)>

**To:**[kscott@bnriverkeeper.org](mailto:kscott@bnriverkeeper.org)

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Historic Black Rock mini-plan

Date: Mon, 17 Nov 2008 15:38:08 -0500

From: "Parke, Bill" <[bparke@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us](mailto:bparke@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us)>

To: <[jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org](mailto:jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org)>

Here is a document listing draft goals for the Historic Black Rock mini-plan (attached). You are welcome to submit your comments.

I hope to add additional information in the coming days at this web site, so you might want to join this Yahoo! Group:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan\\_black\\_rock](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/plan_black_rock)

Rgds,

Bill

Bill Parke  
Community Planner  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
920 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: 716-851-5123  
Fax: 716-842-6942  
[bparke@city-buffalo.com](mailto:bparke@city-buffalo.com)  
[www.city-buffalo.com](http://www.city-buffalo.com)

<<Goals\_09\_24\_2008\_wo\_refs.doc>>

12/01/2008



**Bill Parke**  
Community Planner  
Office of Strategic Planning  
City of Buffalo  
920 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

December 1, 2008

Dear Mr. Parke:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Historic Black Rock Mini-Plan. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper believes that the Historic Black Rock neighborhood holds enormous promise. Due to its ability to access the Niagara River at grade, historic building stock, existing marinas and maritime service facilities the neighborhood is very ripe for waterfront redevelopment.

We are particularly interested in working with both the City and the neighborhood to ensure that public access to the water's edge is protected and expanded, that the neighborhood's maritime services are preserved and that neighborhood improvements contribute to improvements in river health through the use of low impact development and green infrastructure techniques.

We are delighted that the New York State Department of State has awarded funding to the City and Riverkeeper to work with residents and local businesses to develop and begin implementation of a Niagara Street Greenway Plan. We look forward to formally kicking off the project with stakeholders as soon as the City's contract with Riverkeeper is finalized.

We look forward to working with the entire neighborhood on this exciting planning effort and pledge our resources to the implementation of a community based and river-sensitive waterfront development effort.

Your partner and Niagara Street neighbor,

**Julie Barrett O'Neill**  
Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 4 LAND USE MAP**

# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



## Historic Black Rock Current Land Use

**LEGEND**

- Historic Black Rock Planning Boundary
- Railroads
- Street

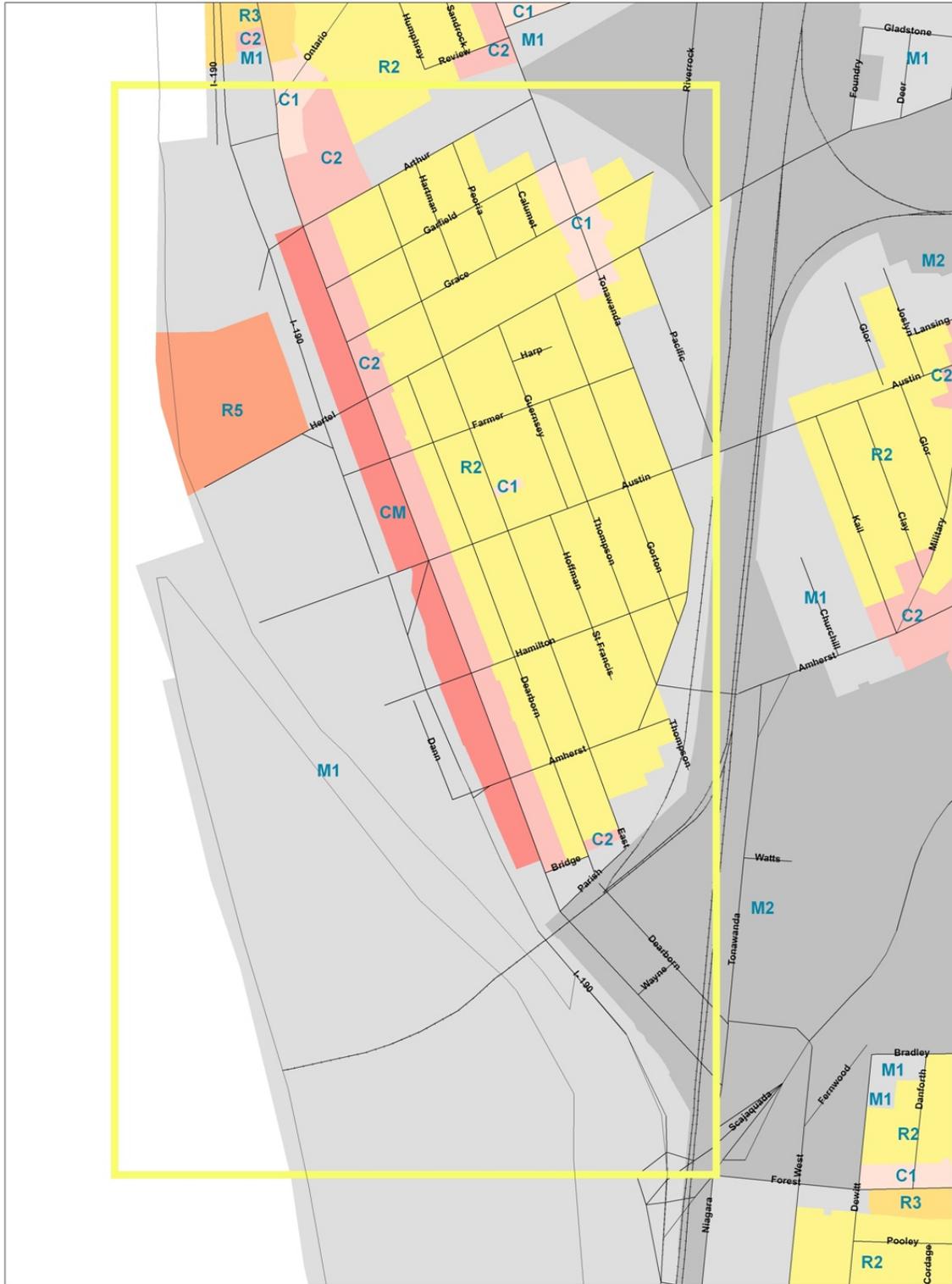
**LANDUSE (Feb. 2008)**

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

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 5 ZONING MAP**

# HISTORIC BLACK ROCK: WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



## Historic Black Rock Current Zoning\*

**LEGEND**

- Historic Black Rock Planning Boundary
- Railroads
- Street

**ZONING\***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #fce4d6; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> C1 Neighborhood Business District - C1</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f8bbd0; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> C2 Community Business District - C2</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffb74d; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> C3 Central Business District - C3</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #e91e63; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> CM General Commercial District - CM</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #bbdefb; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> M1 Light Industrial District - M1</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #cfcfcf; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> M2 General Industrial District - M2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #424242; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> M3 Heavy Industrial District - M3</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #fff9c4; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> R1 One-Family District - R1</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #fff176; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> R2 Dwelling District - R2</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffe0b2; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> R3 Dwelling District - R3</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffccbc; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> R4 Apartment District - R4</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffb74d; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> R5 Apartment-Hotel District - R5</li> </ul>
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\*For display purposes only. For up-to-date zoning at the parcel level, consult with the Land Use Administration division, Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 6 SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS**

DP-1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000  
 Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data  
 Geographic Area: Census Tract 59, Erie County, New York

Subject	2000 Census Number	2000 Census Percent
<b>Total population</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>		
Male	1,828	48.3
Female	1,956	51.7
Under 5 years	257	6.8
5 to 9 years	269	7.1
10 to 14 years	279	7.4
15 to 19 years	262	6.9
20 to 24 years	246	6.5
25 to 34 years	466	12.3
35 to 44 years	629	16.6
45 to 54 years	470	12.4
55 to 59 years	196	5.2
60 to 64 years	164	4.3
65 to 74 years	288	7.6
75 to 84 years	189	5
85 years and over	69	1.8
Median age (years)	37	(X)
18 years and over	2,822	74.6
Male	1,317	34.8
Female	1,505	39.8
21 years and over	2,663	70.4
62 years and over	640	16.9
65 years and over	546	14.4
Male	205	5.4
Female	341	9
<b>RACE</b>		
One race	3,652	96.5
White	3,225	85.2
Black or African American	203	5.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	79	2.1
Asian	40	1.1
Asian Indian	1	0
Chinese	7	0.2
Filipino	1	0
Japanese	0	0
Korean	1	0
Vietnamese	16	0.4
Other Asian 1	14	0.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Native Hawaiian	0	0
Guamanian or Chamorro	0	0
Samoan	0	0
Other Pacific Islander 2	0	0
Some other race	105	2.8
Two or more races	132	3.5
<b>Race alone or in combination with one or more other races 3</b>		
White	3,336	88.2
Black or African American	266	7
American Indian and Alaska Native	122	3.2
Asian	52	1.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3	0.1
Some other race	146	3.9
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE</b>		
<b>Total population</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>100</b>
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	308	8.1
Mexican	13	0.3
Puerto Rican	245	6.5
Cuban	0	0
Other Hispanic or Latino	50	1.3
Not Hispanic or Latino	3,476	91.9
White alone	3,076	81.3
<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>		
<b>Total population</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>100</b>
In households	3,784	100
Householder	1,741	46
Spouse	459	12.1
Child	1,141	30.2

DP-1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000  
 Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data  
 Geographic Area: Census Tract 59, Erie County, New York

Subject	2000 Census Number	2000 Census Percent
Own child under 18 years	865	22.9
Other relatives	185	4.9
Under 18 years	73	1.9
Nonrelatives	258	6.8
Unmarried partner	142	3.8
In group quarters	0	0
Institutionalized population	0	0
Noninstitutionalized population	0	0
<b>HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>		
<b>Total households</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>100</b>
Family households (families)	884	50.8
With own children under 18 years	473	27.2
Married-couple family	459	26.4
With own children under 18 years	216	12.4
Female householder, no husband present	320	18.4
With own children under 18 years	206	11.8
Nonfamily households	857	49.2
Householder living alone	748	43
Householder 65 years and over	301	17.3
Households with individuals under 18 years	517	29.7
Households with individuals 65 years and over	474	27.2
Average household size	2.17	(X)
Average family size	3.02	(X)
<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>		
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>2,023</b>	<b>100</b>
Occupied housing units	1,741	86.1
Vacant housing units	282	13.9
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	7	0.3
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	5.1	(X)
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	9.5	(X)
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>		
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>100</b>
Owner-occupied housing units	667	38.3
Renter-occupied housing units	1,074	61.7
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.45	(X)
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2	(X)

(X) Not applicable

1 Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

2 Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

3 In combination with one or more other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P3, P4, P8, P9, P12, P13, P,17, P18, P19, P20, P23, P27, P28, P33, PCT5, PCT8, PCT11, PCT15, H1, H3, H4, H5, H11, and H12.

P53. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999 (DOLLARS) [1] - Universe: Households  
Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

	<b>Census Tract 59, Erie County, New York</b>
Median household income in 1999	19,167

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

P52. HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1999 [17] - Universe: Households  
 Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data

	<b>Census Tract 59, Erie County, New York</b>
Total:	1,736
Less than \$10,000	471
\$10,000 to \$14,999	260
\$15,000 to \$19,999	167
\$20,000 to \$24,999	219
\$25,000 to \$29,999	76
\$30,000 to \$34,999	110
\$35,000 to \$39,999	62
\$40,000 to \$44,999	64
\$45,000 to \$49,999	70
\$50,000 to \$59,999	110
\$60,000 to \$74,999	48
\$75,000 to \$99,999	60
\$100,000 to \$124,999	11
\$125,000 to \$149,999	0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4
\$200,000 or more	4
Total Count	1736

U.S. Census Bureau

DP-1: General Population and Housing Characteristics: 1990  
 Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) - 100-Percent data  
 Geographic Area: Tract 59, Erie County, New York

Subject	1990 Census Number	1990 Census Percent
<b>Total population</b>	<b>4,195</b>	
<b>SEX</b>		
Male	1,981	47.2%
Female	2,214	52.8%
<b>AGE</b>		
Under 5 years	363	8.7%
5 to 17 years	731	17.4%
18 to 20 years	167	4.0%
21 to 24 years	255	6.1%
25 to 44 years	1,267	30.2%
45 to 54 years	392	9.3%
55 to 59 years	184	4.4%
60 to 64 years	180	4.3%
65 to 74 years	368	8.8%
75 to 84 years	241	5.7%
85 years and over	47	1.1%
Under 18 years	1,094	26.1%
65 years and over	656	15.6%
<b>HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>		
<b>Total households</b>	<b>1,860</b>	
Family households (families)	1,028	55.3%
Married-couple families	614	33.0%
Other family, male householder	94	5.1%
Other family, female householder	320	17.2%
Nonfamily households	832	44.7%
Householder living alone	742	39.9%
Householder 65 years and over	347	18.7%
Persons living in households	4,195	225.5%
Persons per household	2.26	
<b>GROUP QUARTERS</b>		
Persons living in group quarters	0	
Institutionalized persons	0	
Other persons in group quarters	0	
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>		
White	3,996	95.3%
Black	66	1.6%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	62	1.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	37	0.9%
Other race	34	0.8%
Hispanic origin (of any race)	118	2.8%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>2,012</b>	
<b>OCCUPANCY AND TENURE</b>		
Occupied housing units	1,860	92.4%
Owner occupied	766	38.1%
Renter occupied	1,094	54.4%
Vacant housing units	152	7.6%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	2	0.1%
Homeowner vacancy rate	0.8	
Rental vacancy rate	5	
Persons per owner-occupied unit	2.63	
Persons per renter-occupied unit	2	
Units with over 1 person per room	22	

DP-1: General Population and Housing Characteristics: 1990  
 Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) - 100-Percent data  
 Geographic Area: Tract 59, Erie County, New York

Subject	1990 Census Number	1990 Census Percent
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>		
1-unit detached	633	31.5%
1-unit attached	24	1.2%
2 to 4 units	968	48.1%
5 to 9 units	42	2.1%
10 or more units	307	15.3%
Mobile home, trailer, or other	38	1.9%
<b>VALUE</b>		
<b>Specified owner-occupied housing units</b>	<b>463</b>	
Less than \$50,000	409	88.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	53	11.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0	0.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	0.0%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1	0.2%
\$300,000 or more	0	0.0%
Median (dollars)	33,300	
<b>CONTRACT RENT</b>		
<b>Specified renter-occupied housing units paying cash rent</b>	<b>1,064</b>	
Less than \$250	625	58.7%
\$250 to \$499	431	40.5%
\$500 to \$749	8	0.8%
\$750 to \$999	0	0.0%
\$1,000 or more	0	0.0%
Median (dollars)	233	
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER</b>		
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>1,860</b>	
White	1,776	95.5%
Black	39	2.1%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	20	1.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	10	0.5%
Other race	15	0.8%
Hispanic origin (of any race)	36	1.9%

(X) Not applicable

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 1 (100% Data)

Matrices P1, P3, P5, P6, P8, P11, P15, P16, P23, H1, H2, H3, H5, H8, H10, H18A, H21, H23, H23B, H32, H32B, H41.

P080A. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1989 - Universe: Households  
Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) - Sample data

	<b>Tract 59, Erie County, New York</b>
Median household income in 1989	17250

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing

P080. HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1989 - Universe: Households  
 Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) - Sample data

	<b>Tract 59, Erie County, New York</b>
Less than \$5,000	253
\$5,000 to \$9,999	407
\$10,000 to \$12,499	147
\$12,500 to \$14,999	48
\$15,000 to \$17,499	95
\$17,500 to \$19,999	109
\$20,000 to \$22,499	105
\$22,500 to \$24,999	98
\$25,000 to \$27,499	99
\$27,500 to \$29,999	63
\$30,000 to \$32,499	51
\$32,500 to \$34,999	27
\$35,000 to \$37,499	73
\$37,500 to \$39,999	41
\$40,000 to \$42,499	30
\$42,500 to \$44,999	56
\$45,000 to \$47,499	26
\$47,500 to \$49,999	49
\$50,000 to \$54,999	29
\$55,000 to \$59,999	27
\$60,000 to \$74,999	16
\$75,000 to \$99,999	24
\$100,000 to \$124,999	0
\$125,000 to \$149,999	8
\$150,000 or more	0
<b>Total Count</b>	<b>1881</b>

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 7 RELEVANT PLANS AND PROJECTS

- Black Rock Canal Park Proposal
- Towpath Park Project
- Squaw Island Park Project
- Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- Queen City Waterfront: Buffalo Waterfront Corridor Initiative
- Niagara River Greenway Plan
- Scajaquada Downgrading Project
- GBNRTC Traffic Volumes
- NFTA Bus Service
- Reuse of St. Francis Xavier Church
- Ambassador Bridge Proposal
- Rock Harbor Village Proposal
- Jessie Kregal Bike Path Proposal
- Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Draft Plan