

# Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure and Public Realm Framework



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Buffalo Urban Development Corporation

**Hon. Byron W. Brown, Chairman**

[buffalourbandevelopment.com](http://buffalourbandevelopment.com)

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# Framework Vision



The Downtown Buffalo Infrastructure & Public Realm Framework provides the guiding principles to coordinate and prioritize streetscape and public space investments throughout the city's central core. Based upon a comprehensive existing conditions analysis, the Framework recommends key infrastructure investments for downtown's streets and public spaces.

The Public Realm Investment Map (page 3) provides a baseline guide for desired improvements throughout downtown. The framework map details a long-term, holistic vision for a revitalized public realm. Key factors in determining recommended improvements include identifying those which will serve to establish a more vibrant living environment, diversifying the city's ability to attract residents, businesses and stakeholders to the central business district.

The Framework vision identifies a series of categories of public realm and infrastructure improvements designed to create an interconnected environment of streets, parks and public spaces in a manner that enhances Joseph Ellicott's historic radial street grid pattern:

## Special Urban Places

- Unique civic or commercial destinations
- Includes City Hall, the Downtown Library and First Niagara Center

## Key Park Spaces & New Park Spaces

- Potential for new public space exists in several locations downtown
- Lafayette Square & Fireman's Park are existing spaces highlighted for improvements

## Retail-Oriented Streets & Complete Green Streets

- Connect Downtown to surrounding neighborhoods & improve public health with plants & Bike Lanes
- Further retail development should be encouraged along Main Street and Delaware Avenue

## Improving Green Waterfront Connections

- Fill gaps in the existing "Riverwalk" trail through downtown
- Link important Downtown destinations to the Waterfront

## Cycling-Pedestrian connections

- Thoroughfares are exclusively reserved for pedestrians and cyclists
- Should align with citywide Bicycle Framework

## Streets Designated for Calming

- Investment in such streets should calm traffic and rebalance the street to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists
- Examples include Elm-Oak Streets and North/South Division Streets

## Intersection and Underpass Improvements

- Improvements will enhance the safety and comfort of users
- Improve Downtown-Waterfront connections
- Examples include the I-190 and One Seneca Tower

## Transit Transfer Zones

- Areas in downtown where the bus and LRT network converge
- Infrastructure enhancements that enhance connectivity between the two systems

# Public Realm Investment Map



## Legend

-  Special Urban Place
-  Key Park Space
-  Potential Area for New Public Space
-  Retail & Commercial Oriented Street / District
-  Complete Green Street
-  Cycling/Pedestrian Oriented Connection
-  Green Waterfront Connection
-  Street for Calming
-  Intersection Improvement
-  Underpass Improvement
-  Transit Transfer Zone
-  LRT line
-  LRT Stop

# Investment Area Strategy



## Erie/Shelton Square Node

The Shelton Square/Erie investment node is designed to reconnect Michigan Street and Erie Community College to Lake Erie in a pedestrian-friendly manner, with an emphasis on traffic calming and green space. Public art, lighting and other approaches could beautify and increase safety throughout the node.

### DESIGN CHARACTER CONSIDERATIONS

This area is the city's nexus between downtown and the reemerging waterfront. Public realm aesthetics should reflect a blending of traditional and formerly industrial landscapes. Furniture should be composed of wood and steel with a contemporary motif. Sidewalks and paving materials should continue the template established on Main Street and with subtle references to the waterfront, incorporating elements such as cobbles and sandstone into the design. Trees should be selected for their ability to provide a substantial canopy.

### Key Projects

#### STREETSCAPES:

- Erie Street Improvement Project
- Erie Node two-way conversions
- Erie Node Intersections and Streetscapes
- North & South Division Traffic Overhaul

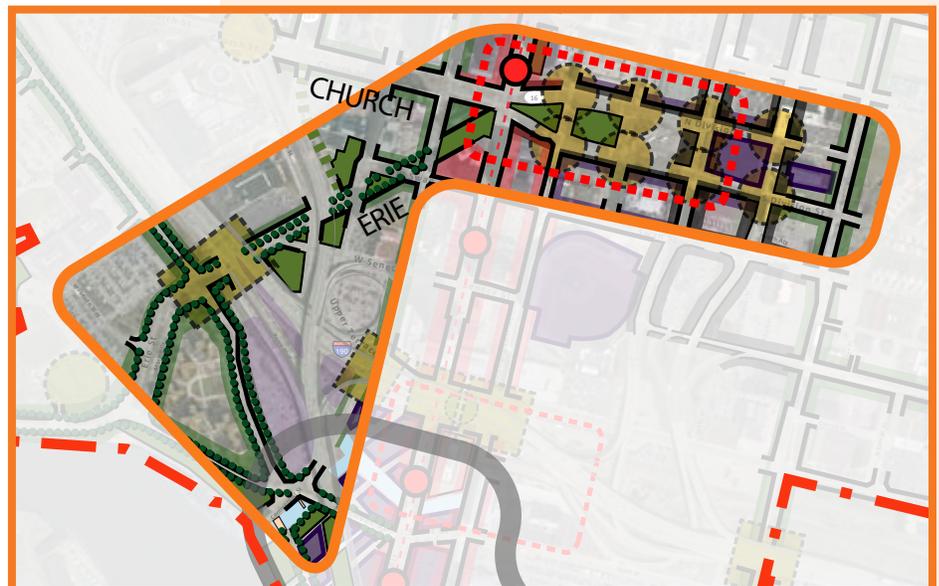
#### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS:

- Traffic Tables
- New student-oriented park
- Erie underpass beautification & development
- Five Flags/Fireman's Park design study

Four priority investment areas are defined to complement existing development and encourage renewed investment to strategic areas of downtown. Each area features specifically tailored improvement projects ranging from streetscape improvements to added public space and public art. These projects are designed to stimulate economic activity and improve everyday experiences for downtown employees, visitors and residents.

Potential public realm improvement projects will be vetted by the established downtown infrastructure working group. A project selection criteria, which considers each project's benefits to downtown infrastructure as well as its impact upon the local real estate market, has been developed to assist with guidance and prioritization of competing proposals.

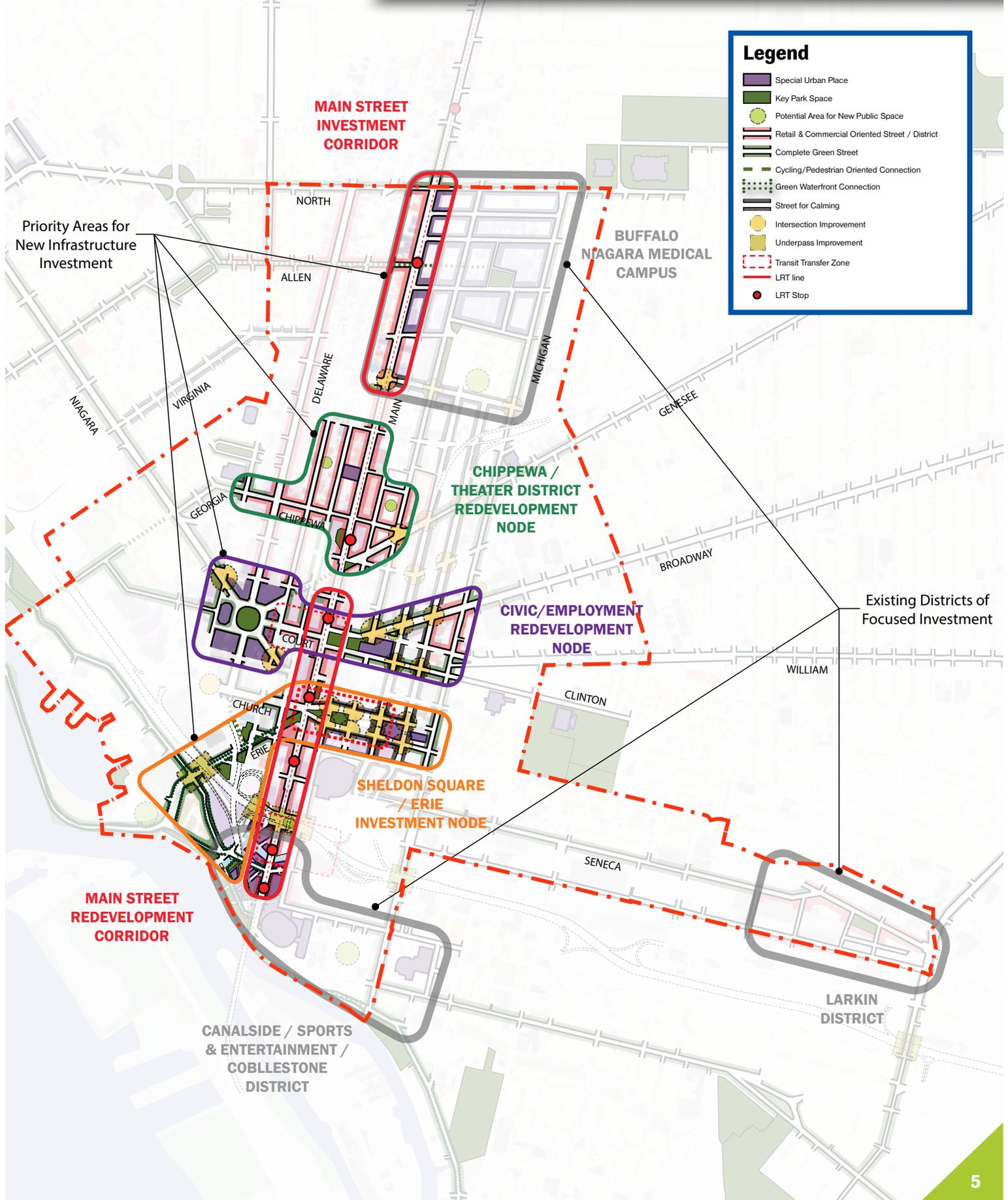
As the plan is a living document, the nodes are intended to be flexible. This will allow for adaptability to changing downtown conditions and transformative projects. The plan will be revisited and updated bi-annually.



# Redevelopment Nodes

**Legend**

- Special Urban Place
- Key Park Space
- Potential Area for New Public Space
- Retail & Commercial Oriented Street / District
- Complete Green Street
- Cycling/Pedestrian Oriented Connection
- Green Waterfront Connection
- Street for Calming
- Intersection Improvement
- Underpass Improvement
- Transit Transfer Zone
- LRT line
- LRT Stop



Priority Areas for New Infrastructure Investment

Existing Districts of Focused Investment

**MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR**

**CANALSIDE / SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT / COBLESTONE DISTRICT**

**SHELDON SQUARE / ERIE INVESTMENT NODE**

**CIVIC/EMPLOYMENT REDEVELOPMENT NODE**

**CHIPPEWA / THEATER DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT NODE**

**BUFFALO NIAGARA MEDICAL CAMPUS**

**LARKIN DISTRICT**

# Civic/Employment Node

The Civic/Employment investment node connects Municipal and State buildings with other office oriented employers. This East-West linkage is a high profile area containing key destinations and park spaces. Investment in this node would improve public space conditions in Niagara Square and Lafayette Square. Pedestrian-oriented improvements would provide an amenity and increase safety for nearby employees, visitors and residents.

## DESIGN CHARACTER CONSIDERATIONS

The center of Buffalo's business District, the Civic Node is iconic and monumental. Street furniture should reflect this environment with formal/traditional design, incorporating built seat walls, extended benches and large planted areas into the streetscape. The area's two major public spaces, Niagara and Lafayette Squares, should feature movable tables and chairs to allow each space to transform for various uses including daytime, entertainment and throughout the seasons. Lighting at the squares should be reduced to a pedestrian scale to provide a more intimate oasis within a monumental context. Sidewalks should be at maximum width in this node and continue to the pallet defined within the cars on Main Street project.

## Key Projects

### STREETSCAPES:

- Court Street streetscape & planted medians
- Broadway Road Diet
- William Street Road Diet

### PUBLIC SPACES:

- Niagara Square Beautification
- Lafayette Square & Library plaza overhaul



# Entertainment Node

The Entertainment district investment node also benefits from Cars Sharing Main Street and will continue to undergo infrastructure improvements. Such improvements increase accessibility and compliment neighborhood attractions such as Shea's Theater and the Market Arcade. The node is designed to allow investment and development to push eastward through the emerging Flower District along Ellicott Street.

## DESIGN CHARACTER CONSIDERATIONS

The Entertainment Node is Downtown's urban playground. Public Realm improvements should incorporate a more artistic and whimsical nature. Beyond Main Street, the city should commission custom street furniture produced by local artisans and manufacturers. Themes within the designs may reflect the districts heritage as a film and theatre destination. Sidewalk construction should continue the Main Street pallet and feature bulb-outs at intersections and mid-block crossings in the long blots between Chippewa and Tupper Streets.

## Key Projects

### STREETSCAPES:

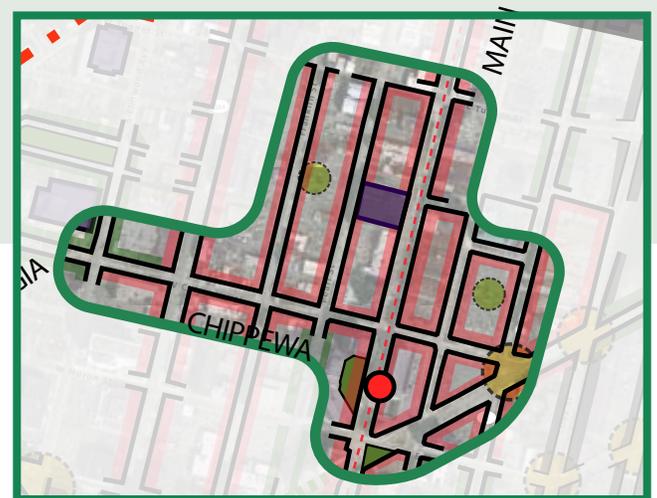
- Cars Sharing Main Street (Lafayette to Mohawk)
- Chippewa Streetscape

### PLANS:

- Flower District Concept Plan

### PUBLIC SPACE:

- Potential new public space to be incorporated into a redevelopment project



# Main Street Investment Corridor

The Main Street investment corridor will benefit from the Cars Sharing Main Street project to allow increased exposure for businesses on two segments of Main Street. Multiple transportation options, streetscape improvements and an influx of residents in this corridor are promoting economic activity. Public art improvements and new park space would allow sections of this corridor to become more desirable to pedestrians and cyclists.

## DESIGN CHARACTER CONSIDERATIONS

The Main Street design should continue that which has been established in the 600 and 700 all the way south to the Buffalo River. Variations can subtly occur within each crossing node as well as within the Medical Campus and Canalside districts. Metro Rail stations should be designed to uniquely identify their general area within Downtown, incorporating public art and material variations into the design.

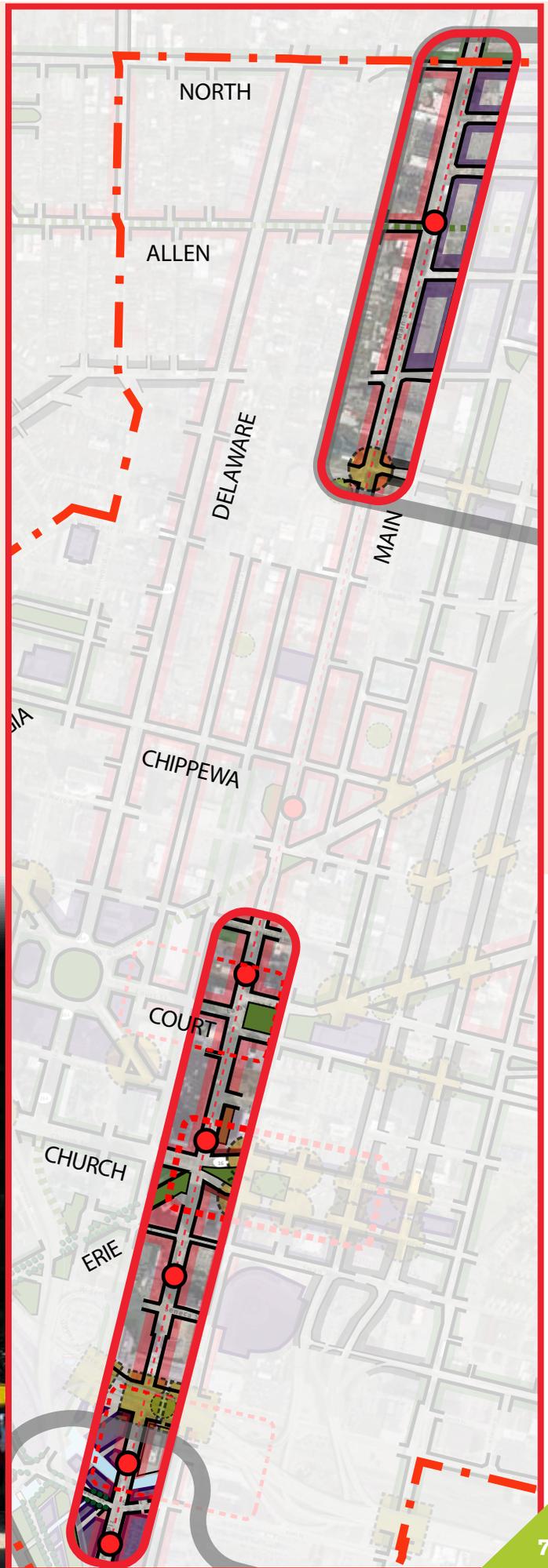
## Key Projects

### STREETSCAPES:

- Cars Sharing Main Street (Mohawk to Court)
- Cars Sharing Main Street (Perry - Exchange)
- Main Street Goodell to North Improvements

### PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS:

- Main Street Underpass Improvements
- I-190 Connector Projects



# Implementation & Funding

## Collaborative Approach

Implementation of the Downtown Infrastructure Framework will require the continued involvement of the many stakeholders and organizations that have contributed to the Framework and the Buffalo Building Reuse Project. Identification of additional and sustainable long-term funding sources to fund the proposed improvements is a critical next step. Additionally stakeholders will be directly involved with the evaluation and selection process for improvement projects. Review will include consideration for each project's consistency with the Framework, impact on the downtown real estate market as well as their contribution to the form and function of the downtown public realm.

Stakeholder involvement may involve multiple tiers of participation, from a core group of organizations responsible for direct oversight of the plan and the Buffalo Building Reuse Program (City of Buffalo Dept. of Public Works, Parks & Streets, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning, BUDC and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership), to a larger group of

organizations responsible for implementing transportation and public works improvements, such as the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Thruway Authority, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, and GoBike Buffalo. Finally, implementation of the plan should continue to involve the larger group of downtown stakeholders organized as the Downtown Infrastructure Working Group for ongoing insights, input and oversight of the Framework. This Working Group is comprised of most of the key private investors and property owners in downtown, drawn from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Development Advisory Group and the Board of Buffalo Place, Inc.

The matrix provided on the adjacent page identifies key potential implementation projects identified in the framework and details suggested project partners, timeframe and potential cost.



POTENTIAL PROJECTS & LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIME CATEGORY	EST. COST RANGE
<b>Main Street Investment Corridor</b>					
<b>Main Street 800 Block Improvements</b> Goodell to North St.	Road Diet, Bike Lanes, designated pedestrian crossings and furniture to match 600 Block. A planted median, left turn lanes and intersection bulb outs should be considered.	City of Buffalo	> BNMC	Intermediate	TBD
<b>Cars Sharing Main Street Extension</b> Perry to Exchange St.	Continue Cars sharing Main Street improvements in the same format as further North. Do not remove or relocate any light rail infrastructure.	City of Buffalo	> NFTA	Intermediate	\$30,000,000
<b>Cars Sharing Main Street Extension</b> Mohawk to Court St.	Continue Cars sharing Main Street improvements in the same format as further North. Do not remove or relocate any light rail infrastructure.	City of Buffalo	> NTFA	Intermediate	\$16,085,000
<b>Main St. Underpass Improvements</b> I-190, One Seneca Tower	Pedestrian oriented lighting, generous sidewalks, dedicated cycling facilities, and public art. Consider mirrors, reflective surfaces and screening.	TBD	> ECHDC > Tower Owner > NYS DOT/TA	Quick Fix	\$88,000 - 100,000
<b>I-190 Underpass Connector Project</b> I-190 Underpass	Create "active park space" on the surface parking lots in this area. Safe walking connection between Light Rail and Train Station. Consider replacing the train station.	City of Buffalo	> NFTA > Amtrak	Long Term	TBD
<b>Civic/Employment Investment Node</b>					
<b>Court Street</b> Niagara Square to Lafayette	Enhance streetscape/landscape, connecting to improved "pedestrian island" in Niagara Square.	City of Buffalo		Intermediate	Medium
<b>Niagara Square Improvements</b>	Create improved "pedestrian refuge" islands to improve safety and pedestrian experience. Road striping.	City of Buffalo		Intermediate	\$25,000
<b>Lafayette Square - Library Plaza Redesign</b> Washington Street	Add features to better match Lafayette Square. Connect the two through colored pavers, potentially traffic tables, etc. Use chains and bollards to define the space.	City of Buffalo	> Erie County > Priam Enterprises > Signature Development	Intermediate	\$25,000
<b>Broadway/William road diet</b> Broadway and/or William St. (Lafayette to Michigan)	Transition to 2 lanes with center medians and bike lane, ("Delaware Treatment").	City of Buffalo		Short Term	TBD
<b>Entertainment District Investment Node</b>					
<b>Chippewa Streetscape</b> Main to Elmwood Ave.	To complement sidewalks, "catenary lighting" should be installed to simulate a roof of lights. Vertical or hanging planters should be installed to limit the impact of vandalism.	Chippewa Street Alliance	> City of Buffalo > Key Bank > Building Owners	Short Term	\$40,000
<b>Public Space</b> M&T Bank Lot -or- Franklin Lots	Establish a new park space on an existing surface lot. Potentially explore building structured parking underground.	City of Buffalo	> M & T Bank > Sinatra Development > Partnership	Long Term	Additional \$100,000
<b>Flower District Concept Plan</b> Flower District	Develop a comprehensive strategy to introduce medium to high-density mixed-use development in this district.	Consultant	> City of Buffalo > BUDC > BNP	Intermediate	\$15,000-\$25,000

POTENTIAL PROJECTS & LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	TIME CATEGORY	EST. COST RANGE
<b>Shelton Square/Erie Investment Node</b>					
<b>Erie Street Improvement Project</b> Main to Lakefront Blvd.	Create a linear public space on Erie Street geared towards pedestrians and cyclists. Connect the terminus to trails leading to Lasalle Park and Canalside. Move Franklin intersection to the South.	City of Buffalo		Intermediate	TBD
<b>Erie Underpass beautification</b> I-190, Skyway	Implement underpass improvements for I-190 and Skyway (lighting, sidewalks, cycling facilities & public art).	City of Buffalo	> NYSDOT/TA	Short Term	TBD
<b>Develop Erie Underpasses</b> I-190, Skyway	Develop new land uses under the thruway to "enliven the space." Initially utilize shipping containers (similar to Canalside). If successful move on to permanent structures.	City of Buffalo	> NYSDOT/TA	Long Term	TBD
<b>Erie Node Two-Way Conversions</b> Franklin, Pearl (announced), Swan	Restripe for 2-way & bike lanes where possible	City of Buffalo	> Kissling	Short Term	TBD
<b>Erie Node Intersections &amp; Streetscape</b> Franklin, Pearl & Swan St.	Improve pedestrian safety in intersections (i.e. bumpouts), utilize "Main St." palette.	City of Buffalo		Intermediate	TBD
<b>North and South Division traffic overhaul</b> Main to Michigan Ave.	1. Follow DOT plan for North/South Division, Road Diet and bike lanes ("Delaware Treatment"). 2. Intersection Improvements (Washington, Ellicott, Oak Elm, Michigan).	DOT	> M & T Bank > City of Buffalo > NFTA	Intermediate	TBD
<b>Traffic Tables</b> Washington, Ellicott, Oak	Install raised traffic tables (with consistent pavers) between each park spaces to further calm traffic.	City of Buffalo	> DOT > NFTA > M&T Bank	Intermediate	\$55,000
<b>New Student-Oriented Park</b> NFTA Bus Layover space	Create a new park geared towards ECC students in the NFTA bus layover space.	NFTA	> ECC	Long-Term	TBD
<b>Design Study</b> Five Flags/Fireman's Park	Explore strategies to tie the two parks together, brighten the park for nighttime use/safety and consider new furniture or walking path realignments.	> Steering Group? -or- >Consultant	> City of Buffalo > BUDC > BNP	Short Term	\$30,000 - \$400,000
<b>Other Projects</b>					
<b>Waterfront Trail</b> Lasalle Park to Ohio St.	Connect various bike/pedestrian paths through downtown. Use signage to identify trail, distances and access.	City of Buffalo	> ECHDC > Olmstead Conservancy	Intermediate	\$800,000
<b>Elm/Oak Improvement Project</b> Rte. 33 to I-190	Commission a feasibility study to determine what improvements are possible/practical. Focus on significant traffic calming and return to 2-way traffic (if possible).	DOT	> Consultant	Long Term	\$20,000 - 30,000
<b>Michigan Corridor Improvements</b> South Park to Main St.	Following Elm/Oak project: extend consistent tree plantings and lighting, improve pedestrian crossings (safety), continuous coniferous hedge to hide surface parking.	City of Buffalo		Short Term	TBD
<b>Michigan Transportation Study</b> South Park to Main St.	Transportation and engineering feasibility study for: lane reductions, expanding the sidewalk & pedestrian realm & bike lanes.	Consultant	> City of Buffalo	Long Term	\$20,000 - \$30,000
<b>Goodell Parking/Road Diet</b> Michigan to Main St.	Feasibility Study. Two way conversion if possible. Road diet, bike lanes, parking and street trees to calm the space (pending study results).	DOT	> Consultant	Long Term	\$20,000 - \$30,000
<b>Transit &amp; Parking Strategy</b> Downtown	Incentivize Transit use, adjust parking rates, install wayfinding, relocate some NFTA services.	NFTA	> BCAR (City) > Consultant	Intermediate	\$7,000,000 - \$10,000,000

# Get Connected



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