

Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form

Date of Submittal: 9/23/2026

Project Registration Number (*office use only*):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

☒ Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding

☐ Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name:	BRRAlliance, Inc.
Mailing Address:	52 Amherst Street Buffalo
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14207
Federal ID#:	45-2481780
Charities Registration #:	43-49-39

PROJECT TYPE (Please check only ONE)

☐ Trail Development / Improvement

☐ Interpretation / Cultural Monuments

☐ Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration

☐ Stewardship

☒ Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

FUNDING COMMITTEE

☐ Host Community Standing Committee

☒ Ecological Standing Committee

☐ Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee

☐ State Parks Standing Committee

☐ Unsure at this time / N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED

\$312,000

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Source	Amount
Ongoing private foundation funding for annual maintenance	\$3,000 per year

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name:	<i>Market Square Park Gateway to the Greenway</i>
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	Market Square Park, 1859 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14207 42.94737° N, 78.83911° W
Project Site Address:	1859 Niagara Street, Buffalo
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14207
Minor Civil Division(s):	City of Buffalo
County:	Erie
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	Owned by the BRRAlliance, Inc.

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name:	Anne K.C. McCooey
Title:	Executive Director
Business Address:	52 Amherst Street, Buffalo
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14207
Work Number:	716-202-9070
Cell Number:	716-202-9070
E-Mail Address:	amccooey@brralliance.org or brralliance2@outlook.com

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name:	Anne K.C. McCooey
Title:	Executive Director
Organization / Firm:	BRRAlliance, Inc.
Business Address:	52 Amherst Street, Buffalo
State:	NY
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Project Narrative: Market Square Park a Gateway to the Greenway

1. This project will create a more user friendly, safer and more accessible gateway connecting the Shoreline Trail and the Black Rock/Riverside community. Market Square Park is historically recognized as the former site of the Black Rock Harbor, the last stop on the Erie Canal before vessels reached Buffalo and Lake Erie. It now serves as the most recognizable corner of the North District as it welcomes visitors exiting off NYS Route 190 and those coming through the community. It is also a community gathering space where vendor markets, musical events, public art and programs bring residents together to enjoy and celebrate nature and the diversity that makes this community so special. By rethinking the landscape design using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, removing obstacles to access, and planting environmentally appropriate and sustainable species, the BRRAlliance plans to transform this into a trailway connector and rest area for those in the community and those utilizing the Niagara Street cycle track portion of the Shoreline Trail that passes the park. Funding for this project will allow the BRRAlliance to contract professional landscape architects; conduct community engagement sessions; remove barriers to clean sightlines and install solar powered lighting for improved safety; and add wayfinding, educational and respite elements to the park for the safety and convenience of Shoreline Trail users. When funded, this project can be started immediately and finished in less than 15 months, depending on the final design plan and the timing of availability of plant materials and appropriate planting conditions. This project is important because not only will it make the park safer and more accessible, bring more people to this commercial district and help foster environmental stewardship, but it will be an important link to the Rail Trail portion of the River Rock Connectivity Plan, designed to connect people to the Niagara River and created by the City of Buffalo in 2024.
2. This project touches on each of the **Principles** of the Niagara River Greenway vision. It will be designed with **Excellence** as the guiding standard and by using native and environmentally appropriate plants it will have long term viability and **Sustainability**. **Accessibility** is a key factor in moving this project forward so more people can use the park by installing mobility friendly pathways, leveling the currently irregular land, and adding lighting for higher visibility. By creating signage and educational materials in multiple languages that reflects the make-up of community members it will also ensure that everyone feels welcome and it will preserve the **Authenticity** of this diverse and historically significant part of the city. As a National Wildlife Foundation Certified Wildlife Habitat in a certified Wildlife Habitat Community, the **Ecological Integrity** of the space will be preserved as part of the planting plan development.

The final design plan will also incorporate some of the existing passive play elements in it and by adding amenities such as a bike repair stations and map guides, it will help increase **Public Well-Being** by offering a stopping point along the Shoreline Trail. With the park strategically placed at the entrance to the Niagara Street commercial district of the community, improvements that will help increase use of the park for public events and programs will help reinforce the **Restoration** of this urban center by attracting new visitors to experience first-hand the unique community assets in the vicinity. The location of the park also makes it perfect for **Connectivity** with the proposed River Rock Connector trail which is being considered for the abandoned CSX rail line two blocks west of the park. This is part of the City's River Rock Connectivity Plan, released in 2024, and is currently the focus of a BRRAlliance grant project to assess the feasibility and development of that portion of the Tonawanda BOA. The park is already dedicated to the **Celebration** of the history, diversity and cultural resources of the community as evidenced by the murals and public art sculptures already commissioned by the BRRAlliance and in the park. These works send a message of how diversity of cultures creates beauty, and how biodiversity in nature creates a different kind of beauty. The BRRAlliance will continue to share that celebration in not only the design of the park, but in the programming

it brings to the park annually.

The BRRAlliance annually partners with over 30 other organizations and community groups in planning, programming and support. The park has been used by collaborating organizations and groups in the past and with the improvements, we will be able to offer improved access for more programming that other organizations can bring to the community, thus strengthening and increasing our **Partnerships. Community Based Planning** is one of the foundations of the BRRAlliance since its inception and we continue to bring residents, businesses, and stakeholders together so that their voices can be at the table when community development or improvements are happening. During the planning phase of this project, we will host a minimum of two community forums, we will provide regular updates at community and block club meetings, and we will maintain ongoing communication with the residents through social media and website updates.

With regard to the **Goals** of the Greenway, this project will **Improve Access** to the park by leveling the ground, adding mobility friendly pathways and making amenities accessible for all ages. It will also **Improve Access and Make Connections** to the Shoreline Trail by including wayfinding elements to assist travelers and residents to enhance their use of the trail and provide interactive feedback on their Greenway experiences. As a cornerstone community greenspace, it is important that the reenvisioning of the landscape design supports the efforts of the City and the commitment of the Buffalo Sewer Authority when they redesigned Niagara Street with an eye toward creating a more environmentally responsible transportation corridor. To this end, the BRRAlliance is committed to ensuring the park, which as mentioned previously is an NWF certified Wildlife Habitat, remains certified and that design and plantings provide sustenance and shelter for migrating wildlife, and that sustainable practices are included in both construction work and maintenance of the space long-term, thus meeting the Greenway goal of **Protecting and Restoring Environmental Systems**.

As part of the recently designed Scajaquada Heritage Area, and adjacent to the Market Square Historic District, **Celebrating the History and Heritage** of the area has always been part of the goals of the BRRAlliance for use of this park and the waterfront that borders these distinguished areas. Signage, programming and interactive elements constructed for this project will convey this rich heritage in new ways. It is anticipated that the successful connectivity achieved with this project other projects, such as the reclamation of the Tonawanda BOA rail line, will move forward and the previous investments that the BRRAlliance has brought to the revitalization of the Niagara Street commercial corridor will continue and be enhanced by the added value that a welcoming ,vibrant gateway brings to a community, thus supporting the Greenway goal to **Spark Revitalization and Renewal**. One of the major purposes of this project is to **Promote Long Term Sustainability** in order to minimize maintenance costs with designs that will include environmentally appropriate plants, easily maintained educational and wayfinding elements, solar powered lighting and removal of invasive species. With Olmsted's Riverside Park less than 1.5 miles north of this project location, the park can and will serve as a connector to the park for travelers, thus **Extending Olmsted's Legacy**.

The **Criteria** of the Greenway Plan are met by the various components of the project and the location of the project site. **Consistency with Principles** has been met by the inclusion of all the Principles in the project as noted previously. **Priority Status** is achieved because this project will help assist visitors with information on how to access the waterfront through design and wayfinding and signage. It will also assist in furthering the **Development of an Integrated Trail and Park System** given its location adjacent to the Shoreline Trail and proximity to the planned Tonawanda Street BOA River Rock Connector rail trail. The **Restoration of Niagara River Ecosystem** is a priority of this project and will be reflected in the final design and plant selections for the park. Interpretation and Education, as mentioned previously will be fulfilled through signage and public art installations. As noted, Revitalization of Urban Centers will follow as more people are attracted to the

amenities of the area, including the Shoreline Trail, Market Square Park and the shops and business along this commercial corridor. Located in a Designated Area of Concern, and well within the **Focus Area** of the Greenway Plan, the site will help anchor the **Environmental Soundness** of the area.

The project is **Implementable** as demonstrated in the detailed timeline and budget below. Having a steady, consistent funding source for park maintenance over the past three years since taking ownership, the organization is confident that the **Economic Viability** assessment is high so as to not create a long-term commitment for the Niagara River Greenway. As a primarily volunteer driven organization, the BRRAlliance has **Local Sponsors and Partners** that currently assist with the care and maintenance of the park, including the local block club and business neighbors. It is anticipated that those partnerships will continue after this project is completed. To date the BRRAlliance has been able to secure investment in beautification of the park and has installed public art, passive play elements and comfort amenities. It is anticipated that the funding of this project for park redesign will allow the BRRAlliance to secure **Matching Funds/Leveraging** for additional and continued funding for programs in the park and long-term maintenance.

The BRRAlliance has been actively involved in many community planning forums over the past 15 years and utilizes or considers the plans created by the City, County or other organizations whenever launching a new initiative. As a voice at the planning table, this often allows the BRRAlliance to work efficiently by not duplicating efforts as well as assisting the planning organization by helping to move plans forward. Examples of **Consideration of other Planning Efforts** are included in the attachments to the application. As a multi-component project, it is hoped that the **Benefits are Clear** for both the advancement of the Greenway and for the community we serve and we welcome the opportunity to discuss these in more detail in person or during a presentation.

3. Budget

Planning – landscape architect, community input sessions, educational material development and production, program planning and development	\$65,000
Construction – material procurement costs, and contracted installation	\$175,000
Acquisition	\$0
Administration – project and grant management, RFP development, procurement, community outreach, public relations	\$72,000
Operation and Maintenance / Year – Lawn care, watering, weeding, replacement of species as needed. Funded annually by a private trust over the past three years	\$3,000/year
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$315,000

Additional funding for this project has come from a private trust that annually gifts \$3,000 per year over the past three years to help maintain the property. It is anticipated that this funding will continue.

4. The BRRAlliance has worked with the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning on multiple infrastructure improvement planning projects in and around this area. Improvements for more controlled traffic flow were completed on Niagara Street four years ago and included the addition of the dedicated protected cycle track that runs past the park and is part of the Shoreline Trail system.

Implementing additional connectivity to the waterfront through this intersection was also noted in the City's 2016 Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan Update, The River Rock Connectivity Plan (2024) and as far back as the Historic Black Rock War of 1812 Bicentennial Community Plan (2008) which references Amherst Street as a cultural corridor that connects to Niagara Street and notes it as recommending a demarcated bike plan along Amherst Street (page 26-27 and 47). Throughout these documents the corner of Amherst and Niagara Streets and Market Square Park are frequently referred to as a “key gateway” with recommendations that improvements should include wayfinding, play spaces and improved safety. Full plans can be accessed through the links below and pertinent pages can be found as attachments to this document in following pages.

Link to the 1812 Plan: https://bra01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fregional-institute.buffalo.edu%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F155%2F2021%2F07%2FPlan_Black_Rock_draft_plan_12_29_2008.pdf&data=05%7C02%7C%7C49e087cd38594b02dd9608df18223a8a%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C639256207966715861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMtMlslkFOljoitWFBpCjlsldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=5T5BuzjNac5LV0Y0TtdUvYRb0c5sjzcq1HQ1JB599Gs%3D&reserved=0

Link to the 2016 Bicycle Plan:

<https://www.buffalony.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15982/2016-Buffalo-Bicycle-Master-Plan?bidId=>

Link to the River Rock Connectivity Plan: <https://www.buffalony.gov/1403/River-Rock-Connections>

Moving forward with this project, the BRRAlliance will work with the project design team and stakeholders, including the City, Greenway, and community members to ensure the design meets the goals not only of the funders but meets the needs of the community. A series of community input sessions will be conducted to get input from those that live and work in the community and will include block clubs, faith-based communities, business owners, police and fire services. This will ensure all perspectives are considered as the design is being created and public comment will be considered before a final design is adopted for installation and work begins.

5. This park had been privately owned and left with minimal improvements for decades. The BRRAlliance began leasing the property in 2018 order to begin creating a more user-friendly community green space for events and activities. After proving the ability to maintain and bring investment to the park as well as conduct programming that had wide appeal, the BRRAlliance was given the option to purchase the property in 2024 and is now looking to do more substantial improvements to create a safer and more accessible space, as well as a more sustainable and environmentally friendly landscape for the migratory wildlife in the community. Irregular ground makes it unsafe and difficult for visitors with mobility concerns to go off the paved pathway.

Lack of lighting, trees and tall shrubs provide hidden areas unseen from the street and create unsafe areas for pedestrians. And invasive plants like tickseed and knotweed are beginning to invade the property and choke out native plants that are beneficial to the pollinators and avian life in the area.

With the redesign work being done as part of this project, conceptual drawings and plans will not be available until that work is contracted and completed, however photos of the park currently are attached.

This project will go for a SEQRA determination as required, however it is anticipated that it will not have any negative environmental impact given the location of the property and that there are no current indications of existing habitats, plants or animals protected by class that would be disturbed or displaced during this project.

6. Timeline attached

Attachments:

Map, photos of current conditions, and local planning documents where this was noted as an area for improvements

Market Square Park Gateway Improvements

[illegible]



City of Buffalo Explorer

Atlas

Property Information

Property Report Exporter

Mailing Labels

Look Up Zones and Districts



Street Intersections

Streets

Street Light Underground

Parcels

Zoning (UDO)

Metro Rail Overlay

Waterfront Overlay

Planned Unit Development

Historic Districts

Historic Landmarks

Council Districts

Police Districts

Neighborhoods

Opportunity Zones

Traffic Signals

Zip codes

Census Tracts

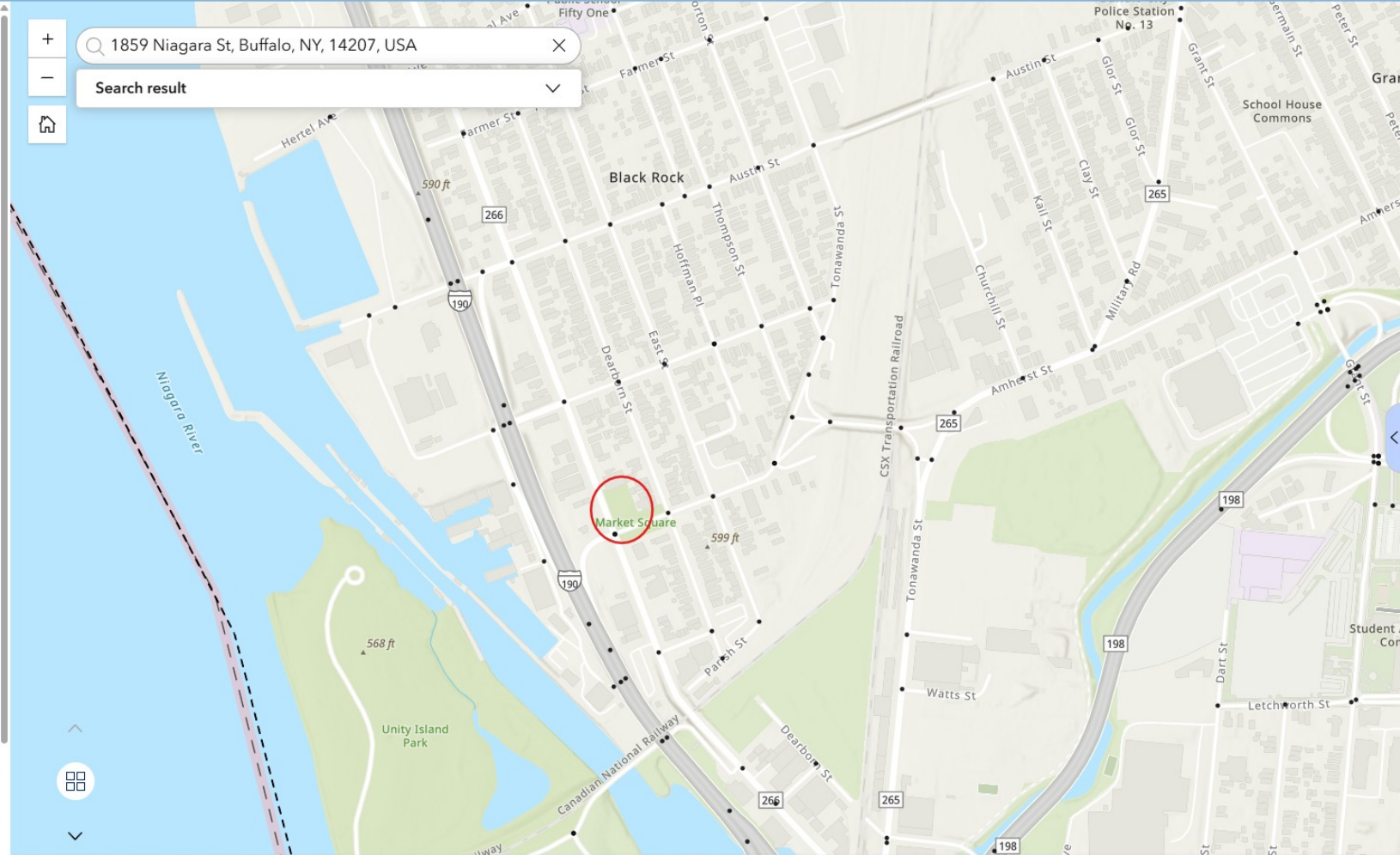
Census Block Groups



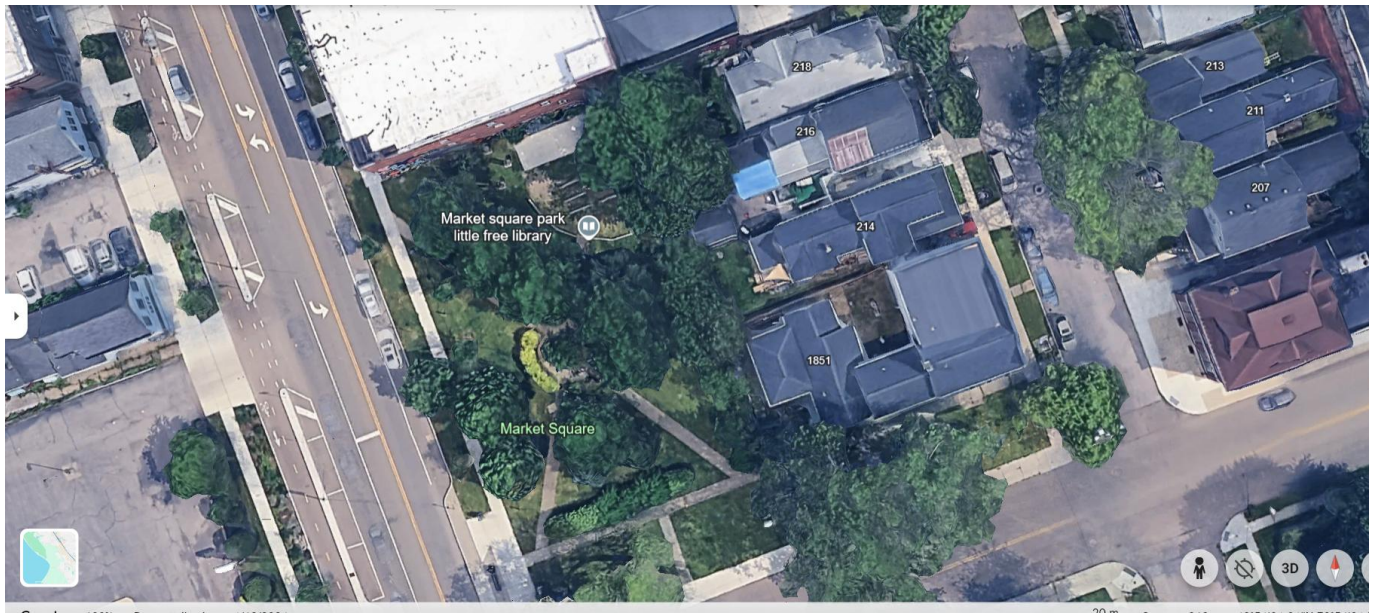
1859 Niagara St, Buffalo, NY, 14207, USA



Search result



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, Province of Ontario, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri Canada, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, M... Powered by Esri





Market Square Park, welcoming gateway to the North District!



Pathway from Niagara Street to the circle of shrubs



Inside the circle of shrubs



View inside the park of Amherst Street



Amherst Street view of the park



Performance circle and balance
benches



Stage, blackboard, pollinator mural, people of Black Rock in windows



“We Are...” Mural, People of Black Rock sculptures. Both celebrating the beauty of diversity.

RIVER ROCK CONNECTIVITY PLAN

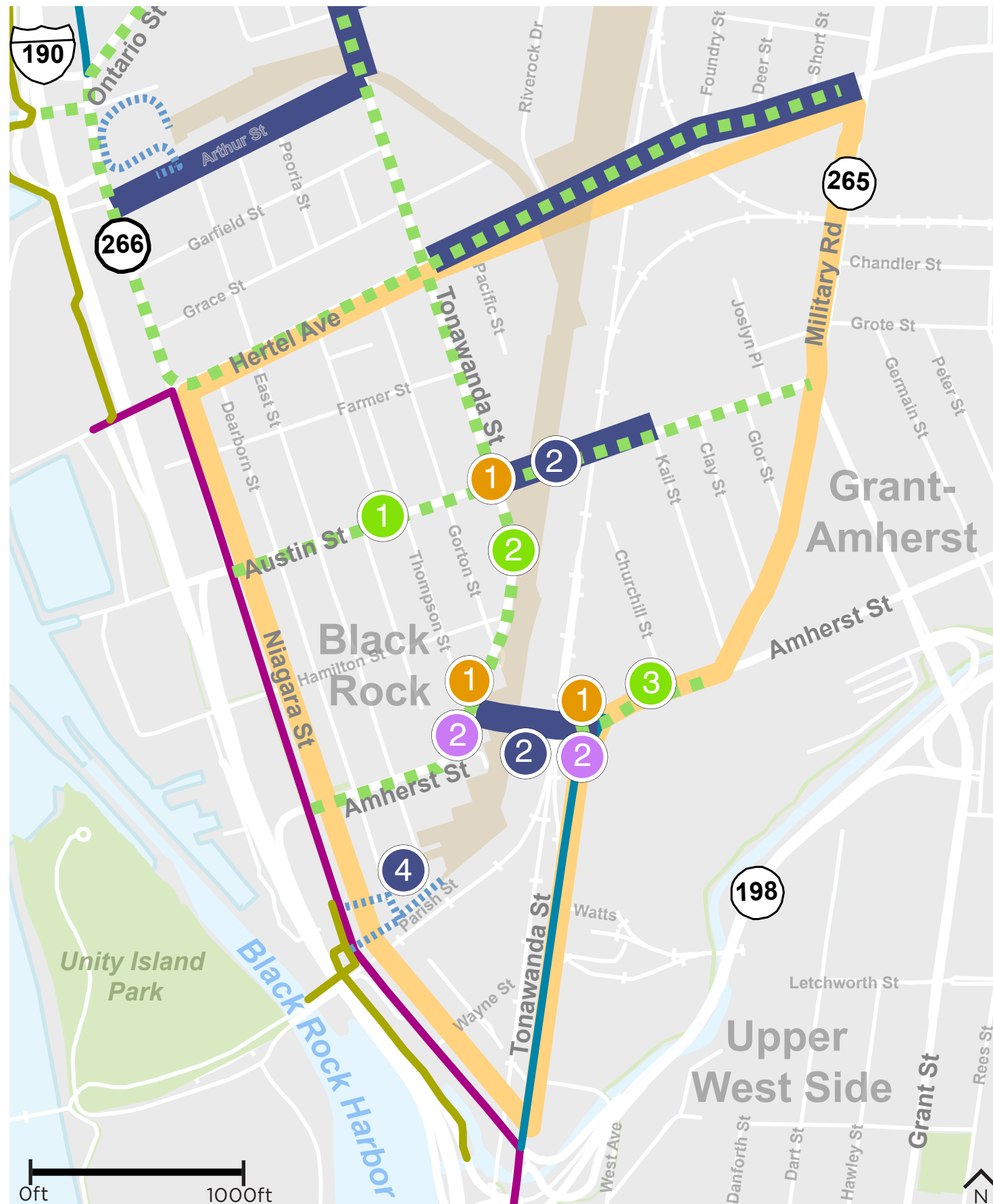
Opportunities for Buffalo's
Riverside and Black Rock
Neighborhoods

City of Buffalo Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN





Sub Area 3 Recommended Improvements

Streets and Trails - Connectivity and Safety

- 1 Intersection & Pedestrian Crossing Infrastructure Enhancements (Tonawanda St & Austin St; Tonawanda St & Amherst St, west of CSX underpass; Tonawanda St & Amherst St, east of CSX underpass).
- 2 Underpass Connectivity Improvements (Austin St CSX, Amherst St CSX).
- 4 Rail Trail Feasibility Analysis (Parish St & Bridge St Trail Connection Alternatives).

Neighborhood Gateways and Signage

- 2 Business District Gateway Treatments (Amherst/Tonawanda Business District Gateway, west of CSX underpass; Amherst/Tonawanda Business District Gateway, east of CSX underpass).

Connectivity Recommendations in Other Planning Documents

- 1 Austin Street (Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan)
- 2 Amherst Street, west of CSX overpass
- 3 Amherst Street, east of CSX overpass

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Connectivity Recommendations in Other Planning Documents | | Rail Trail Feasibility Study Area |
| | Trail Connectivity | | Existing Cycle Track |
| | Street Connectivity and Safety | | Existing Bike Lane |
| | Perspective Drawings | | Existing Shoreline Trail |
| | | | Sub Area Boundary |



Waterfront Focus Areas

The Waterfront Study Area was subdivided into five "Focus Areas" to facilitate a closer analysis of the unique needs and opportunities along the waterfront corridor. A brief description of each Focus Area is provided below:

- **Focus Area 4-A: Riverwalk** This Focus Area includes a sunken portion of I-190, Niagara Street between Vulcan Street and Crowley Avenue, and one pedestrian bridge connecting the neighborhood to the waterfront over I-190.
- **Focus Area 4-B: George Washington Park/Riverwalk** Includes all of George Washington Park, Niagara Street between Crowley Avenue and Collaton Street, and several intersection between local roads and Niagara Street. I-190 is below-grade or at-grade in this Focus Area.
- **Focus Area 4-C: Black Rock Canal** Includes Black Rock Canal Park, the dog park, and the Harbour Place Marina. Includes Niagara Street between Collaton Street and Grace Street. I-190 is above grade in this Focus Area. Black Rock Harbor Road and Arthur Street connect Niagara Street to the waterfront.
- **Focus Area 4-D: Towpath Park and Foot of Hertel Avenue** Includes Towpath Park, Marina Vista, and Riverview Manor Apartments. Includes Niagara Street between Grace Street and Austin Street. I-190 is above grade in this Focus Area. Hertel Avenue connects Niagara Street to the waterfront.
- **Focus Area 4-E: Unity Island Access** Includes Unity Island and the Black Rock Lock. Includes Niagara Street between Austin Street and Tonawanda Street. I-190 is above grade in this Focus Area. Austin Street and the Shoreline Trail connect Niagara Street to the waterfront.

BUFFALO BICYCLE NETWORK MAP

PROPOSED FACILITIES

- Interested but Concerned (path/protected facility)
- Interested but Concerned (neighborhood bikeway)
- Enthusied and Confident
- Strong and Fearless
- Route for Future Study

EXISTING FACILITIES

- Bike Lane
- Shared Lane Marking
- Shared Use Path
- Bike/Ped Overpass/Underpass
- Contra-Flow Bike Lane (existing & proposed)



5 min

10 mins

0.75

1.5 Miles



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:

1. Niagara Street commercial corridor, from Amherst to Arthur • Resurface street • Demarked lanes: 2 lanes each way plus a center turning lane • Demarked bike lanes • Plantings, trees, benches, banners, wayfinding signage • On-street parking • Traffic calming measures 2. Niagara & Amherst as the key gateway intersection • Enhanced crosswalk • Wayfinding signage • Improve Market Square Park with a children's play space	3. Niagara & Tonawanda, Tonawanda & Amherst, Tonawanda & Hertel, and Niagara & Ontario Gateways • Enhanced crosswalk • Wayfinding signage 4. Amherst Street cultural corridor • Demarked bike path • Enhanced crosswalk • Plantings, trees, benches, banners, wayfinding signage
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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.