

A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WASHINGTON MARKET: An Opportunity for Downtown Buffalo



Final Report of CRP 6690: Fall 2011 Cornell
Preservation, Design, and Development Workshop



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Washington Market, 1890 (Buffalo Rising).



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INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

Alive
Arts
Bipolar
Disorganized
Emerging
Ghost town
Neglected
Potential
Return
Segregated

-words used to describe downtown,
Green Code public outreach

Downtown Buffalo is no stranger to economic problems. Like most major cities in the northern United States, the city's urban core has suffered a substantial decline in economic, social, and cultural activity over the past 50 years. The decline in the city's manufacturing base and the departure of businesses and residents to the periphery have left formerly active downtown spaces vacant and underused.

However, downtown is also on the cusp of a transformation. It has strong assets on which to build, such as the growing theater district, the University at Buffalo medical campus, and world-famous architecture and urban design. There is increased interest in downtown apartments. Buffalo's recent planning efforts have recognized the need to utilize these treasures to revitalize growth in Buffalo or risk losing them forever.

To these ends, we undertook an analysis of two key parcels downtown, the parking lots bounded by Ellicott, Washington, Genesee, and St. Michaels Streets. This site has historical significance as a public market and is linked to Main Street through the Market Arcade and along Chippewa Street (see Figure 1). In addition,

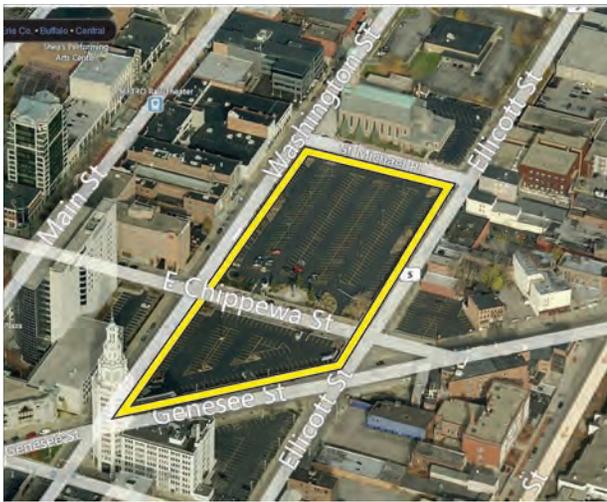
it sits at the intersection of the theater district, the UB medical campus, and new loft development along Ellicott Street.

Development of this unique site may be pivotal for Buffalo if done in concert with other planned improvements such as opening Genesee Street to the waterfront, restoring two-way traffic and implementing streetscape improvements to Ellicott and Washington.

This document will:

- Outline goals and rationale for the project;
- Analyze the real estate market, neighborhood and regional demographics, amenities, neighborhood open space, circulation, and historic and architectural characteristics of the site; and
- Recommend uses, target market, and design criteria for orientation, open space, parking, and types of institutional partners.

Fig. 1.1: Market Site



Process

The project team included City and Regional Planning students from a variety of backgrounds: real estate, historic preservation, land use planning, and economic/community development. Several team members considered Buffalo home, while others brought an outside perspective. The team used an iterative process throughout the workshop. This process began with the team's advisor, Jeffrey Chusid, prior to the semester.

The team began by creating a list of project goals both identified in Buffalo's public plans and brainstormed by the team. The team then conducted a version

of Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat analysis (SWOT) for downtown Buffalo, identifying downtown's:

- Strengths and assets,
- Weaknesses and internal barriers to the identified goals,
- Opportunities and regional trends that support the goals, and
- Threatening trends outside of Buffalo's control.

The team completed and refined the analysis through a survey of demographic and employment trends, local history, downtown land use and architecture, and

site visits including interviews with city officials and local real estate experts.

With this analysis in mind, the team chose the Market Site due to unique strengths of history, parcel size, and flexibility. The team investigated case studies to determine how the Site's qualities could capitalize on downtown's strengths while mitigating weaknesses. This analysis ultimately suggested which of the possible goals a project at the Market Site could best address. These goals, articulated in the next section, guided the recommendations the team developed.

VISION FOR A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WASHINGTON MARKET

The space would be permeable, blending into the surrounding neighborhoods. It would include outdoor and indoor stalls, permanent cafés, and outdoor space that would be inviting year-round, even in Buffalo's famous winters. The project should complement the already stunning architecture of the area, drawing sight lines to the Electric Tower and St. Michael's Cathedral; paying homage to the historical use of the site and its surroundings; and reinforcing traditional circulation patterns through Market Arcade and along Chippewa. It would be an asset for both downtown and its adjacent, diverse neighborhoods.

Capping the project would be residential space within walking distance to retail, entertainment, and employment, adding 24-hour vibrancy and attracting creative, community-oriented residents who will become part of Buffalo's 21st-Century economy. These new residents would play a significant role in attracting new activities to the area, with local businesses seeking to take advantage of the needs and demands of the new population. The development proposal calls for coordination with nearby property owners, urging local and regional business owners to invest in the surrounding properties. Finally, the project's success would require a coordinated marketing effort to attract the diverse target market.

DOWNTOWN CHALLENGES

Downtown Buffalo faces a number of challenges, although it is difficult to determine the causal relationship among them. For example, many people would seek downtown living if only there was more to do, but “retail follows rooftops” and most establishments will not enter a neighborhood without a sufficient, stable or growing population. Therefore, the challenges are presented as negative cycles, and the project goals are to break these cycles.

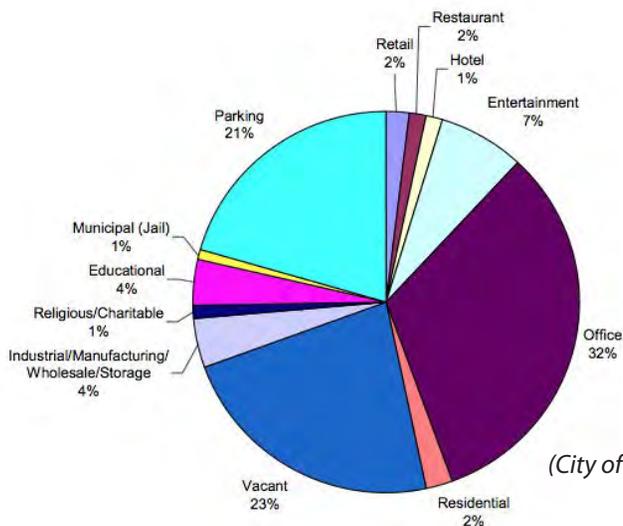
Negative retail growth

Given the number of downtown employees and visitors to attractions and conventions, downtown’s retail vacancy is higher than expected. Despite a 2008 Pedestrian Study¹ finding “the pedestrian volume... especially along Main St., is healthy and strong,” many retailers and restaurants struggle. This is because the analysis was only undertaken during the sunniest weekdays of June, July, and August when high volumes of office workers and special event attendees were present. In actuality, potential shoppers congregate in open space for short bursts of time, such as during lunchtime hours in pleasant weather.

Winterfest and the Rotary Rink are successful, but still only seasonal.³ Even downtown’s year-round entertainment options along Chippewa Street and in the Theater District, both of which attract many people to downtown, are not financially feasible to many living nearby. Those that do attend often do not explore the rest of downtown.⁴

While downtown’s opportunities for engagement throughout the year are a great start, there is not enough variety to ensure a permanent daily presence of people. A prime reason is the lack of places to shop, dine, and live.⁵ **In 2006, retail, residencies, and restaurants totaled 6% of land use. 23% of land was vacant and 21% was parking.**⁶ Although efforts are underway to develop a mixed-use “24/7 hotbed of activity,” vacant land and parking lots continue to far outnumber built or landscaped areas.⁷ Misused and underused spaces cannot predominate if downtown Buffalo aims to thrive.

Fig. 1.2: Downtown Buffalo Land Use Inventory



(City of Buffalo, NFTA, Buffalo Place, New York DOT 2009)

Parking mismatch

Parking is a controversial topic in Buffalo. One report cites a lack of spaces in the financial district,⁸ but some residents believe garage parking is too inexpensive and employees should be encouraged to seek transit options.⁹ Although downtown parking is generally abundant, market-rate apartments and class-A office and retail space still require dedicated parking to sell. At the least, suburban residents and reverse commuters cannot be alienated as downtown transitions to a vibrant, walkable core.

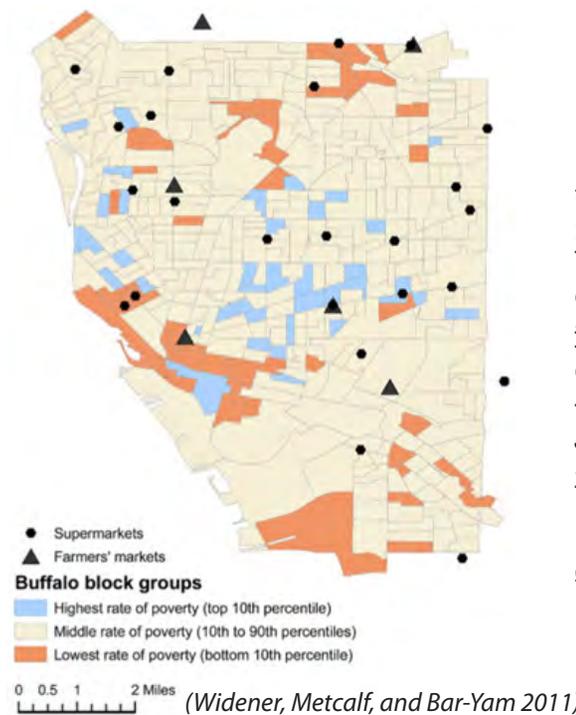
Lack of healthy options and amenities

When farmers markets close during the winter, more impoverished areas such as the East Side have less access to fresh foods as grocery stores are far away.¹⁵ In addition, despite much of Buffalo being vacant, there is an identified lack of quality open spaces. Public respondents to the **Green Code survey indicated there were not healthy food options and “green spaces”** conveniently located throughout downtown.¹⁰

Buffalo-Niagara as a whole is losing jobs, mostly in the manufacturing¹¹

Comprehensive economic development policies are being put in place, including workforce training and entrepreneurial incubation.¹² Some sectors are growing. Nevertheless, Buffalo is increasingly recognizing a problem of its **perceived “place quality” failing to attract young talent** to fill manufacturing retiree’s positions.¹³

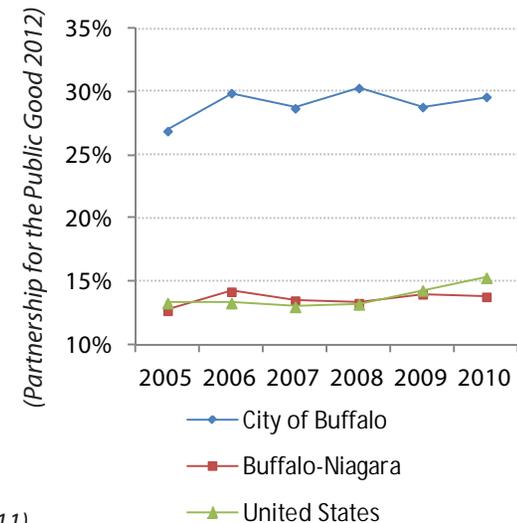
Fig. 1.3: Food Access and Poverty



Nearby shrinking neighborhoods with low incomes

Although downtown is faring well, east side and lower west side residents face high rates of poverty. Nearly 30% of the City lives below the poverty rate with a median income of \$29,285. **A leading cause for poverty is not unemployment, but poorly-paid service positions. However, unemployment is also high in the City at around 12%.**¹⁴ Although no one project can solve this issue, a project can be optimized to provide economic opportunity for existing residents.

Fig. 1.4: Percent of People Living Below Poverty Line



PROJECT GOALS

Take advantage of shifting demographics to create a vibrant, 24/7 environment Downtown

Downtown’s market is growing because of rising gas prices, shrinking household sizes, a large number of retirees who wish to reduce driving, and “millennial” preferences for urban neighborhoods. If these new residents are attracted to the site, they can provide a street vibrancy that encourages retail, discourages crime, and enhances quality of life. To forward these goals, the site should pay special attention to the “public realm” and mix of uses.

Use “crossroads” location to create physical connections among districts

The Market Site is at a crossroads. It is located along the Buffalo Metro Rail, connecting the Financial District, Theater District, Allentown, University of Buffalo, and other major points of interest in the City. In addition, Ellicott Street is poised to become a thoroughfare from BNMC and the Fruit Belt.

Honor and enhance cultural and architectural “sense of place” to attract talent, increase quality of life, and decrease segregation

The industrial-era commercial architecture surrounding the Market Site are key contributors to the area’s sense of place. Their relatively similar ages of construction have resulted in a consistent scale, materiality, and level of façade arrangement and ornamentation. The City can adopt complementary design guidelines and regulations to continue the attractive urban streetscape.

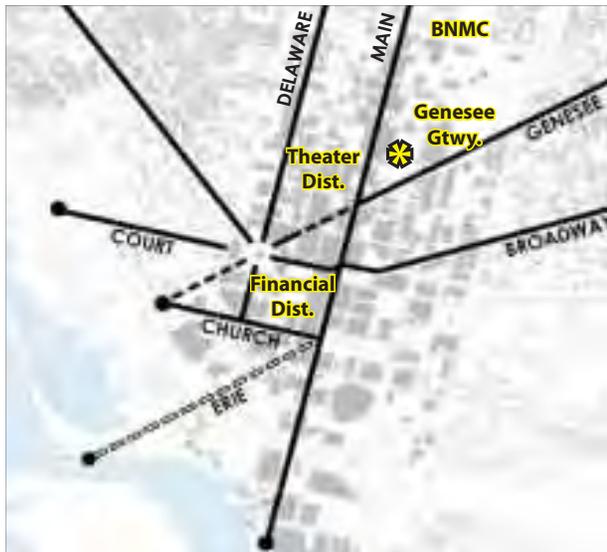
Main and Chippewa was identified as the second most important downtown intersection in a recent workshop, and many cited the pedestrian nature of Chippewa as one of the greatest strengths of downtown. Both Chippewa and Theater Districts draw patrons from Buffalo and the suburbs.

Additionally, Washington Market is important to Buffalo’s history, with a legacy of mixing diverse groups. New development should honor this legacy, appealing to neighborhood residents as well as out-of-towners. The project can be marketed in the context of the Theater District or the Genesee Gateway. This kind of marketing effort will brand the development as being part of a larger “place” while enhancing the notability of the district to visitors.

Genesee Street is reclaiming its position as an Ellicott radial: a gateway between downtown and adjoining neighborhoods. The City hopes to eventually reknit the street through Niagara Square to the Waterfront.

A public market with strong “public realm” amenities can link the districts, increasing the odds that visitors or residents that stop at one will stop at many.

Fig. 1.5: The site in relation to districts and Buffalo’s radials.



Use the site's infrastructure and entitlement assets to create a destination that can also provide amenities to nearby residents

The Market Site has nearly limitless possibilities so long as parking questions are answered—it is large, undeveloped, has access to highways but is also walkable, and is located near growing districts. A goal is to not develop this asset without ensuring it provides needed downtown or inner-ring neighborhood amenities such as greenspace and/or grocery markets and other services.

Fig. 1.6: Market Arcade, an excellent example of Beaux Arts architecture adjacent to the site



- **Attractiveness**
- **Bringing companies to the neighborhood to give back**
- **Connecting Main St. to the waterfront**
- **Convention Center and Main Place Mall, completely out of place and kill the urban fabric**
- **Focus on people, not cars**
- **Getting more people to move back and stay in the city**
- **Improving connections to neighborhoods on the north/west/east**
- **Infrastructure issues**
- **Increasing random interaction between people**
- **More integration across socio-economic levels (integrated cities stabilize housing values)**
- **More pedestrian friendly**
- **More people living downtown**
- **Need jobs to keep college friends in Buffalo**
- **Providing apartment-style living space**
- **Reducing parking lots**
- **Restoring neglected buildings**
- **Stimulating economic development in the area**
- **Think "Grafton Street, Dublin"!**
- **Walkability**

-Citizen Goals as Described in Green Code Outreach

WHY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION?

Downtown Buffalo's challenges and goals are hardly unique. Buffalo mirrors the fortunes of declining industrial towns across the United States. These towns face poor economic prospects, decaying city centers, reductions in population, and a correspondingly shrinking tax base. Since the 1980s, public-private redevelopment of downtown real estate parcels has become a significant part of the strategy for reversing the fortunes of such cities. Even though new development at the Market Site has strong potential for economic revitalization and cultural enrichment, funds for ground-up construction are difficult to attain even in relatively thriving major markets. Despite downtown's positive indicators, vacancy rates for office and retail space are 10-15%, and Buffalo is widely viewed as a shrinking city, discouraging private developers for anything but a few rehabilitation projects.

This leaves development to institutions. Even when development cannot be successfully financed by the private sector, the public sector and institutions still require space. However, a purely institutional or public-sector development may also be infeasible. For example, University at Buffalo may

at first appear a perfect developer. The University's closest buildings lie only two blocks from the site. Moreover, the University has set a goal to expand in size by a third by 2020. However, like most state universities, UB faces decreasing state tax revenue. While downtown development for educational programs aligns well with the University's mission, large pools of capital are simply hard to raise in the current economic climate.

Public-Private Partnership as a Solution

A public-private partnership may solve this challenge: a **public-private real estate development project offers some unique advantages unavailable to either the private or public player individually**. Differing reputations, capital costs, investment horizons, goals, and underwriting metrics can combine to make feasible two parts of a deal when neither part is feasible alone. By mixing public and private uses, it becomes possible to mix funds.

The private party relies on the institutional partner in the deal to provide some combination of money and credit sufficient to provide profit or security to an otherwise unprofitable or risky deal:

- Institutions and public entities have lower borrowing costs than developers, because developments are generally seen as risky investments—a half-completed development may be worth less than the land it was built on.
- Institutions and public entities have longer investment horizons, meaning they can finance out of their general operations or bond, the equivalent of a developer beginning construction with permanent financing in place, a huge advantage.

While the rationale for the private entity to partner is simple, the institution or public entity's rationale is more complex and controversial:

- The public sector may want to share risks with private investors.
- Private partners may deal with questions of liability.
- Large institutions have been largely unable to compete in some industries; market-rate housing is an obvious example.

The more sophisticated rationales are best addressed with an examination of a typical deal structure for this

kind of project . Unfortunately, **deal structures are extremely dependent on programming considerations, which are in turn dependent on the needs of the institutional partner.** For example, residential development, one of this report's recommended uses, is easiest to finance through direct financing assistance through bonds, with most of the for-profit considerations controlled by the private partner. Additional subsidies, such as land write-downs, are generally associated with affordability requirements.¹⁸

Obviously, public-private development introduces a great deal of complexity not present in either purely public or private investments. What may not be obvious is that most of this complexity occurs well before construction takes place. Once construction begins, building, marketing, lease-up, sale, and general operation takes place much like a conventional, wholly private development project.¹⁶ On the other hand, institutional partners generally control much of the predevelopment process, with the economic underwriting and programming part of a highly integrated negotiating process.¹⁷

The simplest reason to create the additional layers of complexity implicit in

a public-private deal structure is the idea of comparative advantage: both parties are simply better equipped to meet the needs of their particular parts of the development, and that codevelopment creates a trading framework for those advantages to intersect. However, that rationale is not itself sufficient to justify public subsidy, and a more concrete set of criteria is required. **Any subsidy must both attract skill that would otherwise be unavailable and be proportionate to the public benefits generated by the project.**¹⁹ Where the required subsidy to attract talent exceeds the worth of the institutional benefits, a development is impossible.

This, of course, is the heart of the matter. Is there a subsidy large enough to attract a competent developer to the site while still small enough to stay below the quantifiable institutional and community benefits from development? Unfortunately, there is no a priori methodology for answering this question. One cannot simply fill a spreadsheet with figures and metrics and hope to attain meaningful insight into the possibility of a public-private deal, if only because one can only understand one side of such a deal. Such deals require long periods of negotiation, and the viability of such a development is not

certain until said negotiations are well underway. **What Buffalo needs now is an institution willing to start that conversation. The following analysis and recommendations may serve as a springboard.**

(See p. 5-14, Finance Deal Structure, for a discussion of potential rationales and structures.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A public-private partnership to develop the Market Site

The underlying real estate market makes it improbable that the Market Site will be developed without institutional partnership. In addition, the owner of the site has interest in maintaining parking for its adjacent class-A office space.

Yet, the Market Site is ideal for a large-scale project that could anchor the Theater District, connect several growing districts with an energized streetscape, and provide amenities for nearby residents. Proactive action could take advantage of this asset, giving more control to the public through community-based design. However, a purely institutional use is undesirable, both because a private partner could distribute risk and leverage public investment and because the private sector specializes in a number of recommended uses.

A public market or a market and convenience store anchor

Several plans have documented a need for indoor space to grow the Tuesday market into a year-long daily market. In addition, there is a documented problem that start-up retail and restaurant businesses have trouble affording the tenant improvements necessary to activate downtown's storefronts. A market can serve as an incubator space to build expertise and brand. Finally, a market providing fresh foods can serve both the growing young and educated downtown demographic and existing residents living on the East Side.

This Market Site is ideal not only because of its central location with excellent highway access, but because of its history as a space that drew a crowd, spilled into the streets, and activated neighboring retail.

Sharing the site with a major housing component

A housing component is not a traditional piece of a public market, but adjacent rental housing could still benefit the site greatly. It would move toward the City's goal of adding 1000 units of housing downtown to absorb the 161-323 potential households per year; it would provide additional patrons to support the walkable entertainment/retail in the area; and the predictable revenue could maintain the site's financial sustainability. In addition, large housing projects provide an opportunity for a mix of apartment sizes and prices.

A design that reinforces historic and present-day circulation patterns

A successful design would connect neighboring districts with perhaps a cut-through or plaza near Market Arcade; small-scale restaurant, retail, or market access from Chippewa; and an inviting architectural showpiece viewable from Genesee. Streetscape design along Ellicott should unify BNMC and the Market Site, and open space could take advantage of the site's solar orientation and provide amenity for loft and first-floor retail development on Ellicott.



Fig. 1.7: Team's Design Concept

A design that incorporates public and private space

A market can provide a gradient from indoor to outdoor by including permanent indoor stalls along with less-permanent outdoor stands. This will give start-up businesses and vendors a variety of price options and encourage street and public space activity in much the same manner as the historic market. A design that is flexible can also shift focus indoors during cold weather without closing all street activity.

A set of neighborhood design guidelines that apply to the Market Site

The surrounding neighborhood is architecturally rich, flanked by St. Michael's Cathedral and the Electric Tower, near the gold dome of M&T Bank and the Genesee Historic District. The neighborhood also has a great deal of existing homogeneity, and guidelines on massing, scale, fenestration, and façade could reinforce the sense of place and encourage other types of projects—such as a large-scale hotel—to locate in other areas of downtown where they would not disrupt the neighborhood pattern.

Well-designed open space

Although many claim downtown Buffalo already has too much open space, both our analysis and public opinion show that it doesn't have quality open space which:

- Is positioned to take advantage of the sun,
- Offers focal points and easy access,
- Has amenities such as a variety of seating and interactive features, and
- Meshes public and private realms with surrounding retail or restaurant uses.

The nature of a public market could provide sunlit space on the site that is easily accessible and visible from the street without feeling overly exposed.

Engagement with surrounding neighborhoods

The Site should not just physically engage with surrounding neighborhoods. St. John's Baptist Church's engagement with the Fruit Belt neighborhood provides an excellent example of how institutions can create economic development assets that benefit rather than displace the host community.

The "host community" in this case is still being defined—a growing group of young professionals preferring downtown living mixed with empty nesters and seniors looking to downsize along with major businesses and their employees. However, it is within walkable distance to many diverse neighborhoods as well, each with economic and cultural stakes in eastern downtown. The Market Site will be stronger if it serves and engages both groups and becomes a "melting pot" much as it was 100 years ago.

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

1. Buffalo Place, Inc., *Buffalo Place Inc. 2008 Pedestrian Study*.
2. The Downtown Country Market occurs between May and October on Tuesdays and Thursdays; Thursdays at the Square concert series takes place every Thursday from June to August; and the M&T hosts their summer concert series from June to September. City of Buffalo, *Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project*, 3-3; Buffalo Place, Inc., *Buffalo Place: We're Downtown*.
3. Some other winter attractions are a Christmas Tree Lighting and New Years Eve Drop. City of Buffalo, "Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project," 3-3.
4. Buffalo Place, Inc., Personal Communication.
5. City of Buffalo, *Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project*, 3-1-3-3
6. More recent statistics on land use could not be found electronically. Ibid.
7. As of 2010, there were 217 publicly available parking lots and garages present in the downtown area.
8. Buffalo Place, Inc., "Live Downtown," Buffalo Place, Inc., "Downtown Buffalo Publicly Available Parking."
8. Desman Associates, *Comprehensive Parking Assessment Downtown Buffalo New York*.
9. *Buffalo Rising*, "Parking War Heats Up."
10. Widener, M.J., S.S. Metcalf, and Y. Bar-Yam, "Dynamic Urban Food Environments: A Temporal Analysis of Access to Healthy Foods."
11. City of Buffalo, "Community Workshop References."
12. University at Buffalo Regional Institute and Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, *Buffalo-Niagara Labor Market Assessment 2010*.
13. New York State, "Western New York."
14. Buffalo's 2012-2013 recommended budget stated, "By investing in quality of life enhancements, we will continue to make Buffalo stronger, safer and more attractive for economic growth." City of Buffalo. *Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Budget Overview*. 4. For a survey of Quality of Life literature, see David Salvesen and Henry Renski's "The Importance of Quality of Life in the Location Decisions of New Economy Firms."
15. Partnership for the Public Good, "Poverty in Buffalo-Niagara," 3.
16. For a detailed overview of the structural implications of programming and public-private cooperation, see the Lincoln Land working paper, "Problem Solving through Redevelopment Agreements" by Joseph E. Coomes.
17. For a detailed examination of the development process and how it differs in public-private projects, see Robert Witherspoon's *Codevelopment: City Rebuilding by Business and Government*.
18. John Stainback's *Public/Private Finance and Development* offers a solid overview of this predevelopment process, complete with an easily followed timeline.
19. For a broad examination of public-private dealmaking, as well as a delineation of the fundamental conflict between these two criteria, see Harvey Brooks's first chapter in *Public-Private Partnership: New Opportunities for Meeting Social Needs*.



CHAPTER TWO: CURRENT AND HISTORICAL USE



Fig. 2.1: Market Site (City GIS)

These parcels have been parking lots since Washington Market was razed in 1965. In 1992, M&T Bank acquired the properties from their previous owner, Goldome Bank, as part of a liquidation sale that included what is now known as M&T Center at 1 Fountain Plaza. They are currently zoned Downtown Opportunity (DO), and the Draft Buffalo Green Plan calls for them to be rezoned as Downtown Hub (N-1D).

Table 2.1: Market Site Parcel Characteristics

Address	571 Washington Street	46 Genesee St
SBL	111.38-6-1	111.46-4-1
Shape and Approximate Size	Rectangle, 2.7 acre	Triangle, 1 acre
Owner	M&T, since 1992	M&T, since 1992
Use	391-space parking lot	157-space parking lot
Currently Assessed	\$2,094,300	\$941,900

Because the site still currently serves as parking for M&T Center, the total 548 spaces would likely need to be remediated in some manner for a deal to occur. This might be accomplished with a mix of on-site parking, perhaps dedicated to car poolers, and using some of the 609 spaces in the Mohawk parking deck, which is only 500 feet further from M&T Plaza than the site. Currently, the spots are leased at \$41-65 a month, suggesting the upper bound of income for the rectangle site is \$25,415.¹ Parking is discussed in detail in following chapters.

The site is located across Washington Street from the historic Market Arcade building, three blocks from both the Financial District and Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The surrounding buildings are a mix of community, commercial, and upper-story residential uses. Nearby are Chippewa Street and the Theater District, areas with multiple restaurants and bars with a thriving nightlife. The site is located along the Buffalo Metro Rail and near the terminus of NY-33.

HISTORICAL USE

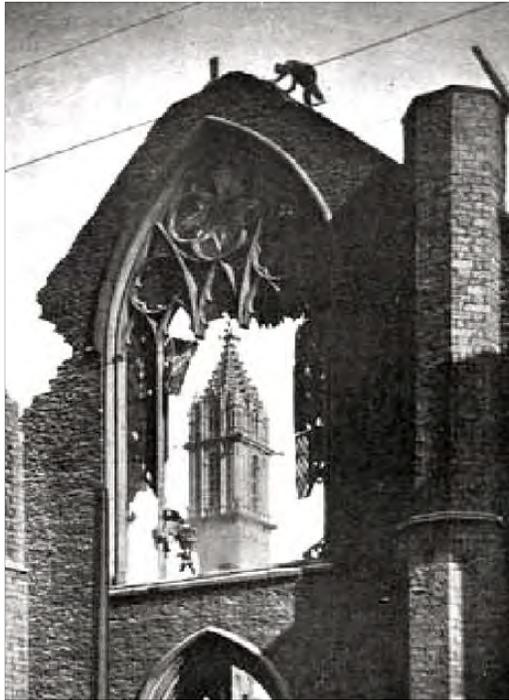


Fig 2.2: "The Passing of Old St. John's", c. 1906. (Picture Book of Earlier Buffalo, 1912).



Fig 2.3: View north from Frontier Elevator c. 1900. (Buffalo Industrial Heritage Committee).

The history of Buffalo and the Washington Market are intertwined, both integral to the relevance of the site in the past, present and future. By examining this history, it is possible to identify the past successes and failures of the market and the site, which can be utilized to inform the planning and architecture of future development. The historic market added economic vitality to downtown Buffalo, exhibiting a density that created a sense of urban spectacle. This excitement was lost as the market was refurbished in an attempt to increase parking and capture suburban commuters. However, it is possible to recreate those beneficial attributes in a manner that corresponds with present day values.

BUFFALO: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CREATIVE DESTRUCTION AND RENEWAL

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Buffalo was the gateway to the Great Lakes. The Erie Canal, grain elevators, railroads, and the waterfront all positioned Buffalo as a prominent center of industry. In 1901, Buffalo drew millions of visitors into the city to see the Pan-American Exposition. The Pan-Am was famous for harnessing

electricity from Niagara Falls to light the exposition. Despite the assassination of President McKinley at the fair, the Pan-Am made Buffalo famous.

Buffalo prospered into the early twentieth century, drawing many important architects to the areas, such as Wright, Sullivan, and Richardson. From the 1950s to the present, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the age of the automobile made Buffalo's strategic transportation location obsolete, and suburban sprawl plagued the region. To compete, city officials advocated for highways to connect the city to suburbs, but neighborhoods were disrupted and the highways never reached their design capacity.

Because Buffalo no longer had a locational advantage, industry moved south or overseas, and the loss of jobs resulted in a continually declining population and widespread poverty and demolition. In the 1980s, Buffalo adopted a new nickname: "City of No Illusions," but along with this nickname came a new commitment to preservation and reconstruction.

WASHINGTON MARKET: PAST SUCCESS TO PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

Early History: 1856-1910

In 1856, the establishment of the Washington Market resulted in a thriving commercial neighborhood in downtown Buffalo. During this early industrial era, Buffalo was a growing community, with an impressive amount of economic opportunities that attracted a booming, diverse population. The market's creation reflected Buffalo's prosperity. Prior to this, the location was a sparsely settled block that contained a small schoolhouse and a few other frame structures.

The market building, a brick Romanesque revival style structure, ran the length of the site: a long, narrow building with ample room for additional stalls to the sides. Financially, the market belonged to the City, which rented out the spaces to vendors. The structure's form provided various types of space for different sorts of vendors. The central portion of the building featured a gable roof and clerestory for lighting and ventilation, with pointed brick arches at each entrance. This innermost portion was fully enclosed, housing predominantly butchers, who needed more protection from the elements than other vendors.²

The market roof reached outwards from both exterior walls, providing shelter and shade in a blend of interior and exterior space. This space hosted stalls for poultry, butter, cheese, fruits and vegetable vendors.³ Outside this section, merchants of crockery, tins, knit products, and other assorted products set up stalls in open air.⁴

At the market, fixed stalls were complemented with temporary outdoor stalls as well as movable wagons, which were "allowed to stand on the side of the streets which surround the marketplace, and pedestrians walk along the sidewalks and buy from these wagons."⁵ The bustling crowds of the market spilled out of the building and into the lot and surrounding streets, creating an enjoyable urban spectacle. The primary market days were Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, with the market hours spanning into the nighttime on Saturdays. The Saturday market was a particularly exciting sight:

Saturday, is of course, the greatest market day and upon that day from early morning till midnight the narrow pavements between the stalls are so crowded that even market-men and farmers can scarcely find room to move



Fig 2.4: View of the Market, c. 1905 (Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society).



Fig 2.5: Postcard, c. 1900 (Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society).



Fig 2.6: Postcard (J. Chusid).



Fig 2.7: Washington Market, c. 1890 (Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society).



Fig 2.8: View of Ellicott Street from Market. Tallest Building on the right is the Urban Roller Mills (BECHS).

*about. The market is lit by gas and many of the outside stands use torch lights, so that as one approaches the market at night the scene is a brilliant and active one.*⁶

Although moving through the more than 400 stalls could be difficult, the market experience was accompanied by a delightful sense of chaos amongst the crowds. In addition to the plethora of colorful goods for sale, the dense conglomeration of a diverse range of people provided an urban sense of theatrical stimulation.

The market spilled out into the nearby streets, creating a surrounding neighborhood with a strong economic vitality. Although the official site of the market was confined to a single lot, the wagons and stalls encouraged the visitor to meander to nearby stores lining Washington, Ellicott, Chippewa and Genesee streets. These shops provided a diversity of goods and services, capitalizing on the spillover population from the market and providing economic continuity on days the market was closed.⁷ An additional defining feature of the neighborhood was the five-story Urban Roller Mills with a loading space across from the Market on Ellicott.⁸

The connections between these businesses and the market vendors was due in part to the architecture of the market building, which provided a permeable environment that intentionally interacted with the adjacent streets. This connection with the broader community was an essential feature of the market in its heyday, and attested to the ability of a market to provide a thriving economic basis for a much larger region.

Like the Washington Market, the 1892 Market Arcade building directly encouraged a connection between the commercial shops on different streets. Designed to provide direct access from Main Street to the Washington Market, the Market Arcade served to architecturally link these two commercial corridors. The use of glass skylights echoed the blend of interior and exterior space that is present in the Washington Market building, encouraging pedestrian use.

In the Midst of Change: 1920's-1950's

The structure and usage of the Washington Market evolved alongside the development of technology and the increasing popularity of automobiles. As cars replaced horses, the market was used differently than in the earlier

period. More customers drove to the site, thereby requiring parking and reducing the pedestrian contact that visitors had with the surrounding businesses. The market site was adjusted to fit new needs by eliminating the majority of the exterior stalls and reducing the size of the market to the building itself, in order to provide parking space. In the earlier days of the automobile, the market still thrived, but with the increasing use of the car, as well as the changing patterns of city living, the downtown area began to witness a reduction of customers and the beginnings of economic struggle.

These changes to the market, and Buffalo at large, are reflected in a newspaper article from 1931, where a lifelong market vendor nostalgically describes the evolution of the site. Margaret Burkhardt states,

Poof! Being on the market today is nothing...Why, at 5 o'clock in the morning our aisles were as crowded in those days as they are today at 2 p.m.' Mrs. Burkhardt waved pityingly at the throngs of soft-bodied market shoppers. 'Look at them. They come in here late and they buy only half of what they used to. And deliver? They want to have a yeast cake delivered. In the old days, we

*didn't even have bags. People brought their own baskets.'*⁹

The introduction of the automobile played a large role in the slow abandonment of the market. Although the market still thrived during the thirties and forties, the customer base gradually changed from those of Mrs. Burkhardt's era to those who lived further away from downtown, driving into the center city more casually and later in the day, perhaps more out of nostalgia than the strong need for goods.

Urban Transformations: 1950's-Present

In 1955, the original Washington Market building was replaced by a modern concrete block building, destroying the original flexibility and permeable form of the market in the service of more permanent parking and less expensive construction. The new market building featured storefronts that predominantly interacted with Chippewa Street, thus eliminating the East-West connection between Washington and Ellicott Streets. This disrupted the vital fluidity between the market and the surrounding businesses, effectively reducing the role of the market in the community.

In the early 1960s, downtown Buffalo was



Fig. 2.9: This 1955 drawing by the architecture firm of Backus, Crane and Love shows the building that replaced the original structure (Buffalo Evening News 4 Feb 1955).



Fig 2.10: The market building in its last days, from Chippewa, 1963 (Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society).



Fig 2.11: "Washington Market Demolished"
(Buffalo News 1965).

subjected to a particularly destructive case of urban renewal, in which the domination of the automobile led to the razing of several historic buildings in order to provide an excess of parking lots. Kensington expressway, constructed from 1961-1965, separated and racially segregated low-income communities from wealthier ones, disrupted the park system, bypassed the historic business corridor on the East Side of Buffalo, and encouraged suburban exodus. In 1965, the year of the Expressway's completion, the Washington Market was razed and replaced with a parking lot.¹⁰

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Today, the site of the original Washington Market remains a parking lot, fenced in from the surrounding streets in an action antithetical to its original function. Unlike many parking lots with similar histories, the location of this site is still quite valuable. There is a very relevant, enormous opportunity to reconnect Washington, Ellicott and Chippewa Streets to the centrally located site of the former market. Capitalizing on this significant history, some recent efforts have been made by the Genesee Gateway Company, who has listed a few of the structures opposite the market site as a small local district.¹¹ (See p. 4-4, *Genesee*

Gateway for details.) This designation implies the possibility of connecting the historic market site to nearby efforts, thus linking the two communities. Many of the difficulties faced in the neighborhood, such as poor amenities and the lack of downtown residents, could be addressed by animating this site in a manner similar to the original Washington Market.

Several aspects of the original market could be applied to successfully create a similarly bustling site today, thus improving not only the current lot but also the surrounding community. The early history of the market demonstrates the need to congregate people, rather than disperse them. Rather than provide an excess of open space, the new site should attempt to create a crowd that rivals the urban spectacle of the original thriving market, thereby drawing people into the site and recreating that original urban density. In addition, the later history of the market reveals a necessity to capitalize on the strategic location of the lot, using the space, and a permeable interior-exterior structure, to connect to the nearby streets and storefronts rather than isolating it from its surroundings. The effect of automobiles on the site has also revealed a complicated history of urban decisions, suggesting that parking

should be less valued in the footprint of the site, with attention paid to the flexibility of stalls or other creative uses rather than prioritizing the automobile. These suggestions may be difficult to achieve, but the site's history suggests their importance and value.

Fig 2.12: Washington Market, circa 1880 (Forgotten Buffalo).



CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. City of Buffalo, Buffalo Place, Inc., and Urban Design Project, *The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo*.
2. Mark Goldman, *Buffalo Rising*, "A Backward Glance at the Revival of Chippewa Street."
3. Michael Rizzo, *Nine Nine Eight: The Glory Days of Buffalo Shopping*.
4. Chuck LaChiusa, *Buffalo as an Architectural Museum*, "Chippewa/ Washington Market."
5. Peter Paul Book Company, *Paul's Dictionary of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Tonawanda and Vicinity*, 168.
6. Ibid, 167.
7. Buffalo City Directories, 1882-1889.
8. H.W. Hill, *Municipality of Buffalo, New York: A History, 1720-1923*, 51.
9. Ethel Hoffman, *Buffalo News*, "40 Years in the Market Place, She Longs for the Old Days," 2.
10. *Buffalo Evening News*, "Washington Market to Close July 1, Banas Announces."
11. Sharon Linstedt, *Buffalo News*, "Historic But Vacant Genesee St. Strip for Sale," D-7.

BUFFALO'S PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CULTURE

"Buffalo is home to some of the greatest American architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries." - New York Times¹



Fig 3.1: Art Deco style City Hall (Buffalo as Arch. Museum).



Fig 3.2: Sullivanesque style Guaranty Building (Caulfield 2011)

Approximately 80 sites in Buffalo are on the National Register of Historic Places, including skyscrapers, housing, and industrial sites. These sites share an "uncommon quality" and have inspired a grassroots preservation movement that has resisted their demolition since the 1970s.²

Many associate Buffalo with the Arts & Crafts movement. Roycroft, a formative community in the movement, is located in East Aurora, near Buffalo. The 1894 Guaranty Building has clear Arts & Crafts influences, and much of Buffalo's surviving historic housing is craft cottages. Another dominant style, Beaux Arts, was featured during Buffalo's Pan-American Expo. Finally, some of the most prominent buildings, such as the City Hall and Rand Building, are Art Deco style.

New construction must live up to and compliment these high standards. Architectural critic Reyner Banham wrote, "**the city needs new buildings for economic and functional reasons, but psychologically it also needs new buildings of high architectural quality...**"³



Fig 3.3: Beaux Arts style Buffalo Savings Bank, now M&T Bank (Buffalo as Arch. Museum).



Fig 3.4: Roycroft Print Shop in East Aurora (Gualdoni 2010).

The Ellicott radials, Olmsted parks, and waterfront are “to be preserved, restored, expanded and reconnected as a central task in the revitalization of Buffalo.” -Queen City Plan

Although all three elements have been damaged by intrusion of facilities such as the highway system, Peace Bridge Plaza, and Buffalo Convention Center, they remain central to Buffalo’s character and sense of place.

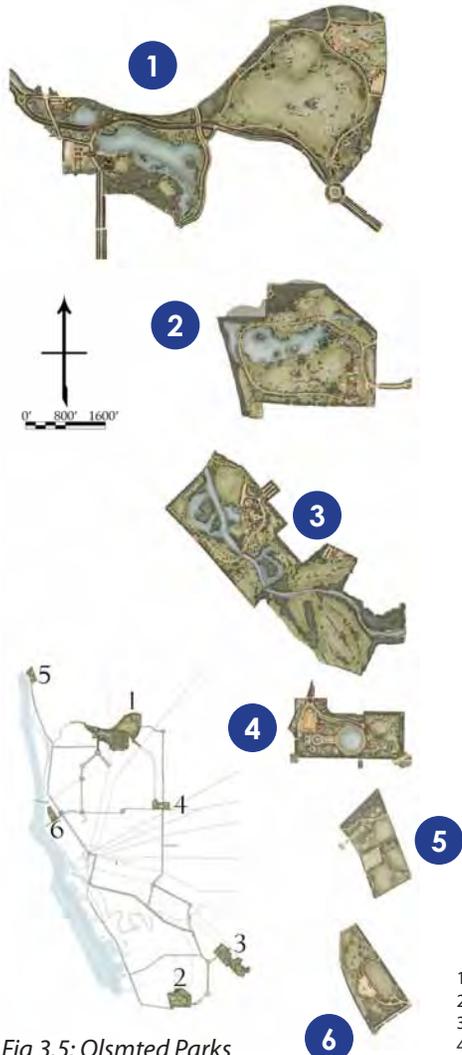


Fig 3.5: Olmsted Parks (Olmsted Parks Conservancy 2008).

The Market Site is at downtown’s northeast gateway on Genesee Street, an Ellicott Radial that currently is interrupted by several buildings but could one day physically and psychologically connect the site to the City Hall and the waterfront.

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy adopted a plan in 2008 to guide the long-term restoration of the parks, a cultural landscape on the National Historic Register. Not only are they a milestone of a famous landscape architect, but also they play a cultural role in Buffalo’s development, health, and economy. Work is already underway in Martin Luther King Jr. Park,⁴ and **as the parks are restored and reconnected to each other and to Niagara Square by greenways constructed or planned along the waterfront, they will become an important destination-type amenity** similar to Olmsted’s famous Central Park.⁵

1. Delaware Park – 368 Acres
2. South Park – 168 Acres
3. Cazenovia Park – 196 Acres
4. Martin Luther King Jr. Park – 51 Acres
5. Riverside Park – 37 Acres
6. Front Park – 26 Acres

The Rotary Rink and Magical Memories are a model for year-round activity

The Rotary Rink at Main Street’s Fountain Plaza is one of few events that bring people downtown during winter.⁶ The skating rink is free to use and open throughout the week, with hours that extend from afternoon to evening.⁷ In recent years, two new wintertime events have emerged. “Magical Memories” showcases figurines once used in holiday displays by Buffalo’s AM&A Department Store in animated window displays along Main Street.⁸ Winterfest is an all-ages event with a motto, “In downtown Buffalo, we don’t fear winter. We revel in it.”⁹



Fig 3.6: Skyway sledding at Winterfest (Visit Buffalo-Niagara).

Magical Memories and the Ice Rink in particular activate Main Street during Buffalo’s blustery winter while also ensuring inclusivity, because both events are free and all are welcome to partake. They offer more economically and to a wider variety of people than other entertainment options available in the city center. They should be considered a model for other initiatives undertaken by the city, including the Market Site.

Buffalo is a regional arts and entertainment center, home to NY's second-largest theater community

The Market Site is not only adjacent to the theater district, but within transit distance to the fine Albright-Knox Art Gallery of modern and contemporary art in the Elmwood Museum District.

"The city has evolved from a snow-covered bump... into a culturally-diverse hotspot for creative-types, young adults, and LGBTQ people." -OutTraveler¹⁰

Visit Buffalo-Niagara markets the region as a destination for gender-neutral weddings and honeymoons. In fact, even the Market Arcade has played host to gender-neutral weddings, with one couple saying, "**We were genuinely taken aback over and over by how friendly and truly embracing the people of Buffalo were.**"¹¹ This stance helped Buffalo win GayCities/American Airlines 2011 "Best Up and Coming City."¹²



Fig 3.7: 2007 Pride Week Parade (Denzizo).

Buffalo's Pride Week celebration in Elmwood is attended by an estimated 6,000-10,000.¹³ Allen St., between Main and Delaware, is a popular spot for gay nightclubs, and a renovated church on the corner of Tupper and Delaware is home to "Babeville," Ani DiFranco's gay-friendly performing art venue/record studio.

Table 3.1: Culture and Entertainment Districts

	Attractions	Distance from Site
Theater District	Shea's Performing Arts Center, Buffalo United Artists Theater, Andrews Theater, Forbes Theatre, Main Street Cabaret, Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre	<3 walking
Kleinhans Music Hall	Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra	7 by car or bike, 17 NFTA
Elmwood Museum District	Albright-Knox Gallery, Burchwood-Penney Art Center, Rockwell Hall, Buffalo Historical Society, Shakespeare at the Park	12 by car, 20-30 NFTA
Buffalo Zoological Garden		10 by car, 25 by bike or NFTA
Buffalo Botanical Gardens		17 by car, 30 by bike or NFTA

Local businesses give Buffalo a unique appeal, but a lack of national retailers reflects a poor market

Many national chains, such as California Pizza Kitchen, Trader Joe's, and Bertucci's, have not embraced Buffalo due to poor fundamentals such as growth and median income. This may impact the decisions of those familiar with national chains and considering moving to the region. However, this gives room for local businesses to flourish, creating an "only in Buffalo" feel.

Additionally, H&M, Urban Outfitters, White House Black Market, Joe's Crab Shack, and other national chains recently expanded to Walden-Galleria Mall, and Five Guys and Dinosaur BBQ are coming downtown. This may indicate an economic shift.

Fig 3.8: Dinosaur BBQ and TGIF near site (Google Maps).



Buffalo “is steering itself toward culinary prominence.” - Atlantic Cities¹⁴

Buffalo is famous for “blue collar” cuisine including Buffalo Wings, Roast Beef on Kummelweck, and a unique cross between New York and Chicago pizza. However, Buffalo’s restaurants also include authentic world cuisines and famous steakhouses.¹⁵ The region is home to several craft breweries and wineries; Buffalo’s 2012 Winterfest even featured a beer vs. wine taste event.¹⁶

Taste of Buffalo, the largest two-day food festival in America, attracts 450,000 annually only four blocks away from the Market Site.¹⁷ The Site can engage in this heritage in a number of ways, from offering low-cost areas for vendors to build a brand to being a home for residents that desire a unique food and beverage culture. Notably, Niagara Community College recently opened a culinary arts school/restaurant in nearby Niagara Falls.¹⁸ In addition, 17 farmer’s or public markets take place annually in Erie County, 5 in Buffalo:

Table 3.2: Farmer’s and Public Markets in the City of Buffalo

	Address	Open	Features	Distance f/ site (mins)
Downtown Country Market	Main between Court and Church	Tue – Thu, 8 am-2:30 pm May - October	Food and crafts	8 by foot, 5 by NFTA
Broadway Market	999 Broadway	Mon-Sat, 8 am – 5 pm Year-round	Community events, candy, delis, restaurants, sundries	9 by car, 20 by bike or NFTA
Clinton Bailey Farmers Market	1443-1517 Clinton Street	7 days 7 am – 6 pm May – Nov Sat 6 am – 1 pm Nov – Apr	Wholesale and public, food, plants, bushes, Christmas trees	9 by car, 17 by bike, 25 by NFTA
ECMC Farmers Market at Grider	ECMC Parking Lot A	Fri 10 am – 4 pm May – October	Demos, fresh foods	10 by car, 26 by bike
Elmwood-Bidwell Farmers Market	Bidwell Parkway	Sat 8 am – 1 pm May – December	Demos, music, producer-only	11 by car, 17 by bike, 30 by NFTA



Fig. 3.9: Farmers at Clinton Bailey Farmers Market (Christa Glennie Seychew).

Fig 3.10: Downtown Country Market.



(Harry Scull Jr., Buffalo News)

The QCH plan suggests, “**Expanding [Downtown Country Market] into a year round market will increase shopping opportunities, provide convenience retail for residential populations, and provide retail incubator space.**” The market has an estimated draw of 15,000 to 20,000 shoppers each week, but an expansion should be carefully planned to complement rather than compete with existing public markets.

Although crime rates have improved since the 1990s, Buffalo ranks in the top 25 US metros for violent and property crime

Buffalo reports an average of 14 violent and 60 property crimes per 1,000 people per year, compared to 4 and 20 in New York State.²⁵ One cannot accurately rank cities due to differences in reporting, but crime is clearly a perceived problem. However, the majority of crimes are reported in areas with high vacancy rates, and Downtown is considered a safe neighborhood.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design²⁶

Development should encourage 24-7 activity to discourage crime in the area and ensure public areas:

- Are visible from windows and the street,
- Are well-lit but avoid glare,
- Have alarm or video surveillance systems,
- Are consistently well-maintained, and
- Have strategies evaluated regularly.

28 of 57 Buffalo schools are categorized as failing.²⁷

Buffalo has a bussing system intended to promote diversity in its schools, which include specialized magnet schools. Some of these are very well regarded: City Honors School at Fosdick-Masten Park is ranked as one of the best high schools in the US.²⁸ Most schools' middle-class student achievement rates are at or above state averages.²⁹ Nevertheless, **residents report moving to suburbs or out of the area, seeking better schools.**

Buffalo's well-regarded, diverse higher education plans to expand

Erie County has 11 colleges and universities which have a history of cooperating with Buffalo. Most degrees in Erie are awarded for business, education, health fields, or liberal arts, but the schools also have programs in engineering, architecture, planning, public administration, visual and performing arts, and many other fields. The largest public university in New York, University at Buffalo (UB), was ranked 51st best public university in the US, and its School of Pharmacy 17th best.³²

UB is implementing "UB 2020," a plan to forge new business and research connections and strengthen all three campuses, which share the Main Street corridor with the Market Site. Ultimately, it hopes to increase its student/faculty size 40%.³³

Fig 3.12: Crime Rates and Ratio of Violent Crime



"Buffalo Public Schools is working to upend its record of low student outcomes." - BPS Review Report³⁰

Buffalo is near the end of a ten-year program for rebuilding schools' structures and technology, and all Buffalo residents who graduate from Buffalo public schools are now eligible to receive a scholarship to any SUNY or CUNY.³¹ Nevertheless, fundamentals will need to improve as well before Buffalo becomes more attractive to families. The Market Site is likely ideal for singles and couples, but **to retain families as they age, school improvement must continue to be a priority.**

“Buffalo is known for its snow, but... enjoys four distinct seasons, each remarkable in its own right.” - University of Buffalo¹⁹

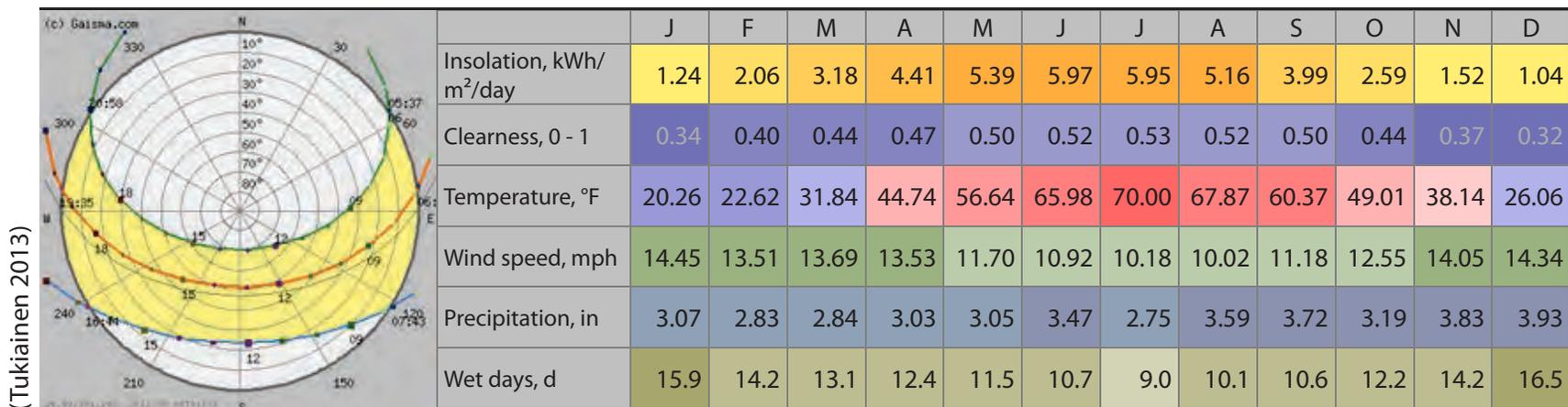
- **Snow:** Buffalo is famously snowy, averaging 30 days of snow per year, reaching over 2 feet monthly in Jan-Feb and 93 inches annually. Buffalo Place removes snow on Main Street areas and may be able to expand their service to the site. Heated sidewalks have been discussed but not implemented.²⁰
- **Sun:** At the summer solstice, the sun apexes at 70° in the south, in winter it reaches 25°. The lot is oriented roughly 10° from a N-S axis, with the eastern portion of the site best situated to receive sun. Nearby Electric Tower casts a midday shadow on part of the triangle lot. Buffalo is less sunny than US average, especially in winter months, with about 80 sunny days annually.
- **Wind:** Buffalo is particularly windy, especially from late fall to early spring. Predominating winds are east/southeast. Trees are often used as windbreaks.
- **Temperature:** Buffalo is slightly cooler than America’s average throughout the year, making for enjoyably temperate summers and slightly chilly winters. Windchill drives temperatures down during winter.²¹

Buffalo's sports are a major attraction for those living in and around the city

However, despite largely contributing to culture, the Bills’ seven annual games keep Ralph Wilson Stadium at only around 85% capacity: around 65,000 spectators.²² The Buffalo Sabres have kept downtown First Niagara (formerly HSBC) Center’s 18,690 seats at 99.9% capacity during their 40 annual games. It also hosts a variety of concerts and events.²³

Both professional teams have never won a championship, but one promotional video proclaims, “Anybody who knows the Bills history knows that we won’t give up no matter how long the odds are... keep those legs moving, then eventually something’s going to happen, inch by inch.”²⁴ Nearby Dunn Tire Park is also a draw, housing Bisons minor league baseball.

Fig. 3.11: Weather and Sunlight in Buffalo



(Tukiainen 2013)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Erie County is shrinking, but its 25-44 year old population is projected to grow until 2020-25

In the last 20 years, Erie County's population has decreased by more than 50,000 people, and although it's stabilized somewhat, current birth and migratory trends suggest it will continue to decline in the coming decades. However, the 45-64 category is projected to shrink the most, with some aging in place and others out-migrating, with groups younger than 45 growing in the short-term.

Fig. 3.14: Historic and Projected Population, Erie County

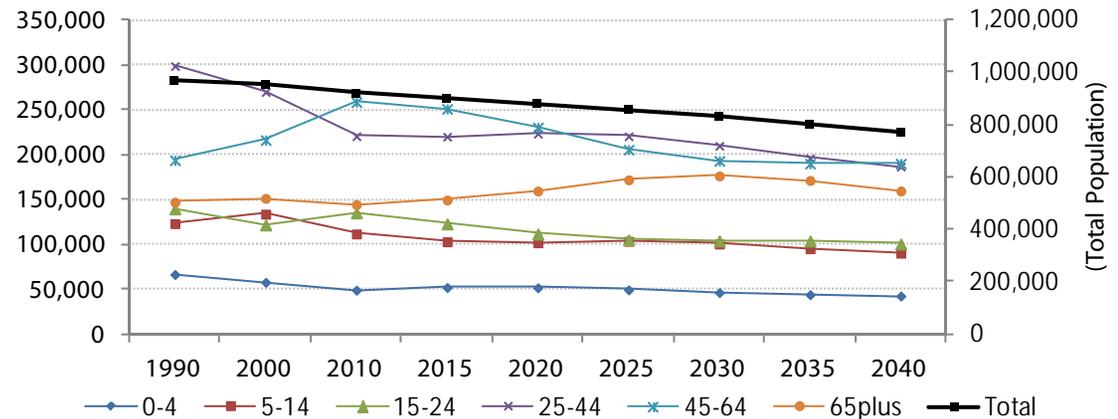
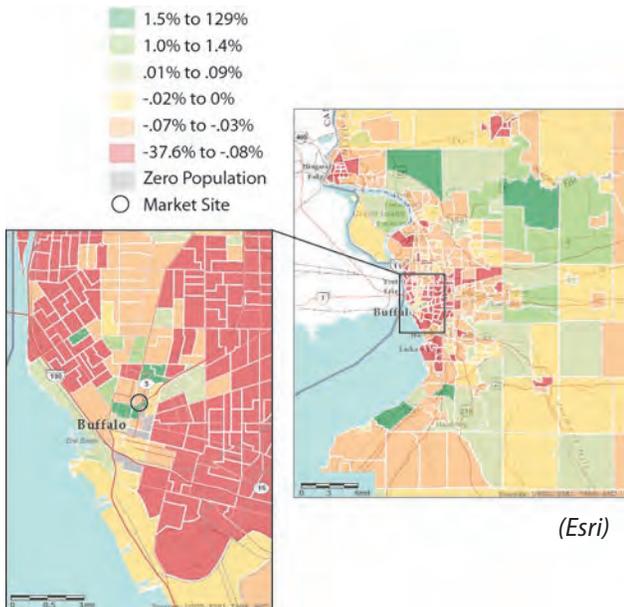


Fig. 3.13: Population Change 2000-2010



Outmigration is shifting to outer neighborhoods and suburbs, but downtown growth is still slow

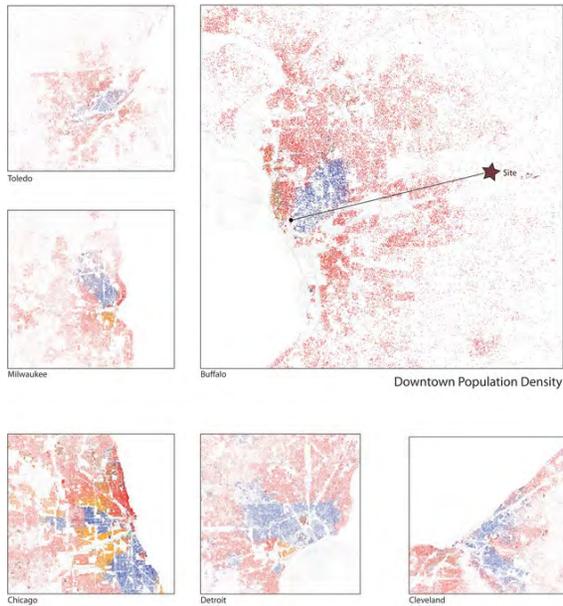
Erie County's loss was until recently almost entirely in Buffalo. The City shrank from 34% to 28% of Erie County since 1990, with residents emigrating both to suburbs and out of the metro. However, in the last ten years, growth patterns have shifted. Older suburbs are declining, while distant, rural areas and the downtown are now modestly growing. In those years, downtown grew by 421 to a total of 1,337 in 2010.³⁴ However, nearby neighborhoods continue to decline. The Queen City Plan identifies reasons of school choice, housing choice, and proximity to suburban employment.

Buffalo-Niagara's young people are more educated than the US average

About 33% of Erie County's residents have some college or an associate's degree, and 35% have a bachelor's degree or higher; several percentage points over US average. This education is concentrated in the population below 35, reflecting the change in Buffalo-Niagara's economy. Those skilled in manufacturing but without college degrees will soon retire, indicating that businesses that may occupy the Market Site should provide occupations requiring college education. Conversely, there may be a need to expand training for vacated highly-skilled manufacturing positions.³⁵

Figs 3.3 & 3.8: (Cornell Program on Applied Demographics)
 Figs 3.6 & 3.7: (US Census Bureau)

Fig. 3.15: Race and Density



(Megan Basnak)

Buffalo-Niagara's minorities are segregated but staying in the region

Out-migration from Erie county is overwhelmingly white, with the net effect of making Erie more proportionately minority. However, the Metro is still the sixth-most segregated Metro in the US, with minorities concentrated in the City.³⁶ This is especially relevant to the site, as it is only one block from Main Street, a historic dividing line between the overwhelmingly black "East Side" and the white and Hispanic "West Side."

Fig. 3.17: Race in Erie County

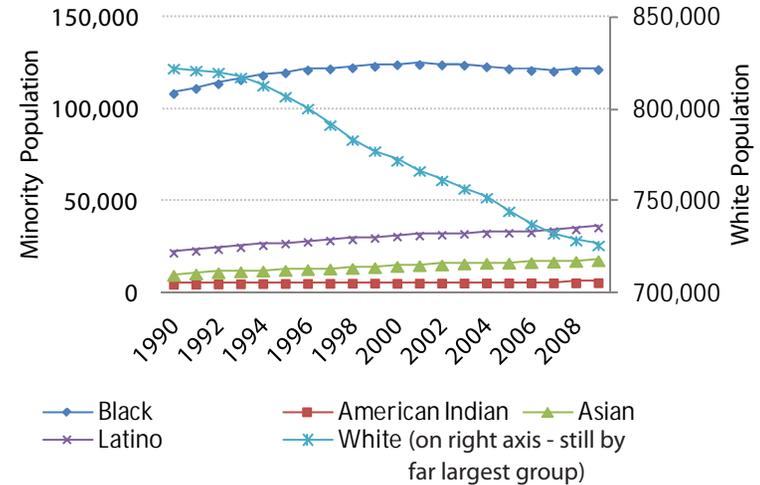


Fig. 3.18: Net Migration Rates

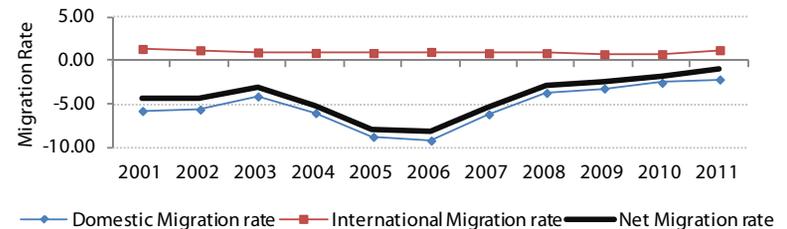
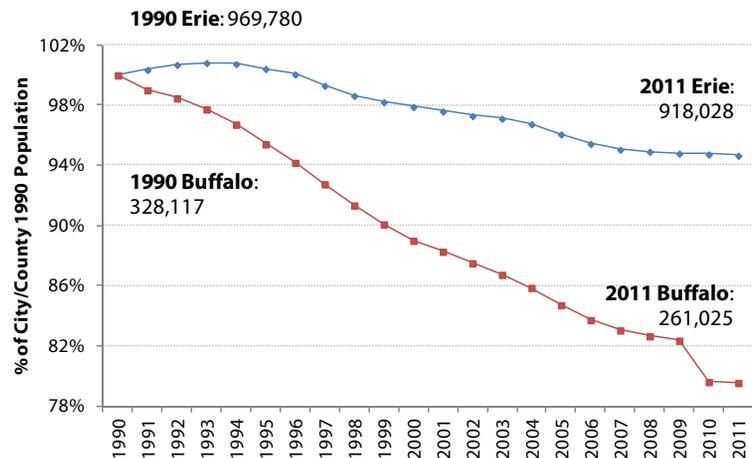


Fig. 3.16: Erie County and Buffalo

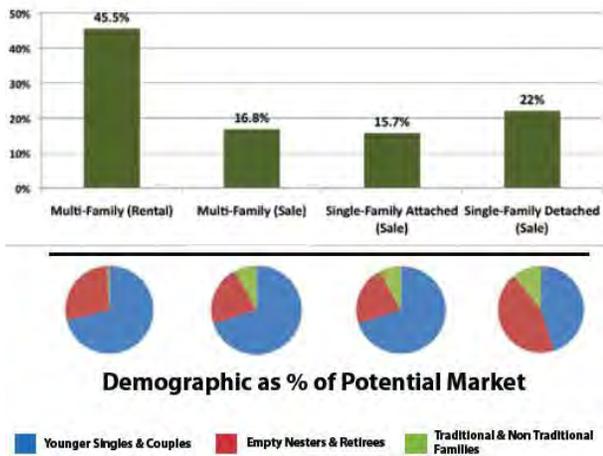


Buffalo-Niagara has diverse, often highly-skilled international immigrants. Much of Erie County's domestic net out-migration has been tempered by a steady international in-migration. Immigrants in Buffalo are more diverse than many other metros, and an estimated 62% of these immigrants are highly skilled, compared to the average of 50% in the top 100 US metros.³⁷ Immigrants from Canada, Southern and Eastern Europe, and South-Central Asia and refugees from the Caribbean, Southeastern Asia, and Eastern Africa are among the largest groups of foreign-born population. Nevertheless, the overall foreign immigration rate per 1000 residents is still lower than the national average.³⁸

Nearly 5,000 households yearly are potential downtown in-migrants, most already living in Erie County

In 2008, about 10,500 households in-migrated to Erie County, approximately 3,800 from outside the state. About a third of households moved to Buffalo. A residential demand study³⁹ estimated the average number of in-migrant households—and those moving internally in Erie County—that would consider downtown living to be about 4,865 annually:

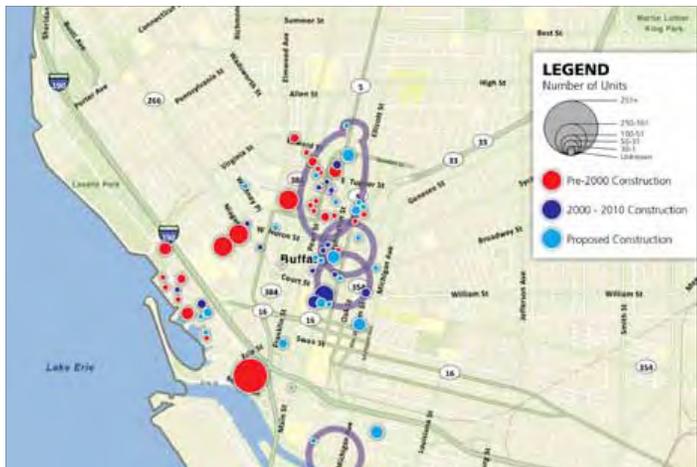
Fig. 3.19: Housing Type as % of Downtown Potential



- 76% are young singles and couples
- 19% are retirees, and
- only 5% are families.

70% of these households would be relocating from somewhere in Erie County, but a growing number are from other places as the economy changes and the metro's turnover increases. While the young singles may be moving out of student housing, their parents' houses, or from out of the area for jobs, the retirees would largely be downsizing from elsewhere in Buffalo-Niagara.

Fig. 3.20: Recent Housing Development



New households in Buffalo-Niagara are a mix of singles and families

More than 2/3 of Buffalo households contain just one or two persons, with the rest of households split between 3 or 4 or more. Only 10% are married-couple families with children, 20% are single parents with children, and 70% are singles or couples. These singles and couples are most likely to move to the City, and most likely to move downtown in particular.⁴⁰

30% of Buffalo households are carless, many 2-person households own 1 car

Still, only about 14.2% of employed residents take transit to work, with small numbers that walk or bicycle.⁴¹ This may be partly due to a housing/employment mismatch: many who work in the suburbs choose to live in the City; many who work in the City choose to live in the suburbs. Only a small number are forced to live near their employment for lack of transportation.

There's a growing market for downtown living

The 2011 study suggests the market is larger than a similar study estimated in 2004.⁴² The study also suggests the retiree market may grow as housing prices stabilize nationally and seniors can sell their homes for their perceived value. These households may choose to live elsewhere in the Buffalo-Niagara region if their needs aren't affordably met downtown.

City of Buffalo (BZABEL).



ECONOMY

Buffalo-Niagara specializes in seven high-growth export clusters:⁴³

- Advanced Business Services (Back office, call centers, data centers)
- Advanced Manufacturing (Automotive, aerospace, chemicals, plastics, food)
- Agribusiness (Dairy, food processing)
- “Cleantech” (Wind, photovoltaic, thermal solar, hydro)
- Life Science (Medical device, therapeutic, in Toronto-Rochester biomedical cluster)
- Logistics (Trade with Canada)
- Tourism

Table 3.3: Buffalo-Niagara Employees and Locational Quotient

Sector	Emp. 2001	Emp. 2010	Change	LQ '01	LQ '10	Avg. Private # Emp. 2011
Total	443,209	426,562	-16,647	1.00	1.00	16.6
Natural Resources and Mining	1,850	1,595	-255	.27	.22	9.0
Construction	19,865	18,022	-1,842	.72	.82	7.3
Manufacturing	78,172	49,408	-28,764	1.18	1.07	39.5
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	104,212	94,845	-9,367	1.00	.97	17.2
Information	10,379	7,505	-2,874	.71	.69	23.3
Financial Activities	30,175	30,193	18	.97	1.02	13.8
Professional and Business Services	58,024	68,741	10,717	.88	1.02	16.3
Education and Health Services	75,632	85,417	9,687	1.26	1.14	25.6
Leisure and Hospitality	44,947	51,867	6,920	.92	.99	18.6
Other Services	19,497	18,550	-947	1.14	1.06	6.9
Unclassified	457	517	60	.44	.81	0.9

Bureau of Labor Statistics

New York State has invested heavily in several sectors of Buffalo-Niagara's economy

The Buffalo region's economy is slowly contracting, but it is reinventing itself as a center for high-growth, high-tech industries. In late 2011, New York State dedicated one billion dollars for economic development in the Buffalo metro. Selected programs include:⁴⁴

- Streetscape and circulation improvements for downtown,
- Career education programs for youth and adults including an arts & health technology center,
- Support for Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Alfred University's material research,
- Tourism and education programs for Niagara Falls, and
- A collaboration between Upstate institutions including UB to translate research into businesses through an entrepreneurship-incubator program which bridges business clusters in 27 counties.

90% of net job growth since 2001 was in health services, education, financial, business services, and hospitality⁴⁵

Highest-LQ subsectors are residential care facilities and business management.⁴⁶ Although growth in financial sector was slight, it may increase: the City of Buffalo hosts the growing M&T and First Niagara's corporate headquarters, and HSBC Bank plans to concentrate back-office services for its worldwide operations in Buffalo.⁴⁷ Notably, the average private business in Buffalo is small: around 16.6 employees. However, most jobs are in a small number of large businesses.⁴⁸

Tourism accounts for about 8% (direct and indirect) of regional employment, with a variety of visitor types

Buffalo-Niagara is the second-largest tourism market in Upstate after the Finger Lakes.⁴⁹ This tourism is centered on the Niagara Falls state park, receiving more than eight million visitors a year.⁵⁰ There are currently 1,803 rooms in downtown Buffalo and 9,163 in Erie County with an above-average 66.1% occupancy rate.⁵¹ A 2007 study suggested 40% of visitors were in Buffalo on business, 37% were there for leisure, and 23% were in the region for conventions or sports.⁵² Since 2007, the number of events in Buffalo has increased and several new hotels are planned (See p. 3-23, *Real Estate: Hotels*).

The Market Site is walkable to health, financial, and tourism clusters

The Market Site is minutes away from the Buffalo-Niagara Health Campus and the Financial District and located adjacent to the Theater District, a tourist location. The other clusters, including logistics, business services, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness, are concentrated in Amherst or south of the Buffalo River, drivable to the site.

Clearly, there is opportunity for a project to tie into one or more of these sectors and the \$4 billion of investment the \$1 billion of economic development grant money is expected to generate.⁵³ The Site's unique history as a public market may even suggest a tie into agribusiness.

Fig. 3.21: Monthly Hotel Occupancy, 2011

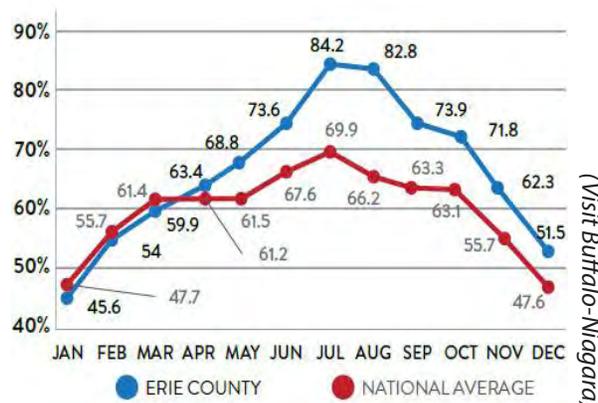


Table 3.4: Top 14 Employers in Buffalo-Niagara

Top employers, 2011	Emp.	Industry	Distance f/ Site (Mins)
State of New York	27,955	Government	Not Applicable
University at Buffalo	10,898	Education	23 NFTA to S. Campus
Kaleida Health	10,000	Health Services	10 car, bike, or NFTA
United State of America	10,000	Government	Not Applicable
Catholic Health System	6,230	Health Services	11 car or bike, 15 NFTA
Employer Services Corp.	6,089	Admin and Support	25 car, 57 NFTA
Buffalo City School District	5,200	Education	Not Applicable
Tops Markets	5,117	Retail Trade	21 car, 45 NFTA to Corp. HQ
HSBC Bank USA N.A.	5,000	Finance/Insurance	4 car or bike, 7 NFTA
M&T Bank	4,611	Finance/Insurance	3 car or bike, 6 NFTA
Catholic Diocese of Buffalo	3,500	Other	3 car or bike, 7 walk
Roswell Park Cancer Institute	3,224	Health Services	5 car or bike, 10 NFTA
Wegmans Food Markets	3,134	Retail Trade	Not Applicable
Moog Inc.	2,578	Manufacturing	20 car, 63 NFTA

*Note that many employers have multiple locations spread throughout Buffalo-Niagara. State of New York includes many education jobs at SUNY Buffalo (Buff State) and many Federal Government jobs are related to the border crossing to Canada.

New tourism and manufacturing clusters are planned for brownfields near the Market Site

New York State awarded three Brownfield Opportunity Area Grants to Buffalo, including two close to the site: Buffalo Harbor and Buffalo River. The grants pay for suitability studies and implementation plans, and although the program is in public comment phase, suggestions include creating additional recreational facilities and positioning large, key parcels for manufacturing or logistics south of the river.⁵⁴

Jobs walkable to the Market Site tend to pay more than the Erie county average and require at least a bachelor's degree

Jobs within a .5 mile distance to the Market Site are often in the financial or professional sector, and more workers in that radius have a bachelor's degree and make more than \$3,333 a month than the Erie County average.⁵⁵ However, many people who live downtown actually reverse-commute to mostly northeastern suburbs, where there are many education and information-related jobs.

Those in highly-skilled positions tend to have lower incomes than the US average

Many HUD and mortgage underwriting standards use a guideline that households spend only 28% of their income on housing. This suggests the average Buffalo worker can afford \$900 monthly for rent or mortgage, home or renter's insurance, and utilities.

The average worker in manufacturing, construction, information, professional, or finance—or working for the federal government—have wages at or near \$4,000 monthly and could afford common downtown rents. However, those wages are still under US averages and are almost all falling.

Table 3.5: Average Weekly/Monthly Wage, Buffalo Niagara 2011

Supersector	Average Monthly Wage Q4 2011	12 mo. % change in average weekly wage Dec 2010 - Dec 2011	12 mo. absolute change in average weekly wage Dec 2010 - Dec 2011	28% of Monthly Wage
Total, all industries	\$3,216	-0.50%	(\$4)	\$900.48
Natural Resources and Mining	\$3,516	-4.40%	(\$40)	\$984.48
Construction	\$4,156	-2.40%	(\$26)	\$1,163.68
Manufacturing	\$4,644	-0.20%	(\$2)	\$1,300.32
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	\$2,676	-1.20%	(\$8)	\$749.28
Information	\$3,916	-1.90%	(\$19)	\$1,096.48
Financial Activities	\$4,028	-2.70%	(\$28)	\$1,127.84
Professional and Business Services	\$3,868	-0.40%	(\$4)	\$1,083.04
Education and Health Services	\$2,980	-0.50%	(\$4)	\$834.40
Leisure and Hospitality	\$1,880	5.40%	\$24	\$526.40
Other Services	\$1,880	-1.50%	(\$7)	\$526.40
Unclassified	\$2,736	-3.30%	(\$23)	\$766.08
Federal	\$5,412	-4.80%	(\$68)	\$1,515.36
State	\$3,596	-1.50%	(\$14)	\$1,006.88
Local	\$3,564	-3.50%	(\$32)	\$997.92

Bureau of Labor Statistics

View from City Hall observation deck (Tim Lewis).



DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC SUMMARY

Buffalo's laborshed—potential Market Site customers, residents, or workers—may become increasingly young, skilled, and multicultural, the type of population that enjoys downtown living. However, even if this segment grows, Buffalo-Niagara's overall population may continue to shrink.

However, the retiree population will also grow, creating need for senior services, housing, and entertainment.

Buffalo-Niagara is leveraging state money in specialized industries, especially biomedical and tourism. The Site is near both these clusters, in addition to a stable financial sector downtown.

Finally, the future of manufacturing in Buffalo is still uncertain. Buffalo is positioning itself to take advantage of a manufacturing comeback, but with a weakened pool of labor and young workers less interested in manufacturing, Buffalo's competitive advantage is weak.

REAL ESTATE MARKET: HOUSING

REAL ESTATE

Even if the Market Site is developed for institutional use, including private-sector uses can increase the site's fiscal sustainability and add vibrancy. Matching appropriate private and institutional uses could also suggest reasons for going ahead with a public-private partnership; for example, a convention hall that operates partially with public money in the same project as a completely private hotel will increase the viability of both pieces of the project.

Examining Buffalo's real estate stock, absorption rates, sales and lease prices, and projects in the pipeline can suggest what private uses are viable at the Market Site. In addition, Buffalo Building Reuse Project offers location/project criteria for public project funding of different types of projects. The Market Site is analyzed through these criteria as well.

Single family home prices are stable, but few are being sold

The Buffalo-Niagara region as a whole enjoys a great deal of market stability. Between 2008-2012, median single-family per square feet grew around 40%; 18% last year. This is due to a combination of Buffalo's affordability and diverse economy preventing foreclosures from dragging the housing market down.⁵⁶ Housing Price Index has been growing since 2000, although it has slowed somewhat recently.

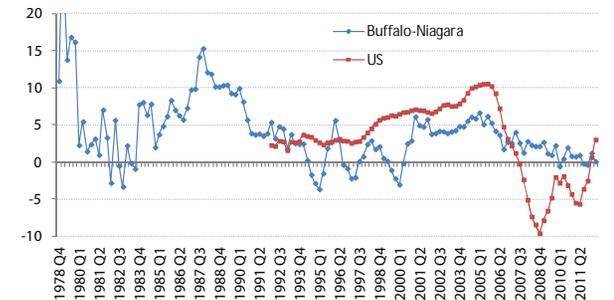
Although there were 9,080 subprime loans in the region at the time of the 2008 recession, Buffalo's foreclosure rates were about 1.6%,⁵⁷ less than half of the US rate. Its delinquency rate is medium-low as well, at around 7%, which suggests that future foreclosures may cool the market while avoiding serious disruption. However, the number of new mortgages is shrinking, suggesting many cannot meet tight lending requirements.⁵⁸ This also suggests sellers cannot find buyers at perceived values, reinforced by the average list price being \$170,622, but the average sale price being only \$93,478. Many houses in Buffalo are taken off the market when list prices aren't met.⁵⁹

Fig. 3.22: Avg. Single Family Price Per SqFt



(Trulia)

Fig. 3.23: 1-Year Change in HPI



(Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Multiunit structure sales are strong, selling at around \$30,000 per unit

In Buffalo-Niagara, sale price per unit in multiunit structures has remained slightly over \$30,000 from 2008-2012.⁶⁰ However, similar to single family detached trends, tighter lending requirements have decreased the number of annual transactions. This also indicates that few property owners are troubled and need to sell for less than perceived value of their properties. Buffalo currently commands higher-than average per-unit asking prices for the metro at about \$33,000.

The Market Site is a priority residential area Buffalo-Niagara Enterprises suggests incentivizing residential development near existing housing and retail density. The site is within the Queen City Hub priority area but not adjacent to priority residential reuse projects. However, the site can link those projects to the new housing near Genesee Gateway. Additionally, there is active retail for potential residents along Ellicott St. and in the Chippewa district. BNE recommends encouraging a mix of development types.⁶¹

Fig. 3.24: BBRP Residential Priority Areas



(Buffalo Niagara Partnership 2012) Site noted by team.

Absorption for downtown is estimated at 161 to 323 units per year

The Zimmerman-Volk residential study, using demographic projections similar to those described in this report, estimated that the downtown market could absorb different unit typed, based on the average proportion of each group that prefers new construction:

(Zimmerman-Volk 2011) Table 3.6: Estimated Absorption Potential Downtown

Type	Annual Potential	Est. Capture Rate	Est. Absorption
Rental Multi-Family	2,215	5% to 10%	111 to 222
For-Sale Condo	815	2.5% to 5%	20 to 41
For-Sale Single-Family Attached	765	2.5% to 5%	19 to 38
For-Sale Single-Family Detached	430	2.5% to 5%	11 to 22

Zimmerman-Volk suggest downtown could capture more units based on its proximity to transit stops. However, the effect of Buffalo’s light rail on absorption is unknown. Although it is hardly a “train to nowhere,” it still lacks important connections to places such as UB’s Main Campus or the airport, therefore conservative projections seem appropriate.

There is little available for-rent or for-sale multifamily housing currently available downtown

Overall, there is only a 3.2% vacancy rate with 2% annual rent growth for multifamily housing in the Buffalo-Niagara region, comparable to most New York markets.⁶² 513 downtown units in 19 buildings that Zimmerman-Volk surveyed in 2011 were 98% occupied. They found only 22 condo units available for sale.

1/3 of downtown workers would rather live downtown, with the average ideal rental being two bedroom and \$685 monthly (2011 adj. \$)

About one third of 2100 respondents to a 1998 downtown employee survey said they would prefer living in the Theater or Allentown districts if there was affordable housing. Those who desire to live downtown were 64% college graduates, 79% white, and 81% childless singles or couple. The prices most respondents could afford were \$96,000 or \$476 monthly in 1998 dollars, although 35% were seeking rentals \$500-1000. 62% of renters preferred apartments and 38% preferred singles or townhouses. These preferences were reversed for owners.⁶³

Available housing downtown is at a large range of types and prices

A major barrier to many who wish to live downtown are rents, which can push up to \$2,000 a month. Public opinion as voiced in the Green Plan Workshops is that downtown housing is not accessible enough to a mix of incomes and ages. Although new construction would necessarily have to be largely market-rate, larger housing developments can provide a diversity of options at a range of prices. This is an option not available for smaller developments that must maximize the rents of every unit.⁶⁴

According to the Zimmerman-Volk residential demand study,

Of the 20 properties covered in the survey, rents for studios currently range from \$525 to \$600 a month for units containing from just under 400 to 500 square feet (between \$0.93 to \$1.58 per square foot, up from \$0.80 to \$1.00 per square foot in 2004). Rents for one-bedroom apartments generally start at about \$650 and reach \$1,895 a month for units ranging in size from around 700 to 1,850 square feet (a general range of \$0.90 to \$1.28 per square foot, although a few individual units fall below or above this rent-per-square-foot range, and up from \$0.70 to \$1.25 per square foot in 2004). Rents for two-bedroom apartments generally start at around \$850 per month with a few units priced at or near \$2,500 a month (at the Buehl and Pierce Buildings), for approximately 1,000 square feet up to 2,400 square feet of living space (from well under \$1.00 to about \$1.33 per square foot, from \$1.00 to about \$1.25 per square foot in 2004). For the most part (and depending on location), these rents and prices cannot be achieved by the development of one or two infill units, but require that projects be of sufficient size (at least 20 units) to support a high-impact marketing campaign and achieve some measure of cost efficiency through economy of scale. Location will also have a significant impact on rents and prices; projects situated within a short walking distance of high-value amenities, such as restaurants, theaters, shops, or employment will likely command rents and prices at the upper end of values. Those projects in less desirable locations are likely to command rents and prices at the lower end of values.

New units are almost always adaptive reuse/restoration or senior/student housing with 331 new units now or soon online

In 2012, 161 new units downtown—including 115 at Hotel Lafayette—had been completed or were in the pipeline. An additional 83 units were complete or in the pipeline in nearby Allentown or Elmwood Village, and 87 additional were elsewhere in Buffalo. Most of these units are adaptive reuse or restorations, with the only new construction in Elmwood Village.⁶⁵ In addition, 49 new townhomes are built or planned for the neighboring Fruit Belt neighborhood.



Lofts at 136, adaptive reuse, only downtown student housing.

Dedicated student housing is usually outside downtown

Most student housing development is in Amherst or University Heights, with the largest recent project 150 new units in Amherst. Since 2010, Lofts at 136 has the prime example of downtown student housing, with 91 2-5 bedroom furnished units ranging from \$460 to \$595 per student, utilities and internet included, parking extra.⁶⁶ The Lofts advertise to all the area universities, but nearly 70% of residents went to nearby Erie Community College in 2010 and 24% attended Buffalo State.⁶⁷ When Buffalo State sent 175 students to Lofts at 136 during 2012 dorm renovations, it reached its full 303-student occupancy.⁶⁸

REAL ESTATE: OFFICE

The Market Site doesn't match all the criteria for priority office development

The BBRP recommends priority funding for offices that build on recent investments, provide class "A" office space with large plates and nearby decked parking, and reduces surface parking lots and vacant parcels. Although the site could offer large floorplates, it is not in an existing cluster such as Larkin, BNMC, or the Financial District.⁸¹

Fig 3.29: BBRP Office Priority Areas



(Buffalo Niagara Partnership 2012) Site noted by team.

Type "A" Office Space is currently performing well, but vacancies may soon double.

Although Buffalo-Niagara had a 10% office vacancy rate at the beginning of 2012, the best-performing buildings were in Amherst/Williamsville and in downtown. In downtown, there's an even mix of Class A, B, and C space, with class A and B performing better than the US Average downtown rate of 13%. New inventory is being added in the Larkin District and near the medical campus along with some rehab projects downtown. Expansion in the entire region is largely fueled by the education and healthcare sectors.⁷⁸ Rehab projects have reduced the largely-vacant class C space by 110,000 square feet, but there are still millions of square feet of class C space left.

Table 3.8: Inventory of Office Space in Central Business District

	Total Inventory (SF)	Change in Supply (SF)	Available (SF)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Change in Vacancy (%)	Net Absorption (SF)	Quoted Lease (\$ PSF)
Class A	3,966,677	0	173,379	4.37	0.37	-14,716	19-24
Class B	4,300,490	113,840	552,676	12.85	-1.68	169,439	15-18
Class C	4,292,219	-110,700	~ 963,945	~ 22.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flex Office	125,000	0	10,000	8	-20	25,000	N/A

(CBRE, Inc.)

Projected vacancies at HSBC Tower and creation of space at the Statler may add 1,450,000 sf of type A to existing 1,700,000 sf of all types of vacant downtown space.

Although HSBC plans to maintain back-office operations in Buffalo, it plans to relocate to the nearby atrium, and two other major tenants have already vacated. The owners of the plaza are considering their options, including converting offices to condos or hotel space, especially as the extra office space competition could put pressure on smaller landlords downtown.⁷⁹ If this space is vacated and the current, healthy absorption rates continue, it would still take more than 11 years for the vacancy rate of all classes of offices to reach 10% in downtown, considered healthy by BBRC.⁸⁰

Until the future of the HSBC space is determined, new office space should be limited to specialized space in existing districts. However, the long-term prospects for type A and B space downtown seem strong.

REAL ESTATE MARKET: RETAIL

Buffalo-Niagara's retail is concentrated in existing shopping centers

At a macro level, Buffalo-Niagara is organized into five regional shopping centers centered on enclosed malls. CoStar estimates 62 million square feet of retail in the metro, with about 9 million in Buffalo CBD⁶⁹, not counting offices and apartments with first-story retail. Consumers spent an estimated 9.6 billion from summer 2011-summer 2012 in the metro.⁷⁰

A common measure of competition is dividing spending by square feet of active retail (Index of Retail Saturation), with 200 indicating low-competition areas. Buffalo-Niagara's IRS is around 170. Another measure, retail space per capita, puts Buffalo at 32-34 sf per capita, higher than most metros.⁷¹ The large amount of retail SF reflects Buffalo's strength in retail. In fact, it ranks 17th of the top 100 metros for retail jobs retained 2008-2012 and 3rd in rent growth 2012: .5% per quarter.⁷² Much of the success is attributed in part due to Buffalo-Niagara's continued appeal to Canadian shoppers as the US Dollar weakens.⁷³ However, the fact that there's almost no retail growth indicates that retail in Buffalo-Niagara may be overbuilt.

Downtown isn't as successful as the metro

At the end of 2012, CoStar reported a 25.74% vacancy rate and CBRE reported a 7.1%. The difference may be due to CoStar's inclusion of buildings of less than 50,000 sf. Both reports agree, however, that Buffalo's net absorption is negative: tenants are moving out faster than moving in. The only positive absorption was in the North Buffalo corridor, with a new Spot Coffee, Target, and Shoe Depot. Although there is no recent report on vacancy or absorption rates downtown, a 2002 Buffalo Place analysis of Main Street indicated a 27% first-floor vacancy rate. The team found that some asking rents reached \$12 for mixed-use first-floor retail, but the average was below the MSA's average at \$9-10 psf.

Fig 3.25: Avg. Per SqFt Asking Rent, Retail

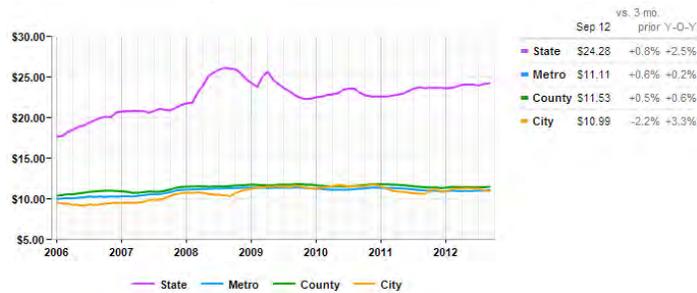


Fig 3.26: Avg. Per SqFt Asking Price, Retail

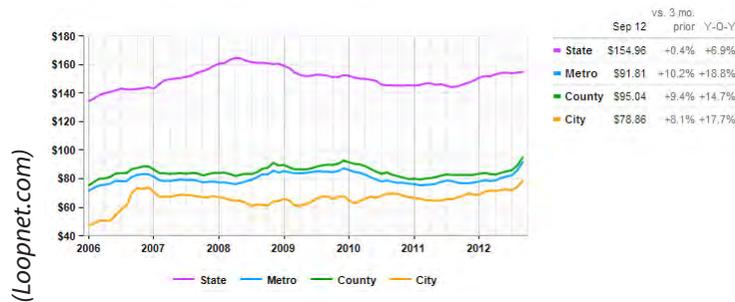


Table 3.7: Number of Stores by Category 2003

Bicycle Shop	1
Book Stores	3
Confectionery Stores	1
Cigar Store	1
Clothing Stores	1
Eating and Drinking	108
Electronics	1
Florist	7
Furniture and Acc.	3
Gift Stores	5
Jewelry Stores	9
Newsstands	10
Office Supplies	1
Pawn Shops	3
Shoe Stores	5
Stamp/Coin Shop	1
Variety Stores	2
Vitamins/Supplements	1

2004 unmet demand: \$75 million.

(Queen City Hub Plan)

Site is near priority retail investment areas

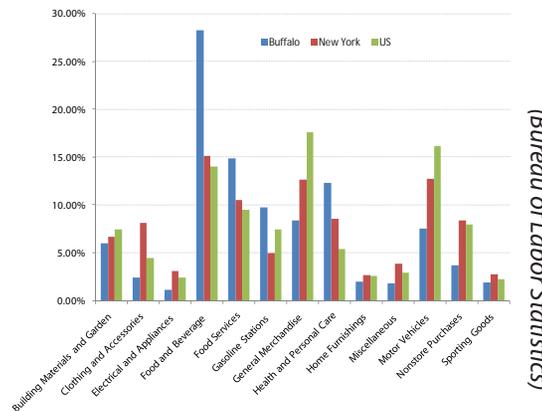
Although even the most optimistic projections of retail growth do not require construction, there is argument for having retail components on the market site. It is adjacent to the Genesee Gateway, a high-visibility BBRP priority area. Other criteria could be met by design, including targeting visitor, worker, or resident needs. Existing nearby establishments could suggest existing clusters or unmet needs. A full market evaluation is recommended.

Fig. 3.27: BBRP Retail Priority Areas



(Buffalo Niagara Partnership 2012) Site noted by team.

Fig. 3.28: Buffalo vs. US Spending



(Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Downtown's retail largely serves people who do not live downtown

There is currently 588,750 square feet of retail and restaurants in the Buffalo Place service area, 2 blocks on either side of Main Street from Goodell to the waterfront.⁷⁴ This is comparable to Cleveland. Most of this retail serves those outside downtown: Several studies⁷⁵ have suggested one household can support 9 square feet per capita of retail that serves daily needs, suggesting that 12,033 square feet of downtown retail is supported by downtown residents. Even if Buffalo meets its goal of adding 1,500 downtown residents, this would suggest only another 13,500 square feet of retail could be activated. Although adjacent neighborhoods are also poised to continue growth, they have their own neighborhood retail centers.

Buffalo workers and tourists don't spend as much as US averages downtown

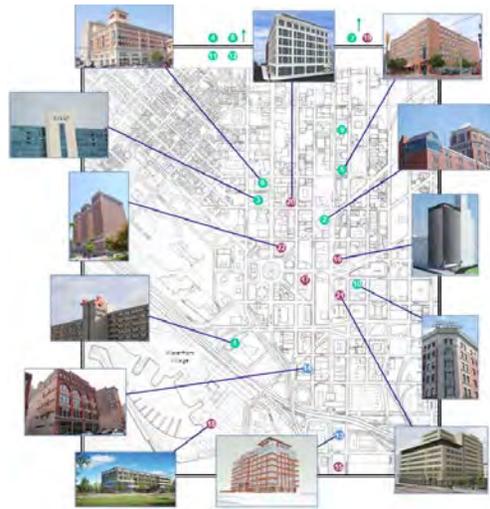
A 1998 study indicated that Buffalo workers only spend \$675 downtown annually, well below the US average at the time of around \$2,740.⁷⁶ There are about 38,700 workers who commute into downtown, with about 40% from 10 or more miles away. Using an estimate of \$265 psf sales for food service establishments,⁷⁷ outside workers currently support 98,600 square feet, but could support 400,000 square feet.

Why don't workers and visitors spend more?

The Queen City Hub plan identifies retail's difficulty as poor landlord-tenant relations along with a mismatch between the types of services desired by downtown employees and those offered by downtown. Landlords often require retailers and restaurateurs to pay for storefront improvements, but entrepreneurs rarely have access to the required startup capital. Among solutions were landlord education, a revolving loan fund for entrepreneurs, and a focused marketing program.

REAL ESTATE MARKET: HOTEL, OFFICE, INDUSTRIAL

Fig. 3.30: Downtown Hotels



(Buffalo Rising 2012)

No.	Hotel	Status	Rooms
1	Adam's Mark	Done	486
2	Hyatt	Done	396
3	Embassy Suites	Done	182
4	Holiday Inn	Done	166
5	Comfort Suites	Done	146
6	Hampton Inn	Done	139
7	Doubletree- Med Campus	Done	100
8	Best Western	Done	61
9	Hostel Buffalo Niagara	Done	40
10	Hotel @ Lafayette	Done	34
11	Mansion	Done	28
12	Lenox Hotel	Done	20
Total:			1,798

No.	Hotel	Status	New Rooms
13	Courtyard by Marriott	UC	96
14	Lofts on Pearl	UC	32
Total:			128

No.	Project	Status	New Rooms
15	Webster Block	PL	140 or 200
16	Hilton Garden Inn (Tishman)	PL	123
17	50 Court Street	PL	120
18	Wingate	PL	100
19	1001 Main Street	PL	92
20	Curtiss	PL	68
21	AM&A's	PL	na
22	Statler	PL	na
Total:			643+

Buffalo-Niagara hotels have strong occupancy rates, but many projects are “in the pipeline.”

Downtown hotels routinely reach full occupancy during conventions and sporting events. Several developers have responded with downtown hotel projects. A 32-room boutique hotel and 96-room Marriot hotel are currently under construction, and 643 additional rooms are in planning stages.⁸² Because these represent a 33% increase in downtown inventory, it is inadvisable to begin additional hotel projects until fewer are “in the pipeline.” However, there may be an eventual need for a large, brand name hotel such as a Four Seasons, depending on sports and convention growth.⁸³

Fig 3.31: Economic Development Zones



- Empire Zones
- Renewal Communities
- Empire Zones and Renewal Communities

(Queen City Hub Plan) Site noted by team.

Buffalo's industrial vacancy rate is relatively low, but the site is not ideal for industry.

Buffalo-Niagara's vacancy rate increased in 2011 to 13.2%, still below the national average. However, neighboring markets vacancy rates are better, as low as 5.5% in Toronto. There was negative absorption for manufacturing and flex space, but good performance for warehouse.⁸⁴ Rents are at around \$3 - 4 psf.⁸⁵ Costs for sites with already-developed infrastructure are \$45,000 - \$60,000 per acre, and several industrial parks have ready-to-build sites.

Although light industry such as the Choco-logo Confectionary has proven successful in downtown and the QCH plan recommends marketing class B and C space for light industry incubation, office and residential space can out-bid industry and new development on the site would likely be too expensive compared to the city's peripheral industrial parks. In addition, there are still vacant industrial buildings for high-end or artisan industry desiring a “hip” location.

REAL ESTATE SUMMARY

Buffalo-Niagara is viewed as a “third tier” market for many reasons, but most of all because of the metro’s historic loss of jobs. However, Buffalo is stable and predictable, with lease rates and sale prices growing modestly but steadily.⁸⁶ This is in large part due to the economy’s resiliency, “one of the best-performing regional economies among the nation’s 100 biggest,” a Brookings Institution Study shows.⁸⁷

Because of Buffalo-Niagara’s population loss, it may be undervalued. Well-positioned residential rental properties downtown have had excellent absorption rates with favorable cap rates. Condominiums have had some success as well. Although rates from \$1,000 - \$1,500 are achievable, there is great demand for more affordable rental units.

Single family detached homes, however, are often on the market for long periods, and many sellers take the homes off the market when they do not sell. On the upside, the mortgage crisis does not seem to have greatly disrupted Buffalo’s market.

The market for class-A office space and hotel space are both strong, but the end of large tenants’ leases in HSBC tower and several hotel projects in the pipeline create a great deal of uncertainty at the time of this report. Other sites offer better access for industrial real estate at lower rents.

On the other hand, retail and restaurant use may have some site-specific potential, despite a high vacancy rate downtown, a large metro-wide ratio of square feet to population, and too small a downtown population to activate more than around 10 to 15,000 additional square feet of retail even if growth occurs.

New retail may, however, serve employees working in Buffalo’s downtown, who do not currently spend as much as their counterparts in other cities on downtown food and services. A closer examination of the neighborhood along with an exploration of complimentary institutional uses could reveal the ideal uses against this regional backdrop.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

1. Nicolai Ouroussoff, *New York Times*, "Saving Buffalo's Untold Beauty."
2. Reyner Banham, et al, *Buffalo Architecture: A Guide*.
3. Ibid, 11.
4. In late 2011, the City undertook a \$4.5 million project to restore Martin Luther King Jr.'s early-1900s basin, creating a winter skating rink, fall/spring reflecting pool, and summer splash pad. The City and Olmsted Parks Conservancy undertook concurrent projects such as restoring and improving shelters. Public Works commissioner Steven Stepniak said, "To us, this is not just about MLK Park, this is the historical significance of that basin. It's a huge part of the history of Buffalo." Sara DiNatale, *Artvoice*, "Still Wading: MLK Splash Pad's Opening Delayed."
5. Although a master plan has been adopted outlining implementation steps and costs to restore and relink the park system, full funding has not been committed. See Olmsted Parks Conservancy, *The Olmsted City: The Buffalo Olmsted Park System Plan for the 21st Century*; City of Buffalo, *Queen City in the 21st Century*.
6. Some other winter attractions are a Christmas Tree Lighting and New Years Eve Drop. City of Buffalo, *Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project*, 3-3.
7. Buffalo Place, Inc., "Rotary Rink at Fountain Plaza."
8. Buffalo Place, Inc., "Magical Memories on Main Street."
9. Buffalo Winterfest, *Buffalo Winterfest Powder Keg*.
10. Evan Lambert, *OutTraveler G.P.S.*, "Buffalo, NY: The Queen City."
11. Lyndsey D'Arcangelo, *Advocate.com*, "Op-ed: The Buffalo Stace."
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Current use of Market Site, an M&T parking lot (Steve Siegel).



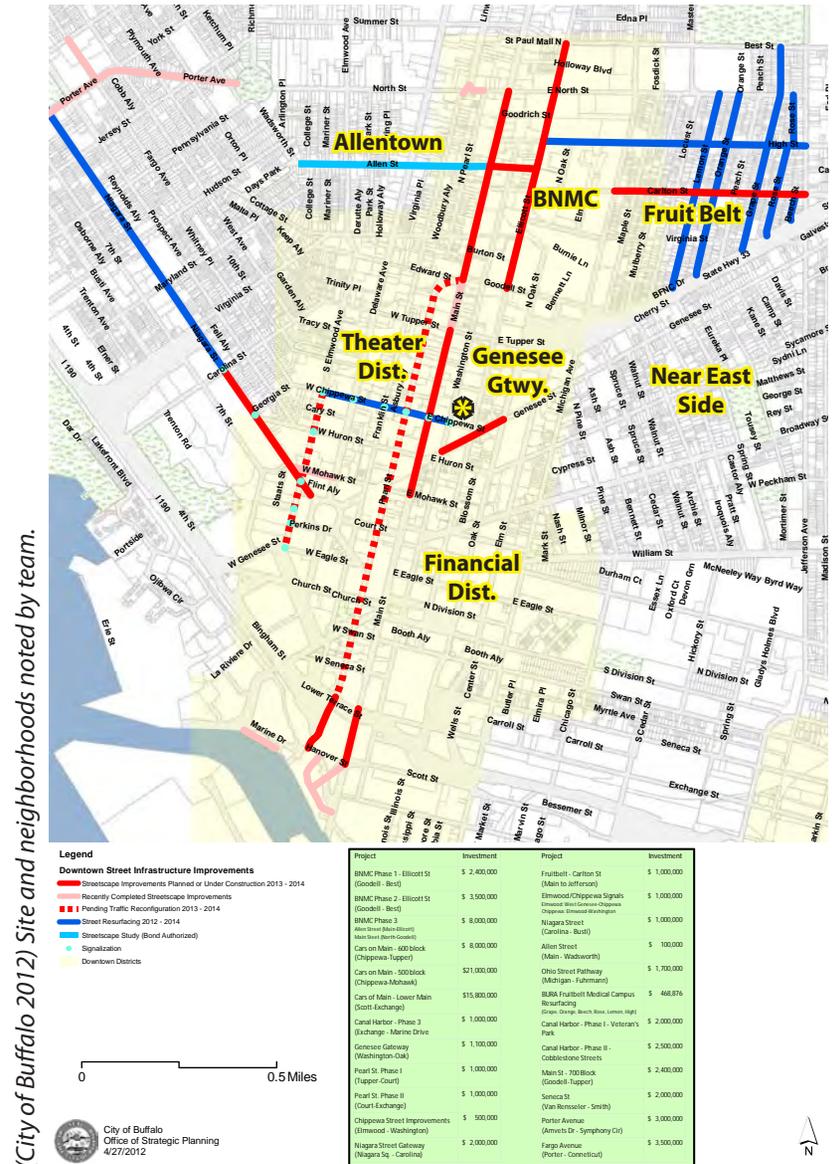
CHAPTER FOUR: SITE ANALYSIS

Many initiatives are currently underway to revitalize Buffalo's downtown core. Some of these schemes include

- “The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo” – a civic effort to ‘improve the center of the city’ through the identification of strategic investment areas;
- “Buffalo Building Reuse Project” –an analysis of current conditions using Queen City Hub’s identified strategic investment areas as well as an examination of precedents; and
- “Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project” – an effort to reintroduce the automobile back to Main Street in hopes that the presence of cars will reinvigorate the thoroughfare and the surrounding streets.

The Queen City Hub plan sets goals for districts that compose downtown, with an ultimate goal of knitting these districts together with adjacent neighborhoods. The site analysis begins with a description of districts and neighborhoods near the site, then moves to analyzing surrounding adjacent architecture, open space, circulation, and land use regulation.

Fig 4.1: Downtown Infrastructure Projects with Neighborhoods noted



(City of Buffalo 2012) Site and neighborhoods noted by team.

ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Genesee Village



The Genesee Village was a cultural and economic hub from mid-1800s to mid-1900s, fueled in part by activity at the Washington Market. However, it suffered from suburbanization, deindustrialization and urban renewal, and many of the buildings were demolished.

The Buffalo Urban Renewal Authority created a 2005 plan to assemble parcels for reuse and create streetscape improvements to revitalize this area.¹ Concurrently, developers rehabilitated

several buildings on Ellicott, which are now upscale lofts at 100% capacity renting at \$1150 to \$1950.² One neighborhood draw is named after the Washington Market, an upscale deli/coffee shop with convenience grocery items.

In summer 2010, Buffalo created a Historic District enabling tax credits. This enabled a \$10 million+ rehabilitation creating a mixed-use project.³ The “Genesee Gateway” houses the US Passport Office, Department of State, and

two startup investment advisory firms.⁴

The BUDC plans to improve the streetscape with high-visibility crossings, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting along Genesee, which would link the new developments to the Market Site. It is considering a traffic circle at Genesee and Ellicott.⁵ In addition, Catholic Health is planning a 700-employee facility on Oak Street.⁶

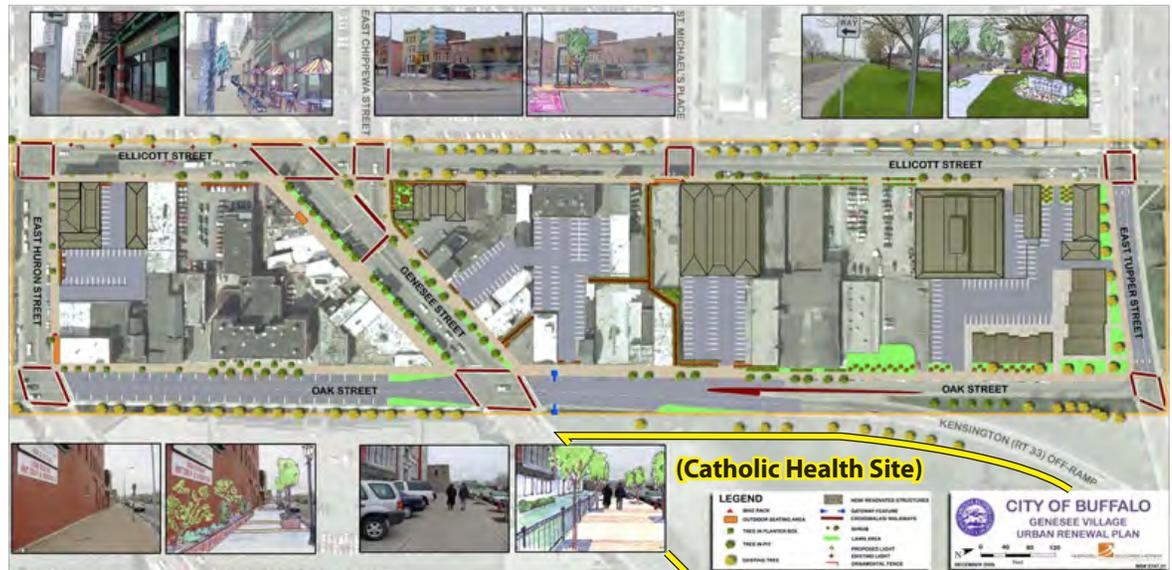
Figs. 4.2 - 4.6, Counterclockwise from top: Former Werner Photography Building, Genesee Block in the 1940s, Genesee Gateway, Streetscape Improvement Plan, Genesee Renewal Plan.



(Buffalo Rising)



(Buffalo Urban Renewal Authority)



(Buffalo Urban Renewal Authority) Team noted health site.

Theatre District

The idea to preserve and market the 500-600 block of Main as the Theatre District was born in a UB graduate architecture studio. In 1983, it was made a local preservation district bounded by Goodell, Chippewa, Washington, and Pearl, and it is now a regional attraction drawing 1.2 million visitors each year.⁷ Although Buffalo had a theater community since the early 19th century, the centerpiece of the theater district, Shea's, was actually built as a silent movie theater. Shea's was restored in the late 70s after a period of decline, and now shows Broadway musicals, orchestra and band performances, a free film series, and other live shows. Other "off-Broadway" type theaters have opened around the district.

Recently, developers have converted a number of 1920-30s era office and light industry spaces into residential lofts. As second and third-story space along Main



Street is developed into housing, the City envisions the theatre district growing onto Washington and Pearl Streets. According to the Queen City Hub plan, "Over the years, attention has focused consistently on the Theatre District and vicinity as the most attractive and logical place to develop new housing Downtown."⁸

Other prominent architecture includes the Market Arcade, a shopping plaza that connects the Market Site with Main Street and once part of a series of mid-block pedestrian cut-throughs (*See 6-2, Market Arcade for description and recommendations*). Further south on Main Street, the scale of buildings grows to more than 20 stories, including the Hyatt-Regency, KeyBank Tower, and M&T Center. This area includes the Fountain Plaza (*See 4-8, Open Space*).

Although the district is an example of successful redevelopment, many storefronts remain closed. The 1970s-era pedestrian mall is now viewed as a failure, although the reasons are most likely due to its design rather than its concept—it is full during downtown's many events such as Curtain Up, Downtown Country Market, and weekday lunches. Nevertheless, plans to return vehicular traffic to the mall have been implemented. Finally, there may be need to enhance historic interpretation in this area.⁹

Financial District

The Financial/Government district, south of the site, is one of the largest employment centers in Erie County, home to about 30,000 jobs, 20% in finance, 20% in professional/technical, and 16% in public/administration. More than half of the employees make more than \$3,333 a month, about a third hold at least a bachelor's degree, and 85% are white. They live in and outside of Erie County, 10% living farther than 50 miles away. However, a large number live in the West Side neighborhood, Abbot McKinley neighborhood, or nearby villages of Kenmore, Kensington, and Hamburg. Most drive.¹⁰ Notably, the grandest renovations and new projects such as the Federal Courthouse and Statler Hotel renovation take place in the financial district.

Fig 4.7 Below: Niagara Square (Bill Cobb).

Fig 4.8 Left: Shea's Performing Arts Center (AAA).

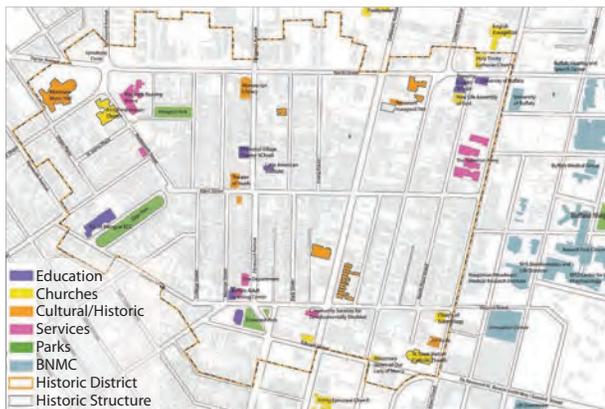




Fig. 4.9: Allen Street nightclubs (Wikipedia).



Fig. 4.10: Eclectic houses in Allentown (Sasaki and Madden).



Allentown

Allentown is described as “an artist community... it's where all the young boho-trendy people hang out.”¹¹ The neighborhood was famously one-time residence of Millard Filmore and Samuel Clements. It faced decline from the great depression through the 1940s, but in the early 1960s, Allentown residents formed a community association to preserve its variety of architecture, secure home improvement loans, and demand increased city services. It gained a reputation as a hub for Buffalo counterculture, which remains to this day—although some argue it has been gentrified, it remains diverse. It was made into a local historic district in 1978, with part listed on the National Register in 1980 and the remainder listed in 2012.¹²

Allentown has a “First Fridays” celebration the first Friday of each month at galleries, restaurants, and businesses and an annual Art Festival drawing 450 exhibitors and an estimated crowd of more than 300,000 annually.¹³ Allentown’s retail—69 businesses in 2009—is centered on Allen Street’s intersections with Elmwood and Delaware, featuring an eclectic mix of restaurants, services, and art galleries. Main Street actually has few businesses,

Fig 4.11: Allentown Features (Sasaki and Madden)

although has recently seen restoration and conversion to dwelling units. Delaware Avenue is the most heavily-trafficked corridor, and has some national chains along with service businesses. Particularly famous are Rust Belt Books and a strip of nightclubs on Allen St.¹⁴

Homes in Allentown currently have sold from an average of \$100,000 to \$200,000, and are a very eclectic mix of styles and types.¹⁵ However, only about 25% of residents live in owner-occupied buildings. Employed Allentown residents tend to be poorer than the average employed Buffalo-Niagara resident, likely because they rarely work in manufacturing. Instead, they tend to be employed in healthcare or food service fields. As in downtown, about 45% reverse-commute to Amherst and other suburbs for work.¹⁶



Fig. 4.12: Allen St. (Wikipedia)

Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus

Before 2000, BNMC was Hospital Hill, a neighborhood containing three regional medical research and treatment centers. These centers and many smaller players created a consortium to guide physical development, collaboration, and interaction with the surrounding community. The 3.4 million sf, 120-acre campus is less than a ten minute walk along Ellicott from the site and a stop on the metro rail. The campus employs:

- 8,500 employees
- 500+ MDs
- 200+ PhDs

It also is visited by more than one million patients annually.¹⁷

BNMC updated its strategic plan in 2010, projecting 5.3 million sf growth in permitted or anticipated projects, creating much of downtown's office growth. The growth has outstripped predictions, and economic trends indicate it will reach buildout by 2030.¹⁸

Most relevant to the Market Site's physical layout are planned streetscape improvements along Ellicott, including a two-way conversion and a linear park stretching from Best to Goodell, two blocks from the Market Site. The plan calls

for a continuous streetwall along the park to the current UB Gateway building, with the southern portion of the site focused on educational use.²¹

Less than 30% of BNMC's employees live in Buffalo. The remainder live nearby in Amherst or Cheektowaga, although one survey suggested many would live downtown if affordable housing were available.¹⁹ Notably, if UB expands its presence at BNMC, it anticipates growing student housing, retail, transportation infrastructure, and on-site conference center needs.²⁰

However, the growth has caused friction in neighboring Fruit Belt and Allentown. Demand for parking has disrupted the neighborhood character of Fruit Belt and Allentown businesses. In addition, some have questioned what development scale is appropriate to transition between the campus and neighborhood.²²

BNMC has begun cooperating with NFTA and the City to utilize parking/shuttle options and to create strong pedestrian connections to light rail stops, with hopes to cluster much of the supporting development (residential, office, or support retail) at the stops.²³

BNMC Master Plan includes linear parks and expands into Fruit Belt.

Fig. 4.13: Conceptual Rendering of Ellicott Park (CKS and Gamble).



Fig. 4.14: BNMC Master Plan





Fig. 4.13: Colored Musicians Club (WBFO.com).

Fig. 4.14: Michigan Baptist Church (National Historic Trust).



Near East Side

The Market Site is three blocks from Buffalo's East Side, a geographic region extending easterly from Michigan Street. The area is notable for an early African American settlement near Michigan-William Street Area in the early 1800s. Germans settled in areas near what would become the Fruit Belt. Later communities of Jewish, Italian, and Polish formed in the East Side.²⁴

Buffalo's black history is especially important in understanding this region. Three facilities near Michigan-William Street were instrumental in the abolitionist movement and underground railroad; two of were demolished, while the Michigan Baptist Church is listed on the National Register.²⁸ During the Pan-American Expo of 1901, groups successfully lobbied for "the Negro Exhibit," displays and photographs of black history and accomplishments. However, this was overshadowed by exploitative and misrepresentative Midway presentations such as "Darkest Africa" and "The Old Plantation."²⁵

The black population in Buffalo remained small until the Great Depression, when a large population migrated from rural south to urban north. Most settled in the Michigan-William Street neighborhood. They faced bitter segregation, and

created inward-facing self-help groups and businesses such as the Colored Musicians Club. However, the East Side faced decline in the postwar period, accelerated by late-1950s urban renewal projects that displaced thousands of black and Jewish residents.²⁶ The East Side transitioned to a black majority as white families migrated mostly to suburbs such as Cheektowaga and Amherst.

Today, the east side has around 23% vacancy rates and is considered an "urban prairie." This influences the nation's perception of Buffalo as a whole. Racial tensions are still high, as recently as 1992 polls found racist attitudes in whites.²⁷

Although there have been some community-building efforts elsewhere in the East side, the team was able to find no plans for the area nearest the Site, the "Near East Side." This area includes Enterprise School, Western New York Maritime Charter School, Pinnacle Charter School, and light industry/warehouse development, along with the historic Michigan Baptist Church and the Colored Musicians Club, which hosts daily performances and an annual jazz festival to this day.¹

Fruit Belt

The Fruit Belt's name refers to orchards once there, with streets such as Peach and Orange. It transitioned from mostly German to African American in the 1950s, when urban renewal projects in the lower East Side displaced families to the Fruit Belt. At the same time, the German population learned the Kensington Expressway would split the neighborhood and left for suburbs. It became a destination for the increasing African American population in the 1960s.²⁹

However, distressed properties were not restored with low-interest loans like Allentown's, but instead bulldozed and replaced with two affordable apartment complexes³⁰ and the expanding future Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. This sparked population loss, fracturing of community, and depreciation of homes.³¹ The vacancy rate was around 17% in 2000, with slightly under 2000 residents.³²

However, in the last two decades, the community began building again. Community leaders believe careful planning coordinated with BNMC's expansion may reverse population loss. UB's Center for Urban Studies created a plan to rehabilitate or build new housing, landscape residential streets, and market aggressively to BNMC employees, upwardly mobile blacks, and

suburbanites of all races interested in living near the city. Increased population and buying power may support a small neighborhood retail center. An aggressive anti-gentrification strategy was built into the plan, including refurbishment of homes at public cost, tax breaks for existing low-income residents, and guaranteed re-housing of displaced residents.³³

Although the TIF to fund the project was not approved, community groups and churches have begun to implement the plan; St. John Community Development Corp. in particular is moving on \$500 million plan for a total of 150 infill houses

and amenities.³⁴ One of BNMC's goals is to work with these disparate groups, encouraging housing and retail, while "blurring" the boundary between the campus and neighborhood through step-downs in massing and scale.³⁵

The Fruit Belt contains notable amenities such as churches and schools. City Honors School, a nationally-recognized magnet High School, is located on North Street. PS 47, Futures Academy, is in the center of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is home to nationally-recognized Locust Street Art Class program which provides free art training to all ages.



Figs. 4.15-4.17: Fruit Belt aerial, Infill next to older housing, Map of infill of last 50 years

NEARBY OPEN SPACE



Figure 4.18: Example of ideal types of sittable space, according to Whyte and PPS. Notice that trees are also present in the background and the number of people making use of this space despite the obvious presence of fall. (Project for Public Spaces)

Public opinion is that there isn't enough quality greenspace in downtown Buffalo. What exists is inaccessible, poorly lit, and concentrates the homeless population. HSBC Plaza is considered underutilized and uninviting. In order to attract people on a daily basis, no matter the time of year, a key part of programming must include well-conceived open spaces between the building(s) and the property line.

[Social Life of Small Urban Spaces](#)

In "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces," William H. Whyte and other members of his "Street Life Team" use careful observation of real spaces to uncover why certain areas in a city are filled with people and lively and others are empty and underused. Spaces within New York City such as the Seagram's Plaza—successful—and Bryant Park—not successful, at the time—are their main focus, but other spaces are evaluated as well, both outdoors and in.³⁶ Whyte's advice, based upon detailed analyses, can be used as a model when critiquing current open spaces in downtown Buffalo as well as when developing new points of interest, such as at the Market Site.

Whyte realized that a careful study of people's movements and actions was key to understanding what draws them to certain spaces and deters them from others. He found that people are most attracted to spaces by the presence of other people and that people watching is the "number one activity" that frequenters of urban open spaces engage in. Whyte insisted that the ability of people to move through and within a space "is the ultimate test of a design."³⁷ Many of his findings may seem commonsensical to many readers but aspects he outlines as necessary for successful open spaces, like adequate seating and the presence of a diversity of activities, are very often disregarded when professionals embark on urban space planning endeavors. Whyte developed a number of recommendations based upon his findings that can act as criteria for the programming of the open space on the Market Site and throughout downtown (See sidebar.)

Although preferable, not all of these aspects must be present for an area to be animated. But some of the criteria are considerably more important than others. Whyte discovered "one major finding" true in all studied plazas, deceptively simple,

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Sittable space:** Presence of adequate and comfortable seating (Fig. 4.18)
2. **Street:** Creation of a lively dialogue between the site and the street
3. **Sun:** Orient space towards sun or its reflection to provide warmth and light
4. **Water:** Useful amenity for noise cover and for its relieving qualities
5. **Trees:** Pollution-deterrents, shade-providers, and beautification elements
6. **Food:** Such as vendors, outdoor cafes, or restaurants, as a way to attract activity to a space (Fig. 4.19)
7. **Triangulation:** "Characteristics of a specific space that can bring people together." Involves the ongoing interest that attracts people to site. Might include impromptu street acts, unusual sculpture or other street furniture, or large windows placed strategically along nearby buildings that allow people to easily observe the activity taking place within.³⁸ (Fig. 4.20)

yet often unheeded by cities: "People tend to sit where there are places to sit." It is important to have a variety of sittable space because it gives people "a feeling of choice." Some of the most favored type of sitting spaces are built-in ledges and steps or movable, lightweight chairs. Ledges or movable chairs that are – or can be – oriented to take in the drama of the street are particularly desirable.³⁹ These criteria in addition to qualitative personal observations⁴⁰ made on Sunday, September 18, 2011 and Wednesday, October 19 through Friday, October 2, 2011 are used in the following analysis.

Many of the open spaces in Buffalo's downtown appear as dead zones when walking through and around them on a crisp fall day, but fluctuating weather patterns cannot solely be to blame. On their own, these spaces lack appeal in their siting and everyday offerings.

Figure 4.20: Example of successful triangulation. Eye Sculpture at Pritzker Park in Chicago (Kolb 2009).



Figure 4.19: A Street vendor like this one in New York City can help to enliven an otherwise cavernous space created by the modern tower in the background (Thispiggy.com).





Fig. 4.22: Niagara Square, c. 1912 postcard (Wikipedia).



Fig. 4.23: Niagara Square today (Bing Maps).

Niagara Square and Lafayette Square

Niagara Square and Lafayette Square lie south of the Market Site and are separated from one another by Court Street, which runs east west. Neither of these park-like spaces is actually square in shape. Niagara Square is circular and located at the intersection of Delaware, Niagara, Genesee, and Court Street. The architecturally stunning City Hall borders the square to the west.⁴¹ Lafayette Square, located just west of Main Street, resembles the narrow end of an ironing board. Over the years, its northwest and southwest edges were shaved to allow more room for passing vehicular traffic (See figures page 4-11).

Niagara Square is the more attractive of the two. Its trees are lacy and provide visibility from both within and outside the square. A grassy expanse acts as an open but defined barrier between street and

plaza zone. Conversely, Lafayette Square is burdened by rows of thick trees at its three straight sides to the north, south, and east. The under-pruned trees give the inner spaces a foreboding appearance and grass does not grow well beneath the thick foliage. A sunken, grassy plaza is at the square's west "pointed" end, where a stage is set up during the Thursdays at the Square concert series.⁴²

Both Niagara Square and Lafayette Square are completely encompassed by three to four lane streets, seeming more like islands in a sea of cars and pavement than gathering spaces. Although heavy car traffic is not often present, accessibility is still poor because of wide breadths of pavement. Niagara Square has particular access problems: despite the four openings around its perimeter, demarcated pedestrian walkways are only located at the east and west ends.

	Sittable Space	Street Dialogue	Sun	Trees	Water	Food
Niagara Square	None	Dominated by 3-4 vehicular street lanes	Adequate because of orientation	Lacey and well-kept	None	Not close to food vendors
Lafayette Square	None	Dominated by 3-4 vehicular street lanes	Trees provide too much shade	Unpruned	None	Not close to food vendors
Fountain Plaza	Only immovable benches	Flagpoles demarcate space without creating barrier	Oriented southward for maximum sun	Trees in beds	Pool not interactive in summer, fountain too loud	Close to offices for lunch, no vendors

There is little to do or to see at either square, save for the large sculptures that triumphantly stand in each square's center and the attractive architecture on the opposite side of the street. These squares are too exposed to the street—even consumed by it at many points. There is little to appeal to a pedestrian in search of respite. Despite Whyte's emphasis on interaction with the street, here the street to square ratio is not evenly balanced, making the formation of a dialogue impossible.

The locations of Niagara Square and Lafayette Squares are useful for some purposes, however, especially those that involve large groups of people. Larger groups create a better balance between street and square. Buffalo Place, Inc. describes Niagara Square as the "unofficial town square of Buffalo" and it is sometimes the site of political demonstrations and other gatherings.⁴³

In Fall 2011, the Occupy Buffalo protest selected Niagara Square that affirms Buffalo Inc.'s "town hall" designation. The presence of protesters actually added welcome liveliness and street engagement to the square.

Fountain Plaza

Fountain Plaza, located two blocks from the Market Site on the west side of Main Street, departs markedly from the design of older public spaces like Niagara Square and Lafayette Square. The plaza was designed and constructed in the early 1980s as part of the same Main Street revitalization efforts that transformed the street into a pedestrian/transit mall. While Main Street's closure to automobiles is now a largely acknowledged failure, downtown visitors and citizens view the plaza quite favorably. A reviewer on a travel website even goes so far as to declare it, "the Best plaza in the World!"⁴⁴ In contrast to the grassy Lafayette and



Fig. 4.24: Lafayette Square, c.1912 postcard (Wikipedia).



Fig 4.25: Lafayette Square today (Bing Maps).

	Walking Distance from Market Site	Shape	Access	Programming	Triangulation
Niagara Square	10 minutes	Circular	Poor: Four entries, only two crosswalks across 3-4 lane streets	Political demonstrations	Single monument and architecture across street
Lafayette Square	7 minutes	Iron-board	Poor: Surrounded by 3-4 lane streets	Thursdays at the Square	Single monument
Fountain Plaza	3 minutes	Rectangle	Good: spills into pedestrian plaza	Christmas Tree Lighting, St. Patrick's Day Parade	No interaction with surrounding buildings



Fig 4.26: Fountain Plaza as fountain. Note 5' benches (Nathan Mroz).



Fig 4.27: Fountain Plaza as Rotary Rink (Nathan Mroz).

Niagara Squares, stone is used to pave the ground around Fountain Square's fountain, and trees are arranged in individual beds. A large waterfall is located at the south end of the plaza.

The square has many elements called for by Whyte in Small Urban Spaces:

- It is sited adjacent to the pedestrian street, allowing for an easy dialogue between the two.
- Occupying much of the plaza space is a large rectangular reflecting pool that functions as the Rotary Rink in cold weather.
- Benches approximately five feet in length are placed around the pool.
- Lines of flagpoles surround the reflecting pool, demarcating off the space but without the creation of a solid barrier.

Fountain Plaza is well used in the winter months. In addition to the ice rink, the plaza is also the site of the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and a main feature during the St. Patrick's Day Parade.⁴⁵ Its use during the summer months is indiscernible by the team, although its strategic location along Main Street and close proximity to many office towers in

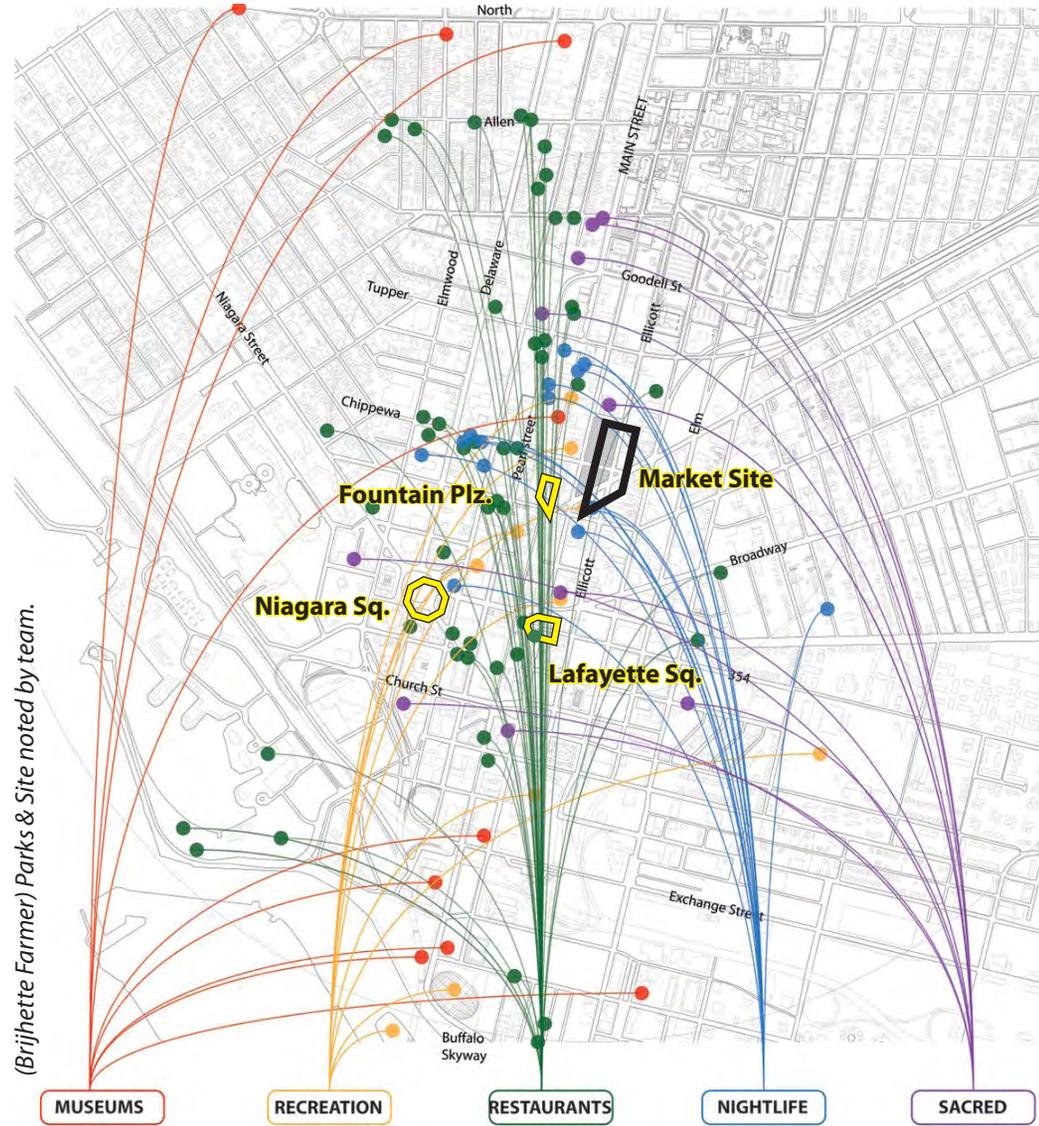
the area ensures that its benches are used during lunchtime hours on weekdays.

Although the plaza incorporates many of Whyte's guidelines, noticeable shortcomings are present:

- There are no ledges or other surfaces upon which to "create" impromptu seats. The water features are also only somewhat successful.
- The reflecting pool has no interactive function when not in use as an ice rink. It does have the opportunity to be a wonderful asset in warmer months too, as a place for children and adults to wade in and refresh themselves.
- The water fountain along the southern edge of the pool creates a near-deafening roar when in use, which reduces its triangulation effect.
- The neighboring office towers exude a sense of being inaccessible fortresses, further reducing triangulation. Although large windows are present at the sidewalk level, they are recessed back into the caverns of the building so that it is difficult to discern what is present within without walking into the void.

Niagara Square, Lafayette Square, and Fountain Plaza are places for congregation and interaction amongst the citizens of Buffalo, but they so rarely perform this function. If dull or overwhelming features were addressed these spaces behave as great congregating centers throughout the year. A noticeable element that all three open spaces lack is easily attainable food centers. Currently strict guidelines regulate the presence of food vendors in downtown Buffalo and it is a time consuming process to acquire a vending license. Perhaps the city should consider loosening such regulations as a low cost way to animate downtown's many open spaces on a daily basis.⁴⁶ Ensuring the active use of these sites has the potential to draw people to other parts of downtown as well, such as the Market Site just a block east of Main Street.

Fig. 4.28: Attractions and Open Space Downtown



SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE



Fig 4.29: St. Michael's Church.

Fig. 4.30: 639 Main Street typifies the low-rise commercial blocks surrounding the site.



The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of largely late 19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings. Their relatively similar ages of construction have resulted in a consistent architectural character in terms of scale, materiality, and level of façade arrangement and ornamentation.

The block north of the site is dominated by the nine-bay southern elevation of St. Michael's Church. The church is clad with brick and incorporates brick corbelling and stone detailing around the nine rounded-arch windows. East of the site stands a block of adjoined rectangular commercial buildings. These two-to-four story buildings are clad with brick and are characterized by flat roofs and parapets, typically crowned by bracketed cornices. Each building's first story-level features large storefront windows with recessed entrances. The upper levels, which are separated by brick stringcourses, feature rectangular or rounded-arch windows. West of the site are the rear elevations of the commercial buildings that front on Main Street. The simple rear façades of these rectangular, brick buildings are similar to those east of the site, featuring flat roofs and parapets with bracketed

cornices, large storefront windows with recessed entrances, and rectangular or rounded-arch windows on the upper levels. Electric Tower, a dominant view across Genesee, is reminiscent of the Tower of Pisa, Italy; and the Pharos lighthouse of Alexandria, Egypt.

Fig. 4.31: Electric Tower.



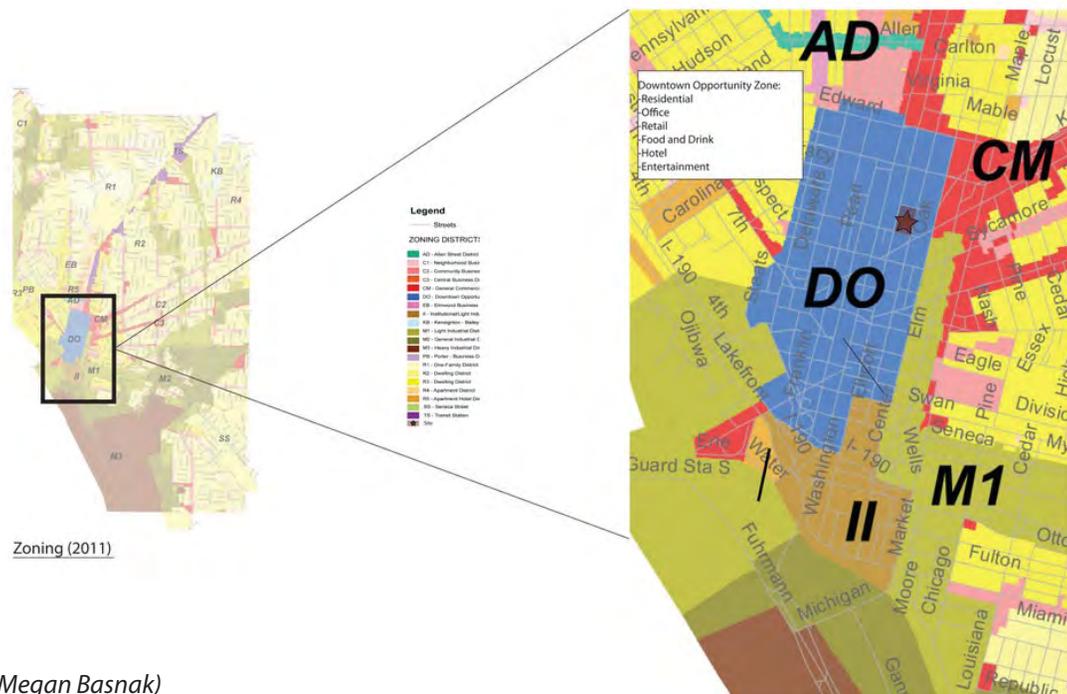
LAND USE REGULATIONS

Currently, the site is zoned Downtown Opportunity (DO), with most uses allowed by right. Buildings must be at least two stories or 24', built to the right-of-way without side setbacks, and with 50% "clear vision glass" at street level. It can be subdivided into lots at minimum 40' frontage and 4,000 sq. ft, and is otherwise very flexible. In addition, all projects must comply with a citywide site plan review.

However, the city of Buffalo is in the midst of creation of a Unified Development Ordinance, the Green Code. The purpose is to "establish a new regulatory framework for the development of our neighborhoods."⁴⁷ Current drafts of the Green Code place the Site in the N1-D district: "Downtown or regional hub of substantial scale with a mix of commercial, residential, hospitality and entertainment uses." The drafts have suggested N1-D will prohibit some uses including gas and service stations, most types of industry, and commercial parking lots. Forms will be limited to urban structures such as mixed-use blocks, towers, or civic/monumental buildings. Plazas will be allowed conditionally, while courtyards will be allowed by-right.

It is very likely that development on the Site will need to be permitted under the new code, but the exact specifications have not yet been finalized. The team's recommendations are compatible both with current zoning and with drafts of the Green Code, but flexible enough to be adapt to the final ordinance.

Fig. 4.32: Zoning Districts



CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

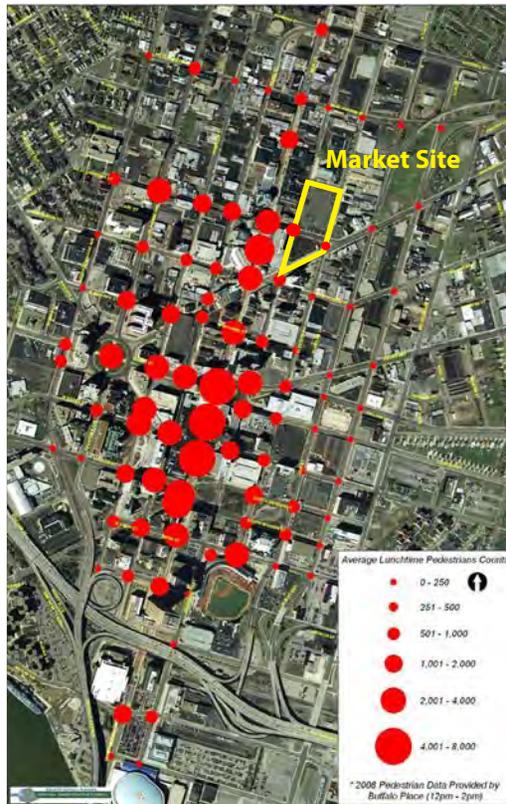


Fig. 4.33: Pedestrian Volume (Buffalo Place 2008) Site noted by team.

Main Street reaches 1000 pedestrians per hour during lunch in summer, the most of any street downtown

Most recent pedestrian counts performed by Buffalo Place have suggested that fifteen locations along Main Street experience the 1,000 pedestrians per hour required to sustain ground-floor retail during lunchtime.⁴⁸ Volume is heaviest on Main Street in the financial district, with Main & Chippewa lunch counts between 500 and 1000. Pedestrian counts along Ellicott are below 250. Although these counts were conducted only during lunchtime in summer, they may reveal which sites experience the most pedestrians, even if they overestimate the count. Chippewa has many late-night establishments, and may have greater counts than Main on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The Site has excellent highway access

The Site is one block from the termination of the Kensington Expressway, a 55-mph grade-separated highway to the Buffalo-Niagara airport and beyond. ADT near the site was 62,400 in 2010, growing to 100,000 as it moves toward affluent northeastern suburbs. The Expressway is currently the subject of a NYS DOT study in which capping portions of the trenched highway or converting it to an at-grade boulevard is being considered.⁵⁰ Funding has not been identified and its effect on the site, if any, is unclear. Additionally, the site is only three minutes from the Peace Bridge and I-190, linking Buffalo to Toronto and the rest of New York.

Kensington defines traffic patterns around the site⁴⁹

The most successful sites need a delicate balance—enough cars to be visible and accessible, but not too many to make the area unpleasant or unsafe for pedestrians. This site may have this balance, as there are around 4,000-7,000 cars daily on the four streets the site touches, with most traffic headed to or from from Kensington Expressway. Nearby arterials Oak and Goodell Streets have the largest traffic counts in the area, with between 15,000-17,000 cars daily. A challenge will be to draw eyes from these arterials to the neighborhood while maintaining calm traffic on the surrounding streets.

Fig. 4.34: Diurnal Ebb and Flow of People

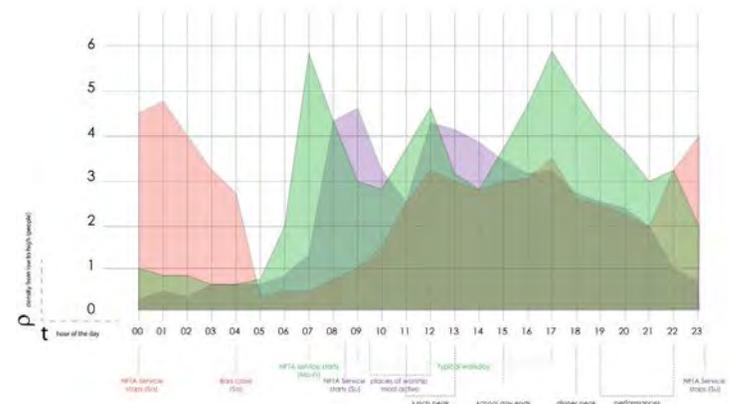


Fig. 4.35: Average Daily Traffic



The Site is separated from nearby neighborhoods by Oak and Goodell

There's a flip side to having good visibility from Oak/Elm and Goodell/Tupper—these high-traffic corridors separate the Market Site from nearby districts and neighborhoods, effectively cutting it off from Allentown, BNMC, Fruit Belt, and the Near East Side. Although Tupper has been reconverted to two-way traffic and calming measures are being installed as part of BNMC improvements, but no projects are planned for Oak/Elm, despite an QCH action item suggesting a study to recommend improvements.⁵¹ It may be beneficial to consider improvements to the Genesee Street intersection with these two roads as Genesee Gateway is further developed.

The Site is one block from the Fountain Plaza and Theater NFTA stops

NFTA trains run once every ten minutes during rush hour and once every twenty minutes other times from 5:10 am to 12:50 am weekdays, and later in the morning on weekends. Despite being labeled “a train to nowhere” the system has experienced a 5-10% increase in ridership most quarter since 2008, reaching 23,000 passengers daily.⁵² The system currently terminates at UB’s south campus, but NFTA is currently undertaking a \$1.2 million study to extend the line to UB’s Amherst campus.⁵³ Given the transit-friendly target market of the site and the large number of downtown residents who currently work in Amherst and number of students who live in Amherst but enjoy the Chippewa district, this would only increase the site’s appeal as both home and attraction. In addition, there is interest in creating a new line along Genesee, Division, or Exchange Streets to the airport. Genesee would create a hub between the Main and airport lines near the site, but city plans identify Exchange as the preferred option. This expansion is only theoretical at this time.

The Theater stop, which now serves 2,000 passengers daily, is being removed to increase curbside drop-off for Shea’s Theater when Main Street is reopened for traffic.⁵⁴ Fountain Stop is closer to the Site, and would likely channel more people down Chippewa than through Market Arcade.

DOWNTOWN PARKING

Theatre District parking near capacity

Although QCH recommends a study that includes weighing shuttle options, transit, and demand-side programs; the most recent parking study⁵⁵ simply analyzed parking facility use and downtown growth to recommend construction of new garages, then completed feasibility studies on several potential sites.

The study separated downtown into districts, with the Market Site split between “Theatre” and “Main-Genesee.” It assumed 90% was maximum functional capacity. There were no developments at the time of study that would create new demand in the theatre or Main-Genesee districts. The table indicates that if the 548 parking spaces at the Market Site were removed and demand unchanged, the Theatre District would be above 90% capacity.

A shortage of short-term, inexpensive parking downtown creates an impression of an overall parking shortage

The Queen City Hub plan recommends requiring retailers and restaurants to validate parking, and perhaps provide a small number of short-term spaces reserved for visitors to retail locations on the site.

Table 4.2: Parking Availability near Market Site

	Private	Public	Total	Peak	Surplus under 90% capacity
Theatre	1709 (1318)	1397	3106 (2715)	2417	378 (-13)
Main-Genesee	391	3167 (3010)	3586	2811	416 (259)
Market Site N	391 (0)	0	391 (0)	350	1 (-390)
Market Site S	0	157 (0)	157 (0)	120	21 (-136)

Parenthesis indicate parking availability if all Market Site parking was removed.

Parking requirements can be satisfied by existing garages

Current minimum parking regulations require a parking space for every dwelling unit, in addition to one parking spot for every 150 square feet of restaurant and 300 square feet of retail.⁵⁶ However, this parking can be up to 1,000 feet from the site, and there are twelve 24-hour parking lots and two garages within that radius.⁵⁷ Developers of the Green Code are exploring the possibility of removing parking minimums altogether.

Full market-rate or luxury apartments may require on-site parking compete

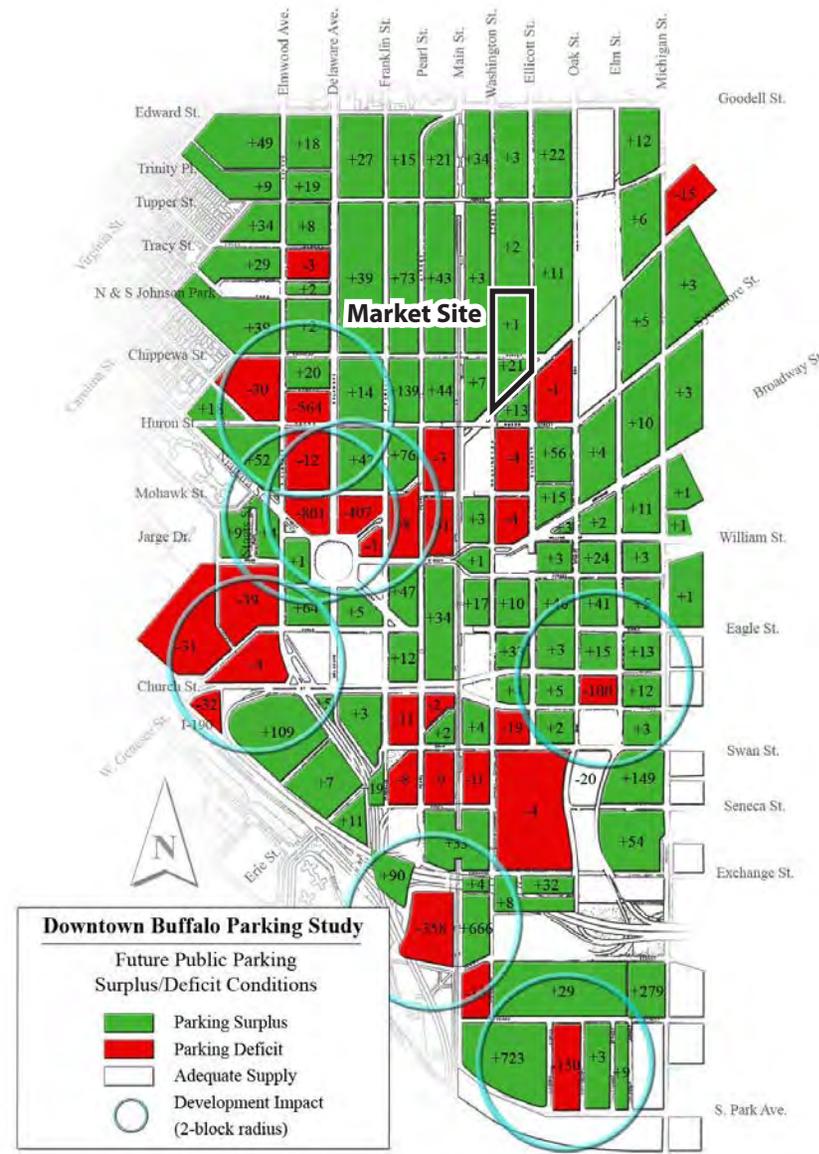
About 2/3 of downtown residents currently reverse commute to mainly northeastern suburbs,⁵⁸ and the City Planning Department has suggested upscale apartments currently require on-site parking to attract high rents.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, many recent loft-style developments have been successful with minimal on-site parking. If a parking deck is determined to be required, it should have ground-floor retail or community space, as outlined in the Queen City Hub plan.

“We have a lot of access to downtown with our Metro Rail and Metro buses, but the vast majority of people still like to drive their cars here.” - Buffalo Place, Inc⁶⁰

The Executive Director of Buffalo Place continued, “That’s a continued dialogue that takes place probably every day between the building owners and real estate developers.”

Although the relationship between parking supply and demand is complex, at the very least it is clear that nearby blocks would not have room to absorb additional demand. There was an identified shortage in the southern “office” district of town, and the City has responded to the need by seeking partners to build new ramps at the Webster block near the waterfront and the Ellicott-Oak site near Main Place Mall. However, changing parking prices and adding transit options may still reduce demand on parking and create additional urban vibrancy.

Fig. 4.10: Parking and Impact of Development



(Desmond 2011) Market Site noted by team.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

1. Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, "Genesee Gateway."
2. *Buffalo Rising*, "Key to the City."
3. *Buffalo Rising*, "Genesee Block, You've Come a Long Way."
4. *Buffalo Rising*, "Genesee Gateway Announces Two New Tenants."
5. Jonathan Epstein, *Buffalo News*, "City has Genesee Street traffic circle on drawing board."
6. The 700-employee facility, only two blocks from the Market Site, will include a 700-car garage, with construction expected to be completed in 2014. However, the site design does not completely align with a walkable urban context. *Buffalo Rising*, "Catholic Health Admin Center Design Released."
7. *Nile Guide Website*, "Buffalo Theater District."
8. City of Buffalo, Buffalo Place, Inc., and Urban Design Project. *The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo*, 32.
9. Ibid, 88.
10. U.S. Census Bureau, "Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics-On the Map."
11. University at Buffalo, "Allentown."
12. *Buffalo Rising*, "Thursday Event to Mark Expansion of Allentown Historic District."
13. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Library of Congress Local Legacies*, "Allentown Art Festival."
14. Sasaski and Madden Planning Group, *Allentown Neighborhood Strategy*.
15. Colleen Kulikowski, *Buffalo Real Estate News*, "Current Real Estate Market Conditions in Allentown."
16. U.S. Census Bureau, "Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics-On the Map."
17. *BNMC Website*, "Work;" CKS Architecture and Design, Gamble Associates, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Master Plan Update, 2.
18. Ibid, 2.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Center for Urban Studies, *Fruit Belt/ Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Tax Increment Financing District*, 10 – 11.
22. Sasaski and Madden Planning Group, *Allentown Neighborhood Strategy*.
23. CKS Architecture and Design, Gamble Associates, *Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Master Plan Update*.
24. James Napora, History of Buffalo, "History of the Lower East Side."
25. Although the Bethel AME Church and Vine Alley Colored School have been demolished, the Michigan Street Baptist Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Michigan Street Preservation Corporation is spearheading efforts to restore the church, the nearby Nash House museum, and surrounding neighborhood. Monroe Fordham, *Nash House museum website*, "History: The Nash House."
26. Sarah Ruth Offhaus, *Buffalo Rising*, "The Negro Exhibit at the Pan-Am." July 15, 2010.
27. Edward L. Glaeser, *New York Sun*, "Can Buffalo Ever Come Back?" October 19, 2007.
28. The Circle Association, *African American History of Western New York*.
29. *The Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo, New York Website*.
30. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., *A Historical Overview of Blacks in the Fruit Belt: The*

Continuing Struggle to Build a Vibrant Community.

31. Ibid.
32. Sasaki and Madden, *Fruit Belt Neighborhood Strategy*.
33. Center for Urban Studies, *Fruit Belt/ Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Tax Increment Financing District*.
34. Buffalo Rising, "Fruit Belt Initiative Announced."
35. Much of the community has expressed concern at being left out of the planning process and may consider attempting to block demolition of the HUD-sponsored McCarley Gardens. This underscores importance of community engagement for all downtown projects at both public and leadership levels. See Buck Quigly, *Artvoice*, "Fruit Belt, McCarley Gardens Residents Continue Speaking Up."
36. The veracity of Whyte's observations is corroborated by the findings of numerous other people/space-observers including those discussed by Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis in their book *People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space* as well as by the research carried out by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit dedicated to "helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities." PPS is intimately connected to Whyte's research; the organization was "founded in 1975 to expand on" the tenets laid out by him. Project for Public Spaces, "About PPS."
37. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Vimeo. Directed by William Whyte.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. These personal observations were not conducted under strict guidelines but as an on-foot survey of the passing cityscape by a pedestrian familiar with the sidewalks and circulation of select large and midsize cities as well as the findings of Whyte and Project for Public Spaces. A note about the weather during these visits: September 18 was sunny and moderately brisk while October 19 through 21 was a mix of strong winds and rain.
41. Buffalo Place, Inc. "Niagara Square."
42. Plans are currently underway to permanently move the weekly concert series out of Lafayette Park and down to the revitalized waterfront, which makes the need to improve these downtown parks all the more critical. Mark Summer, Buffalo News, "Adieu to Lafayette Square For Now."
43. Buffalo Place, Inc. "Niagara Square."
44. *Yahoo!Travel*, "Buffalo Attractions: Fountain Plaza, Buffalo."
45. City of Buffalo, *Main Street Multi-Modal Access and Revitalization Project*.
46. City of Buffalo and Buffalo Place Inc., "Special Downtown District Vending Program: Overview and Application."
47. City of Buffalo, *Buffalo Green Code*, "Planning for Economic Development."
48. Buffalo Place, Inc., *Buffalo Place Inc. 2008 Pedestrian Study*.
49. See Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council's *2010 Traffic Counts*.
50. A cap between Best Street and East Ferry is the preferred alternative of Reclaiming Our Community Colation, a local group. However, its cost is projected at \$465 million. Boulevard would be \$35 million, and a partial deck would be \$170 million. NYSDOT is in early stages of study. Micki Maynard, *Changing*

Gears, "A Buffalo Neighborhood Wants to Turn Back the Clock."

51. NYSDOT repaved Oak and Elm in late 2012, but did not install traffic calming measures such as bike lanes or improved crosswalks, despite a request by the City for parkway designation and a statement of need in the Queen City Hub plan. City of Buffalo, Buffalo Place, Inc., and Urban Design Project. *The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo*, 81.
52. American Public Transportation Association, *Transit Ridership Report First Quarter 2012*.
53. *Buffalo Rising*, "NFTA to Study Amherst Light Rail Extension."
54. City of Buffalo, Buffalo Place, Inc., and Urban Design Project. *The Queen City Hub: A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo*.
55. Desman Associates, *Comprehensive Parking Assessment Downtown Buffalo New York*.
56. City of Buffalo Charter, Subsection 511-96
57. Buffalo Place, Inc., "Downtown Publicly Available Parking."
58. U.S. Census Bureau, "Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics-On

the Map."

59. City of Buffalo Department of Strategic Planning, Personal Communication.
60. Jane Schmitt, *Buffalo Business First*, "Downtown Parking squeeze still a headache in Buffalo."



CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following chapter details the recommendations for the Washington Market Site, including:

- Neighborhood Design Guidelines
- Programming and Use
- Target Market
- Site Concept, Orientation, and Features
- Open Space Design
- Finance Deal Structure

The chapter ends with an example design that applies the written recommendations and guidelines. This concept is just one form the flexible recommendations might take.

Example Design - View Facing North.



NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

Recommended Context-Sensitive Guidelines for Neighborhood

New construction at the site should be designed to acknowledge local precedents but should not rely on strictly historicist interpretations of the surrounding area. These guidelines will assist designers in identifying and responding to, while not mimicking, the salient character-defining features of the local architectural context (*see p. 6-4 for greater detail*): the anticipated result of the strategic employment of the area's valued built qualities is a navigable downtown neighborhood constructed to a human scale and easily activated for pedestrian use.

CURRENT GUIDELINES

All projects must comply with a citywide site plan review. Sites must use compatible scales, lighting, and signage both with the surrounding neighborhood and within the site. The site must provide for pedestrian and automotive circulation. As Washington Street is a bus route, transit shelters should be incorporated into the design as well.

The development should be designed to relate to all streets it fronts. It should also be harmonious in character with compatible building materials, façade treatments, and landscaping. If the development is to be built to the street line, which would be in character with the neighborhood, 5% of the site must be dedicated to landscaping, seating, or other public amenity. Landscaping should be hearty enough to survive an urban environment and a cold climate.

Glass on street level cannot have reflective glazing. In addition, street level and upper levels must be separated by a cornice or other architectural element. Flat roofs must be surrounded by a parapet, although pitched roofs are acceptable if congruous with the other pitched roofs in the neighborhood.

Massing

All buildings along Washington Street and Ellicott Street that face the site under consideration for redevelopment express solid massing distributed evenly across their lots, each of which is filled entirely by the footprint of its respective building. These volumes have in common a regular, cubic shape and lack of projections, and together they create an even streetwall facing the parking lot. Each of these collections of commercial blocks, however, is formed by several adjacent volumes that vary in height, serving as independent but component parts at a variety of scales.

New adjacent construction should be similarly massed to produce a varied but still consistent collection of volumes, which largely fill their rectangular footprints and preserve the impression of a continuous streetwall. At the ground level, the new construction will fill at minimum 50% of the length of each side of the block to the property line, with no single opening surpassing 25% of the respective total length of its block. Similarly, at minimum 50% of the facades of the upper stories will be positioned at the property line. Cubic forms are strongly encouraged.

Roof type

Roof types found in the commercial blocks surrounding the Washington St. parking lot appear consistently flat (as seen from the sidewalk) with the exception of one (belonging to a building located on Elliott St.) that is end-gabled. They lack overhangs apart from shallow cornices. Although adjacent buildings' roofs do not always meet at the same height, together they form strong horizontal axes that continue the width of the streetwalls. New construction will reflect this pattern by having the majority of visible rooflines (including extended parapet walls) flat and oriented parallel to the street. All visible pitched roofs must not have greater than 20% slope.

Fenestration

Patterns of fenestration—the characteristics and arrangement of openings within facades—of the surrounding buildings are rather consistent. The ground-level floors of all commercial blocks facing the parking lot, programmed for commercial use, include entrances (often slightly recessed) flanked by large picture windows; on these floors, surface-to-void ratios are at least 3:1 and offer a high degree of transparency. Upper stories largely contain vertically oriented, divided-light sash windows

spaced evenly across the width of the façade. The resulting bays are distributed at intervals of approximately eight feet; most nearby façades that are fifty feet across contain four upper-story bays. In a few cases, a hierarchy is found among the windows of the higher floors, so that the uppermost windows have rounded arches while the remainder are simply rectangular or are surrounded by less elaborate ornamentation than those below them.

New construction will maintain the relationship between ground level and upper levels, with no less than 75% of ground-level exterior surfaces clad in glass. Upper levels must offer contrast through material or surface-to-void ratio. Regularly spaced window bays are strongly encouraged, separated by surfaces of approximately twice the width of each window. Window widths should remain consistent across all upper levels, although window heights and shapes can vary in order to form a logical hierarchy from ground level to crown.

Cladding materials

Cladding materials on nearby buildings consist largely of brick, although a variety of clay compositions and hues were used. Stone is found in ornament, such

Fig 5.1: Massing and Roof

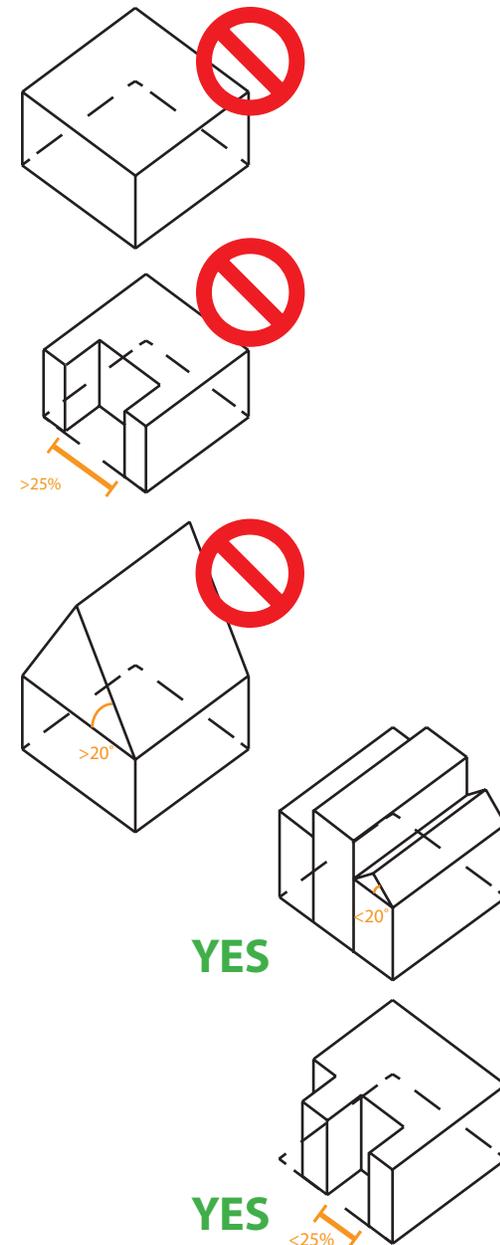
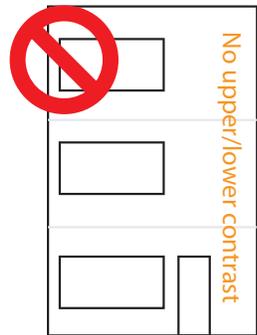
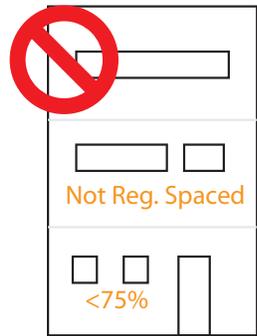
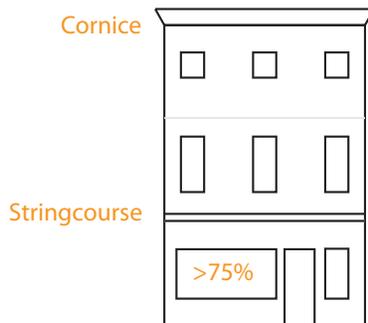


Fig 5.2: Fenestration and Articulation



YES



as cornices, stringcourses, and window surrounds. St. Michael’s is clad in a red, dressed stone. New construction can be clad in any material that provides a predominantly even surface finish.

Articulation

Among all commercial buildings surrounding the parking lot, as well as on St. Michael’s, is a prominent stringcourse or cornice between the first and second stories that separates commercial spaces from what occurs above. Cornices spanning roof edges are also evident on most buildings. The degree of further ornamentation and articulation varies among the buildings, with some (such as the Market Arcade) featuring another stringcourse between its second and third stories. New construction must include a horizontal articulation—for instance, a protruding stringcourse—to separate the ground level from the upper levels; it is encouraged that all exterior walls with flat rooflines be articulated at their top edges to give the impression of a cornice.

Number of stories

Commercial blocks located along Washington and Elliott streets facing the Washington Avenue parking lot site stand largely between two and four stories tall. Those that are two stories tall

are horizontally oriented, with widths of between seventy-five and one hundred feet; more narrow buildings have those buildings that have three or four stories. Component volumes included in new construction must reflect this pattern.

Setbacks

The surrounding buildings largely feature no setbacks and end immediately at the sidewalk. The one exception is St. Michael’s Church, whose south façade is set back no more than ten feet from the sidewalk to allow for a narrow side yard containing a few trees. In accordance with the previous massing guidelines, newly constructed buildings should have no setback along at least 50% of their ground levels.

Landscaping

The immediate area is characterized by a lack of green space infrastructure. Immature trees have been planted at intervals of approximately fifteen feet along the sidewalks that run the perimeter of the parking lot, to function as a screen. On the opposite sides of the streets—east of Ellicott and west of Washington—similar trees are found, but only occasionally. None are components of the historical fabric of the area. Landscaped features can be introduced

into new construction—particularly in open spaces in the center of the block—but should not interrupt the relationship between building and sidewalk. Openings in the streetwall should be designed with landscape elements that form a screen along the property line to give the impression of a continuous horizontal axis, but not dense or tall enough to completely screen activity behind the wall.

Signage

Signage (not historic) is largely contained to non-projecting banners positioned on the facades of buildings. Similarly unobtrusive signage is required in new construction.

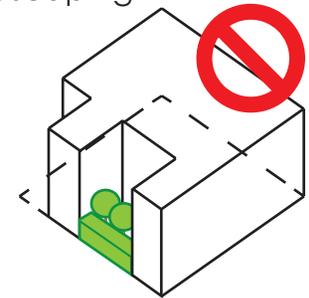
Views in and out of site

A current sight relationship exists across the Washington Street parking lot, between the Washington Street entrance to the Market Arcade Building and the commercial blocks including and adjacent to the flower market. New construction need not maintain this relationship (which could be accomplished through surface transparency) if circulation patterns are designed to orient foot traffic along an axis between the Market Arcade Building and its opposite commercial blocks.

St. Michael’s Church and the Niagara Mohawk Electric Tower form prominent visual anchors to the north and south of the subject area, particularly visible from Washington Street. Each will likely remain visible from all points on Washington Street if all design guidelines are followed (especially exterior surface orientation and number of stories); maintaining these anchors is a priority, and no protruding elements in new construction will encroach over the street to obscure either prominent building from any point on this block of Washington Street.

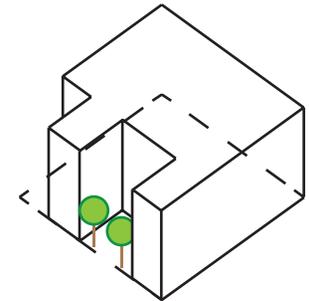
Fig 5.2: Landscaping

Dense/Screens Activity in Courtyard

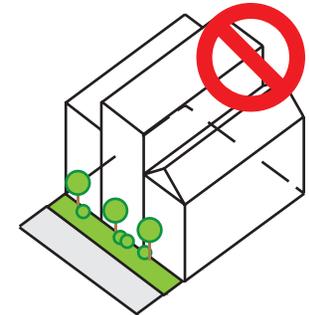


YES

Gives impression of horizontal axis but does not screen

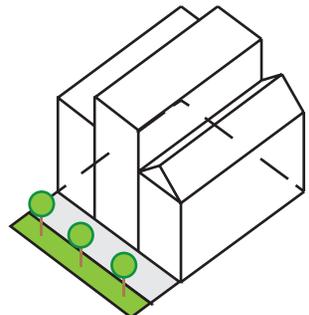


Interrupts relationship between building and sidewalk



YES

Gives sense of pedestrian safety and room for street tables, etc.



USE



Fig 5.4: Spokane Public Market opened in 2011 and shares a building with Sun City Dry Goods.

Fig 5.5: Detroit's Eastern Market is a community center as well as a hub for healthy food (Project for Public Spaces).



Public Market

Given the Market Site's history, the City's desire to expand the Downtown Country Market to a year-round enterprise, a possible need to provide low-cost retail incubator to grow skills and brand, along with the site's excellent access and large size, the team decided a public market would be an excellent primary use.

Other uses, such as a conference center, museum, or light industry space were deemed inappropriate for the cultural and architectural character of the neighborhood. A more detailed analysis of current businesses and the other farmers and public markets in the area is necessary to determine the particulars of the potential market. However, the market could easily be a flexible space, adapting to changing demands and tastes.

Housing

Incorporating multiple uses on the site has the benefit of diversifying against risk and creating greater liveliness. The most viable development in the area is residential because of downtown's continued positive rent growth. Apartments in the site neighborhood are almost at full occupancy and there is still unmet demand. Considering favorable residential real estate conditions, housing would be the easiest part of the project to finance.

Still, the goal of the project is to not only activate the space at the site but also in the surrounding area. Although many residential sites in the area have density, they lack basic necessities such as nearby grocery stores and pharmacies. There is also a physical division between residential sites and entertainment districts such as Chippewa Street. Housing at the site would physically link neighborhoods, encouraging more travel between them. Additional residents would also provide additional customers for both existing retail and entertainment, and for the Public Market component of the project.

Despite demonstrated housing demand, a 2003 R/UDAT team decided that subsidies, permit reforms, and technical assistance to developers would be necessary to catalyze housing development. The Queen City Hub plan recommended that any public incentives be required to be leveraged with a predictable, fair amount of private contribution. Any project built on the Market Site should set an example of public-private transparency.

Finally, starting with a large site affords special opportunity to provide a mix of housing types and affordability that smaller sites cannot sustain. In fact, it might be key to create housing that may appeal to young families in order to retain downtown's population as it ages. There has yet to be a neighborhood organization formed for downtown, likely due to the population's expectation that it is merely transitory. Creating a hub for the neighborhood may mobilize longer-term residents into creating a stronger downtown community.

Support Retail

The neighborhood's context warrants first-floor retail in mixed-use projects, yet much of Main Street's retail space already lies vacant. However, new downtown retail space is viable. For example, the first floor retail of the new Ellicott Lofts are rented out at reasonable rents.¹ Ground-floor retail of similar loft projects coming online is expected to have similarly low vacancy rates.²

The Queen City Hub plan identifies existing retail's difficulty as poor landlord-tenant relations and a mismatch between services offered and the types of services desired by downtown. Landlords often require retailers and restaurateurs to pay for storefront improvements, but entrepreneurs rarely have access to the required startup capital. The plan suggested landlord education, a revolving loan fund for entrepreneurs, and a focused marketing program.

However, new retail space should not replicate existing space. New additions to downtown could include restaurant/bar space that includes semi-private gardens, medium-sized space for low-cost sundry shops for downtown residents, or space specialized to compliment the Public Market, such as delis.



Fig. 5.6: Detroit's Eastern Market is adjacent to several complimentary restaurants, wine shops, and stores (Wikipedia).



Fig 5.7: Portland is considering a public market with an office tower as an iconic gateway to its downtown (Oregonlive.com).

TARGET MARKET

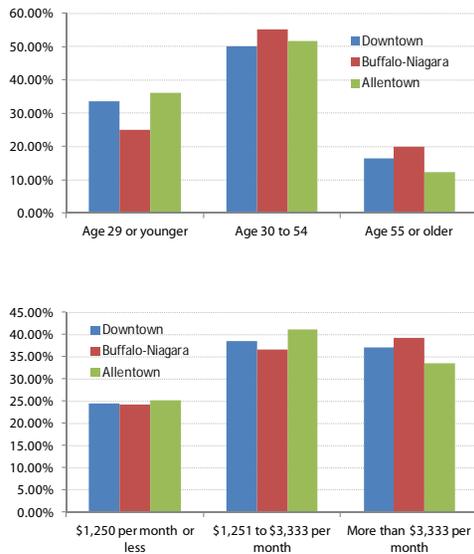


Fig. 5.8: Age and income levels of residents.



Fig 5.9: Concept art for Urban Harvest Market in Oklahoma. Coordinated marketing such as this can show the new Washington Market's and other markets' unique niches in Buffalo.

Public Market: Attracting suburbanites and urban dwellers alike

The Public Market should attract a broad audience. According to a study on land use conducted by Buffalo Place Inc. in 2006, the most obvious group in the area during the daytime is businessmen, with 32% of land use appropriated for office space. The growing number of young professionals living in or near downtown is also a strong potential market.

However, the good access may also draw suburbanites looking for a unique experience. The team also recommends marketing toward established communities such as the Near East Side and Fruit Belt. Markets can provide a variety of goods at a variety of price points. As there are several other public or farmers markets in Buffalo, it may make sense to have coordinated advertising campaigns, offering a day of shopping for each market's speciality.

Finally, the Public Market should be part of a coordinated tourism campaign that highlights an all-day, every day downtown including entertainment in the theatre district and unique restaurants on Chippewa.

Housing: Attracting young, upper-middle class professionals interested in food culture and urban living

The Site will be on a very active, potentially loud corridor where the apartment market appears to be "hottest," therefore the team identified the target market as younger population rather than empty nesters and retirees. Young and nontraditional families were considered, but single family detached options attractive to this group are currently inexpensively available nearby.

The team anticipates that a middle-to-upper income group must be targeted to offset urban construction costs. Price ranges should therefore be \$1,000-1,500, affordable for those in middle management, professional, or information positions in the region's growing industries. A large building can integrate permanently affordable units to segment the market and achieve a mix of incomes, so long as these units are spread throughout the building. Mix of incomes may also be achieved through inexpensive, market-rate studio apartments with rough finishes mixed with the standard two-bedroom units that may be offered.

Segments from the Zimmerman-Volk study that could be considered for the project include:

- “E-types,”
- “Urban achievers,” and
- “Entrepreneurs.”

These groups are 25-40, often foreign-born, tend to be renters, and may enjoy food culture and transit. “Urban Achievers,” the largest potential group to move to downtown, also has a lower median income--\$48,700 in Erie County. This is sufficient to afford \$1000+ rents. The “new bohemian” group, another large group seeking downtown rentals, is more appropriate for existing downtown neighborhoods such as Allentown or Fruit Belt, and thus was not targeted.

The target segments enjoy two-bedroom soft lofts with exposed ductwork, large windows, minimalist light fixtures, and hardwood floors. This fits well within the established patterns of the neighborhood. Environmentally-sensitive materials are preferred, building on themes of local food and activism. If required rents exceed \$1,500, more traditional finishes may be required to target additional markets. Desired amenities include laundry, exercise space, storage, and a semi-private courtyard.

Marketing plan targets city, metro, and region

The housing’s marketing plan should emphasize its

- Sense of place;
- Ease of access to Chippewa district, Theater district, and Allentown; and
- Unique food-related history.

Although its close proximity to BNMC and Financial District may be advertised, it’s just as likely residents will reverse-commute to Amherst. Still, thriving employment centers can be emphasized to illustrate Buffalo as a city with a future as well as a past. Its position on the NFTA line will become invaluable if the line is extended to Amherst.

The “Urban Achiever” segment is most likely to come from elsewhere in Buffalo, “entrepreneur” from the suburbs, and “e-type” from elsewhere in America.

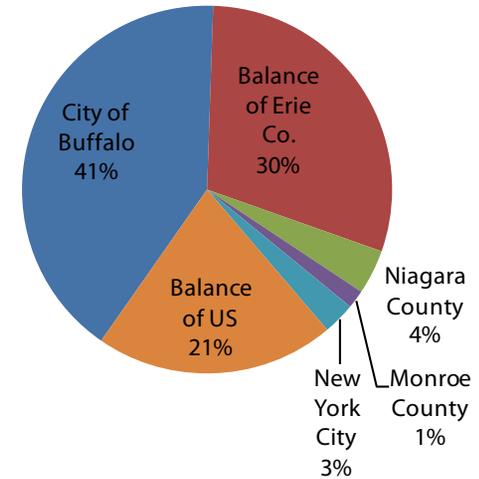


Fig 5.10: Places of origin of potential Buffalo Downtown residents.

POTENTIAL RESIDENTS

E-Types

- 25 to 44 years old, mostly single
- \$51,000 median income

Urban Achievers

- 21 to 30 years old, mostly single
- \$145,000 median income

Entrepreneurs

- 25 to 44 years old, no children
- \$184,800 median income

SITE CONCEPT

In addition to following the team's proposed neighborhood design guidelines, the site should follow the five tenants put forth in the QCH plan:



Provide open space to take advantage of eastern or southern sun.



Use signage or pavement markings to direct pedestrian and bicycle flow.



Provide covered, secure bicycle racks that serve both the Washington Market and surrounding buildings.



Access

The project should have fully integrated pedestrian, bike, bus, and rail services honoring existing and desired circulation patterns along with wayfinding signage linking with the rest of downtown.



Provide an active, well-lit, and attractive link between the Market Arcade and the Ellicott Lofts/Flower Market area.

Preservation

The project has been conceptualized as reinforcing the Genesee Gateway's architectural patterns along with reviving the historic use of the property.



Urban Design

The project may require parking, but this should be wrapped or otherwise hidden to create a pedestrian feel. The center of the site may be ideal for a courtyard.



Incorporate streetscape design from BNMC to enhance a sense of continuity along Ellicott

Maintain and enhance Chippewa's strong pedestrian focus

Green Design

The project should incorporate sustainable features not only to save energy costs, but appeal to the target market and continue Buffalo's reputation as a center for green industry and innovation.

Image

The project should be developed as a flagship property that will be seen by thousands as they enter downtown via Kensington Expressway or Genesee Street. However, it should be marketed as just one piece of the architectural and cultural puzzle that is greater downtown.

Interact with the Streetwall with Glass or Awnings

The public market should be a single-story building that interacts with the streetwall, with perhaps glass, retractable awnings, or other ways to ensure it's not just a "blank wall" in the winter. Space for moveable carts and temporary stands is integral to the project, both to animate the space and to provide many options for startup retail or food vendors. Storefronts with large windows should be at grade level, in scale with the surroundings, and accommodating of those with disabilities. This, too, will activate the "public realm."

Face Ellicott, Washington, and Genesee with Engaging Architecture

The project must be able to "face" both Ellicott and Washington, with main gateway at Chippewa but an engaging streetwall throughout. One goal will be to draw pedestrians from BNMC. However, it must also interact with the Theater district. The smaller triangular lot should be utilized as well; it is the gateway to the site from Genesee, the Financial District, and Kensington Expressway. The architecture must be striking, while remaining within the district's guidelines.

Be One Piece of a Larger, Integrated Economic Development Strategy

The project has been envisioned as part of Buffalo's strategy to reinvigorate the Fruit Belt, expand BNMC, reopen Genesee to the waterfront, and continue economic development in industries Buffalo is especially suited for, filling a unique niche positioned between Toronto and Rochester in the Golden Horseshoe.



- adaptive reuse of shopping mall -> greenhouse
- includes vegetarian restaurants, health food stores, cafes
- arched skylight illustrates direct connection between nearby buildings and streetscape



Fig. 5.11: Use of glass can provide an ideal material dialogue between historic and modern design.

OPEN SPACE

The following recommendations offer advice on the programming of the Market Site's outdoor spaces. They are based upon the observations made above but do not attempt to be all encompassing. For the site and its designed public spaces to truly be successful the views and visions of Buffalonians must be considered and the surrounding areas must be given ample weight. Good public spaces require the input of the community as well as careful studies of the area in question.

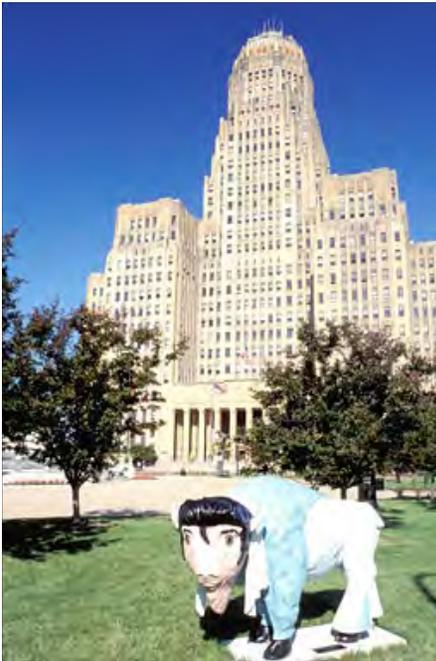


Fig. 5.12: Points of interest can take many forms, but should always be a draw (Andre Jenny).

- Large expanses of plaza should be avoided, and instead, intimate, programmable spaces encouraged.
- Trees and plants arranged in beds or planters are encouraged.
- Types of sittable space that are encouraged include ledges of a comfortable height, small flights of wide steps, or movable chairs. Well-designed benches are not necessarily discouraged but their placement and comfort level should be well considered before installment.
- The south end of the site should contain the greatest amount of outdoor space to take advantage of the sun's southern exposure. Here a small plaza should be designed accommodating sittable space, trees, planter beds, and food carts. The eastern portion of the site also receives good sun exposure, due to an approximate 10 degree tilt. The northern end should minimize open space, both because it is shaded and because it is not a major area of circulation.
- Points of interest, in the form of sculpture or other such artwork, should be displayed along the walkways and within storefronts as well.
- No fences or other sorts of barriers should be erected around the perimeter of the building. If gates necessary for security reasons, they should be minimal and creatively designed.
- Alternative means of transportation should be encouraged. Parking spaces should be minimal and not impose on the design of open spaces within the property line. Bike racks should be provided at the majority of entrances. They might be creatively designed, helping to animate the space even when not in use.

Fig 5.13: A creative bike rack that appeals whether in use or not (Flickrriver).



Fig. 5.14: Mint Plaza in San Francisco (Brand Avenue, "Action and Choreography")



Mint Plaza in San Francisco follows many of the recommendations outlined above. This open space encourages visitors to make the space their own by providing a variety of seating options in the form of movable chairs, ledges, and steps. The integrated planter with greenery adds interest and color. Storefronts in scale with the plaza line the space at either side. This San Francisco plaza is just one of many models that the Market Site's designers can reference when developing a vision for the building(s) and open spaces. But care must be given to consider the precedents in the context of Buffalo, its distinct characteristics, and northerly setting to avoid the creation of spaces that go unused, or even worse, ignored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Sittable space:** Presence of adequate and comfortable seating
2. **Street:** Creation of a lively dialogue between the site and the street
3. **Sun:** Orient space towards sun or its reflection to provide warmth and light
4. **Water:** Useful amenity for noise cover and for its relieving qualities
5. **Trees:** Pollution-deterrents, shade-providers, and beautification elements
6. **Food:** Such as vendors, outdoor cafes, or restaurants, as a way to attract activity to a space)
7. **Triangulation:** "Characteristics of a specific space that can bring people together." Involves the ongoing interest that attracts people to site. Might include impromptu street acts, unusual sculpture or other street furniture, or large windows placed strategically along nearby buildings that allow people to easily observe the activity taking place within.

FINANCE DEAL STRUCTURE

The reasons for public-profit partnership have been described in the introduction of this report. The benefits of such a partnership are clear when considering the success of Buffalo Niagara Medical Center.

In addition, BNMC's master plan's careful attention to adjacent communities is a good model for public projects. The medical corridor has a contentious history; unfortunately many Fruit Belt residents were displaced from homes which could appreciate as the land grew in values. However, the neighborhood's modern anti-gentrification efforts are commendable, and BNMC must continue to support these efforts to truly be successful. Similar efforts to include the community could be included in development of the Market Site, although development on the site is not expected to result in any gentrification effects.

An exploration of the benefits of a private/public partnership are explored here:

Public Profit³

Institutions can pursue real estate development for myriad reasons, starting

with the public drive for profit. With the decline of the industrial city and urban core in the 1950's and 60's, cities were left with large holdings of land. Whether arising from closed government buildings, repossessed vacant lots, or partially-completed urban renewal projects, this parcel inventory constitutes a sizable collection of capital assets. These assets place a considerable burden on municipalities in the form of property maintenance, foregone tax revenue, and blight effects, and the only way for cities to divest themselves of this burden while realizing an economic return on their assets is to pursue some for-profit development strategy.

As governments and institutions generally do not function well in a for-profit environment, this usually took the form of a public-private deal structure, with the city contributing creditworthiness in the form of bonding authority and capital in the form of land write-downs. It is this combination of drives: profit and the need to divest themselves from burdensome assets, that drove the large wave of public-private real estate development in the 1980's and 90's. Unfortunately, the Market Site

is not publicly owned, which not only removes some of the profit/divestment motivations from the equation, but also eliminates land write-downs as a meaningful part of the capital structure.

Value-Capture⁴

Instead, a local institution would have to look elsewhere for motivation, such as using a real estate development to capture value generated by an external action, a pattern most easily illustrated by transit-oriented development. Transit construction is one of the most capital intensive functions a government can pursue, and revenues from transit operations are rarely sufficient to recapture the large capital investments required.

As a way around these limitations, transit authorities across the country have turned to real estate development as a way to recapture the value generated by transit investments, thereby rationalizing otherwise infeasible investments in infrastructure. In this framework, the institution involved contributes not a write-down on land value, but an amenity: the new infrastructure. It is this amenity, combined with the credit-

worthiness of the institution, which allows the private-sector portion to become a feasible investment in itself, and it the profit from that private-sector investment which allows the amenity to be underwritten as economically viable. The Fruit Belt neighborhood suggested this strategy to capture the value of an aggressive renewal program, but its proposal was rejected.

Economic Development⁵

In some cases, the goal of the public agency is neither to profit from existing land holdings, nor to recapture the value generated by alternative public investment. Instead, the motivation of the institution in question can be to create externalities that can be generated by the private development itself. Commonly viewed through the broader lens of “economic development,” this type of partnership sees the private economic activity as an end in and of itself, with overlapping positive externalities generating future economic activity.

It is this future activity, along with its corresponding tax revenue, that justifies the public subsidies necessary to generate the initial private investment. Notice that this type of subsidy is far different than the public investments

outlined in the motivations above. Whereas in those structures the institutional partner seeks to generate an economic return within a particular project, an economic development rationale seeks an economic return outside any particular transaction to be reflected in the general level of economic activity in the larger area, neighborhood, or city. As these secondary returns are difficult to accurately identify, they generally lead to smaller, more dispersed investments, and are less well-suited to site-specific investment programs.

Recommendation

As the beginning of the report indicated, it is impossible to recommend a particular deal structure without knowing the institutional partners. A corporation designed to implement the public market could be one such partner, a housing authority to provide a mix of housing options downtown may be another. Buffalo Place has a stake in the Market Site as well. The most important issue is that if current economic development initiatives are successful, not having a conversation now may mean a missed opportunity.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN EXAMPLE

The height of the complex, fenestrations, setbacks, roof type, cladding materials, the relationship of the site with the surroundings, and other features of the project follow the regulations and guidelines previously described in this document. Even the program is based

on the real estate market strategies, site analysis, and adjacent neighborhood's need.

The result is a 2-story Karl Marx-Hof⁶-based proposal in the parameter of the site, which is the public section of



the mixed-used programmatic hybrid design with an active public courtyard in the center. This part of the project consists of shops, markets, cafés and restaurants that serve the neighborhood. At the north part of the site on the opposite of St. Michael's Church, there is a 4-story residential section to balance the composition of the project with the

church's tower. A two-story semi-public building is organized on top of the first public level to serve the needs of the residents of the complex. The roof of the public layer (the two-story building at the parameter) would serve as a green semi-public open space, specially for the residential complex.

Limited parking spots are provided at the south section of the site with a setback to use the advantage of the street to provide more parking for the super market, designed on the first level of the south section. Additional parking spots are provided at the north section of the site. The project organized and detailed based on the





historical context. Thus, the west-east axis is in line with the Market Arcade building's axis. The main entrance of the complex, which is the west entry to the courtyard, is composed with the design of the Market Arcade's entrance.

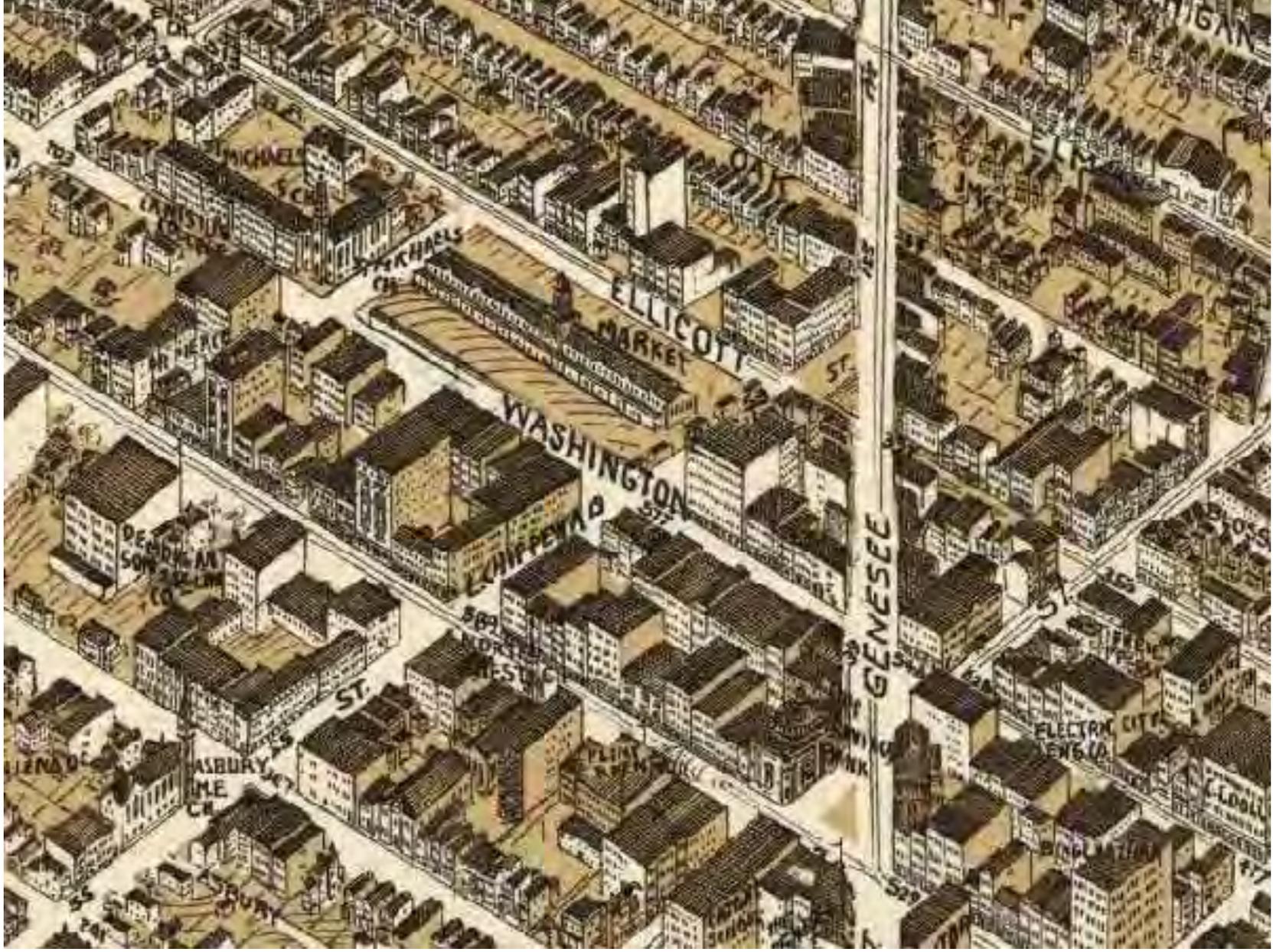
In one sentence, the **design is based on the surrounding architectural context, with a Modernistic approach and contemporary look.**



CHAPTER FIVE NOTES

1. City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, Personal Communication.
2. Buffalo Place, Inc., *Buffalo Place Inc. 2008 Pedestrian Study*.
3. For a detailed examination of public-private development as motivated by the institutional need to make economic use of existing land assets, please see Lynne Sagalyn's *Public Development: Using Land as a Capital Resource*.
4. While value-capture as a motivation for public-private real-estate partnerships is a broad category, it is most easily examined within the context of transit-oriented development. Luckily, there is a wealth of academic literature on such development. For a recent overview, see the Transportation Research Board's *Transit Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects*.
5. Again, economic development as a motivation for real-estate development is a well-tread area of research. For a brief theoretical overview combined with a mathematical case study, please see *Stephen Weiler's Pioneers and Settlers in Lo-Do Denver: Private Risk and Public Benefits in Urban Redevelopment*.
6. Karl Marx-Hof was built between 1927 and 1930 by city planner Karl Ehn, a follower of Otto Wagner in Vienna, Austria.

1906 map of Washington Market area (Library of Congress).





APPENDIX



MARKET ARCADE



Early 20th century view of the Palace Arcade showing occupied store fronts and sign boards of retailers.



Year Built: 1892

Architect: Edward Brodhead Green and W.S. Wicks;

Developer: G.B. Marshall

Conceptually modeled on the Burlington Arcade in London, this late 19th century shopping arcade, briefly also known as Palace Arcade, connected the bustling stretch of Main Street with the flourishing public market that formerly existed at Washington and Chippewa streets.

Historic Use

As a distinctive indoor atrium flanked by three stories of commercial floor space, some of the early business units operating out of the Market Arcade have been:

1. Hoffman House Coffee Company (1905)
2. E G Wiseman Optometrists (1908)
3. Federal Mail Order Association
4. Postal Telegraph & Cable Company (1901)

5. The Bird Store
6. S H Knox & Company (1920)
7. Show Cards Store
8. Homoeopathic clinic of Dr. Peter Erb – 32 Palace Arcade (1899)
9. Sword & Shield Tract Society: Christian book publishers (1916)
10. The Crippled Children's Guild: publishers (1915)
11. Edwards Skirt Supported Company – 124 Palace Arcade (1908)
12. Excel Feature Film Company (1913)
13. Santa Elena Mining Company – 50 Palace Arcade (1907)
14. C C Brown & Company – 55 Palace Arcade (1915)
15. F M Van Etten & Sons – pancake griddles – (1905)
16. Edwin Broad & George Tubbs Coal Mining Company – 74 Palace arcade (1913)
17. Bay State Milling Company (1917)
18. Defender Photo Supply Company – 27 Palace Arcade (1908)

The Arcade's atrium in its heydays with decorations and neatly lined up sign boards on the 2nd floor.

Apart from serving as retail outlets and offices for the above businesses, the Arcade also rented space to organizations to conduct meeting and conventions. Some associations that are known to have used this facility are:

1. Quarterly meeting of the Buffalo Academy of Medicine held at the Academy Parlors in 1898 - 1900
2. Monthly meetings of the Buffalo Camera Club in 1900
3. Weekly meeting of Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America at 57 Palace Arcade in 1911

Current Use

After the Washington Market was demolished in the 1960s, the Market Arcade experienced a substantial economic decline. Pedestrian traffic dropped and the tenants moved out eventually forcing the Arcade to close in the early 1970s. The City of Buffalo subsequently acquired it in 1979 through bankruptcy proceedings, and its efforts to rehabilitate the Arcade bore fruition in 1995 after a \$10 million renovation by Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects, LLC.

Rear of the market showing connection with Ellicott Street.



New Market Arcade complex.





Remodeled atrium and store edges. Bridges as connectors near the staircases ease movement and access even to the connecting buildings.

Their new design used the atrium as an entryway to the two adjacent buildings. This mixed use project involving six existing historic structures, that adjoined the Market Arcade, in Buffalo's Theater District is together known as the Market Arcade complex and now contains a museum, restaurants, retail, offices, and housing. Prominent tenants include:

Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre: accessed from within the arcade and from Washington Street, it comprises eight theatres and can accommodate from 120 to 350 people per theatre with a total seating capacity of 1,600.

CEPA Gallery: holding exhibitions, guest lectures and public art programs.

Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitor's Bureau and Visitor Center: an information center on the city's history and architecture for tourists.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara: a non-profit that aims to identify, preserve, protect, promote and revitalize historically architecturally significant sites, structures, neighborhoods, and landscapes in Western New York.

Buffalo Architecture Center: dedicated to enhancing appreciation of the architecture, art, history and natural beauty that is unique to Buffalo and the Niagara Frontier.

Exploring possible uses: [Reprogramming the Market arcade](#)

In spite of the above organizations occupying portions and a moderately renewed interest in the Market Arcade (owing to its history and distinctiveness in the context of Buffalo), there is still huge unexplored potential in this building. If the Market Site were to be redeveloped, the Arcade could once again play a pivotal role in multiple ways. This would also be a valuable exercise in repositioning a historic resource in the contemporary context .

As the new extension to the Market Arcade is a primary revenue generator, meant for commercial and office related activities, the historic Arcade building need not duplicate this revenue model. Being managed by the same organization, it can perhaps benefit from the accessory revenue for its upkeep and maintenance. This would allow the Market Arcade proper to host activities of a broader nature, building upon efforts to draw visitors and residents to downtown.

[The Arcade as an Accessible Resource?](#)

This would enable the historic structure to be used by a larger segment of people including both locals and tourists without

any impending commercial focus. While the existing art and culture-based activities are a start in that direction, additional possibilities include:

1. Start point of a Downtown Heritage Trail: The Arcade could form the meeting point for a designed walking trail—for locals, school children, and tourists—before moving onto a predetermined route in historic downtown. An audio-visual on Buffalo’s history could be projected here before the walk began, and the Arcade could host a gift and souvenir shop.
2. Coffee shop: The Arcade has a history of housing the Hoffman House Coffee Company (1905), occupying the storefront on Main Street. A new local coffee brand could come in to carry on the tradition while bringing in a younger crowd.
3. A venue for workshops, exhibitions and meeting place for local groups: The exhibitions currently held are of a specialized nature where residents are the audience and not participants. A more interactive and inclusive format could be adopted in the form of citizen forums (like the Buffalo Green Code meetings), cooking classes and art-craft workshops for all age groups, amongst other events.

The above new activities aim to create a hub for citizen groups to come downtown, get together, and participate in collective events. These could be held in conjunction with all programs currently underway at the Market Arcade.



SURROUNDING CONTEXT



The target site is bounded by St. Michael's Place to the north, Ellicott Street to the east, Chippewa Street to the south, and Washington Street to the west. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of largely late 19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings, resulting in a consistent architectural character in terms of scale, materiality and façade arrangement.

The block north of the site is dominated by the nine-bay southern elevation of St. Michael's Church. The church is clad with brick and incorporates brick corbelling and stone detailing around the nine rounded-arch windows. East of the site stands a block of adjoined rectangular commercial buildings. These two-to-four story buildings are clad with brick and are characterized by flat roofs and parapets, typically crowned by bracketed cornices. Each building's first story-level features large storefront windows with recessed entrances. The upper levels, which are separated by brick stringcourses, feature rectangular or rounded-arch windows. The block south of the site is a large triangular-shaped surface parking lot. West of the site are the rear elevations of the commercial buildings that front on Main Street. The simple rear façades

of these rectangular, brick buildings are similar to those east of the site, featuring flat roofs and parapets with bracketed cornices, large storefront windows with recessed entrances, and rectangular or rounded-arch windows on the upper levels.



575 MAIN STREET

OWNER: Manufacturers & Traders Trust Company

USES: Bank, High-Rise Office

KEY TENANTS: M & T Bank

Consists of three buildings built in different time periods, each having a distinctive architectural style in accordance to their time period. The first building built is the M&T Bank, which used to be the Buffalo Savings Bank, its construction material is granite and it has a Neoclassical Beaux-Arts style. The next building, directly facing the site is the M&T Center, designed with a Brutalist style of architecture. The last building in the west corner, has an International style architecture, it is a tower with glass.



601 MAIN STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Hotel Associates LLC

USES: Hotel, Restaurant, Parking Lot

KEY TENANTS: Comfort Suites Downtown, TGI Fridays

This property is a rectangular, seven-story, corner commercial, brick building with a flat roof and parapet. The primary façade is divided into five bays. Large commercial storefront windows and recessed entrances characterize the first story. The second-seventh stories have 2/2 vertical windows. A stringcourse delineates the second, third and fourth floors. A stringcourse also delineates the sixth and seventh floors. The facade looking over to the project area on Washington St. has a parking lot in front of it.



617 MAIN STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency

USES: Retail, Walk-Up Office

KEY TENANTS: Queen City Art Gallery & Buffalo-Niagara Visitor Center

It was modeled after the Burlington Arcade in London. It's a Neoclassical Beaux-Arts styled, rectangular shaped, three-story yellow-brick commercial building with a flat roof and crowned eave. The primary façade is divided into three bays. The first story has four commercial-glass-door entrances and two commercial-display front windows; the bays are divided vertically by six granite pilasters, and horizontally by an accentuated, dentil-cornice. The second story has three windows, the side windows are rectangular shaped with decorative window crowns; the one in the middle is on top of the main entrance, it is a rounded-arch divided-light window, with a unique key stone: a buffalo head. The third story has five, rounded-arched windows divided by paired pilasters. A slight eave overhead delineates the second and third story.



625 MAIN STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation

USES: Theatre, Walk-Up Apartments

KEY TENANTS: Irish Classical Theatre Company & Market Arcade Apartments (10 units, 1 br \$950/mo; 2 br \$1,250/mo)

The main façade of this building faces Main St. It's a Neoclassical Beaux-Arts styled, rectangular shaped, four-story, commercial, brick building with a flat roof and crowned eave. The primary façade is divided into two bays. The first story has two recessed, glass-door, commercial entrances and one central, large, storefront window. The second story has two rectangular, divided light windows; a concrete, rectangular, bracketed transom topped with ornamented keystones frame these windows. The third story has two rectangular, divided light windows without frames. The fourth story has two segmental-arched, divided light windows. The building is topped with crowned, dentil cornice.



639 MAIN STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency

USES: Restaurant, Walk-Up Office

KEY TENANTS: Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre

This property has three different commercial buildings that were incorporated into one activity: a movie theater center. It has eight theatres that seat 120-340 people per theatre; the total seating capacity is 1,600.

- The right side building seems to have a Colonial Revival style. It is a symmetrical, flat-roofed with parapet, two-story, rectangular-shaped building with seven bays. Pilasters divide the bays; each bay has one large commercial window in the bottom and a large, two-over-two casement window on the second-story. The main entrance to this building has a rounded-arch, concrete frame door with a decorated pediment. The parapet has a slight eave overhang, boxed with dentil moldings.
- The middle building is a four-story symmetrical, flat-

roofed with parapet, four bays, rectangular-shaped, maybe Italian Renaissance styled building. Three belt courses delineate the second, third and fourth-story. The first-story has a curtain wall, storefront, commercial windows and doors. The second, third, and fourth stories have the same fenestrations: two-over-two, single-hung, rounded-arch windows. The parapet has a slight eave overhang, boxed with dentil moldings.

- The building to the left is a two-story, with seven bays divided by pilasters. The frontal façade wall is covered with white tile. The first floor seems to have had storefront windows, but it is all covered with concrete now. The second story also had seven square openings that look like windows; they are also covered with concrete now.



573 WASHINGTON STREET

OWNER: St. Michaels Roman Catholic Church

USES: Church, Convent/Rectory

KEY TENANTS: St. Michaels

The front façade has a central tower topped with a bell and lantern bell roof. It is a symmetrical, rectangular shaped, and gable-roofed building of Romanesque architecture style. The exterior walls show distinctive linear, decorative polychrome patterns produced by bands of contrasting color and texture in the stone blocks that make up the wall and the limestone wall foundation's stonework. All the doors and windows have rounded-arch shape. The walls are made out of sandstone bricks; the most dominating color is the red brick, bands of white brick go around the doors to accentuate them. White bricks are also applied in the voussoirs of doors and windows. A dentil cornice goes around the top of all the walls. The walls delineating the tower, in the frontal façade, have quoins in the first-story going up until they reach a cornice that only goes along the tower walls.



471-475 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Ellicott Lofts II LLC

USES: Apartments, Restaurant

KEY TENANTS: Ellicott Commons (30 luxury units, \$1,150 to \$1,950) & Sea Bar City

This property is a rectangular, three-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a bracketed cornice. The primary façade is divided into four bays. The first story has three entrances, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by a bracketed cornice. The second story has vertical, divided-light rectangular windows and the third story has rounded-arch divided-light windows. A stringcourse delineates the second and third stories.



467-469 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Ellicott Lofts II LLC

USES: Apartments, Retail Space

KEY TENANTS: Ellicott Commons

This property is a rectangular, three-story, yellow-brick, apartment- commercial building with a flat roof and parapet. A bracketed frieze and dentil cornice with a keystone crowns the parapet. The primary façade is divided into five bays. The first story has two entrances, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by a dentil cornice. The second and third stories have vertical, tall, rounded arch, single-hung windows. A dentil cornice divides the second and third stories; six consoles running along the cornice delineate the bays.



465 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Ellicott Lofts II LLC

USES: Apartments, Commercial

KEY TENANTS: Ellicott Commons & Copier Fax Business Technologies

This property's primary façade is divided into four bays. It is a rectangular, three-story, red brick, business-commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a cornice with eight consoles (divided by the four bays). The first story has a single entrance, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by dentil cornice. The second story has vertical, divided-light rectangular windows that extend to the third story.



461 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Ellicott Lofts II LLC

USES: Grocery, Café, Apartments

KEY TENANTS: The Washington Market & Ellicott Commons

This property is a rectangular, three-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a bracketed cornice and brick corbelling. The primary façade is divided into five bays. The first story has a central entrance, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by a bracketed cornice. The second and third stories have rows of 1/1 vertical, rectangular windows with stone detailing.



457-459 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Properties LTD

USES: Commercial

KEY TENANTS: Service 1st Heating Cooling Appliance

The loading area for Service 1st Heating Cooling Appliance is located between 455 and 461 Ellicott Street. The space fronting the target property is vacant and covered with asphalt. The rear of 334 North Oak Street is visible from Ellicott Street and appears to be a one-and-a-half story commercial building with a side-gabled roof. A single-bay garage is situated on the left side of the street-facing façade.



453-455 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: 455 Ellicott Street LLC

USES: Kennel/Vet, Apartment

KEY TENANTS: McClelland Small Animal Hospital

This property is a rectangular, three-story commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a bracketed cornice. The primary façade is divided into three bays, accentuated by groupings of 1/1 vertical, rectangular windows on the second and third stories. The first story has a central entrance flanked by a garage door on the southern end and a second entrance on the northern end.



451 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: 455 Ellicott Street LLC

USES: Parking Lot

451 Ellicott Street is a narrow parking lot that serves the neighboring McClelland Small Animal Hospital. The property is vacant of a structure and covered with asphalt.



441 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Properties LTD

USES: Retail

KEY TENANTS: Maureen's Buffalo Wholesale Flower Market

This property is a rectangular, two-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a decorative cornice. The long primary façade is divided into six bays. The first story has multiple recessed entrances, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by a decorative cornice. The second story has groupings of 2-to-3 vertical, rectangular windows per bay, with stone sills and keystones.



439 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: 439 Ellicott Street LLC

USES: Retail

KEY TENANTS: Hastings Marking Devices

This property is a rectangular, three-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and parapet, crowned by a decorative brick cornice. The primary façade is divided into four bays. Large commercial storefront windows and recessed entrances characterize the first story. The second story has 4/4 vertical, rectangular windows and the third story has 4/4 rounded-arch windows.



437 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: William Oshei

USES: Neighborhood Tavern, Apartment

KEY TENANTS: The Golden Swan Café & Grille

This property is a rectangular, three-story brick commercial building with a flat roof and parapet. The primary façade is divided into two bays separated by thick brick pilasters. The first story has two entrances, flanked by large storefront windows and topped by a corbelled brick cornice. The second and third stories each have four 1/1 vertical rectangular windows, grouped into pairs.



435 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: Buffalo Properties LTD

USES: Vacant Commercial Building

This property is a rectangular, three-and-a-half-story, red brick commercial building with a gabled roof. The primary façade is divided into four bays. The first story has a single entrance, flanked by tall, storefront windows and topped by a brick frieze. The second story has a belt-course running along the façade, under the windows. The second and third stories' windows are identical: tall, single-hung, rounded arched windows. The half-story or attic has two, smaller, rounded arch, casement windows in the center. 4/4 vertical, rectangular windows and the third story has 4/4 rounded-arch windows.



433 ELLICOTT STREET

OWNER: MM&E Holdings LLC

USES: Retail

KEY TENANTS: Buffalo Wholesale Flower Market

433 Ellicott Street is a simple Genesee Street is a simple one-and-a-half-story, rectangular-shaped, red brick, flat roofed, commercial building with parapet; used as a flower shop. The primary façade is divided into two bays. The first-story features large commercial storefront windows and two recessed entrances. A simple cornice tops the building, with decorative moldings on each end.



429 ELLICOTT STREET & 62 CHIPPEWA STREET

OWNER: Genesee Gateway LLC

USES: Parking Lot

429 Ellicott Street and 62 Chippewa Street combine to form a large, irregularly-shaped asphalt surface parking lot at the corner of East Chippewa and Ellicott Streets. The parking lot is enclosed by a low metal guardrail.



101-103 GENESEE STREET

OWNER: Genesee Gateway LLC

USES: Vacant; former Werner Photography Building

This property is a trapezoidal shaped, four-story high, yellow-brick, flat-roofed, commercial building with parapet. The primary façade is divided into two bays. Large commercial storefront windows and a recessed entrance characterize the first-story, topped by a frieze and belt-course (that functions as a sill for the second-story windows). The second and third stories' first-bay windows are single-hung topped by segmental arches. The fourth-story's, first-bay windows are single-hung topped with rounded arches; this is the same for the second-story, second-bay windows. A large glass and copper ornamented, "waterfall" skylight covers the third and fourth stories, on the second bay of the building. A slight, copper eave overhang, boxed with brackets, crowns the parapet. This property has been nominated for historic designation because it was designed by the prominent Buffalo architect, Richard A. Waite. The building was designed specifically for the photography industry.



99 GENESEE STREET

OWNER: Genesee Gateway LLC

USES: Vacant; former Giesser Building

99 Genesee Street is a simple two-story commercial building, formerly known as the "Giesser Building". The first story features a large divided-glass storefront, with the main entrance on the right side of the primary façade. On the second story are a band of four vertically-oriented windows topped by single-light transoms. The building is clad in red brick and is topped by a simple cornice.



97 GENESEE STREET

OWNER: William Oshei

USES: Neighborhood Tavern, Apartment

KEY TENANTS: Eddie Brady's Bar

97 Genesee Street is a three-story commercial building of the Italianate style. The building features three distinctive bays, with rows of arched windows arranged on the second and third stories. Two storefront windows flank the main entrance on the primary façade of the first story. The entire building is clad in brick; however, the first story is blond brick while the upper stories are red brick. The building is topped by a bracketed cornice.



91 GENESEE STREET

OWNER: Genesee Gateway LLC

USES: Vacant Commercial Building

91 Genesee Street is a three-story, brick commercial building. The six-bay building features two commercial storefronts on the first story, topped by transom windows. The second and third stories are characterized by rows of vertical, arched windows. A keystone accents the windows on the third story.



85 GENESEE STREET

OWNER: Genesee Gateway LLC

USES: Vacant Commercial Lot

85 Genesee Street is a currently vacant commercial lot at the corner of Ellicott and Genesee Streets. The building on the triangular site was demolished in July 2010.



535 WASHINGTON STREET

OWNER: Iskalo Electric Tower LLC

USES: Class A Office Space

KEY TENANTS: Federal & NYS Offices

Modeled after an Electric Tower presented at Buffalo's 1901 Pan-Am Exposition. The central tower reminds people of the Tower of Pisa, Italy; and the Pharos lighthouse of Alexandria, Egypt. The exterior of the building is covered in white-sand lime and brick-glazed terracotta tiles. Depending on the time of year, the top of the tower may be bathed in ascending patriotic red, white and blue lights or a combination of holiday red and green. A ceremonial ball drop at the stroke of midnight New Year's Eve includes a spectacular fireworks display witnessed by thousands of revelers.

CASE STUDIES



THE TRIANGLE

Austin, Texas

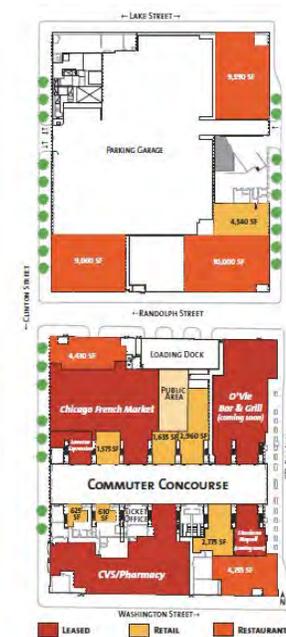
The Triangle complex in Austin, Texas, is made up of over a hundred apartments with over 100,000 feet of commercial space. The success of the project is due to many factors such as unique and diverse shopping opportunities and the green public space that site provides for its residents. The small eateries there are unique in the city and provide an upscale boutique atmosphere. They also face inward to create a courtyard, which blocks the negative components of outside space. The green space in the courtyard, along with the addition of outside restaurant seating provides density for the space. It provides retail and commercial space to not only support the built in population, but also draws people from surrounding areas for lunch, dinner, shopping and other activities. The mixed of uses creates a sustainable and thriving environment.



LEXINGTON MARKET

Baltimore, Maryland

The success of the Lexington model lies in its abilities to meet the needs of the local community. It hosts multiple events for the community year round and draws in the community around the space with an array of eatery spots. By including a market in the mixed-use project the site would be accessible to the people that work in area but do not currently engage the site. It would also give the surrounding communities a place to gather and create density.



METRAMARKET

Chicago, Illinois

Metramarket's success is most evidenced in its ability to meld an upper class food market, the Chicago French Market, with commercial chains such as CVS. This model creates two different channels of shopping. Metramarket also creates open space for shoppers to allow for shifts in density. Restaurants are also included sustain more density and feed into the main market.



FERRY BUILDING MARKETPLACE

San Francisco, California

The Ferry Building Marketplace was the result of a four-year renovation of a ferry terminal completed in 2003. It is now a 65,000 square foot public food market. Permanent shops are allowed to spill out into an indoor "street." The area is lit by a dramatic skylight. Also notable is the 175,000 square feet of Class A Office space on upper stories and plaza easing the crossing of the major traffic conduit, the Embarcadero, to the financial district only blocks away.



COVENT GARDEN MARKET

London, England

Covent Garden Market began as a fruit and vegetable open air market in the 1649 town square of Covent Garden. A structure was built in 1830, and then covered in glass in 1872. Congestion made the market infeasible, and it was nearly demolished in the 1970s. Preservationists rescued it, and in 1980 it was redeveloped into a specialty mall. The main market buildings largely have flexible stalls devoted to hand crafts with themed days--antiques, clothing/ household goods, and handcrafts. They are surrounded by a plaza flanked by boutiques and restaurants having the appeal of an upscale mall.

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