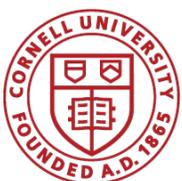




Equity Preservation Workshop

Buffalo, New York

May 2017 DRAFT



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Architecture
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Planning

**ENGAGED
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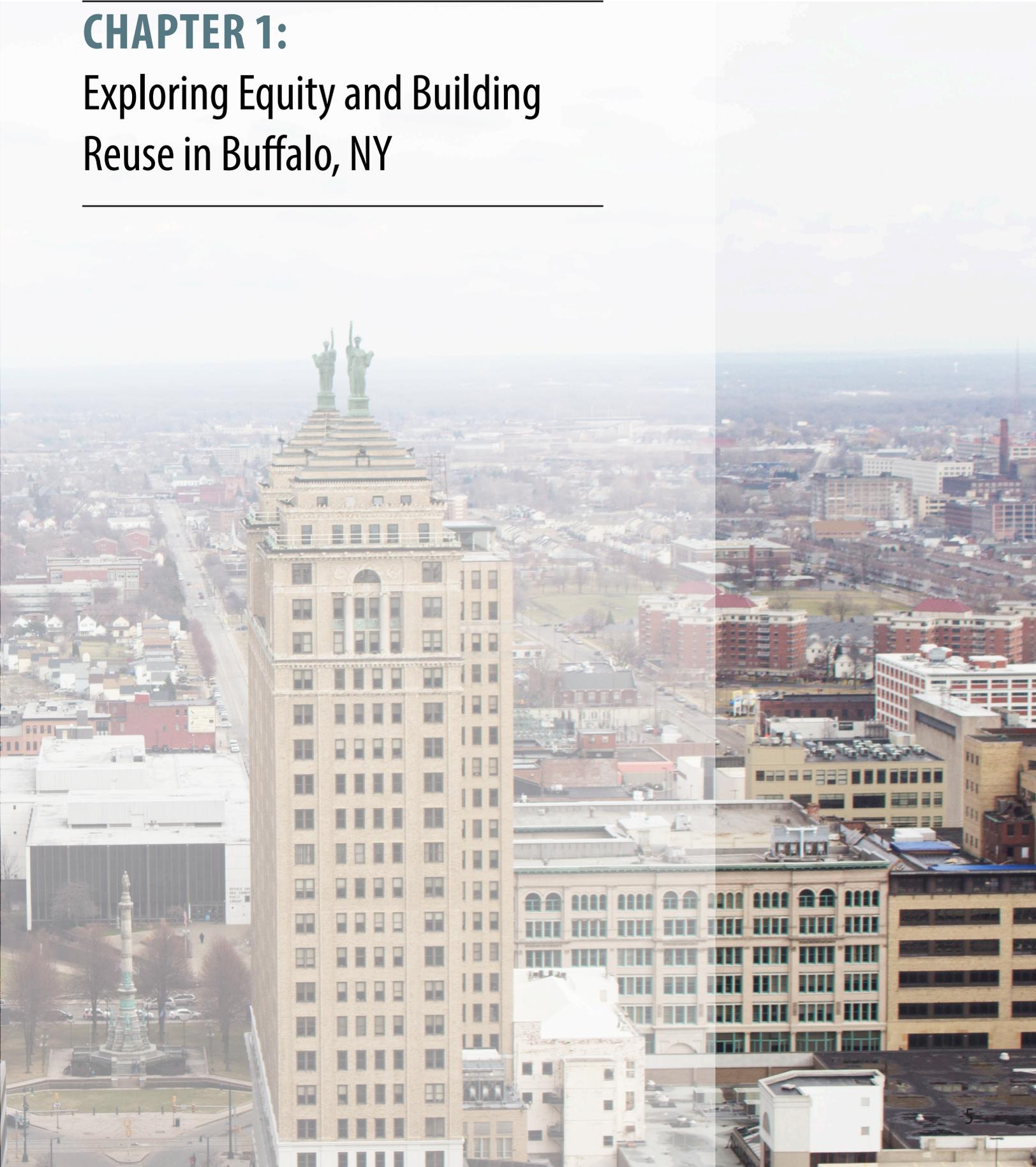
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CHAPTER 1:

Exploring Equity and Building Reuse in Buffalo, NY



Equity has been a transformative concept for urban planning, particularly since Norman Krumholtz's groundbreaking work in Cleveland.¹ Between 1969 and 1979 Krumholtz served as Planning Director for the City of Cleveland, leading the planning department to achieve solutions that benefitted residents most in need. Equity is also integral to models of sustainability;² however, it is often overshadowed in comparison to issues involving the environment and economy.³ Equity should be a priority for sustainability initiatives related to historic preservation, land use planning, and the continued and adaptive reuse of the built environment-- this was the main premise of this workshop. The workshop foregrounded the link between preservation and building reuse that can serve low income, disadvantaged, and historically underrepresented communities. We continually related our research back to the goals of creating sustainable, resilient, and just cities.

The primary foci of our efforts were: 1) to research connections between national preservation and building reuse policy and local communities, especially with regard to community development and land use planning and 2) to fully utilize and ground truth mapped indicators and conduct spatial analyses that utilize the expanding universe of publicly available data on the built environment and social and economic data.

Due to the fact that there was limited research in which the connection between equity issues and historic preservation is explored, a primary goal of this workshop was to provide a framework for understanding historic preservation through a lens of equity. Chapter 2 provides a definition of "equity preservation" while arguing for a preservation agenda that considers how practitioners can unite historic preservation and community development.

National Partners

We are grateful to be working with two national partners-- the Preservation Rightsizing Network and the Preservation Green Lab (the research arm of the National Trust of the Historic Preservation), which have provided valuable insights into the connections between historic preservation and sustainable, just communities. The Preservation Rightsizing Network's *Action Agenda for Historic Preservation in Legacy Cities* provided valuable tools and approaches for understanding preservation policy challenges in legacy cities. Likewise, the Preservation Green Lab's *Older, Smaller, Better Report* and *Atlas of ReUrbanism* provided a value geospatial toolset for exploring the broader sustainability and preservation conditions in Buffalo.

Our research was intended to aid partner organizations by providing an "on-the-ground" overview of the diverse preservation activities in Buffalo. By analyzing geospatial indicators, interviewing community leaders, investigating building reuse in a sample of selected Buffalo neighborhoods, we sought to provide a snapshot of Buffalo's preservation climate, while highlighting the challenges and opportunities that neighborhoods face in preserving the built legacy of the city.

In building on the work of the Preservation Rightsizing Network, our policy tool section (Chapter 6), discusses national policy tools and strategies related to preservation and building reuse, while also relaying specific opportunities and challenges in their application that are unique to Buffalo.

PROCESS

Literature Review

The semester-long workshop, offered in spring 2016, featured a variety of class, individual and group projects. Initial workshop assignments focused on understanding literature related to historic preservation and equity. Students reviewed a variety of articles, book chapters and reports that explored the relationships between historic preservation and diversity, affordability, and sustainability.

Tours and Session with Buffalo Organizations

A two-day visit to Buffalo in late February introduced the class to a variety of preservation initiatives in Buffalo. Tours with PUSH Buffalo, the African American Heritage Corridor, Fargo House, and the Buffalo Central Terminal, as well as meeting with the City of Buffalo's Office of Preservation, The Partnership for Public Good, and faculty from the University at Buffalo provided a valuable orientation to issues of development, preservation, and building reuse in the city.

Mapping and Analyzing Spatial Indicators

In an effort to understand the broader spatial patterns of preservation, building reuse, and investment in Buffalo, a major component of the course included creating GIS maps of the city and its neighborhoods. In addition to exploring the Preservation Green Lab's character score metric, the class utilized publicly available spatial data from the American Community Survey and parcel data from the City of Buffalo. Hot-spot analyses of building and demolition permits with the City of Buffalo helped to provide an overview of the geography of reinvestment in the city (Chapter 2).

Neighborhood Tours and Stakeholder Interviews

Following our initial visit to the Buffalo, the four class groups returned to Buffalo in April to conduct stakeholder interviews and tour neighborhood focus areas. This additional "on-the-ground" research, which included photographing and mapping the neighborhoods, provides a snapshot of Buffalo's preservation climate, while highlighting the challenges and opportunities that neighborhoods face in preserving the built legacy of the city. Chapter 4 provides focused community studies of four neighborhoods in Buffalo: the Eastside, Masten Park, Elmwood Village, and Black Rock. Chapter 5 explores highlights from our stakeholders interviews with community leaders.

Tool Kit of Policies

As discussed above, students also worked individually on research policy tools. Building on the work of the Preservation Rightsizing Network, Chapter 6 discusses policy tools and specific issues related to supporting equity preservation and sustainable building reuse in Buffalo. We hope that this section will be useful to both our national and local partners-- providing both a catalog of national policy tools related to preservation and building reuse, while also relaying the specific challenges and opportunities unique to Buffalo.

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CHAPTER 2

What Do We Mean by Equity Preservation?



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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUITY PRESERVATION?

Equity and Sustainability Communities

Over the past forty years, equity has become an essential component of planning for sustainable communities. Since Norman Krumholz's trailblazing equity-based work as Planning Director for the City of Cleveland in the 1970s¹, issues of equity have been embraced in the planning literature. Notably, Scott Campbell, professor of urban planning at the University of Michigan, discusses equity as one of the "three E's of sustainability," in "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities?: Urban Planning and the Contradictions of Sustainable Development," which serves as one of the most widely cited articles in planning literature.² Contemporary scholarship has noted that equity is missing in many sustainability plans, calling for elevating the importance of equity in relation to the economy and the environment. The focus on equity, its impact on the allocation of public resources, and its emphasis on socially just planning practices, is one of the most important developments within planning theory and practice over the past forty years. Nevertheless, while equity has become a major addition to planning theory and practice, little substantial research has explored the relationship between historic preservation planning and equitable communities.⁴

Preservation as a Force of Equity

Despite the limited literature, the preservation discipline is uniquely situated to provide insight and tools to address issues of community empowerment, diversity, and housing affordability. The contemporary preservation movement in the United States evolved as a grassroots force that developed in response to the overreach of urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century.⁵ Activism of the 1960s and 1970s, bolstered by the writings of Jane Jacobs, considered preservation as a tool of community empowered urban development, embracing small-scale, locally-based incremental development over large-scale, top-down approaches requiring large amounts of capital.⁵ Jacob's observations about the benefits of older buildings in serving as affordable spaces for small business innovation, enhancing economic vitality, and improving neighborhood character serve as widely accepted ideas in historic preservation today. Jacob's observations also act as a framework for numerous small-scale, community-oriented preservation initiatives.⁶

Preservation practice today embraces a more inclusive scope than ever before. As preservation literature emphasizes a broader sphere of engagement, arguing for the consideration of a broader array of historic resources and the inclusion of underrepresented groups, preservation practice moves to represent more inclusive histories.⁷ Buckley and Graves have highlighted efforts of cultural preservation that focuses on, "strengthening existing social and cultural minority communities rather than abetting their displacement."⁸ Focusing on the work of the San Francisco planning department, Buckley and Graves highlight efforts to incorporate LGBTQ, Japanese, and Filipino heritage through cultural heritage districts. These districts emphasize intangible heritage and cultural importance over the traditional architectural-based categories. While some planning and preservation literature is critical of preservation's lack of inclusivity, the growing body of research surrounding preservation and diversity suggest some progress towards a more inclusive preservation agenda.⁹

Historic preservation also provides valuable insights into the issue of housing affordability. Donovan Rypkema, Principal of Place Economics and researcher on the connections between historic preservation and economics,

The preservation discipline is uniquely situated to provide insight and tools to address issues of community empowerment, diversity, and housing affordability.

highlights the potential of older neighborhoods in providing affordable housing options in desirable, walkable, transit-oriented communities. Proposing policy tools for older, historic neighborhoods, he identifies homeownership as a significant policy goal in preventing gentrification and displacement. While further research highlighting preservation's role in supporting affordable housing should be explored, the notion of tailoring preservation incentives to the concerns of middle and low-income neighborhoods provides new possibilities to expand preservation's impact.¹⁰

Critiques of Historic Preservation

Despite historic preservation's progress in addressing issues of community empowerment, diversity and, affordability, some perceptions of historic preservation view the discipline as elitist and antithetical to achieving equity altogether.¹¹ Contemporary critiques of historic preservation often rely on long-held conceptions of historic preservation as an expensive and elitist activity.¹² According to this view, preservation standards require large costs for compliance and increased property values can drive out low income residents.¹³ Though some recent research provides valuable insights into the intricacies of preservation and neighborhood change, there is little empirical research on the extent to which preservation is a direct cause of gentrification and displacement.^{14 15}

Similar arguments attack preservation as an impediment to a city's ability to evolve, which reduces a city's ability to create denser, more affordable housing.¹⁶ Notably, Edward Glaeser argues that preservation review boards have become too powerful and are ultimately prohibiting new supply of housing, which reduces affordability.¹⁷

Other critiques of the discipline challenge the outcome of who benefits from historic preservation, who decides what to preserve, and how funding for preservation is distributed. Dennis Domer, professor at the University of Kansas, argues that preservation standards result in the creation of a, "preferred past" that distributes "the values, aspirations and desired associations of white upper-and middle class men and women who own and invest in those projects and who are strongly motivated by capitalistic goals."¹⁸ C. Richard Swaim, professor at the University of Baltimore, conducted an analysis of Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits that aligns with this view, contending that federal tax credits are a powerful subsidy that confers benefit to wealthy developers who possess the political and financial savvy to take on high-risk, complex, and expensive projects.¹⁹

While limited empirical research exists to definitively support preservation's role in gentrification or reducing housing affordability, perceptions of preservation as expensive, elitist and antagonistic to equity present a burden on preservation practitioners, particularly in low-income communities.²⁰ The benefits of historic preservation in building sustainable communities are widely known. The notion of a building's embodied energy ---"the sum of all the energy required to extract, process, deliver, and install the materials needed to construct a building,"²¹ serves as the guiding force behind Carl Elefante's often cited mantra that the "greenest building is the one that is already built."²² Efforts by the Preservation Green Lab to quantify the environmental savings of building reuse versus demolition have had tremendous impact in reshaping preservation as an essential component of sustainable cities.²³

In this wider framework of sustainability, preservationists have begun to recognize the need to incorporate equity as a goal of community preservation, particularly in middle and low income neighborhoods.

The Preservation Rightsizing Network's *Action Agenda for Historic Preservation in Legacy Cities*, presents specific

policy goals for legacy cities, focusing on shaping new approaches to preservation, adapting preservation tools and policies, and developing broader partnerships and coalitions to better address the problems of divestment in legacy cities.²⁴ Other benefits of preservation to legacy cities are embodied in economic development initiatives and cultural benefits of historic preservation. Preservation Buffalo Niagara identifies in its vision statement the benefits of historic preservation in providing heritage education, “fostering job opportunities”, and “creating community alliances and partnerships.”²⁵

Despite preservationists’ efforts in incorporating sustainability and equity goals and policies into the larger dialogue, the perception of historic preservation as unaffordable, elitist and antithetical to equity places an unfortunate burden on the profession. As the historic preservation discipline expands its effort to support community, diversity and affordability initiatives, preservationists must rise to the challenge of presenting preservation as a force of equity and social good.

TOWARDS AN EQUITY PRESERVATION AGENDA

Acknowledging the need for a preservation ethos that embraces equity as an essential component of preservation, this workshop sought to understand the many ways in which issues of equity and distributive justice can guide historic preservation practice. By considering historic preservation through a lens of community development, neighborhood change and urban sustainability, we hope to challenge popular criticisms of the discipline and to broaden the scope of what traditionally defines historic preservation. A preservation approach that extends beyond traditional place-based values of historic integrity, authenticity and sense of place to include people-based values of community empowerment, sense of ownership and community cohesion is essential in broadening the impact of the preservation movement.

Following a review of the literature on social justice issues in preservation, class workshop groups formulated their own definitions of “equity preservation.” Within our discussion, four general themes emerged:

(1) Awareness of the Risks and Benefits of Preservation

The first step towards a definition of equity preservation, is acknowledging and addressing the potential risks and benefits of historic preservation on neighborhood revitalization. Preservation’s skeptics are right to be concerned about the potential for gentrification and displacement brought on by rising housing costs in reinvested neighborhoods, but they may also overlook the benefits of historic preservation to their surrounding communities. Investment in preservation may provide for the provision of greater affordable housing, increased affordability through tax abatements, or the reduction of rising costs associated with new construction.²⁶ Schweitzer and Valenzuela provide an informative framework for discussing equity in transportation, which could be helpful in assessing the impacts of historic preservation. Notably, by evaluating preservation activities through Schweitzer and Valenzuela’s framework of distributive justice: “who gets what, when, and to some degree how,” preservationists can better assess the imbalance of risks and benefits from historic preservation projects.²⁷

(2) Inclusivity

As the historic preservation field has expanded, it has become more inclusive in its scope and sphere of engagement. What began as a movement centered on the preservation of the homes of prominent white, male,

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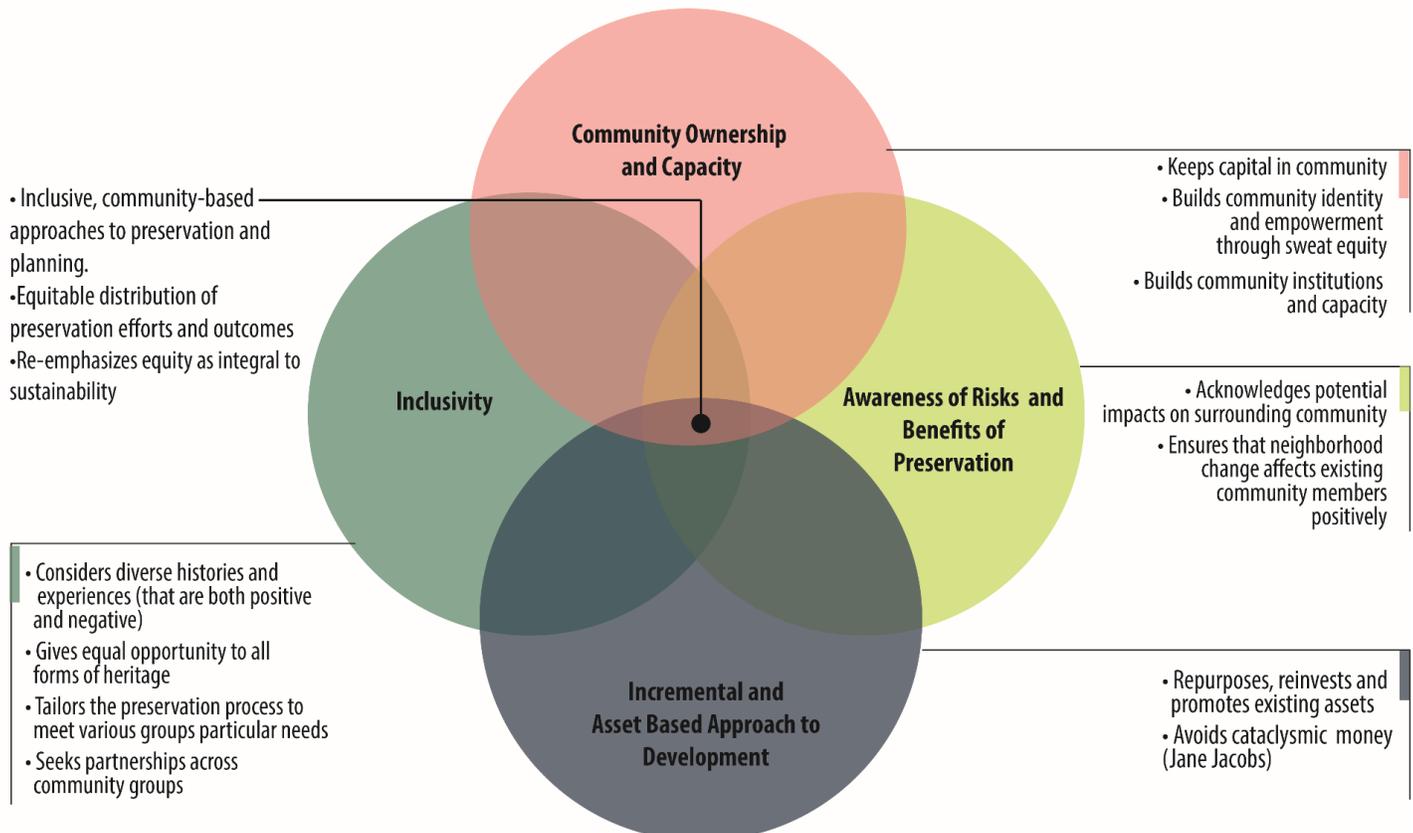
historical figures, preservation has embraced greater inclusivity in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st centuries.²⁸ Local, state, and federal initiatives to survey historic resources associated with underrepresented cultural groups have allowed for greater diversity of representation in preservation. Efforts to document more diverse histories have led to broader definitions of what defines historic resources, with greater emphasis on vernacular architecture, cultural landscapes and intangible heritage.²⁹ While efforts to be inclusive have provided a greater equity in whose histories are emphasized, public participation and a wider recognition of what constitutes significant historical resources can insure a broader inclusion of perspectives.³⁰

In addition to expanding preservation to represent a wider array of cultural voices, a more holistic scope allows for the possibility of partnerships with community groups outside of the mainstream preservation movement. Legacy cities such as Buffalo are enriched by a wealth of neighborhood organizations focused on community, economic and environmental sustainability, youth development, and affordable housing initiatives. Although preservation has been criticized as unaffordable and out-of-touch with the concerns of low income neighborhoods, preservation incentives and tools--through an open and inclusive process--can provide substantial benefits of affordability and community empowerment to neighborhoods. By expanding the reach of the discipline through a preservation process tailored to meet the needs of the communities, broader coalitions within the preservation movement can serve to both prevent demolitions and property deterioration, and improve quality of community life.³¹

(3) Incremental Approach to Urban Development

As a discipline centered on the conservation of the existing built environment, historic preservation is rooted in an approach to urbanism that emphasizes incremental community development over time. In contrast to conventional practices of new construction, which often consist of large-scale development projects requiring

THEMES OF EQUITY PRESERVATION



significant capital, historic preservation projects are often smaller in scale and require significantly less capital.³² Fitting a model of gradual investment, versus massive infusions of capital, historic preservation offers an alternative form of development to what Jane Jacobs described as “cataclysmic money,”³³ whereby massive investment from outside of a neighborhood threatens to alter the social and cultural ties of a community. In contrast, small-scale preservation approaches align with a locally-based community development model where capital is invested and retained in the community. While larger scale development may provide opportunities for affordability, the benefits of historic preservation projects in creating community cohesion, informing cultural identity, and providing low-cost rents suggests that an incremental approach to development can assist in achieving equitable outcomes.³⁴

If historic preservation is to move beyond its popular perception as an elitist, expensive and antithetical to notions of equity, it must assert itself as an essential component of the health and vitality of sustainable communities.

(4) Community Ownership and Increased Capacity

A preservation model that borrows from community development approaches and seeks to build community capacity and ownership is essential in expanding the social impacts of historic preservation. By embracing a community economic development that builds from the skills and knowledge of community members, preservation projects can develop both people and place-based community assets. Through the practice of sweat equity, whereby residents contribute positively to their community through their own actions and collectively with their neighbors, individuals can help to improve community character, cohesion and identity. Community centers, workforce training programs, and youth development initiatives provide a wealth of knowledge in fostering tangible skills and promoting intangible pride within a community and should be embraced as a partner in historic preservation initiatives.

Equitable Distribution of Efforts and Outcomes.

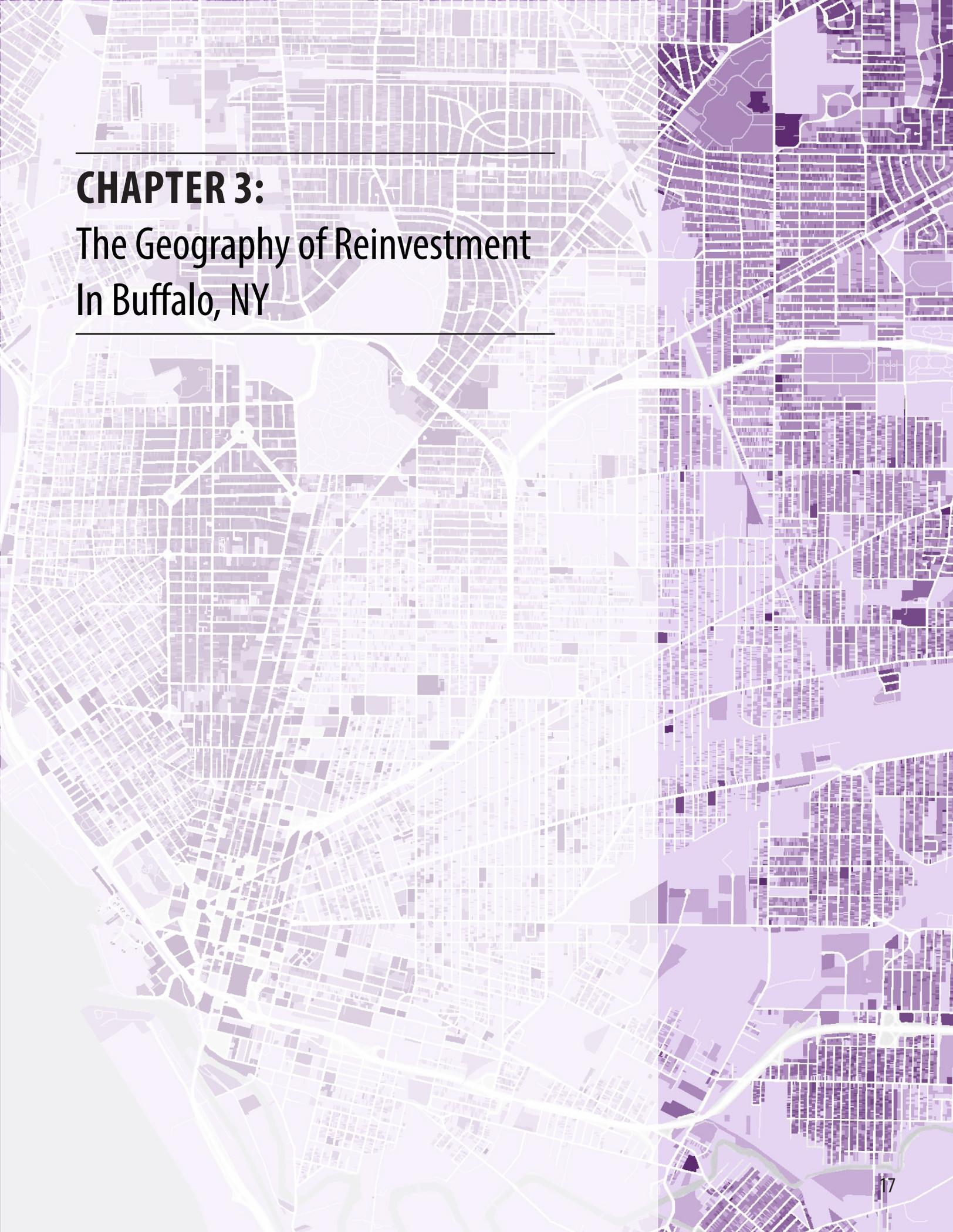
If historic preservation is to move beyond perceptions that it is elitist, expensive and antithetical to equity, it must assert itself as an essential component of the health and vitality of sustainable communities. When we acknowledge the risks and benefits of preservation projects, allow for more diverse perspectives and partnerships, and focus on small scale, community-based development schemes, preservation offers a wealth of knowledge to contribute to the broader dialogue of sustainability. Yet only by making a conscious effort to create equitable outcomes, can the preservation community truly be effective in contributing to more just, sustainable communities.

- Jennifer Minner, Zach Small

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CHAPTER 3:
The Geography of Reinvestment
In Buffalo, NY

CHAPTER 3: THE GEOGRAPHY OF REINVESTMENT IN BUFFALO, NY

Historic Overview

In the 17th century, the area situated at the eastern end of Lake Erie was occupied by the Seneca Nation of the Haudenosaunee League of Nations. The Seneca Nation was the westernmost of the Iroquois' five--later six--nations, with the League's territory stretching across most of New York State. Buffalo was later established as a European settlement in the 18th century and occupied an important strategic location before, during, and after the American Revolution due to its access to waterways and Niagara Falls, as well as its close proximity to British-controlled Canada.¹

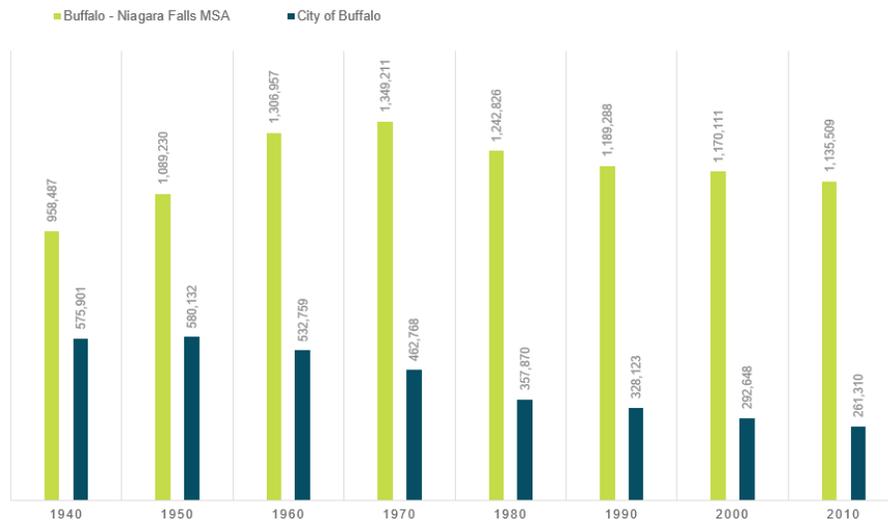
The early 19th century saw the beginning of Buffalo as a planned city. In 1804, the surveyor and planner Joseph Ellicott, who had assisted with surveying Washington D.C. introduced his radial street and grid system plan in the city of Buffalo. The plan called for a grid street network superimposed over a street network of important avenues radiating from the central point of what today is Niagara Square and Buffalo City Hall.²

Construction of the Erie Canal in 1825, triggered a massive development boom for the city, connecting Buffalo to Albany at the Hudson River, the large-scale public works project developed Buffalo as the largest US inland port.³ In only six years, Buffalo emerged as the second most populous city in upstate New York, and was home to 10,000 residents when it was incorporated as a city in 1832. The region became economically vital to the United States' westward expansion, serving as a shipping point along trade routes between the Great Lakes and eastern seaboard. Railroads added to the freight capacity of the canal to serve the transportation needs of new steel mills, meat packing plants, and flour milling--all integral industries to Buffalo's economic growth.⁴

With burgeoning industry came immense wealth, as expressed through the city's many extravagant architectural treasures. Designers such as Louis Sullivan, Henry Hobson Richardson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, and famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted all left their mark on the city's built environment.⁵ Accordingly, Buffalo has inherited a rich architectural history, not only in grand structures like the Buffalo Central Terminal, but in the many residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors built during the late 19th century that emanate from the downtown core. The grain silos along the Buffalo River just south of downtown came to represent Modernist utilitarian architecture, while numerous industrial buildings sprang up in the Hydraulics / Larkin Neighborhoods bordering the Niagara River.⁶

Buffalo's growing shipping and heavy manufacturing industries were a magnet for a diversity of workers in the early 20th century. Workers from south, western and eastern Europe, and coal mining regions of Pennsylvania migrated to Buffalo, gaining union representation in manufacturing jobs and establishing middle class communities throughout the city. The arrival of African-Americans during the Great Migration supported the economic boom of WWI, and established Buffalo as a center for African-American culture and jazz music.⁷

Buffalo Metro and Regional Population (1940-2010)



U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1940-2010

*Buffalo Metro and Regional Population
1940-2010, from US Census, McGavern
2014*

Economic Decline

Following WWII, Buffalo began a half-century of economic decline. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, gave ships a more direct access from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean, drastically reducing Buffalo's importance as a shipping port. Mechanization, greater competition from other countries, the movement of manufacturers to the South and abroad, and the growing dominance of the service-based economy exacerbated the decline of the manufacturing industry.⁸

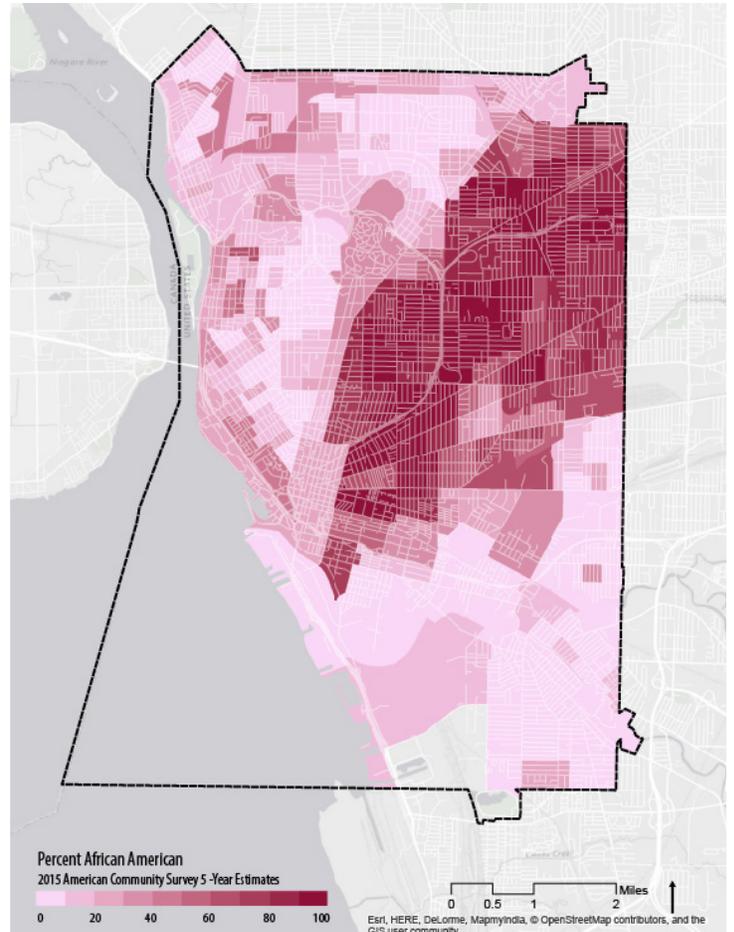
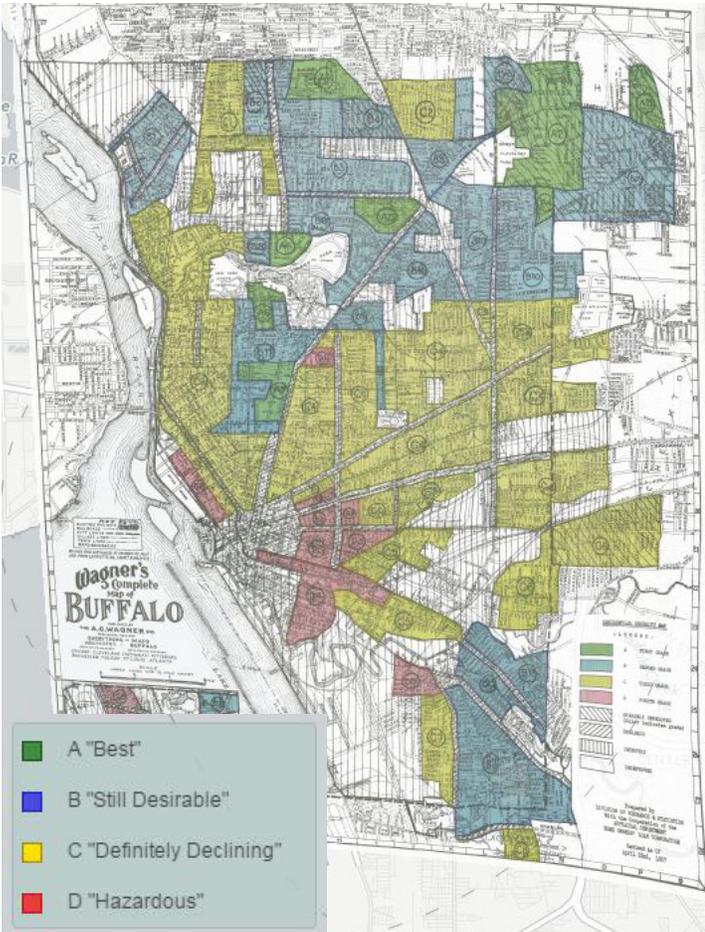
In addition to problems typical of Rust Belt cities, the forces of suburbanization and highway expansion played a significant role in shaping the development of Buffalo in the latter half of the 20th Century. As the city proper began losing population in the 1950s, the regional population expanded in the 1950s and 1970s. From 1950 to 1970 the region gained nearly 300,000 people (1.09 million to 1.3 million people) while the city lost nearly 50,000 people (580,132 people to 468,768). After peaking in 1971 at 1.35 million people, the region began its half-century population decline, falling to a population of 1.14 million by 2010. Suburbanization in a region losing population has exacerbated the depopulation of the city proper. From 1950 to 2010, the city of Buffalo proper's population declined by 318,822 (a 55% drop) while the suburban population increased by 365,101 (a 72% increase).⁹ As cheap land in the suburbs and exurbs continues to entice homeowners and increase suburban sprawl, the city proper is challenged to compete with the market pressures on the peripheries.¹⁰ Declining population and increased poverty within the city of Buffalo had dramatic effects on the city's built environment, as vacancy and blight contributed to a cycle of disinvestment and property abandonment. By 2010, Buffalo had the ninth highest vacancy rate in the US at 15.7%¹¹

In addition to the problems of suburbanization, Buffalo's history of segregation and racial inequality have left a dramatic mark on the city. The legacy of mid-century redlining and large scale urban renewal projects (primarily on the city's east side), contributed to dramatic racial segregation within the city. The Buffalo region is ranked as the 7th most segregated metro area in the country.¹² Economic and racial inequality is most drastic when comparing the suburbs to the city proper. While the poverty rate in the Buffalo-Niagara region was below the national average at 13.8%, the poverty rate in the City of Buffalo--where the majority Hispanic and African American residents are concentrated in the region--was 29.6%.¹³

Back to the City

As in many urban centers, reinvestment in Buffalo in the past 20 years has been driven by the so-called 'back to the city' movement. The movement can be described as the reversal of patterns of urban flight and disinvestment witnessed in several US cities between 1960 and 1990. The last two decades have seen capital investments return to the urban core.

*Left: redlining map of Buffalo, 1957 from "Mapping Inequality"
 Right: Map of African American Population, 2015 American Community Survey. Map by Zach Small*



Renewed development interest in the city is met with enthusiasm by many residents, but caution by others who understand the complicated racial history of the city. In a city where redlining and urban renewal have drastically shaped the urban landscape, the issues of reinvestment and racial politics cannot be easily separated. University of Buffalo Professor Henry Louis Taylor Jr, acknowledges the renewed interest in the city by a white creative class, contending that renewed investment in the city is positive, but questions if the benefits of the investment are shared equally across class and race.¹⁴

Reinvestment Interest and Preservation

In addition to numerous community development non-profit organizations, three primary preservation groups in Buffalo—Preservation Buffalo Niagara, Preservation Studios LLC, and the Campaign for Greater Buffalo—provide a wealth of advocacy and educational programs to support preservation. As renewed investment spurs interest in historic structures, developers have become savvy at utilizing historic tax credits.¹⁵

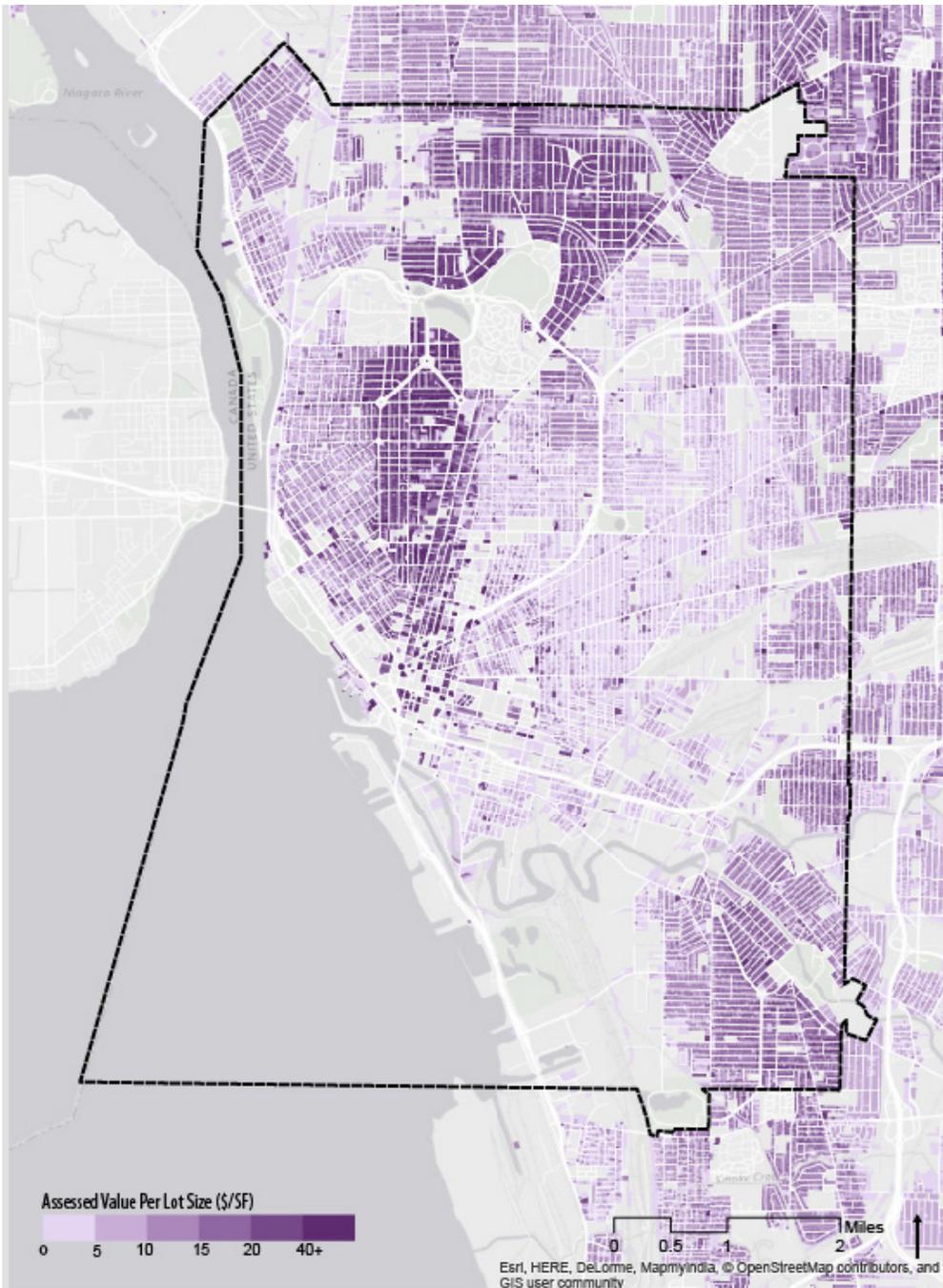
As new growth in the city spurs interest in the benefits of historic preservation, the implementation of the Green Code by the City of Buffalo attempts to reverse the patterns of automobile-centric mid-century urbanism through a simplified form-based code. The Green Code is proposed to aid preservation in Buffalo by:

1. Prescribing appropriate land use relationships that reflect the way that people use historic neighborhoods and commercial centers.
2. Requiring development patterns that respond to historic networks and growth models.
3. Building design that reinforces the specific local character of the city's varying neighborhoods.¹⁶

While the full effects of the Green Code in spurring the development of more walkable, historic neighborhoods has yet to be realized, it offers a simplified process for developers in the city. While critics contend that the code itself may contribute to greater gentrification pressures, the City of Buffalo has begun steps to develop a housing affordability study as well as a preservation plan.¹⁷ We hope that the two planning processes can inform each other.

-Zach Small, Tom Pera, Jessica Stevenson, Ashley Pryce, Joey Jiayun Zou, Cole Noorgaarden

*Assessed Value Per Lot Size \$/SF
from City of Buffalo parcel data, 2016
Map by Zach Small*



Geography of Reinvestment

As renewed investment in Buffalo shapes preservation efforts across the city, a variety of factors shape where and how preservation occurs in the city. A series of maps on the following pages relays the socioeconomic, racial and ethnic composition of the city. An additional spatial analysis of demolitions and new construction data from the City of Buffalo concludes the section.

Property Values

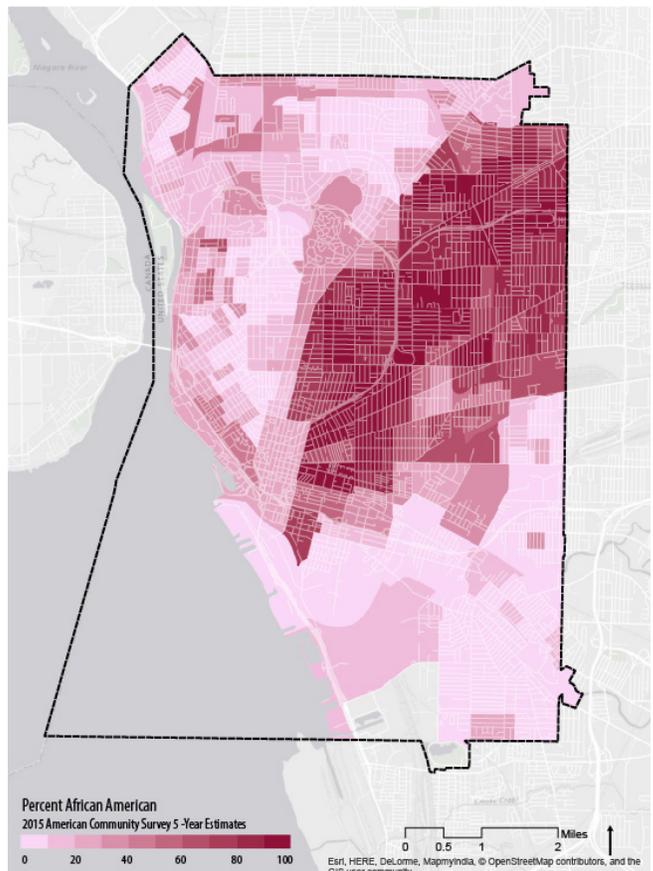
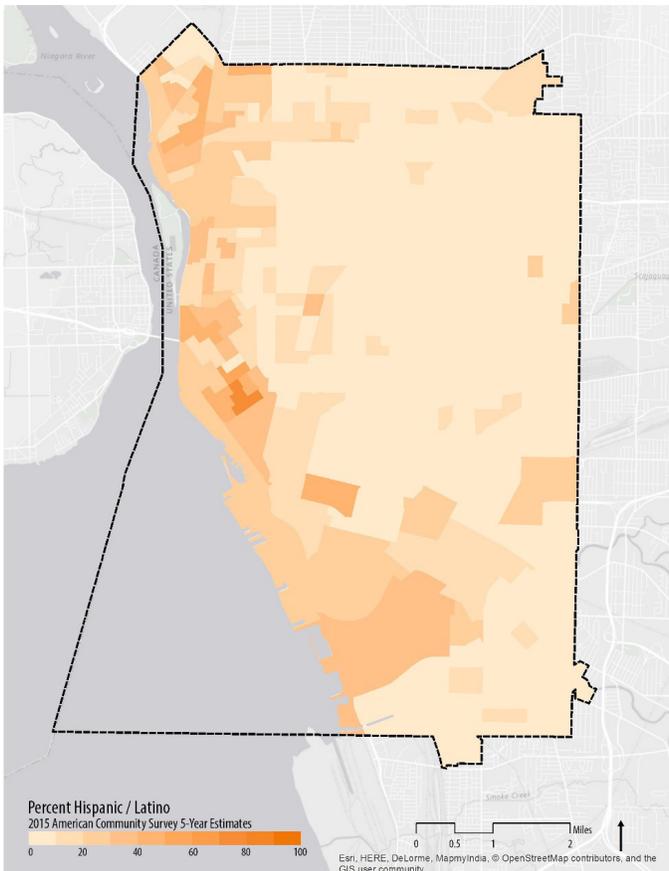
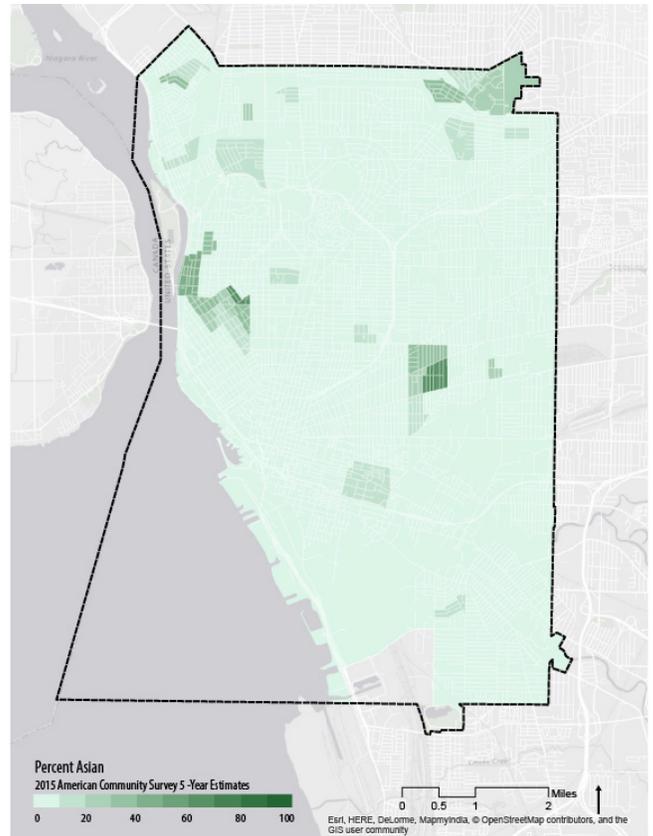
The map above depicts assessed value of properties, normalized by lot size (square feet). Property values are significantly higher in the western and northern portions of the city than the east and south. The neighborhoods of Elmwood Village, Park South, Nye Park, and North Park are the most affluent communities within the city, with lower assessed values in Broadway Fillmore and Humboldt Park. Route 5 (Main Street) serves as the main dividing line between the more affluent from less affluent communities. Middle income communities make up

the northern areas bordering the Niagara River (Black Rock, Riverside and the Upper West Side), and the neighborhoods on the eastern periphery of the city proper (Seneca, Kaisertown, Lovejoy, Kensington, and Delavan and Bailey). Higher assessed values appear in neighborhoods with a higher concentration of historic landmarks and districts concentrated on the west side of the city.

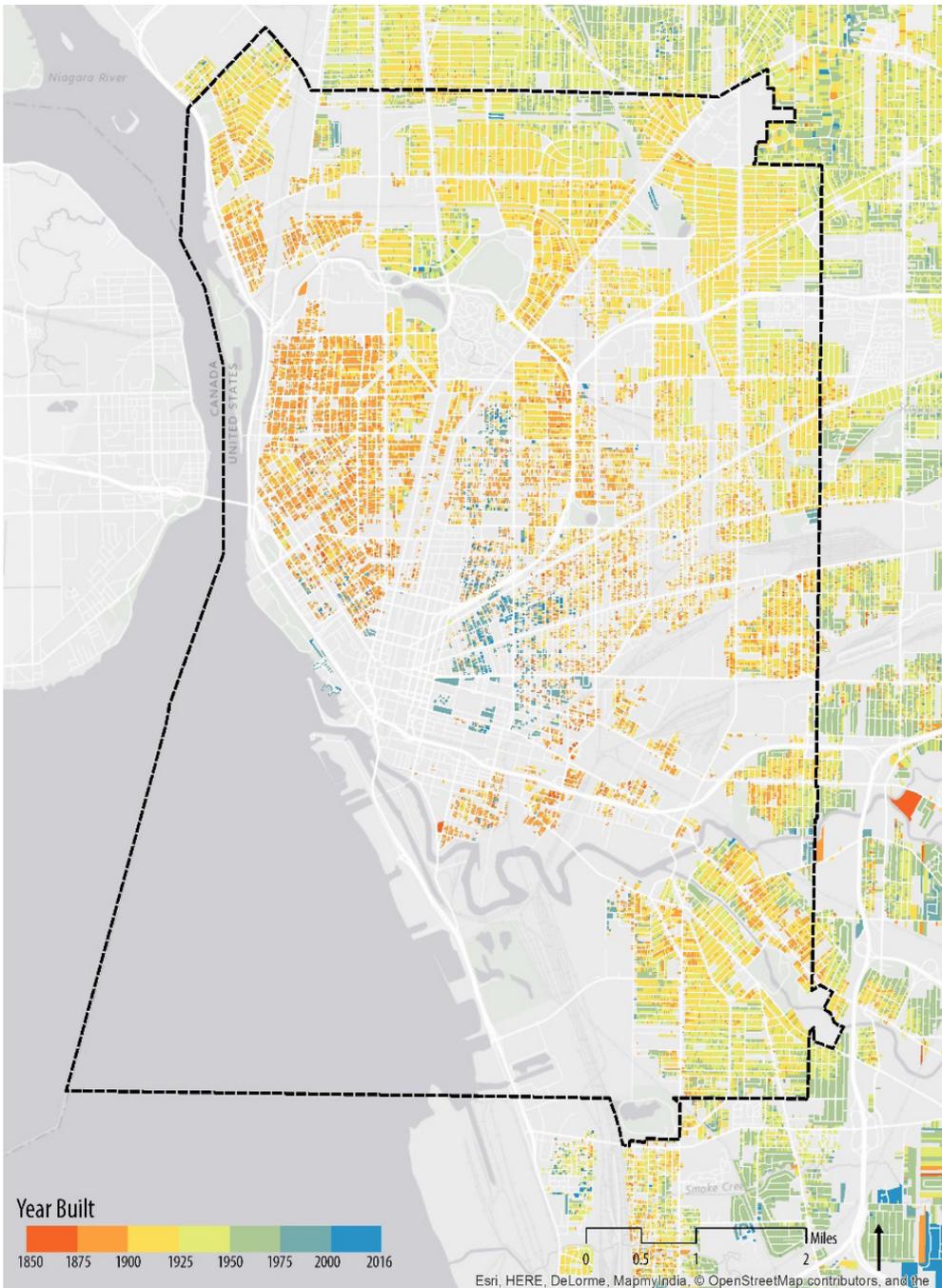
Racial/ Ethnic Demographics

Buffalo's geography of reinvestment parallels racial and ethnic divisions. Main Street serves not only as the dividing line between more affluent west side neighborhoods and the more distressed east side, but a racial dividing line that is reflective of mid-century redlining practices. 80% of the Black population lives east of Main Street, while the White population is generally concentrated on the west side.¹⁸

*Race and Ethnicity
Data by Census Tract,
source 2015 American
Community Survey 5-
Year Estimates, Maps by
Zach Small*



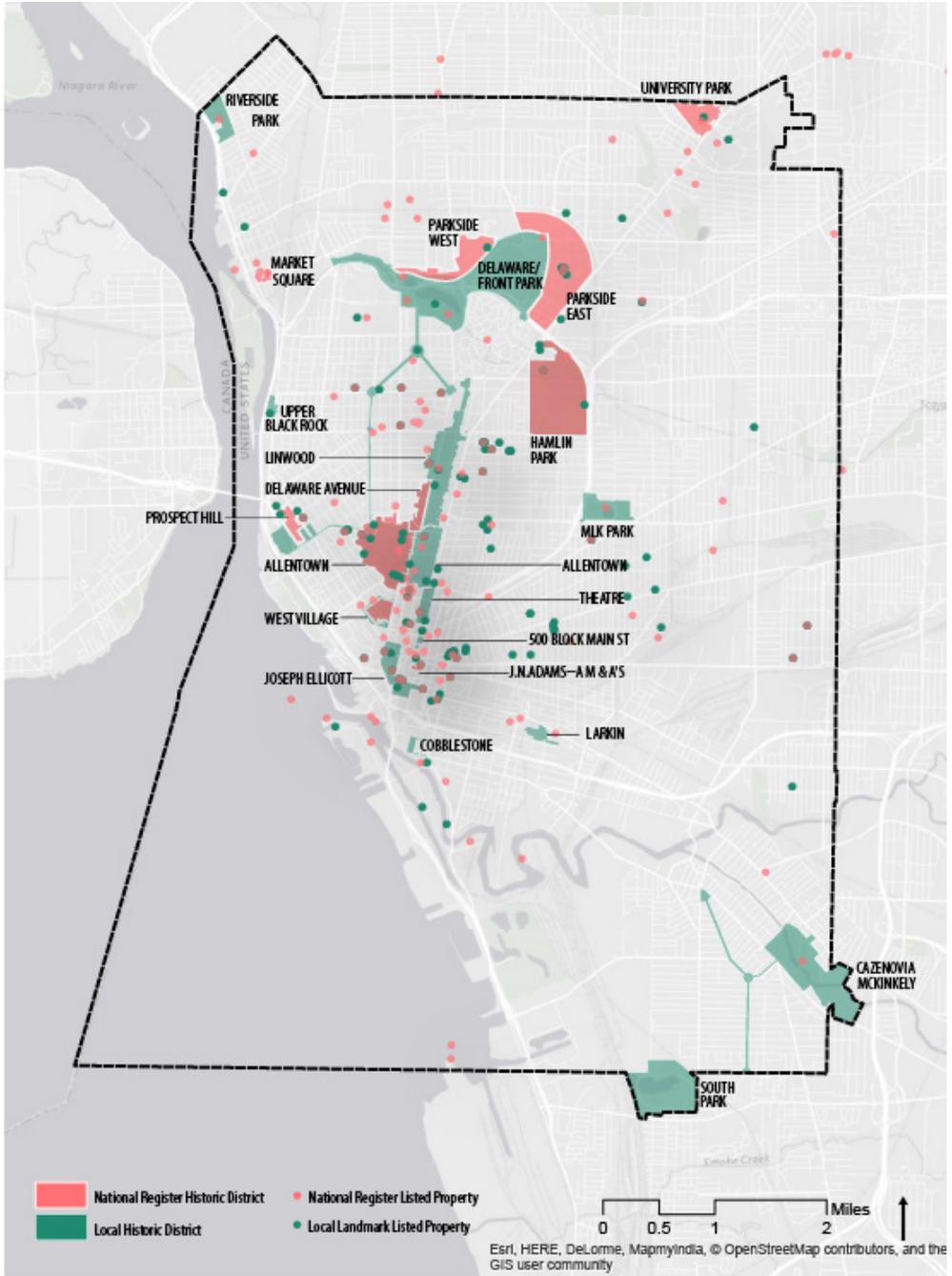
*Parcels by Year Built, Source:
Erie County Department of Real
Property Tax Services, Parcel Data*



Year Built

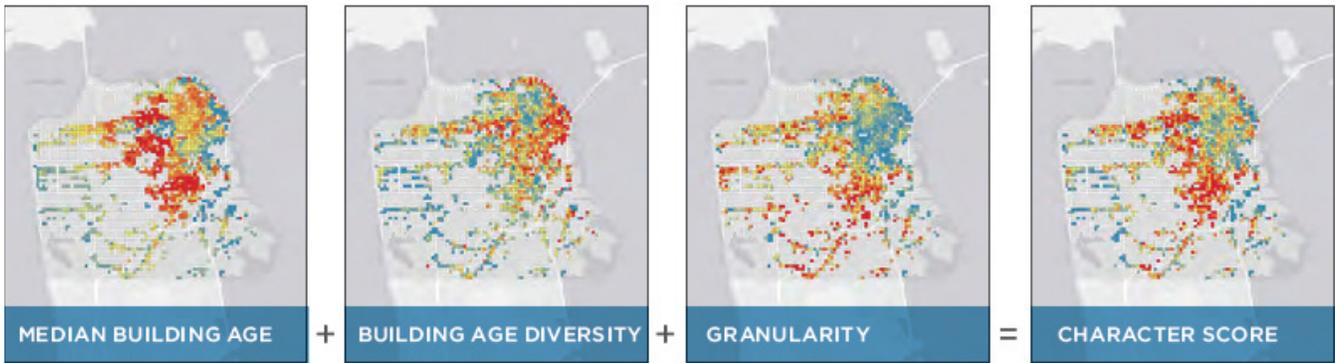
Buffalo's building stock represents a diversity of architectural styles and construction eras dating from the mid-19th century onward. A broad survey of parcel data reveals a concentration of 1875-1900 constructed buildings along the neighborhoods bordering the Niagara River, with pockets of early 20th century construction in the north and eastern portions of the city. Large-scale mid-20th century urban projects highlighted in blue have a significant presence on the East Side. Additional single family infill from the 1990s and 2000s can be observed in the neighborhoods of Broadway Fillmore and the Near East Side.

Buffalo Local and National Landmarks and Historic Districts, Source City of Buffalo, Map by Zach Small



Landmarks

A significant portion of Buffalo's landmarks and historic districts are concentrated on the West side and around the Central Business district. While preservation landmarking efforts are seen scattered across portions of the east side (such as the many churches in Broadway Fillmore), the lack of landmarking shows a clear deficit in the utilization of traditional preservation tools in these areas.



Character Score

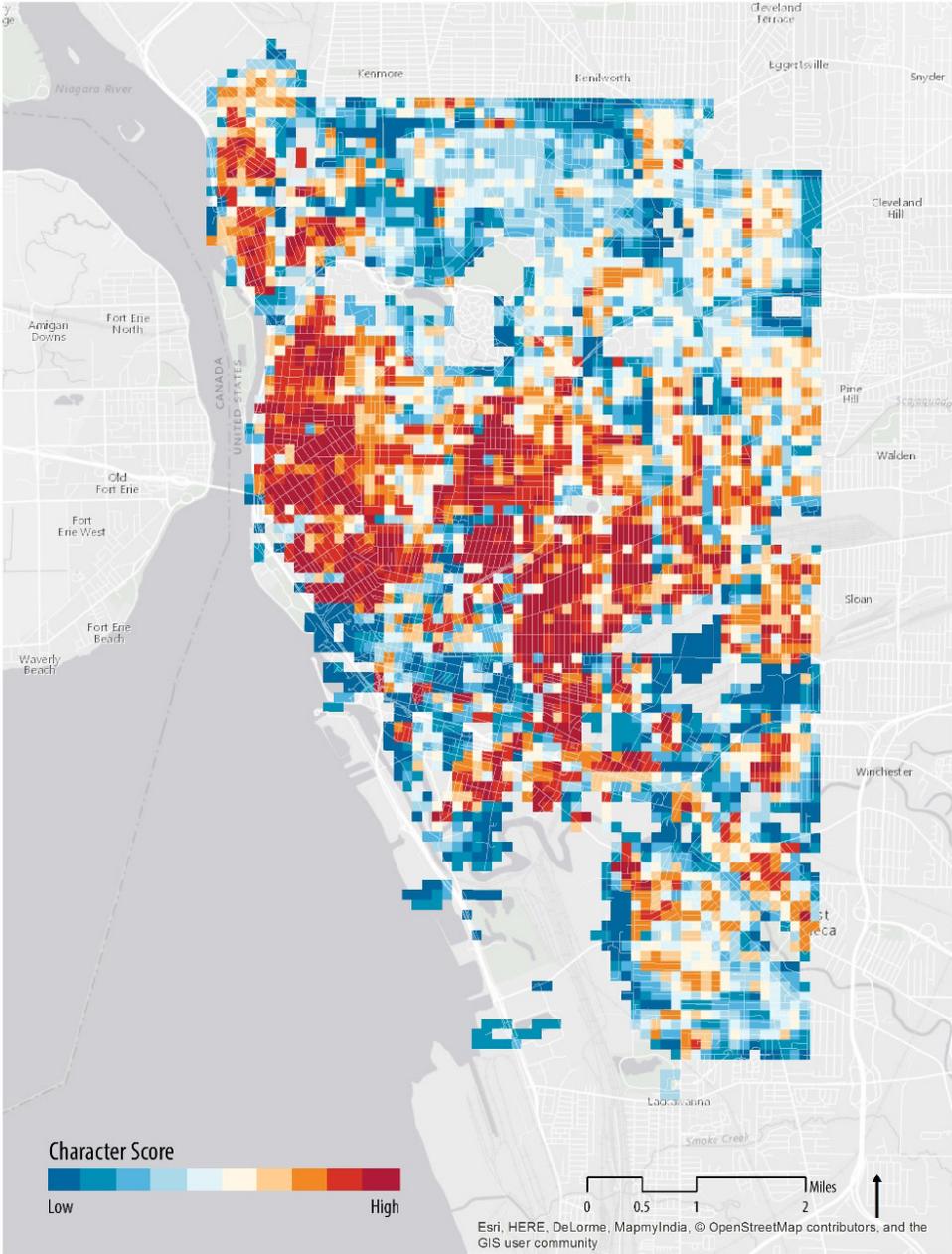
The Atlas of ReUrbanism, a mapping tool developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Green Lab quantifies the physical character of cities across the United States. Analysts at the Green Lab drew upon the writings of Jane Jacobs while developing their character score methodology. In her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs argued that older buildings are a critical component of the health and vitality of our urban communities. This thinking, in turn, resulted in the Green Lab's "Older, Smaller, Better" report in 2014, in which the character score was first applied. The character score is a composite measure that is determined by the variables building age, building age diversity, and granularity (the size of the lot and the size of the building). This score is projected onto a grid comprised of 200 x 200 yard squares. Each of these squares are assigned their own character score. In theory, squares with the highest character scores indicate areas likely to have desirable characteristics, such as walkability and historic charm.¹⁹

The score is calculated by "z-standardizing" the median building age, standard deviation of the building age and number of parcels or number of buildings (if data is available). Z-standardization consists of subtracting the average value from each score and dividing that number by the overall standard deviation of values, which produces a number above or below the city average.

Originally developed to evaluate relationships between urban vitality and historic buildings in 'hot market' cities in the US (primarily on the west coast, i.e. Seattle), character scores in legacy cities have only been explored to a limited extent.

In Buffalo, significant redevelopment of the central business district including the demolition of historic buildings for large parking lots in the latter half of the twentieth century, which likely contributed to the lower character score in this area. Another surprising observation is the relative similarity in character score between the affluent and historic neighborhoods of the westside (Elmwood Village and the West Side) and the less affluent neighborhoods with older building stock on the east side (Broadway Fillmore, Polonia). Chapter 4 discusses the character

*The Three Components of Character Score mapped over San Francisco, CA
Image source: Preservation Green Lab, Older Smaller Better Report (2014)*



*Character Score Map of Buffalo, NY,
data source: Atlas of Reurbanism
2017, Map by Zach Small*

score in more depth, providing a discussion of the issues in utilizing the tool in the context of weak-market, legacy cities.

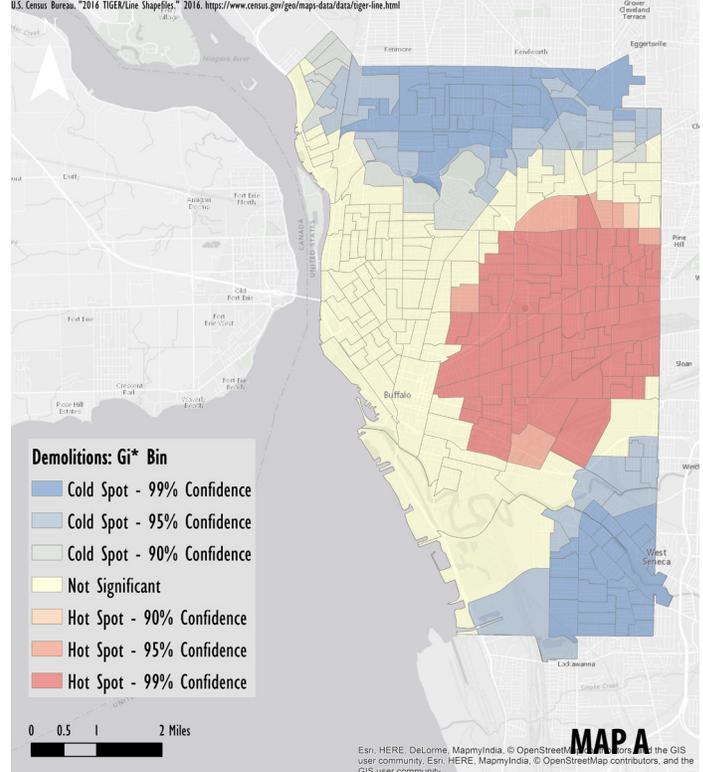
-Zach Small, Jon Ladley

Demolitions

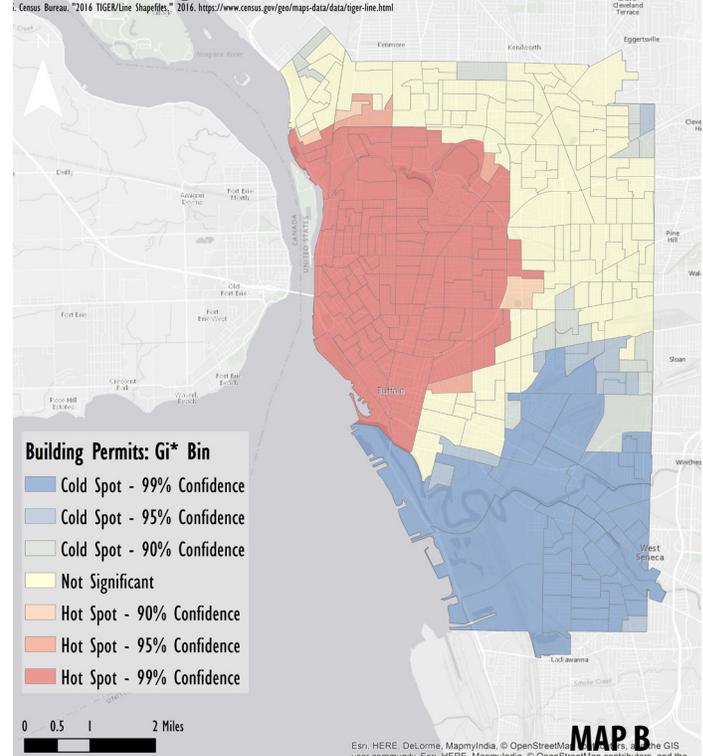
We used spatial statistics to measure the clustering of building permits and demolitions in the city to better grasp patterns of investment and disinvestment. Building permits indicate investment because property owners are spending money to improve the value of their properties. Property owners who file building permits have both the capital and the long-term interest to improve their properties. Demolitions, conversely, can signify disinvestment in area.²⁰ We measured the data at the block group level. For Map A and Map B we used the total count of demolitions and building permits, respectively, in each given block group and then normalized the count by the block groups' land area.²¹ We use geographic information systems (GIS) to run an optimized hot spot analysis.

Both Map A and Map B reveal significant clustering. In Map A, we see clustering of demolitions on the East Side and a lack of demolitions in both North and South Buffalo. Map B shows clustering of building permits on the West Side and in the Elmwood Village, extending into Downtown. Meanwhile South Buffalo again does not see much activity.

Optimized Hot Spot Analysis: Demolitions Demolition Permits/Land Area

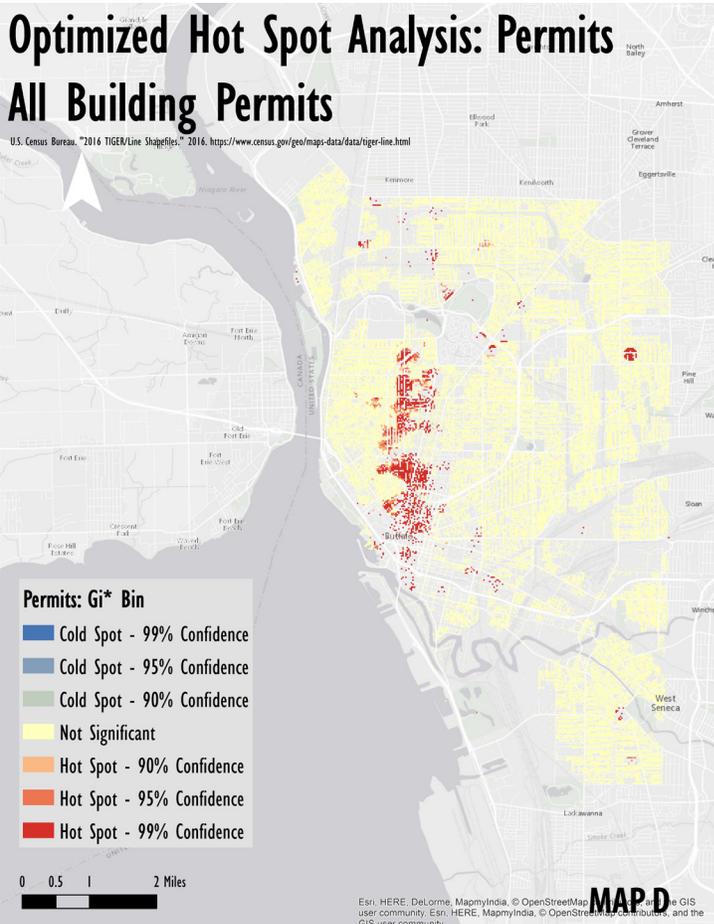
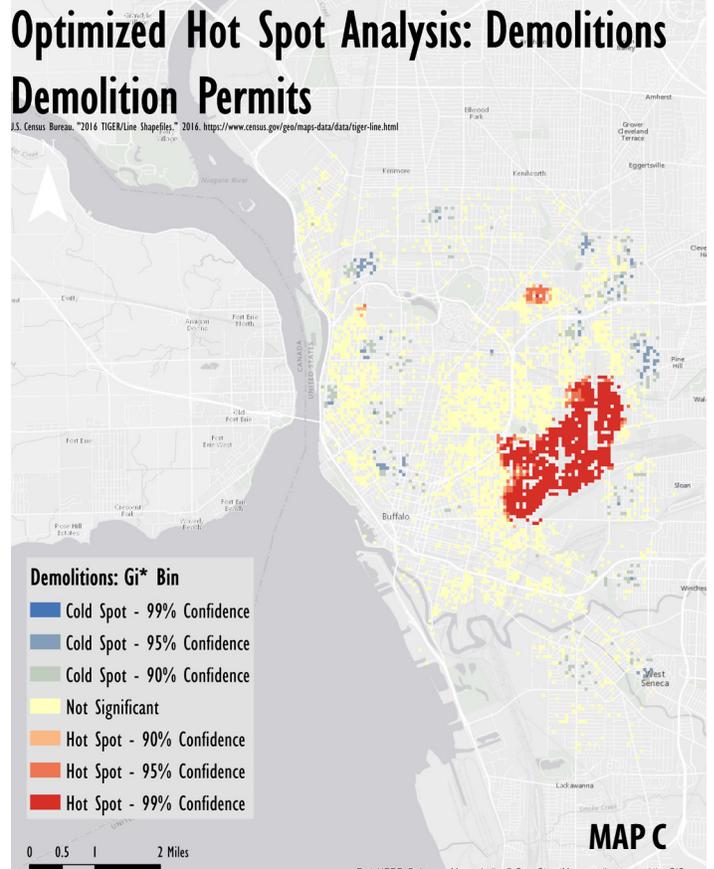


Optimized Hot Spot Analysis: Permits All Building Permits/Land Area



*Optimized Hot Spot Analysis
Maps by Tom Pera*

Map C and Map D use the same optimized hot spot analysis for clustering, except this time using a fishnet method to achieve a more granular result. A fishnet method overlays a grid onto the geographic area, and then the count of permits is taken in each square created by the grid. So, the geographic unit of analysis shifts from block group to fishnet square. Overall, a similar pattern is seen using the fishnet method as the previous block group method: Map C indicates clustering of demolitions on the East Side and Map D indicates clustering of building permits in the Elmwood Village and Downtown. However, some hot spots appear in new areas for both maps. While we did not examine these areas for our report, they may be areas to study in the future.



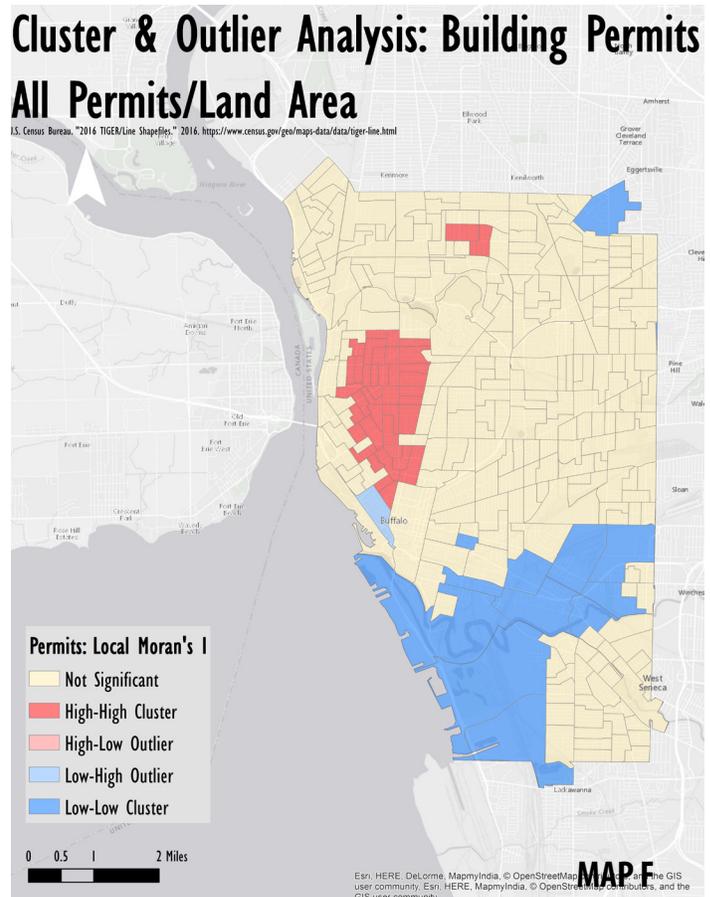
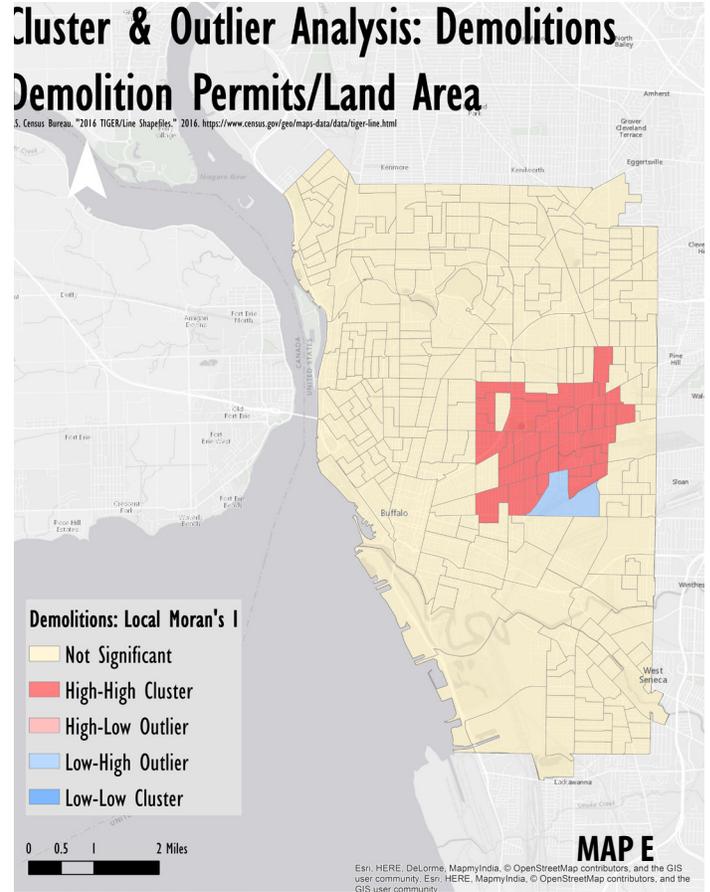
Optimized Hot Spot Analysis
 Maps by Tom Pera

Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap user community, Esri, HERE, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap user community, and the GIS user community

Finally, returning to the block group level of analysis for Map E and Map F, we use the Local Moran's I statistic to determine where clusters are located, in addition to outliers. While the hot spot analysis test does not reveal outliers, the Local Moran's I statistic shows both the clustering of block groups as well as outliers. These outliers are block groups where a low value is observed near a cluster of high values or where a high value is observed near a cluster of block groups with low values.

Map E reveals the similar clustering of demolitions as in Map A and Map C. The light blue low-high outlier represents where we would expect for there to have been a high number of demolitions, but where there was, in fact, a low number of demolitions. Map F indicates, again, the clustering of permits in the Elmwood Village neighborhood. South Buffalo and, this time, the University Heights district in northeast Buffalo show clustered block groups with low numbers of building permits.

-Tom Pera



ENDNOTES

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- ²George Hunter Bartlett, Joseph Ellicott, William Hodge, and Benjamin Ellicott. The William Hodge Papers: The Writer's Memories of His Father, William Hodge, Sr., and of Their Pioneer Days in an Outlying Part of the Present Buffalo, from 1805 TO 1885, 1922.
- ³Sam Magavern, "Talking Proud: Telling Buffalo's Stories: A Partnership for the Public Good Innovation Lab Report for Open Buffalo," 2014, https://ppgbuffalo.org/files/documents/data-demographics-history/historic_preservation/datademographicshistory-_talking_proud.pdf.
- ⁴William Chazanof, "Buffalo in Her Formative Years," 1976, <http://buffaloah.com/h/bflo/bflo.html>.
- ⁵Ibid.
- ⁶Clinton Brown Company, Architecture Rebuild. "Historic Resources of the Hydraulics/Larkin Neighborhood: State and National Register of Historic Places Nomination Multiple Property Documentation Form." Buffalo, NY., 2009, <http://buffaloah.com/surveys/hydr/CBCA%20Hydraulics%20MPDF.pdf>.
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- ⁹U.S. Census Bureau. "Population Estimates, July 1, 2016, (V2016)," accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>.
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- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²"America's Most Segregated Cities," 247wallst.com, Accessed May 12, 2017, <http://247wallst.com/special-report/2016/09/08/americas-most-segregated-cities-2/>.
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- ¹⁴Henry Louis Taylor Jr., "Latte City or Just City? Will Blacks Rise or Be Forgotten in the New Buffalo?" Dispatches From The Rust Belt." Belt Magazine | Dispatches From The Rust Belt. November 15, 2016, <http://beltmag.com/blacks-rise-forgotten-new-buffalo/>.
- ¹⁵Jesse Fisher, in discussion with the authors, 2017.
- ¹⁶National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Buffalo Green Code: A Tool for Neighborhood Preservation. Thursday, October 20, 2011. <https://www.planning.org/events/activity/4157975/>.
- ¹⁷Chris Hawley, in discussion with the authors, 2017.
- ¹⁸Sam Magavern, "Talking Proud: Telling Buffalo's Stories: A Partnership for the Public Good Innovation Lab Report for Open Buffalo," 2014, https://ppgbuffalo.org/files/documents/data-demographics-history/historic_preservation/datademographicshistory-_talking_proud.pdf.
- ¹⁹Preservation Green Lab, "Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring how the character of buildings and blocks influence urban vitality," National Trust for Historic Preservation, May 2014, 1-19.
- ²⁰Sometimes demolitions can indicate investment because developers might demolish a structure to build a new one. Thus, we incorporated demolition permits into the building permits data to measure investment, while keeping demolition separate in the measurement of disinvestment.
- ²¹So: Count divided by land area. Or count / land area.

Chapter 4

Profiles of Preservation in Buffalo Neighborhoods

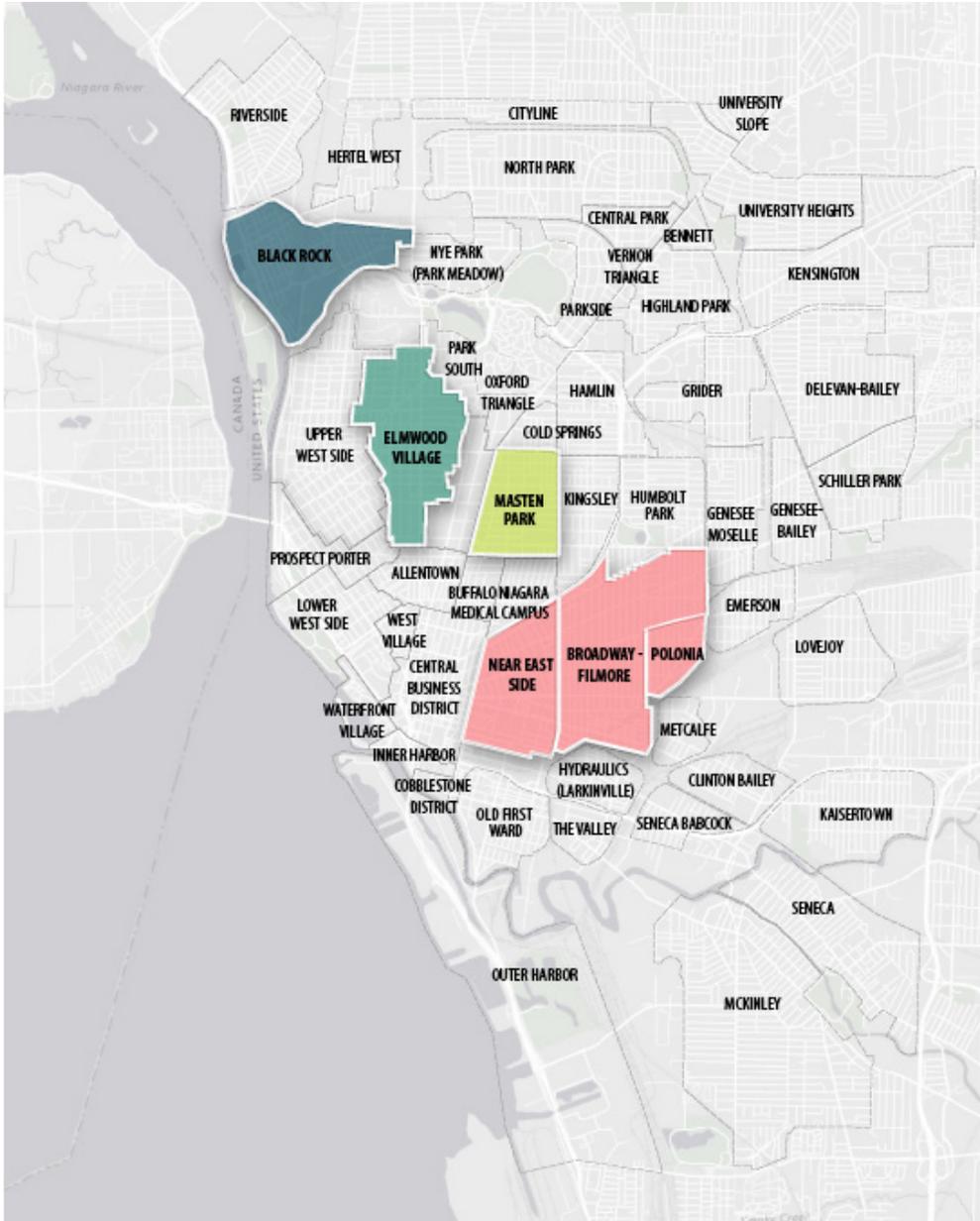


**245 DEARBORN-TWO FAMILY HOUSING
REHABILITATION HOMEBUYER PROJECT**

HON. BYRON W. BROWN
BRENDAN R. McHAPPY-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
JOSEPH GOLDBECK JR., NORTH D DISTRICT COUNCILMEMBER

THIS PROJECT IS BEING FUNDED BY THE CITY OF BUFFALO
WITH FINANCING THROUGH THE BUFFALO URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY AND
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS ACT PROGRAM

*Buffalo Neighborhoods Map,
Data source: Open Street Map,
Map by Zach Small*



Neighborhood Selection

Perhaps one of the most challenging elements of our work in Buffalo was selecting just a handful of neighborhoods for deeper investigation. As the following profiles will make clear, Buffalo has a rich and dynamic history- one that this report only begins to outline. Our workshop was committed to putting forward a respectful, detailed and accurate picture of “The Queen City.” In keeping with our framework of equity through preservation, we hoped to choose a mix of neighborhoods that would showcase the range of preservation activity happening in Buffalo, as well as shed light on lesser known efforts.

Our selection process involved a combination of walking tour assessments, input from local stakeholders, and

analyses of the Preservation Green Lab's Character Score. The workshop's first two-day visit to Buffalo provided an essential overview of the city and a foundation on which to build our investigation. Later, spending time with the Atlas of Reurbanism, we worked to understand the composition of criteria in the character score. Based on our tour of Buffalo, we considered how those criteria might play out. We thought in particular about some of realities we saw on the ground- the implications of the Character Score for the higher levels of vacancy and industrial building stock common in legacy cities. Harnessing the underlying GIS data, we overlaid the Character Score in Buffalo, and looked at the instances of high and low scoring. Here, the workshop broke into teams based on the desire to explore areas with high scores, or to explore instances where we felt actual neighborhood character and character score might be at odds.

Our resulting neighborhood selections include, Elmwood Village, Black Rock, Masten Park, and Broadway Fillmore. We have developed a series of profiles that reveal the unique elements of preservation activity in each neighborhood, and a series of recommendations for keeping that activity alive.

Given the limitations of time and resource we naturally could not cover as much of Buffalo's equity preservation efforts as we would have liked. One such example is Buffalo's Fruit Belt, where residents have come together with local consultancy Preservation Studios to conduct a critical historic resource survey. Facing development pressure from the growing Buffalo Niagara medical campus, the survey seeks to empower residents to fight back against loss of building stock and neighborhood identity. While the challenges of the changing Buffalo landscape are many, it is just that sort of empowerment that we hope our work will provide.

-Ashley Pryce

East Side Neighborhoods

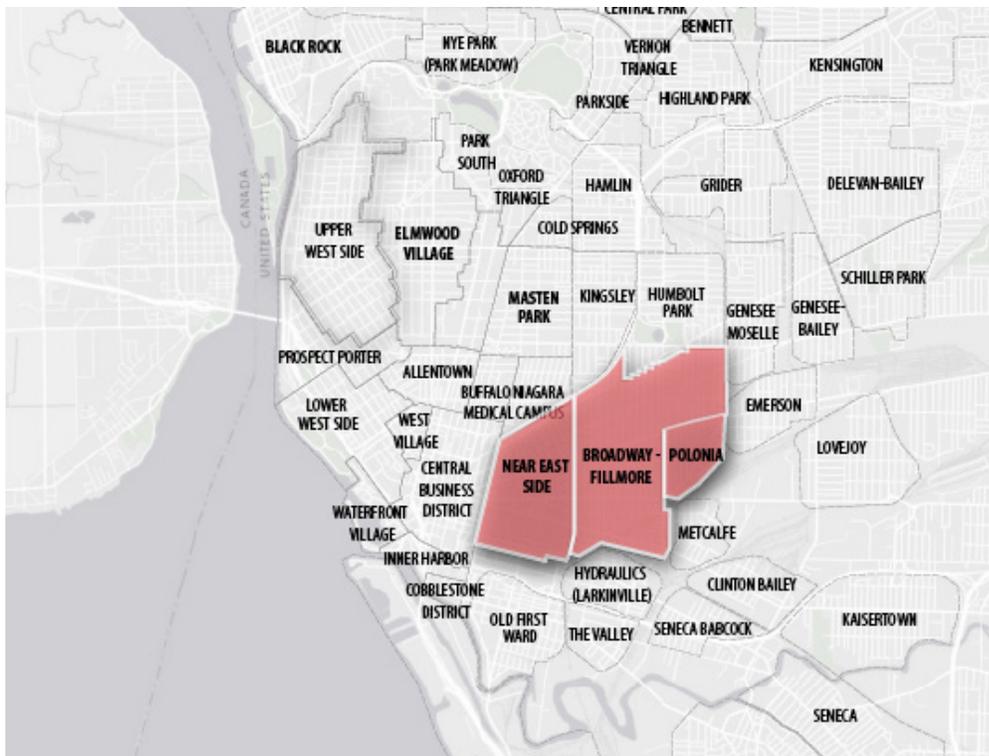
Brooklyn Fillmore

Polonia

Near East Side

Sena Kayasu, Lucas Raley, Zach Small, Vivian Zou





*East Side Neighborhoods.
Neighborhood Boundaries from
Open Street Map.
Map by Zach Small*

EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOODS: BROADWAY-FILLMORE, POLONIA, AND NEAR EAST SIDE

Sena Kayasu, Lucas Raley, Zach Small, and Vivian Zou

Overview

The Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood is located on Buffalo’s East Side, between Near East Side and Polonia. Though we began by looking at Broadway-Fillmore, early stages of our research process proved that the expansion of our study area to include Near East Side and Polonia would allow for a more thorough investigation as all three share common threads in their historic development and current conditions. This change also allowed us to explore how historical landmarks such as the Central Terminal and the Willert Park housing development define the space around them. The East Side has undergone a great deal of changes and challenges, with hundreds of demolitions and a lack of economic investment. The three neighborhoods provide examples of the preservation initiatives that are currently taking place in Buffalo, and create the opportunity to suggest policies and programs that could strengthen an equity preservation approach to community development.

The size of the neighborhood boundaries as seen in our maps is approximately 1.95 square miles, or 1,252 acres. This data shows a population density of approximately 5,800 people per square mile. This density is relatively low, congruent more with a suburb than an inner city. There are 14,084 residents in the six census tracts that make up the three neighborhoods. Of these, 78.73% are African-American, 11.68% are White Non-Hispanic, 5.62% are Asian, 2.26% are two or more races, 1.33% are other races, .34% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, and less than .01% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. As seen in the demographics map below, the area is predominantly African-American, followed by the White population who live mainly near the periphery of the neighborhood’s boundary.

History

The East Side was historically the first section of Buffalo to begin industrial production. In 1820s, a dam was built on a creek to the west of Broadway-Fillmore for energy production. The East Side continued to grow towards the south and east beginning in the 1850s, with the development of the railroad tracks. German immigrants were the first to populate the area now known as Broadway-Fillmore and The City of Buffalo annexed this and the surrounding area in 1853. After the Civil War, German communities began to spread towards the west, and the East Side became mostly populated by the rising number of Polish immigrants who were quickly employed as unskilled laborers.¹

As Buffalo gained status as a transportation and industrial capital, Broadway-Fillmore became known as "The Polish Colony."² Initially, immigrants settled in the area while en route to Chicago. The first Polish residents in the neighborhood settled in 1864.³ In the late nineteenth century, however, Polish immigrants poured into Broadway-Fillmore because of the growing Polish community that was supported by the large number of Polish-Catholic churches in the neighborhood.

The first church, St. Stanislaus, was completed in 1886 after the formation of the community in 1872. The founding clergyman was Father Jan Pitass, who also incorporated a Polish-language newspaper and started Polish schools.⁴ The Polish community continued to grow even after immigration slowed down following World War I. The houses they built were "small, closely-spaced single-family houses or two-story, double family flats."⁵ A market on Broadway Avenue opened in 1894 as a space for individual entrepreneurs operating out of small stalls. It still exists as a representative of Polish culture, and is particularly popular close to Easter Sunday. Broadway-Fillmore also benefited from Frederick Law Olmsted's park system of the 1870s, specifically the park called 'The Parade,' which helped to develop the area.

Demographic Profile of Broadway Fillmore, Near East Side and Polonia Census Tracts, from 2015 American Community Survey. Maps by Lucas Raley

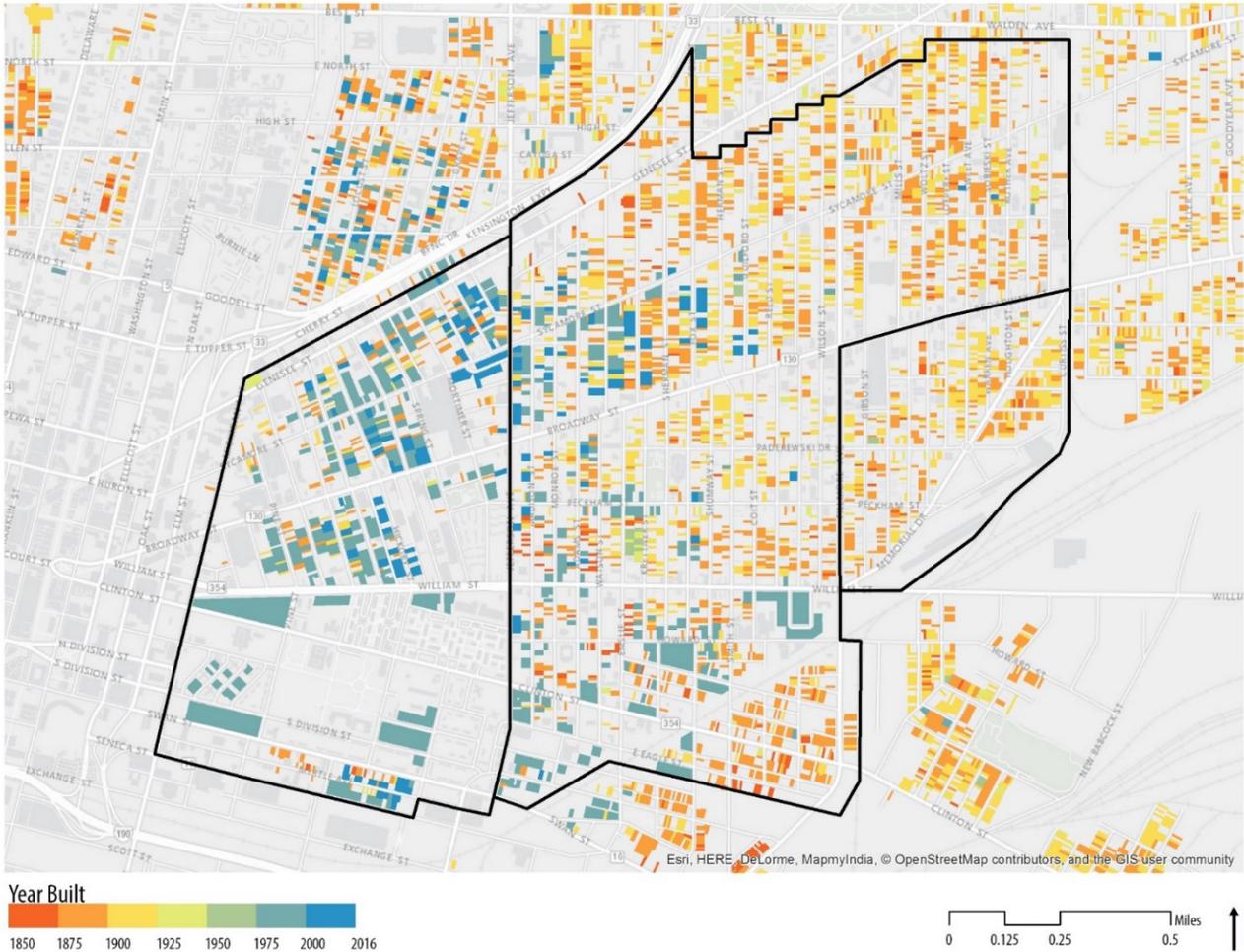
Demographics

- Population: 14,084 People
- Approximately 80% African American
- Approximately 12% White
- Remaining 8% Other

Size

- 1252 Acres
- 1.95 Square Miles





The Broadway Market is a major surviving landmark of Polish community history as well as the Orthodox churches that were built throughout the years. While the earliest, monumental churches form the heart of the neighborhood, many smaller ones can be found towards the suburbs. These trace the expansion of the Polish community towards the suburbs. As congregations got smaller, many churches became abandoned and fell into disrepair. An important historic preservation battle in the neighborhood was Corpus Christi Church, which was built in 1909 and later was no longer used.⁶ The Diocese of Buffalo decided to close and sell the building in the early 2000's, especially because of the high cost of repairs and maintenance. Some parishioners formed a group called "Pauline Fathers" and registered the building as an historic landmark on local, state and national levels. As a result, grant funds were awarded by the state for preservation and plan for reuse, and the structure was saved.

Another major landmark in Broadway-Fillmore is the Central Terminal, built in 1929. This large building worked at high capacity during Buffalo's peak, but fell into disrepair following the increase in automobiles and subsequent disinterest in railway systems. It is now undergoing a major project to restore the interior, while the nonprofit Central Terminal Restoration Corporation is facilitating its sale to a new owner for adaptive reuse.⁷

*Year Built, data source:
City of Buffalo Parcel Data, Map by
Zach Small*



*Broadway Market on Good Friday
(Photo by Sena Kayasu)*



*Corpus Christi Church
(Photo by Sena Kayasu)*



*Houses on Gibson Street
(Photo By Vivian Zou)*

In the post-war era of prosperity in the 1920s, population growth and increased affluence caused the people of “Polonia” to relocate to Buffalo’s suburbs. Simultaneously, the African American population expanded eastward. As with many other neighborhoods in the city, Broadway-Fillmore received its share of urban renewal projects in the 1950s in the form of Ellicott Mall and Talbert Mall. Later both structures were renovated. Ellicott Mall closed in 1981 and the redevelopment, which demolished four of the eight towers, was completed in 1997.⁸ Talbert Mall underwent a similar process, wherein nine of the original twelve towers were torn down and the project was completed in 2005.⁹ Ellicott Mall and Talbert Mall were renamed Ellicott Town Center and Frederick Douglass Towers, respectively. Today, the neighborhood is mostly black (78.73%) with a growing population of immigrants and refugees.

Buffalo employs a “municipal policy that largely incentivizes the demolition of historic structure instead of rehabilitation.”¹⁰ Most of the structures that suffer from this policy are the residential structures that were built by Polish immigrants but, for a longer time, housed Black occupants. Since they are the only representation of the presence of the latter, demolition presents an equity issue. Another is that demolition creates a large number of vacant lots. Unfortunately, the result is that a largely minority, partly immigrant population may be seen as victimized by a broad stroke demolition policy, rather than benefiting from it.

Character Score

The central area of our neighborhood survey area generally has a high character score, with lower values making up the western portion (Near East Side) and middling values within the eastern portion of the survey area (Polonia).

Though reflective of the median age of the building stock (Near East Side contains significant mid-century urban renewal structures), the high character score in Broadway-Fillmore ultimately does appear to provide a limited depiction of the on-the-ground conditions. Significant demolitions have targeted the Broadway-Fillmore area in the past 15 years (notably the five and five program, see chapter 3), leaving large amounts of vacant lots. Likewise, the vacancy rate, remains high. The presence of vacant lots does not appear to be reflected in the character score.

A figure-ground drawing on the following page highlights the significant amount of demolitions in the neighborhood. The central Broadway-Fillmore area, once containing the same density of structures as Polonia, has seen significant demolition. Nevertheless, the high diversity and low median of building age building age keep the character score relatively high. The discrepancy between the character score and the on the ground conditions in Broadway-Fillmore is likely based on the omission of a variable describing demolitions or building per parcel. Introducing a variable based on the number of buildings, rather than parcel data, could better reflect the influence of vacancy.



Vacant Home - High Character Score



Vacant Lots - High Character Score

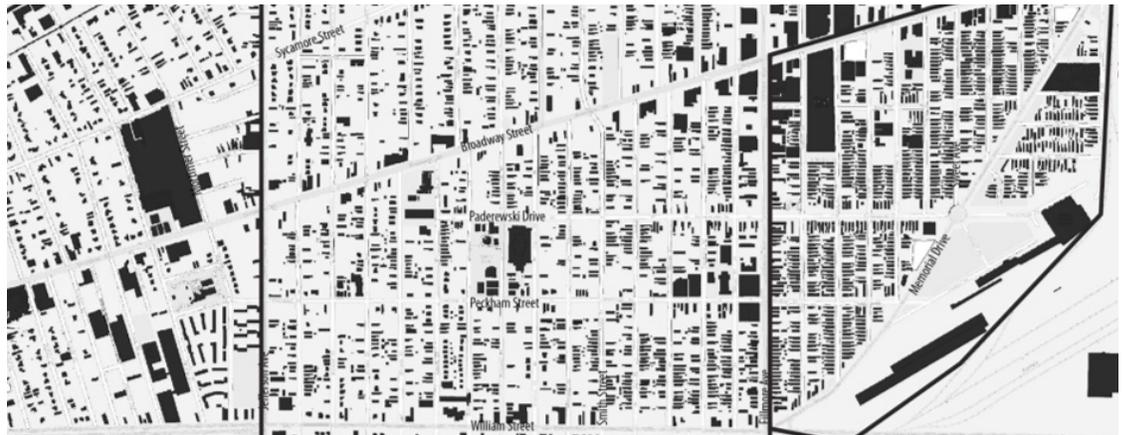


Ellicott Town Center - Low Character Score



Vacant Lots - High Character Score

(Above) The use of building data as opposed to parcel data could provide a more accurate measure that takes into account abandonment, vacant lots, and demolitions (Photos: Sena Kayasu and Vivian Zou)



(Below) Figure Ground: The high number of demolitions in Broadway Fillmore are apparent when comparing the figure ground on the right corner of the image to the center of the image (where demolitions have occurred)



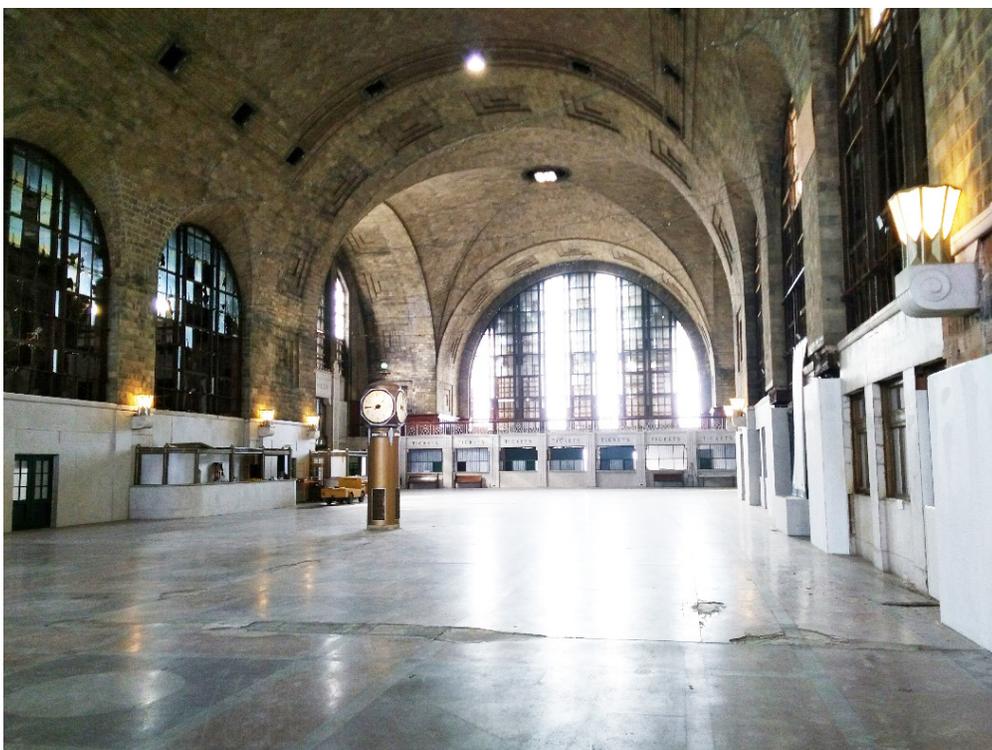
*Willert Court Apartments
(Photo Sena Kayasu)*



Preservation Activities in the Neighborhood

Currently the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood has not been designated as an historic district but is likely to be certified as local register district. The neighborhood is a designated City of Buffalo Planning Neighborhood, defined by the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning.¹¹ Broadway-Fillmore accommodates many landmarks as well as community assets. It is the home to the Central Terminal, which was once the city's main train station and an architectural paragon. The Broadway Market attracted and is still attracting numerous residents and visitors to meet and shop every year. Other landmarks and community assets include the Corpus Christi Church and urban farms.

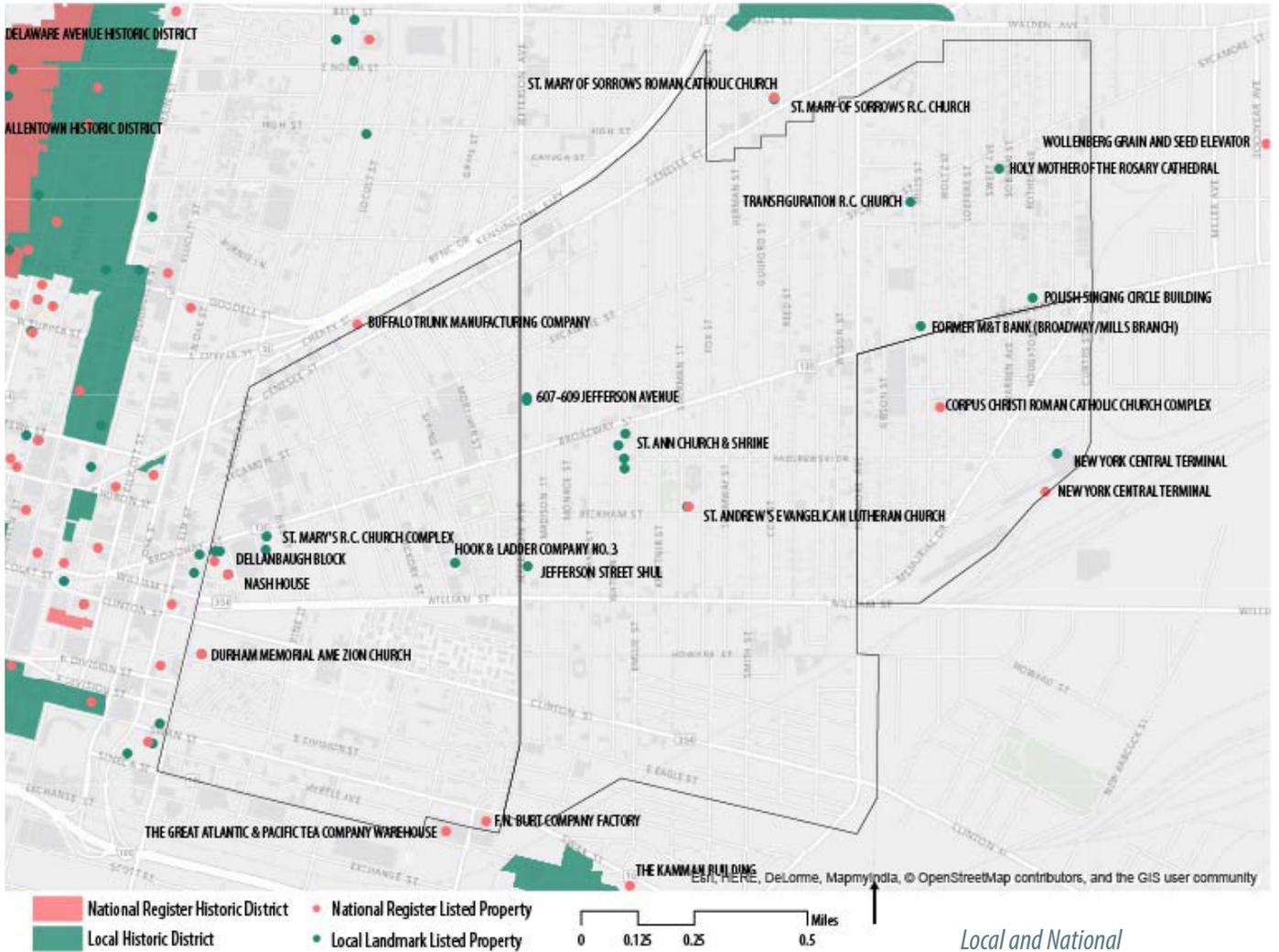
Regarding its rich legacy, historic preservation has been utilized in Near East Side, Broadway-Fillmore and Polonia from time to time to deal with shrinking populations, vacancy and abandonment. It has had a positive effect on this community. Examples include the contentious restoration of the Central Terminal through volunteer efforts. Community action also saved Corpus Christi Church, which was set to be sold due to the high repair costs until a group of loyal parishioners formed a community organization. They found a benefactor to buy the property (Pauline Fathers), registered the building on the local, state and national level and consequently received grant funds for its preservation.¹²



Central Terminal
photo by Andrew Varuzzo

Despite the successful cases outlined above, Buffalo's East Side faces many challenges, including the limited availability of funding. An interview with Cornell University Ph.D. candidate Katelin Olson, who is writing a dissertation on preservation efforts in Broadway-Fillmore, revealed that "in the last grant cycle there was less than \$300,000 set aside for improving residences, but \$10 million for tearing down derelict buildings."¹³ Evidently, there is still a major preference of demolition over preservation, supported by municipal policies that largely incentivize the destruction of historic structures instead of their revitalization.¹⁴ The City is more supportive of higher-end rehabilitation projects around downtown than projects in less affluent, struggling neighborhoods such as those on East Side. For example, the Mayor is reluctant to place the new train station in the Central Terminal because of the perceived negative impact its surroundings may have on the station's success.¹⁵

An important motivation to focus more on preservation rather than demolition is financing. According to Steve Karnath of the Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services Inc. (NHS), the City of Buffalo has run out of demolition funds, so now they are looking for other solutions to vacancy.¹⁶ This represents an important opportunity for historic preservation. "General education on the awareness of the community and what preservation effort has done for the region" can bring in more stakeholders and local participation and trigger more opportunities for historic preservation.¹⁷ Paul Lang from Central Terminal Restoration Corporation stated that the significant amount of older building stock in the area does not need to be designated to be preserved. These structures have special and unique characteristics, and an inherent value for citizens who wish to recall stories from the past.



Local and National Landmarks and Districts in and around the East Side. Data Source: City of Buffalo. Map by Zach Small

Equity Opportunities

Preservation does not only aim to preserve buildings' characteristics solely for history's sake, it can also balance the scales for occupants who cannot afford a new house or shop. An interview with Anthony James from Fillmore Forward and Steve Karnath of Broadway - Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services (BFNHS) defined how their organizations are striving to create equitable conditions for the Broadway-Fillmore community.¹⁸ Karnath expressed that the revitalization of a block starts with BFNHS's efforts to support existing homeowners and work towards growth of the local real estate market. The organization works to identify and help existing homeowners stay in their homes. Those who have the lowest incomes in the neighborhood often find it difficult to pay their mortgage, which depletes their financial capacity for building maintenance and renovations. BFNHS works to aid these homeowners through weatherization, repairs, and necessary restoration in partnership with the owners. BFNHS ensures that they can retain ownership, as well as increasing the ownership rate in the neighborhood, which is currently at 46%. The opportunity of homeownership in vacant housing, and possibly even new housing on vacant lots, will accelerate the neighborhood's revitalization.

Fillmore Forward works to revitalize the Broadway Avenue business district with a focus on Broadway Market and façade renovation near the MLK Park in partnership with the Community Action Organization. They receive funding from 'A Better Buffalo'. Fillmore Forward works to promote and sustain economic opportunity in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood through local businesses. It also strives to promote community engagement by turning vacant lots into 'community gathering spaces'. This promotes the healthy use of empty lots while strengthening the social fabric of the neighborhood. Revitalization of the business district along Broadway can offer opportunities not only for those aiming to start businesses, but for residents who might be able to benefit from the improvement of the local economy. Drawing in capital from other parts of the city to the Market and other businesses as well as supporting local business from within offers the neighborhood as a whole a way to improve the economic standard for those involved.

In addition to housing and business development, the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood can see a revitalization that offers equity through the restoration and saving of historical buildings such as the Church of Transfiguration. As stated in the interview with James and Karnath, "those kind of historic landmarks are the foundation for a neighborhood where people want to live."¹⁹ Broadway-Fillmore has the potential to see revitalization and equity with a combination of community activism and economic investment. As BFNHS and Fillmore Forward continue to work within the community with the goal of revitalization, the area will be able to gain a sense of pride for their home and appreciate the rich history that this neighborhood holds as it grows and adapts to the challenges it is working to overcome.

Conclusion

The Near East Side, Broadway-Fillmore and Polonia are three examples in Buffalo's East Side of how disinvestment in the building stock can lead to deterioration, demolition and a consequent lack of equity. As a city with an already shrinking population, Buffalo decision-makers must be careful in the quest for citywide reinvestment to address the needs of those who have been left behind. Residents in half-empty blocks experience crime and poverty, often because they cannot afford to leave. This is an equity issue and preservation action must help to address needs in these neighborhood despite significant challenges.

Broadway Market has been a cornerstone for community ownership and economic growth in history, and continues to be today. The interest in Polish heritage galvanizes much of the preservation efforts in the area, which has been related to churches. Restoration and adaptive reuse are active and growing, but would significantly benefit from an increase in public funding, private investment, and regulatory municipal incentives. In addition, preservation efforts in the area have been focused on Polish heritage without much incorporation of the recent past history of African American, immigrant, and refugee community members.

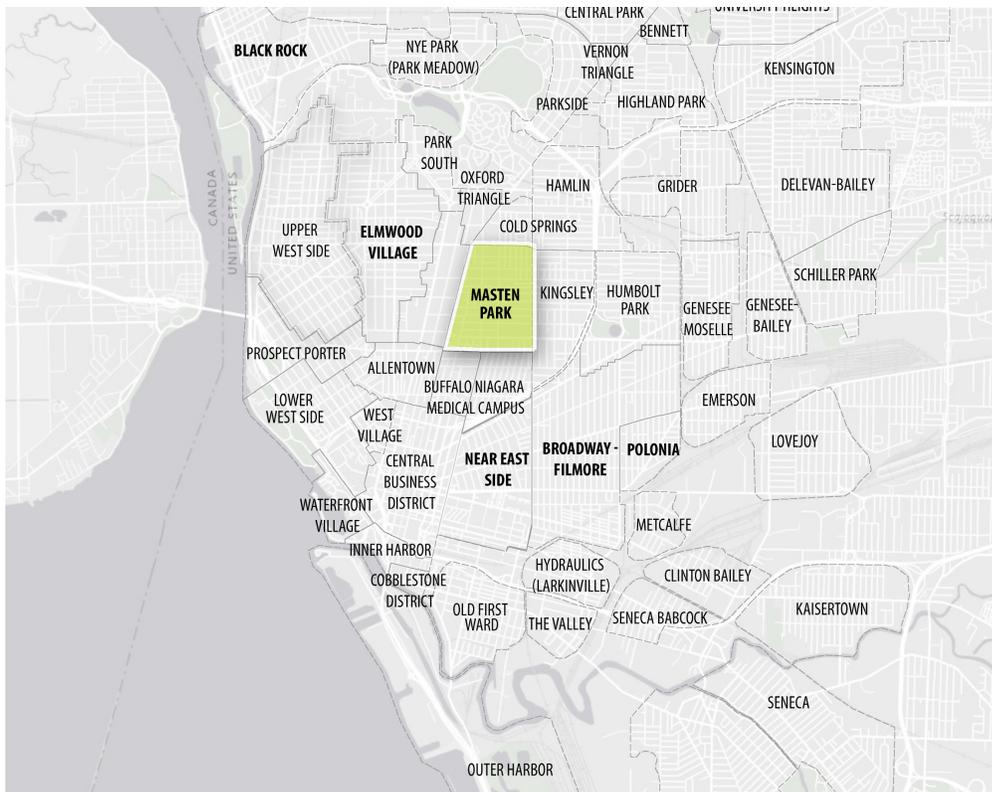
ENDNOTES

- ¹“Historic Resources Intensive Survey: Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood.”The City of Buffalo. August 2004, pp. 11. Accessed 25 April 2017. [www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/Regulatory Boards/Preservation_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey](http://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/Regulatory_Boards/Preservation_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey).
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Polish Americans in Buffalo: The Transformation of an Ethnic Subcommunity by Eugene Obidinski *The Polish Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Winter, 1969), pp. 28-39. Published by the University of Illinois. Accessed 23 March 2017.
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- ⁶ E-mail correspondence with Katelin Olson (Ph.D. Candidate), by Sena Kayasu on April 10, 2017.
- ⁷“Buffalo Central Terminal.” Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, n.d. Accessed 25 April 2017. <http://buffalocentralterminal.org/>.
- ⁸ Sapong, Emma. “Resurrected Public Housing Project to be Celebrated Saturday.” *Buffalo News*, 9 July 2014. Accessed 10 May 2017. <http://buffalonews.com/2014/07/09/resurrected-public-housing-project-to-be-celebrated-saturday/>.
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- ¹⁰ E-mail correspondence with Katelin Olson.
- ¹¹“City of Buffalo: Broadway-Fillmore Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey”. Buffalo Architecture and History. Retrieved on 1 May 2017. <http://buffaloah.com/surveys/bf/1.pdf>.
- ¹² E-mail correspondence with Katelin Olson.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, and with Interview with Steve Karnath (Representative, Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services) and Anthony James (of Fillmore Forward) in Buffalo, 14 April 2017.
- ¹⁵ E-mail correspondence with Katelin Olson.
- ¹⁶ Interview with Steve Karnath and Anthony James.
- ¹⁷ Phone interview with Paul Lang (Representative, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation) on 31 March 2017.
- ¹⁸ Interview with Steve Karnath and Anthony James.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.

Masten Park

Tom Pera, Ashley Pryce, Cole Noorgaarden,
Jessica Stevensen, Joey Jiayun Zou





Masten Park is Located North of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, East of Humboldt Park and Kingsley Neighborhoods. Neighborhood Boundaries from Open Street Map, Map by Zach Small

MASTEN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Tom Pera, Ashley Pryce, Cole Noorgaarden, Jessica Stevensen, Joey Jiayun Zou

Overview

The Masten Park neighborhood is located at the center of the city of Buffalo, just northeast of downtown. Historically referred to as the 'Masten District' it once encompassed portions of both the Cold Spring and Fruit Belt neighborhoods.¹ Today it has a land area of 5.5 square miles and possesses a story that highlights the ways in which demographic change, urban renewal and economic restructuring have contributed to contemporary social inequity in Buffalo.²

The area was originally known for the natural springs (i.e., Cold Spring) that flowed out of what is the now the intersection of Main Street and East Ferry Street, at the neighborhood's northwest corner.³ A trail linking the fledgling villages of Buffalo (to the south) and Williamsville (to the northeast) was laid out by Joseph Ellicott in the very early 1800s. It formed the general route of Main Street and marks Masten Park's present eastern boundary.⁴ Throughout the early- to mid-19th century, white settlers migrated onto the lands north of Buffalo, clearing away indigenous forest land and cultivating it for agriculture.⁵ It was not until after the Civil War though that the area now known as Masten Park became ripe for development.

Demographic shifts in the 1940s significantly altered the ethnic composition of Masten Park's residents. While the neighborhood was historically German and Polish, the Great Migration led to an influx of African American settlement from the South. Much of the neighborhood's current ethnic and racial composition is reflective on these the shift of this era. Today the neighborhood has a total population of 3,594. Of these residents 91.2% are African American or Black, 4.5% are White, non-Hispanic, and 4.3% is comprised of other races.⁶

The area struggles with issues of poverty and the effects of decline. Median family income in the neighborhood

falls is \$25,306, while the median age is 31.⁷ Of the 2,405 housing units in the neighborhood 1054 are renter occupied (with median gross rent at \$645), and 822 are vacant.⁸

History

While Masten Park is primarily residential in nature, it features a number of notable places that have played prominent roles in the broader social and cultural landscape of Buffalo. Main Street and Jefferson Avenue are both historic commercial corridors that continue to serve the needs of local residents, with particularly active nodes at Main & East Ferry, Main & East Utica, and Jefferson & East Utica.⁹ Enduring local businesses in and around these corridors are a source of neighborhood pride, such as Harris Hardware on East Ferry Street, which was the first African-American owned enterprise of its kind in Buffalo when it opened in 1970.¹⁰ Jefferson, being the more neighborhood-oriented of the two corridors, has served as a 'main street' for the Black community in Buffalo since its dramatic expansion during the middle of the 20th century.¹¹

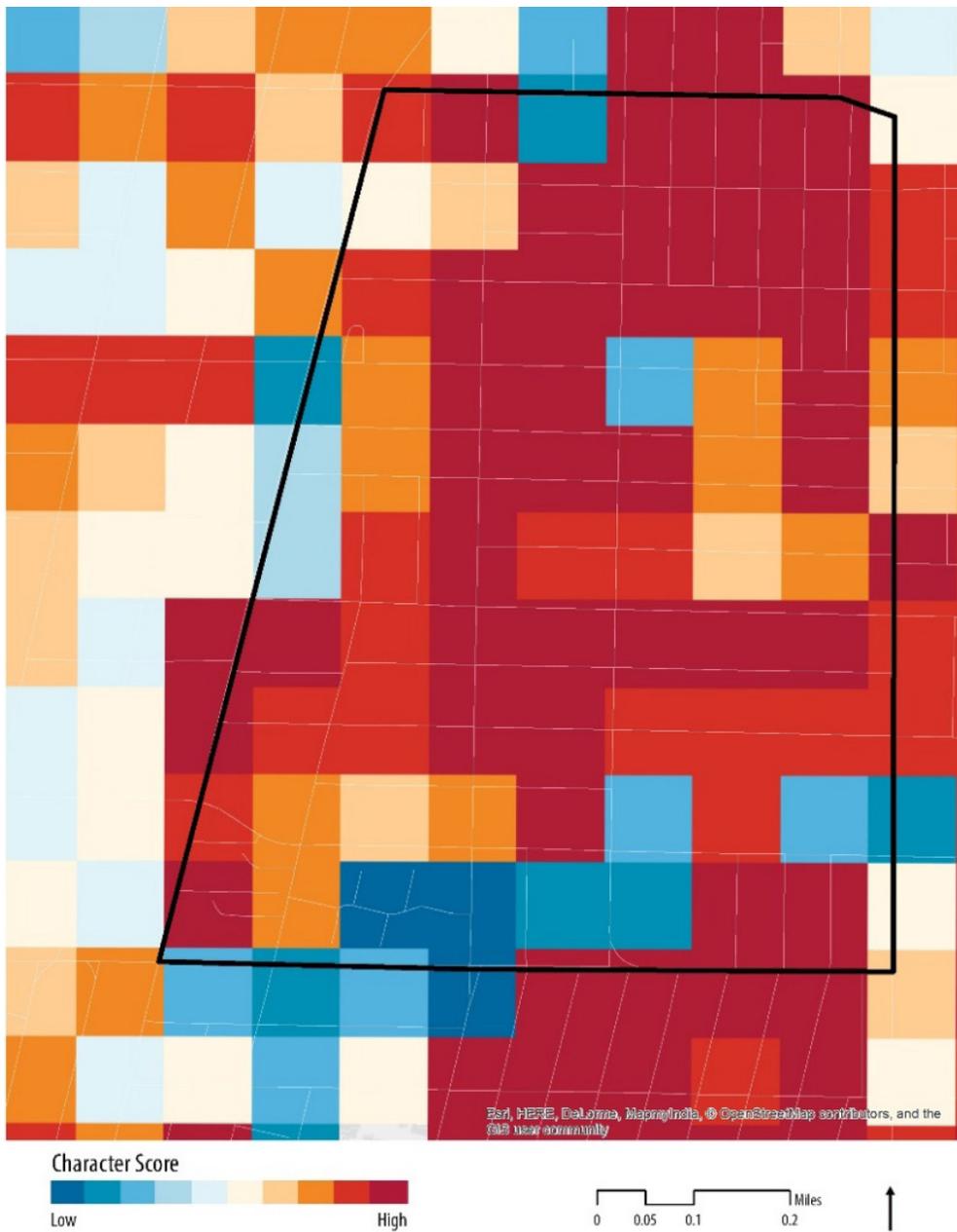
When race riots broke out in east Buffalo in 1967, they were concentrated at the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and East Utica Street. Today that intersection is home to the library that houses the William A. Miles Center for African and African-American Studies, designed by local Black architect Robert Traynham Coles.¹² Though geographically separate from the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor on the edge of downtown, Masten Park is in many senses a historical and contemporary anchor for Buffalo's Black community.

While the Black community in Buffalo had for many years been limited to the Ellicott district just south and east of downtown, as it grew (reaching 20% of Buffalo's population by 1970), many newcomers relocated into the Masten District directly, including Cold Spring.¹³ Compounding this trend was the fact that in 1958, the Buffalo Common Council voted to approve a vast redevelopment plan of the Ellicott district, which essentially entailed leveling 1,235 buildings in the area and displacing 2,219 families (80% of whom were Black).¹⁴ In this way, the present-day character of Masten Park as a predominately African-American community is a direct outcome of the city's urban renewal ambitions at that time. Unlike white residents who were displaced, the majority of Blacks were relocated by the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority into neighborhoods that already had high Black populations, which by that time included Masten Park.¹⁵ The Ellicott and Talbert homes that were eventually built on the cleared land in the Ellicott district not only took years to complete, but also failed to replace the number of dwellings that were sacrificed.¹⁶

As the 1960s progressed, rapid neighborhood change was facilitated by the process of white flight to the suburbs.¹⁷ While historian Mark Goldman claims that the exodus of white residents was a "blessing" for African-American families in need of housing, in reality there were very few places in the city where Blacks were welcome.¹⁸ Concerted 'blockbusting' efforts on the part of real estate agents in Masten Park played into the racial prejudices of white residents. Under this practice, agents would convince homeowners to sell their properties at the first sign of Black occupancy. White homeowners, fearing drastic declines in property value with an influx of Black residents, would often sell their homes cheaply or at below market rates.¹⁹ Agents were then able to sell these properties at higher prices to incoming black residents. The situation in Masten Park grew so dire that the Buffalo Common Council responded by unanimously passing an anti-blockbusting ordinance in 1964.²⁰ While it addressed instances of outright racism, the process continued to unfold until the Masten District was one of two majority-Black neighborhoods in the city (the other being Ellicott).

By 1983, much of the area's original housing stock dating back to the 1880s had fallen into disrepair, leaving only one third of units in average or good condition.²¹ Contemporary challenges related to widespread demolition, housing vacancy, and spatial segregation by race are all directly linked to the legacies of urban renewal, blockbusting, and disinvestment outlined above, and acknowledging these relationships is key to devising effective strategies for equity preservation in the future.

Figure A: Character Score Map of Masten Park showing a generally High Character Score, source: Atlas of Reurbanism 2017. Map by Tom Pera



Character Score

We chose to evaluate the Masten Park neighborhood because it had a relatively high character score defined by the Preservation Green Lab. Figure A represents Masten Park's character score using the 200-meter-by-200-meter block level of analysis. The black bordered-polygon indicates Masten Park's neighborhood boundary, in which the individual character score blocks are visible. The neighborhood's high performance is evident: Most blocks score highest on the scale, with relatively few blocks scoring in the lower half of the scale. In fact, the low character score visible in the southern portion of the neighborhood is where City Honors High School is located, along with its athletic fields. The school's large parcel size—already negatively impacting character score's granularity component—also influences the diversity of building age measure for the block. Simply, the fewer parcels present on a block, the more likely the block's building age is homogeneous.

It is important to note that the character score does not account for vacant parcels, or vacant buildings. Figure B represents Masten Park's vacant parcels and buildings. Without invoking quantitative evidence, Jacobsian observation might indicate that vacant lots affect a neighborhood's character significantly. Indeed, in Masten Park the number of vacant lots where houses have been demolished and replaced by nothing more than empty fields is striking.

Preservation Activity

Historic Districts in Masten Park

There are no official historic districts in the Masten Park Neighborhood. However, the neighborhood does include The Masten Neighborhood Rows Resource. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, The Masten Neighborhood Rows Resource consists of four concentrations of speculative multi-unit rental housing. According to a Gombach Group publication, "Unlike most large urban industrial cities, Buffalo did not experience extensive row house construction due to an abundance of land and a strong local predilection for detached single-family dwellings."²² Of the Buffalo neighborhoods that do have row houses, Masten Park had the largest concentration.

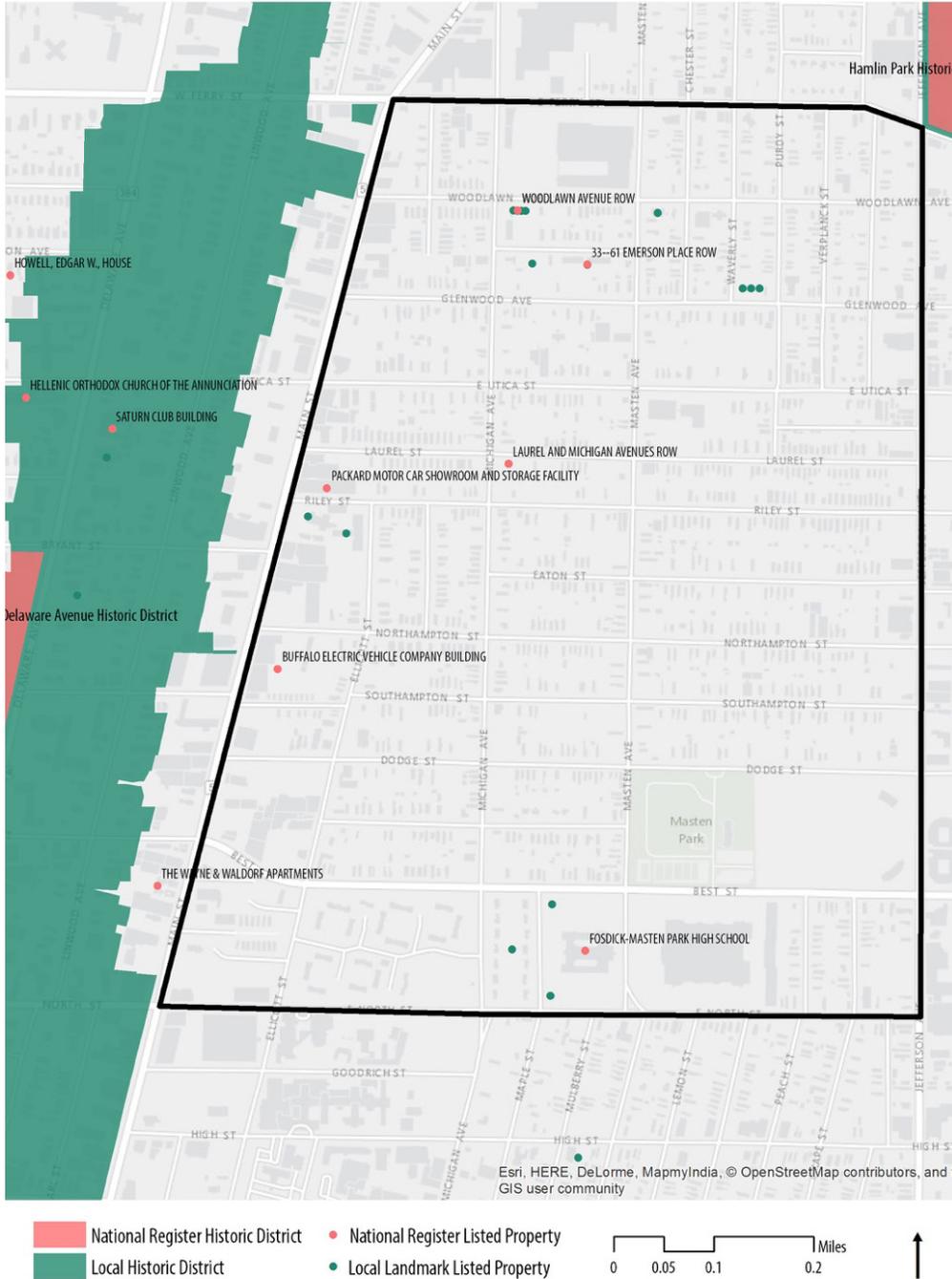
The row houses are examples of "a building type that represents a specific architectural response to the issue of designing standardized speculative urban housing during the late nineteenth century."²³ The Row Houses, built by land speculators and developers, were used as worker's housing. The four units are all located in Masten Park and were developed between 1870 and 1910. The Row Houses include #17-21 and #33-61 Emerson Place, #75-81 Woodlawn Avenue, and #1335-1345 Laurel and Michigan Avenue. As the Gombach Group writes:

Between 1880 and 1910, twenty-one groups of attached frame housing units, with the appearance of row houses, were constructed in the Masten Neighborhood. It appears from title searches and their limited number that these rows were meant as a speculative venture and were built primarily to rent to the large German working-class population. Of the four units of row houses listed on the 1985 National Register, the Laurel & Michigan Avenue Row Houses and #17-21 Michigan Avenue Row Houses have since been demolished.²⁴

Other Significant Landmarks in Masten Park

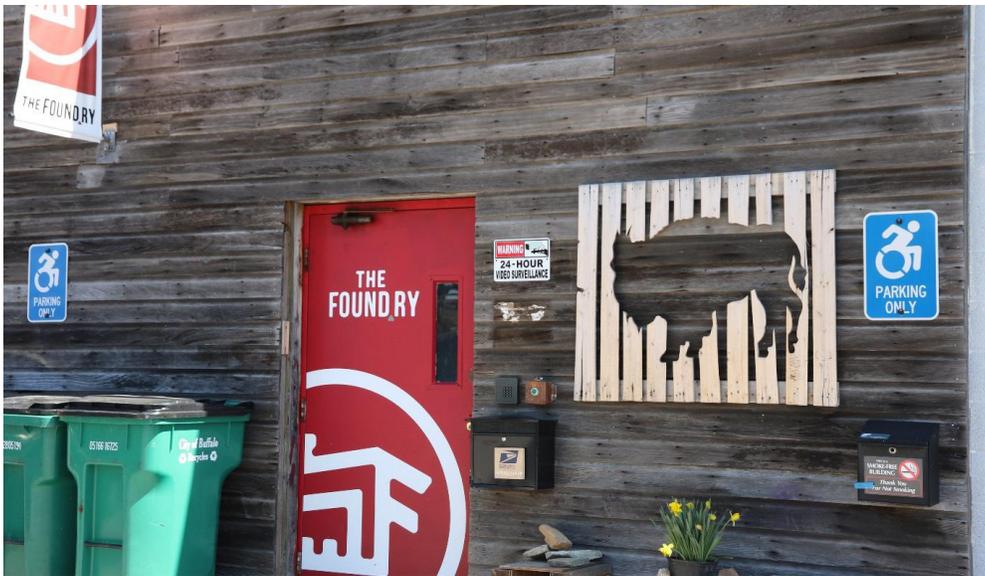
There are several historic sites along the border of the Masten Park neighborhood. Figure C showcases nationally and locally listed landmarks in Masten Park. One such landmark is the Fosdick-Masten Park High School and Great Lawn. The High School, now known as City Honors, was constructed between 1912 and 1914. City Honors is now one of the highest ranking schools in the nation. The Great Lawn was originally designed as a park by Frederick Law Olmstead but was used as an athletic field by the neighboring school. During urban renewal period, a public housing project. Woodson Gardens was constructed on the site. It was later demolished in 2012. A group called Restore Our Field, rallied to have the site turned back over to the school as an athletic field, which is its use today.

Figure C: Historic Landmarks and Districts in and around Masten Park, Data source: City of Buffalo Map by Tom Pera



Preservation in Masten Park

As noted, Masten Park struggles with issues of disinvestment, vacancy and dilapidated housing. While there have been several preservation projects adjacent to the neighborhood, few occurred within its boundaries. One exception is the Artspace Buffalo Lofts. Formerly home to the historic Buffalo Electric Vehicle Company, the factory was converted into affordable artist live/work spaces. The site also houses a high school - The Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology. Likewise, the historic Saint Vincent's Female Orphan Asylum was converted into the Buffalo Health Sciences Charter School.



*Outer View of the Foundry
Entrance.
Photo by Tom Pera*

Other examples of preservation can be seen in the addition of businesses to the Masten Park area. In 2014 a local Buffalo boutique fitness franchise called “Barre Centric” placed its newest location at 1526 Main Street.²⁵ The original building was constructed in 1884 by architect George Metzker. Redevelopment and conversion of the site into a mixed-use commercial residential space began in 2012.²⁶ Figure 5 shows a current view of the 1526 Main Street location.

Likewise, in 2011 a property at 1435 Main Street was converted into a restaurant- the Oakk Room. Estimated to have been built in the 1930s, the original building was once home to an automobile shop.²⁷ Later, it was converted to a brew pub and served as home to the long running, but now extinct restaurant Birchfield’s.

In 2012, the team from Buffalo ReUse, a local supplier of used, surplus, and reclaimed building materials came up with the idea for the Foundry. The building, which serves as a learning center, cooperative workspace, and artisan community was built in the 1950s and was previously used as a laundromat.²⁸ Figure 6 and 7 showcase outer views of the Foundry Building.

Challenges to Building Reuse

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to building reuse in the Masten Park area is that much of current reuse activity is concentrated in Buffalo’s downtown.

Mayor Byron Brown has spearheaded an effort known as the Buffalo Building Reuse Project, which aims to bring investment back to downtown, encouraging infill and reuse of existing building stock to create a more vibrant, walkable neighborhood. In 2012 the Reuse Project released a report outlining strategies for achieving this goal- a plan which has proved to be successful.²⁹ In 2015 five banks agreed to provide the Reuse Project’s loan fund with an additional \$9million.³⁰

While the Reuse Project does serve the valuable goals of sustainable infill and neighborhood revitalization, targeting downtown means that other Buffalo neighborhoods in need of attention have been become a secondary consideration. In order to achieve the level of revitalization the Masten Park neighborhood could truly benefit from, more funding will need be funneled into the area for residential improvement and adaptive reuse projects.

Masten Park Vacancies, data source City of Buffalo parcel data 2016, Map by Tom Pera



The downtown development focus also reinforces Masten Park's challenges with poverty. As the area is predominantly residential, many of the opportunities for rehab work lie in historic homes that have fallen into severe disrepair or abandonment. Nonetheless, the neighborhood is bounded by commercial corridors. While about 15% of the land is vacant, commercial and industrial spaces comprise about 4% and 8% of the neighborhood respectively.³¹ There are certainly opportunities for reuse and adaptation but the aforementioned factors make attracting developer investment difficult without incentives.

Another challenge is that a comprehensive assessment of preservation opportunities in the Masten Park neighborhood has not been conducted. There have been several surveys conducted of preservation-ready residential buildings, but not of commercial or industrial spaces. A more in depth look at Masten Park's resources would provide a much needed picture of opportunity in the area.

Opportunities for Building Reuse

One of the greatest benefits for the Masten Park neighborhood may be Buffalo's new Unified Development Ordinance, known as the Green Code. In an effort to update Buffalo's zoning and make it more sustainable, the Green Code has made a marked effort to focus on neighborhood level land use planning.

In what it classifies as the Cold Spring/Masten Park neighborhood, the city conducted a workshop as part of the community engagement process. During the workshop residents identified challenges that they felt needed to be addressed. Among the challenges identified were the need for Michigan Avenue to develop a service sector. Residents also felt that their streets were not pedestrian friendly. Likewise, they found Main Street to be too wide, to not have wide enough sidewalks and to therefore not be walkable. Residents were also concerned that the historic neighborhood along Michigan and Main streets was being eroded.³² Proposed solutions included streetscape improvements, promotion of mixed use development along Michigan and Jefferson streets, and the incorporation of green spaces in residential areas, including jogging trails.³³

Here, residents recognized the need for greater density of development along commercial corridors in order to create more walkable and engaged communities. The City has taken great care to address this in its new land use plan stating:

Neighborhood centers have a greater chance for success when they are based on sound urban design principles and surrounded by compact residential areas with a mix of housing options. Density must be high enough to support a full range of retail, services, and public transit; and design must ensure that buildings and public spaces work together to appeal to pedestrians. The design of context-sensitive infill development is particularly important to revitalizing these areas, since vital neighborhood centers lead to increases in both property values and quality of life.³⁴

As such, the City has also proposed a plan to allow a greater intensity of development along one of Masten Park's commercial corridors- turning it into an urban core. The city defines urban core as, "High intensity areas in terms of uses, building heights, and scale." This change would be in contrast to existing designation along the neighborhood's western boundary as "neighborhood center."³⁵ This classification allows mixed-use commercial areas at a neighborhood scale. This change would also allow Main Street to take greater advantage of existing NFTA metro public transit stops along the corridor. The allowed intensity may encourage greater vibrancy and walkability, as well as allow for spillover effects of reinvestment (increasing likelihood that neighboring properties may be rehabbed or adaptively reused).

Equity Opportunities

As Buffalo makes use of its new strategies for addressing years of disinvestment it will be important to ensure that concerns of equity are being addressed. As aforementioned, much of the new Green Code focuses on opportunities to channel development toward infill and adaptive reuse projects, particularly downtown. While city officials must ensure that redevelopment projects bring the potential for economic growth, they must also ensure that local residents actually see the benefit of this growth. The city will have to consider provisions for retaining affordability of housing and access to goods and services. While the pull of new businesses are appealing, the mix of commercial activity must reflect the needs of all residents of the neighborhood. As the Land Use Plan elucidates, "Urban sustainability [should] incorporate concerns for economic well-being, social equity, and environmental quality."³⁶



*Outer entrance of the Foundry,
photo by Tom Pera*



*Current view of 1526 Main Street,
Photo by Tom Pera*

Policy Tools

Buffalo has several tools at its disposal to address the challenges in the Masten Park neighborhood. The Green Code already speaks to ways to combat vacancy and restore vibrancy, including: minimizing regulatory barriers to adaptive reuse of vacant structures, encouraging homesteading as an option for renovating abandoned structures, building new housing on vacant lots, land banking parcels in areas where traditional neighborhood structure has eroded, and allowing interim and permanent reuses for vacant land, such as market or community gardens. Within the context of our analysis of Masten Park, we feel the following policy tools/ strategies are also ideal.

Live Work Spaces

As previously highlighted, one example of a Live Work Space on the border of Masten Park is the Artspace Lofts. Artspace was developed as a catalyst for economic development in Midtown and provides 60 units of affordable housing for artists and their families. There is commercial space on the main floor as well as a two-story community gallery where the artists display their work. The Buffalo Art and Technology Center located in the building provides after school arts programs for at-risk youth and health sciences career training for under-employed and unemployed adults.

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive Reuse is another important policy tool for Masten Park to address the large number of vacant and underutilized structures. Buffalo recognized a need for a reuse task-force and created The Erie County Industrial Development Agency. The ECIDA works to promote economic development within Erie County. In 2008, The Erie County Industrial Development Agency created an adaptive reuse strategy which allows it to offer tax incentives for, "The rehabilitation of buildings that are at least 20 years old and have been empty for three years or more. The structures are often functionally obsolete and suffering from long-time neglect. The results can present unforeseen restoration costs for developers."³⁷

Before work is done on a structure, community meetings are held to gain input from nearby residents and businesses. To date, the ECIDA has reported over \$400 million in private investment generated through adaptive reuse projects with over 2.4 million square feet of rehabilitated space.³

ENDNOTES

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http://buffalogreencode.com/September2016/LUP/lup_revised_sept2016.pdf
- ³ Kowsky & Wachadlo, 15
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 32
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- ⁶ 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
Census Tract 168 - Masten Park / Cold Spring, Buffalo, Erie County, New York
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
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- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37
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- ¹⁸ Mark Goldman, *City on the Edge, Buffalo, New York* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Press, 2007), 174.
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³¹ Ibid.

³² Masten Workshop Transcript. City of Buffalo Land Use Plan. 2016. Pg 29.

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³⁴ City of Buffalo Land Use Plan. Green Code. 2016 September. Pg 34.

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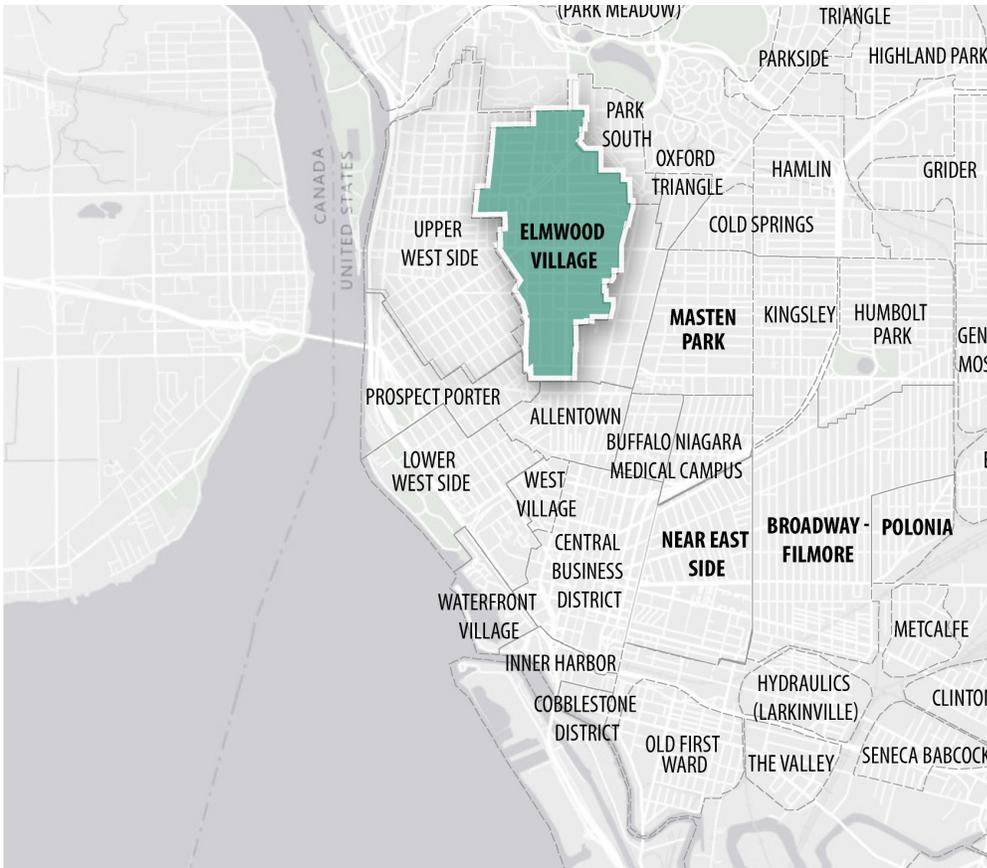
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Elmwood Village

Mengbing Du, Luis Gravelly, Jr. , Claire Meyer, Andrew Varuzzo, Olivia White





Context Map of Elmwood Village Neighborhood. Neighborhood Boundaries by Open Street Map. Map by Zach Small

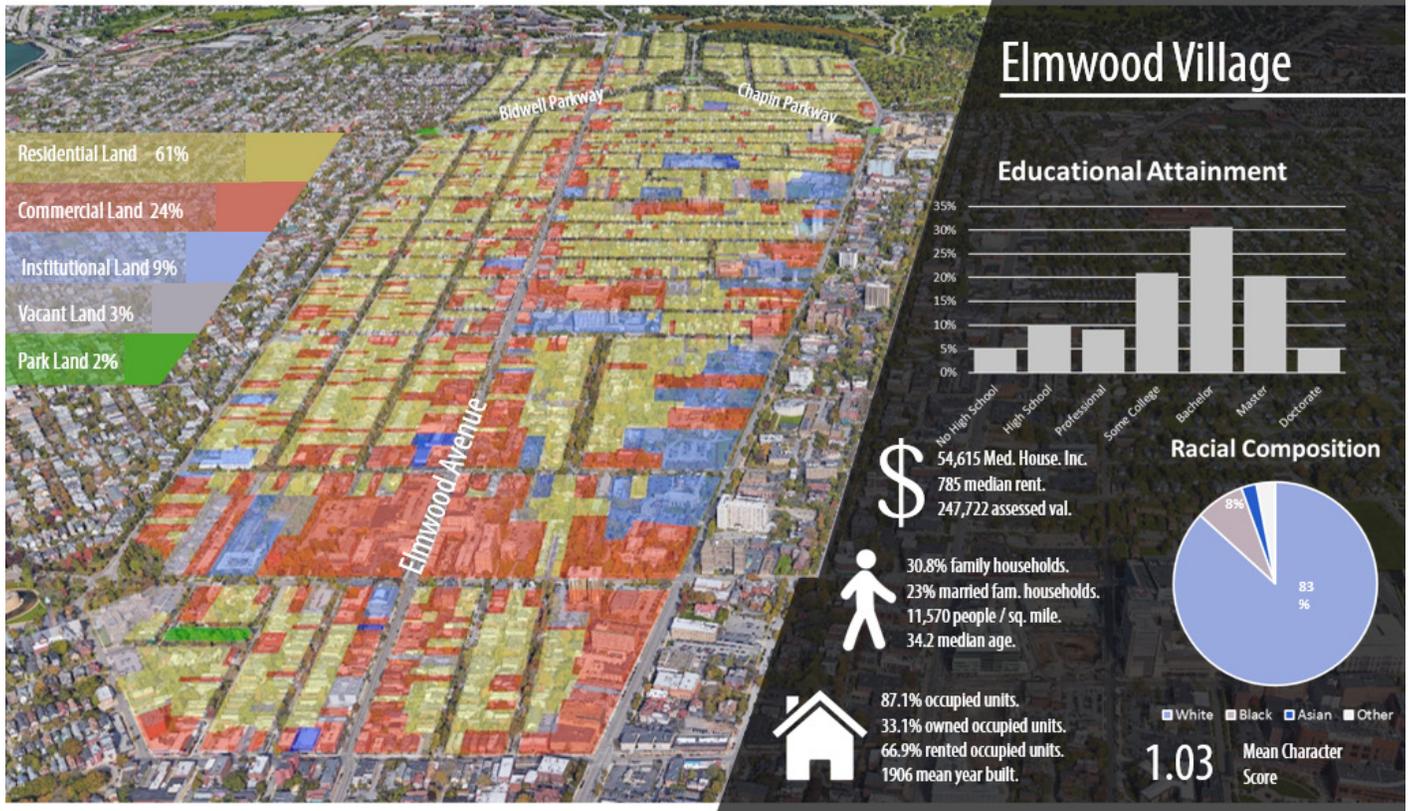
NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE : ELMWOOD VILLAGE

Mengbing Du, Luis Graveley Jr., Claire Meyer, Andrew Varuzzo, Olivia White

Overview

The Elmwood Village neighborhood is located in the northwest section of Buffalo. It is traditionally bounded by Forest Avenue to the north, West Utica Street to the south, Richmond Avenue to the west, and Delaware Avenue to the east. The neighborhood is 83% White, 8% African-American, and 9% Asian and other races. Nearly 67% of residents are renters, and the majority have at least a Bachelor's degree. The neighborhood has a relatively young population, with a median age of 34.

The neighborhood is primarily (61%) residential. Elmwood Avenue is a major commercial corridor, where most businesses in the neighborhood are located. The neighborhood has very little vacant land, and even less parkland. The major green spaces in the neighborhood are Biddel and Chaplin Parkway, which meet at Soldiers' Circle.



Neighborhood History

The development of Fredrick Law Olmstead’s parkways system in the 1860s was one of the first major developments in Elmwood. Roads in the area were laid in the the 1870s and 1880s, leading to further expansion of the city westward. The streetcar lines, which expanded into Elmwood at the end of the 19th century, had a major impact on the growth of the neighborhood. The population in 1860 was approximately 81,000 residents, and by 1900 there were 350,000 people living in the area.¹ Between 1890 and 1910 houses were constructed in the neighborhood at a rate of around two houses a week.²

In the early 20th century Elmwood Village was home to many affluent families and individuals. Elmwood Avenue was a highly desirable street, lined with mansions, and available only to the wealthiest citizens. Located approximately two and half miles from downtown, the neighborhood was an early streetcar suburb that offered repose from the burgeoning industrial economy.³ Elmwood Avenue became an important commercial corridor following the extension of Elmwood Avenue between 1910 and 1911. Around this same time, more middle class families moved into the area, and larger houses were subdivided into smaller apartments.⁴ In 1941 the streetcar line was removed, and the neighborhood streets were adapted to accommodate the automobile.⁵

The neighborhood went through a brief period of decline in part because of increasing suburbanization and de-industrialization. The neighborhood’s demographics changed dramatically between 1980 and 2000, when the area lost 30% of its White population, sand experienced a 77% increase in the Black population and a 380% increase in the Hispanic population.⁶ The neighborhood also suffered from economic decline.⁷ Elmwood Avenue became a depressed commercial corridor, and many businesses along the street had to close.⁸ These trends not only caused an economic decline in the commercial district, but also had a negative impact on the historic buildings and streetscape from a preservation perspective.

Elmwood Avenue began to be referred to as the “Elmwood Strip” in the 1980s because of the transformation of the urban landscape and the community’s desire to promote the neighborhood’s presence. During this time period the neighborhood witnessed an increase in crime and drug use. Elmwood Village only became known as such because of a rebranding campaign launched by the Elmwood Village Association, which formed in 1994

Elmwood Village Land Use and Demographic Info. Sources: Green Code, 2015 American Community Survey. Graphic by Andrew Varuzzo

to revitalize the neighborhood. Instead of tearing down old buildings and building up new, they used planning methods to reclaim the neighborhood's vitality, such as narrowing Elmwood Avenue and widening its sidewalks to emphasize the significance of pedestrians.² These strategies have helped protect the original charm of the neighborhood, which is one reason the neighborhood is still doing well today.

Today, Elmwood Avenue faces issues that stem from continued change. The demographics of residents are shifting and there is renewed demand that has been described as "fueling gentrification."⁹ Local business operations are also threatened due to the emergence of national chains on the street.¹ Elmwood Avenue is an important corridor in Elmwood Village and change along Elmwood Avenue could be a threat to the historic buildings and streetscape in the neighborhood, and impact the residents' sense of place. With changes in both physical form and internal function of the street, the activities along it could change as well. This in turn could impact the inner-neighborhood, such as the flow of population and impact prices (both sale price and rent price) of houses. These changes may cause chain reactions along Elmwood Avenue from historic and community preservation perspectives. Therefore, it is important to identify how to support small retail businesses and keep the original charm of Elmwood Avenue.

Today Elmwood Village is, as it was nearly a century ago, a predominately White, middle-to-upper class neighborhood. The community in the neighborhood is invested in balancing its interests in encouraging new development while protecting its historic character. The brief period of economic decline inspired the resurgence of interest in revitalizing the commercial corridor and reusing the historic homes. While these changes have benefited those who can afford to live in the neighborhood, the area lacks socioeconomic diversity.



Building on Potomac avenue threatened with demolition for the arbor + REverie Project. Photo by Andrew Varuzzo

Character Score

EV Mean = 1.03 | Buffalo Mean = 0.42

Mean ZA = 0.78 | Buffalo Mean = 0.12

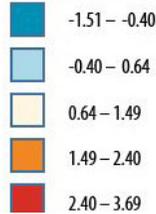
Mean ZD = -0.02 | Buffalo Mean = 0.00

Mean ZG = 0.27 | Buffalo Mean = 0.30

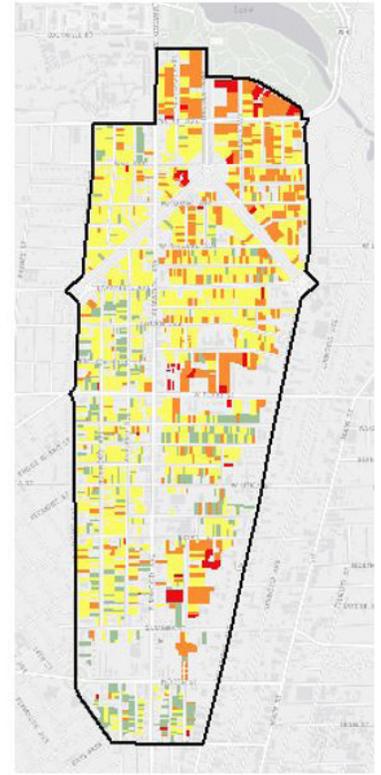
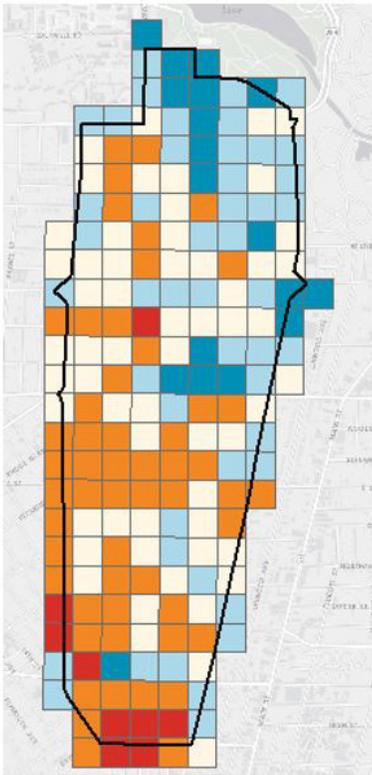
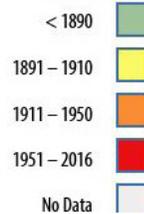
In Elmwood Village, it's all about:

Age

Character Score



Year Built



Elmwood Village has a Character Score as defined by the Atlas of Reurbanism of 1.03. The average character score for the City of Buffalo is 0.42. While Elmwood Village has a higher Character Score than many other Buffalo neighborhoods, it is still only midway on the scale. The factors affecting the Character Score include the number of new buildings in the neighborhood, particularly along the Elmwood Village commercial corridor. The majority of buildings constructed in the neighborhood were built between 1891 and 1910. The neighborhood does not have much diversity in building age stock because there were not substantial amounts of construction in the area again until the late 20th and early 21st century. Despite the fact that the residential streets of the neighborhood are largely intact and replete with historic resources, this fact is not as reflected in the Character Score.

Analysis of Character Score versus Year Built in Elmwood Village, source: Atlas of Reurbanism, City of Buffalo, Graphic by Andrew Varuzzo

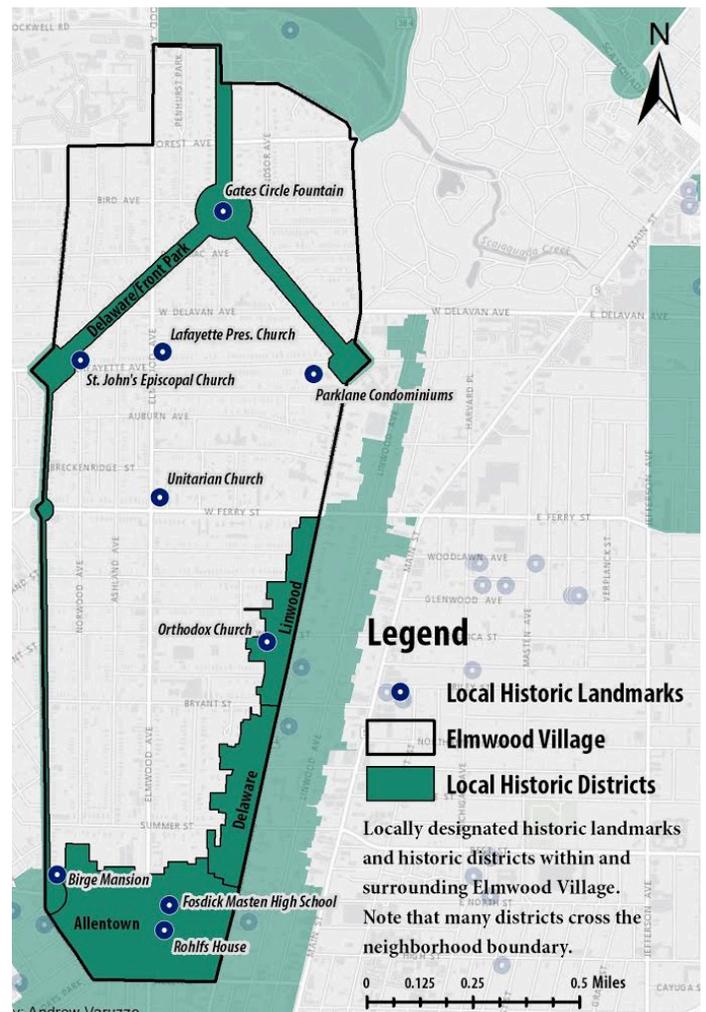
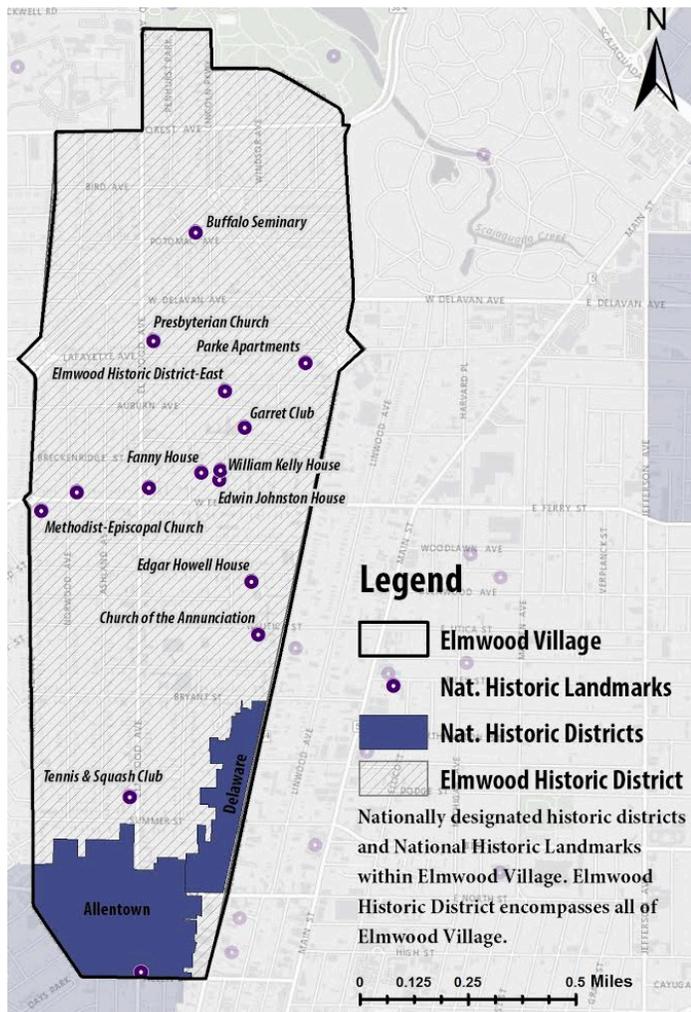
Preservation Activities

Elmwood Village has an interesting history with regard to preservation and the designation of its two historic districts: Elmwood Historic District West and Elmwood Historic District East. The Elmwood Historic District West was nominated as a historic district in July 2012 and was officially listed on the National Register in December 2012. According to the National Register Nomination form for Elmwood Historic District West, the Elmwood Historic District (both east and west) contains approximately 5,000 historic resources.

The Elmwood Historic District East was nominated as a historic district in October 2015 and was officially listed on the National Register in April 2016. Both historic districts were nominated according to the National Register criteria of being property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history and additional criteria of being a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method. Overall, the areas of significance for Elmwood Historic District were: architecture, landscape architecture, and its community planning and development.^{10,11}

In general, preservation has been used widely in Elmwood Village. While the obvious example would be the use of the historic district nomination in order to create two National Register listed Historic Districts, preservation has also been used in Elmwood Village to deter development that would change the historic character of the neighborhood as well. For example, the American Planning Association named Elmwood Village one of its “10 Great Neighborhoods in America” citing the village’s design guidelines, which have resulted a larger number of mixed-use structures that utilize neighborhood architectural styles rather than single-use buildings set back from the street and surrounded by parking.¹²

National and Local Historic Districts and Landmarks in Elmwood Village. data source: City of Buffalo, Maps by Andrew Varruzo



Sign protesting controversial developments in the neighborhood photo by, Andrew Varuzzo



While Elmwood Village is receptive to development, according to the Elmwood Village Association’s Executive Director, Tony Maggiotto, Jr.,

“The City of Buffalo is excited that Buffalo . . . is experiencing development and there is a general feeling that all of the development is positive and exciting. But in specifically Elmwood [Village], there is a slight concern about the character of the neighborhood, the massing and scale of development, but overall it’s the same. Development is seen as positive . . .”¹³

This dichotomy between the “want” of development in Elmwood Village and the “need” for preservation and the concern about the character of the neighborhood can be seen in the controversial ‘Arbor + Reverie’ development project by the Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation. This project, a mixed-use residential and commercial space, would have included demolition of historic structures along Bidwell Parkway. As of May 2017 the project is “on hold” until final approvals and compromises between the developers and the neighborhood are made; including approval based on the new Green Code adopted by the City of Buffalo. Many members of the neighborhood did not believe the project was to a “good fit” for the neighborhood character and expressed this concern at various meetings and events.^{14,15}

Overall, the preservation efforts in the Elmwood Village are widespread and work with various levels of government, including the national and local level. The neighborhood has been active in nominating its entire district as part of the Elmwood Historic District West and East and has worked on a smaller, local scale to keep the neighborhood character alive as well.

STRENGTHS

- Wealth of historic resources
- Involved Neighborhood Association
- Good preservation ethos

WEAKNESSES

- Little to no affordable housing
- Not much developable land
- left=greater demolition threat

- Development Pressures
- Green Code

- Development Pressures

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

Equity Opportunities

One important policy tool that has impacted the Elmwood Village neighborhood is solar power. While solar power has become increasingly popular in Buffalo, Elmwood Village is one of the neighborhoods that makes use of this the most, since between 2004 and 2017 29/226 or 12.8% of solar array building permits granted in Buffalo were for parcels within Elmwood Village. This is despite Elmwood Village comprising only 3.75% of Buffalo tax parcels. This means that the rate of solar energy investment in and around Elmwood Village is approximately 2.5 – 3.5 times what would be expected based upon the Buffalo city average. In the city, the majority of neighborhoods using solar power have been middle-to-upper income. Thus far, the benefits of using solar power have not reached lower-income areas, in large part because they do not have the investment capital and may not have access to information about affordable options. Another reason for this is that renters, rather than homeowners, are more prevalent in low-income neighborhoods, and traditional solar installation requires property ownership.

As the neighborhood continues to face significant development pressures, local historic designation has the opportunity to make sure that the residents have greater control over what happens in their neighborhood.¹⁶ The Allentown Historic Preservation District, a local historic district in the city, currently extends into the southern portion of the neighborhood between Allen and North Streets, and partially between North and Summer Streets. However, this only protects a small number of parcels in the area. Local historic designation is something that the neighborhood has explored before, and was recently considered in response to Ciminelli’s latest project in order to protect properties on Elmwood Avenue.¹⁷ Locally designating any part of the neighborhood would mean that demolishing anything protected by the designation would require approval by the city Preservation Board. The Preservation Board’s decision on demolition is binding. If the neighborhood were to decide to pursue local designation they would have greater control over how the processes of demolition, preservation, and development proceed. This has the potential to be a more equitable path for the neighborhood because it has the potential to decrease demolitions in the area, thus preserving the character of the neighborhood and ensuring that residents are not displaced.

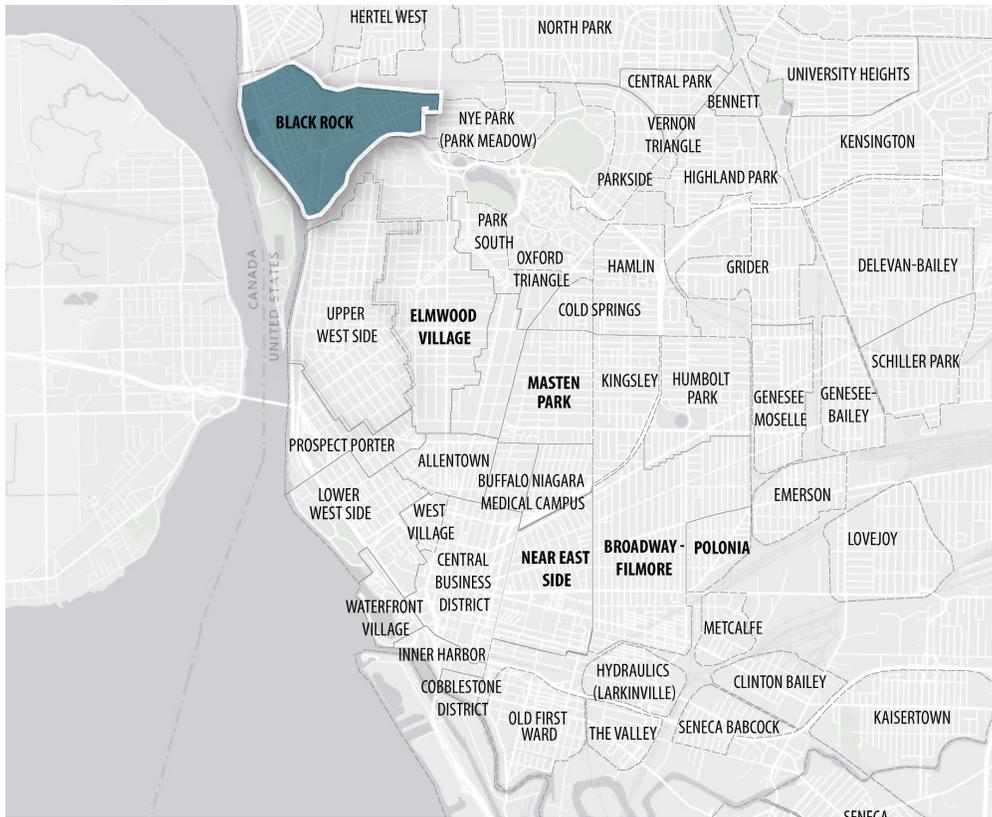
ENDNOTES

- ¹ Jennifer Walkowski, "Elmwood Historic District (West)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), September 14, 2012, Section 7, page 2.
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- ³ S.B. Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).
- ⁴ Jennifer Walkowski, "Elmwood Historic District (West)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), September 14, 2012, Section 8, page 3.
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- ⁷ Christopher J. Willer, "'It Takes a Village': Urban Change in the Elmwood Neighborhood, 1990-2016," (master's thesis, Kent State University, 2016).
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- ¹⁶ S. Garren, A. Giancatarino, S. Greschner, R. Jackson, and I. Schwingler, "Low-Income Solar Policy Guide," GRID Alternatives, 2016, <http://www.lowincomesolar.org>.
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Black Rock

Akanksha Chauhan, Melanie Colter, Mengyu Guo,
Jon Ladley, Michelle Van Meter





Black Rock Context Map, Neighborhood boundaries from Open Street Map, Map by Zach Small

BLACK ROCK

Akanksha Chauhan, Melanie Colter, Mengyu Guo, Jon Ladley, and Michelle Van Meter

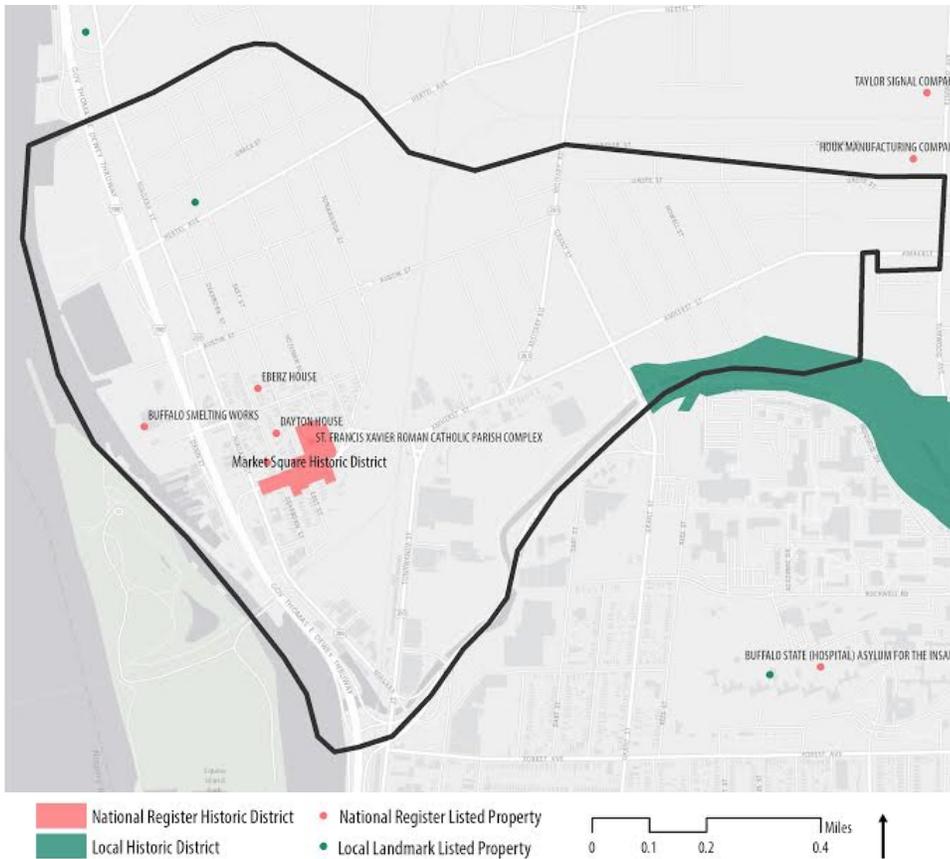
Overview

A former independent municipality with its own distinctive history, the neighborhood of Black Rock is located in the northwest of Buffalo. It is a roughly 1.1 square mile neighborhood, bound by Arthur Street, Hertel Street and Chandler Street to the north, Scajaquada Creek to the south, Elmwood Avenue to the East, and the Niagara River to the west.

In 2015, Black Rock's population was approximately 10,000 residents, 12% of which are foreign born. 55% of the population identifies as White alone and 12% identifies as African American alone. The population density of 9,516 per square mile is relatively high compared to Buffalo's overall density of 6,354 per square mile. Only 25% of Black Rock residents are homeowners, representing 1,612 owner occupied housing units. There are 1,313 vacant housing units, and 46% of the population is considered below the poverty level. The median home value is \$43,660 compared to \$91,401 for the city as a whole.

Railroad tracks adjoining Tonawanda Street bisect the entire neighborhood north to south. Due to this physical barrier, the Grant-Amherst section to the east of the tracks developed somewhat independently of the section to the west that grew along the Niagara River and Niagara Street. This neighborhood profile concentrates on the older, western section and the unique features of that area.

Black Rock's registered historic districts and properties. Data source: City of Buffalo. Map by Mengyu Guo



Though Black Rock's built environment is largely comprised of residential buildings, there is also a commercial corridor along Niagara Street and an historically-industrial corridor along Tonawanda Street. It was along these streets, especially, where we observed several buildings from Black Rock's commercial and industrial past that are prime candidates for adaptive reuse.

This history provides not only a unique sense of place for the neighborhood, but also presents opportunities that can be capitalized on to spur reinvestment. Revisiting the role that Black Rock had as a transportation-focused hub of commercial activity and the challenge of reconnecting the community with its waterfront represents potential for those interested in promoting a vital Black Rock through equity preservation.

This profile delves deeper into the history of the neighborhood, followed by an analysis of its character score, and an exploration of current preservation activities and equity issues. Our team then recommends specific policy tools that may help to expand these activities and address the issues identified by our research. An informal, reconnaissance-level, windshield survey of Black Rock and interviews with Mary Ann Kedron of the Black Rock-Riverside Alliance and John Montague of the Buffalo Maritime Center serve as the foundation of this research.

Neighborhood History

Of the thirty-two neighborhoods recognized by the City of Buffalo, Black Rock has a unique origin as an independent village, which predated its incorporation into the city. The neighborhood acquired its name from the natural black limestone formation that was located in the adjacent Niagara River. This large, triangular-shaped limestone, which measured approximately 100 feet by 300 feet, is beneath I-190 west of the Niagara Street and Hampshire Street intersection. Historically, the limestone rock created a natural harbor, which helped establish a local docking area, prior to the construction of the Erie Canal. Much of the limestone was removed from the river during the canal dredging in 1825.

Black Rock's spatial development and economic growth, like much of Buffalo, was a product of its role as an inland port. Settlement of the area began at a natural crossing point on the Niagara River in the early 1800s on land purchased by the state from the New York State Reservation. The Black Rock Ferry, which transported people and goods between the east and west banks of the river, established the first commercial activity in Black Rock, and transformed the village into a busy harbor town.

During its early history, The Village of Black Rock was the site of multiple skirmishes between British and American forces during the War of 1812. The British burned the original village, along with Buffalo, during the conflict. Following the war, Black Rock vied with Buffalo to become the western terminus of the proposed Erie Canal. It ultimately lost the battle and the rapid prosperity the canal brought because Buffalo had the superior harbor. However, Black Rock's location along the canal did bring traffic, hydropower, and eventually increased industry and commerce to the area during the 1920s.

A lock at the foot of Austin Street provided power for several mills, which in turn brought job-seeking immigrants. This began a period of German Catholic settlement, as well as Irish, Canadian, French and English arrivals, which continued throughout the 1800s.

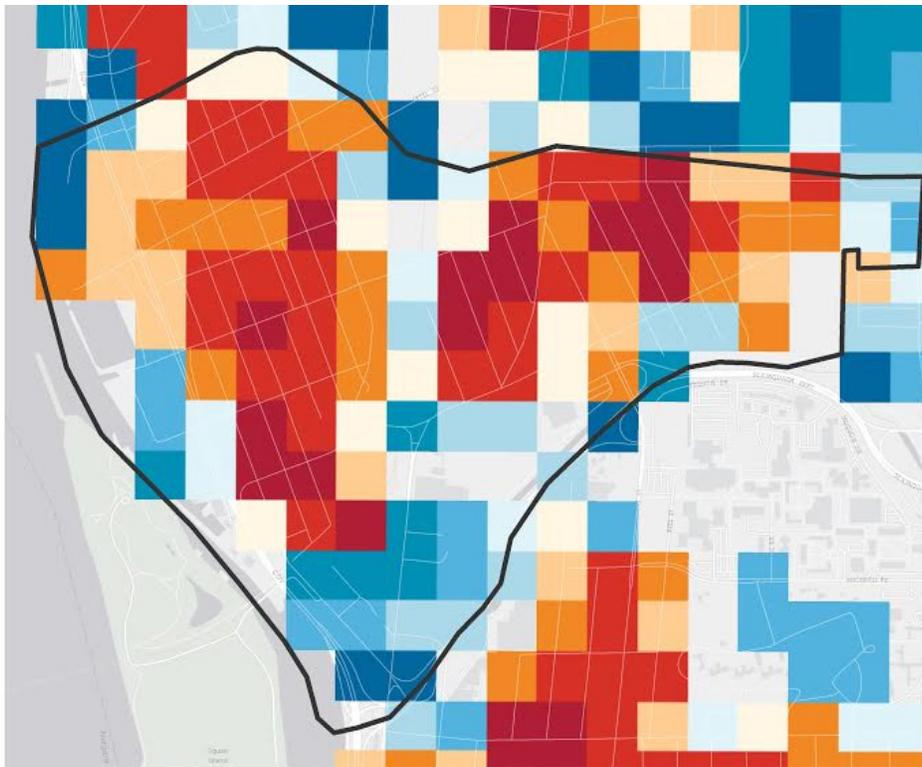
Despite the prosperity it experienced as its own municipality, an expanding Buffalo eventually annexed Black Rock in 1854. However, the area's identity as a center of transportation commerce continued beyond the glory days of the Erie Canal. Niagara Street was a designated highway by 1826, and by 1860, it was the first transportation corridor in Buffalo to boast streetcar railways. The International Railway Bridge, the first rail link to the Midwest built in 1873, and the New York Central Railroad's Belt Line (1883) sustained the development of transportation-based commerce.

Ultimately, the mid-twentieth century construction of I-190, the Niagara Extension of the NYS Thruway, along the former canal path led to the decline of industry in the area and provided a substantial physical barrier between the community and the waterfront.

Black Rock has had some success leveraging its commercial past as a community asset, but there are still many untapped opportunities. The Black Rock Canal is a National-Register-eligible resource within the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor that is directly related to the region's historic maritime activity. The neighborhood has an active community that has made efforts to retain this historic maritime identity, reinforced by the Buffalo Maritime Center headquartered within the neighborhood.

There have also been some victories in preserving the historic residential areas of the neighborhood. The former village center is now the Market Square Historic District. It contains buildings that range from late-Federal era homes from the 1830s to Gothic Revival churches of the early 1900s, and was successfully added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

This district is an essential section of Black Rock to begin our discussion of character score.



Character Score Map of Black Rock Neighborhood, data source: Atlas of Reurbanism, Map by Mengyu Guo



Character Score

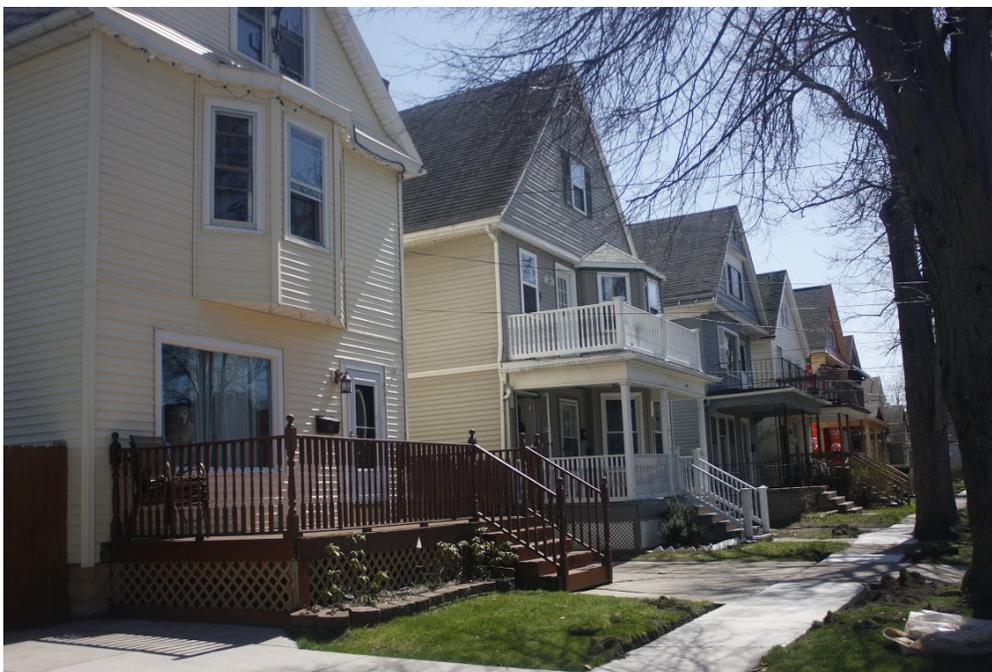
The Atlas of Reurbanism’s Character Score metric displays a high degree of variation within the Black Rock neighborhood. Sections with the highest score, symbolized by red squares, are concentrated within the west neighborhood interior, while low character score areas, symbolized by blue squares, correlate with the industrial and commercial trajectories of Niagara and Tonawanda Streets. This symbolization is reflected in the Black Rock streetscape. Most of Black Rock’s historic residential parcels are located in the center of the neighborhood, while large industrial buildings and open spaces define the parcels flanking the neighborhood’s main thruways.

Highlights

The character score data accurately picks up on the historic, dense fabric of residential Black Rock. This is especially true for the area surrounding the Market Square Historic District. The Market Square Historic District is the heart of what was once the Village of Black Rock. The district features diverse building types and ages, including the Jacob Smith House and Tavern, a Greek Revival home built during the 1830’s, and St. Francis Xavier Church, Black Rock’s first Roman Catholic Church.

Limitations

The Character Score seems to overlook Black Rock’s historic industrial assets. Black Rock, because of its waterfront access and its status as a railroad hub, became a center of manufacturing in the 19th century. Black Rock’s remnant industrial legacy can be found in its factory spaces, such as the Buffalo Smelting Works. Due to their size, these parcels are symbolized with a low character score. However, not only are these buildings a key component of Black Rock’s heritage and visual character, they maintain the structural integrity to accommodate adaptive reuse for light manufacturing, commercial, or even residential uses.



High Character Score section, near Hamilton & Dearborn Street, abutting Market Square Historic District, photo by Melanie Colter.

Another limitation of the Character Score is its disregard of vacancy rates. Vacancy and abandonment can be a significant indicator of the general condition of the built environment and the health of a community. Prolonged vacancy may result in building degradation, burdening areas with older, smaller fabric with the cumbersome and costly task of future rehabilitation. In many cases, the cost to rehabilitate an historic structure may exceed the value of the property. In areas without historic designation protections, deteriorated building conditions from vacancy and neglect increases the likelihood of demolition. This is especially true for legacy cities like Buffalo that have an active demolition plan in response to prolonged vacancy and disinvestment.¹

Areas within the residential core of the west side of Black Rock, near the Market Square National Historic District, displayed several stages of the demolition-by-neglect process. Visually, this detracts from the overall character of the block. However, the character score for this location remains relatively high. While including vacancy rates in the overall character score may deviate from the tool's intended purpose, including vacancy metrics as a new layer in the broader picture of the Atlas of ReUrbanism would be an informative and beneficial contribution to the conversation.

Overall, despite the aforementioned limitations and also an organic street layout, what has been witnessed on foot appears consistent with the Character Score grid overlay. That being said, the character score tool does a sufficient job indicating areas with higher and relatively lower character in the built environment, especially in terms of density and diversity of building age.



*High Character Score Area,
near Market Square Historic
District, photos by Melanie
Colter.*



Preservation Activities

Black Rock-Riverside Alliance and the Black Rock Historical Society

The primary drivers of planning and preservation in Black Rock, the Black Rock-Riverside Alliance (BRRRA) and the Black Rock Historical Society (BRHS), can be found along Black Rock's Niagara Street commercial corridor. The BRRRA 501(c)(3) non-profit organization was established as means for the neighborhood to receive grant funding and to implement community plans. The mission of the BRRRA is to bolster the unique identity of Black Rock through preservation activities, remediation of blight, neighborhood beautification, local economic development, and increasing commercial desirability.

The Black Rock Historical Society was born from the BRRRA to bring Black Rock's history and identity to the forefront of planning activities in the area. In addition to overseeing the stewardship of the Market Square Historic District and the designation of historic sites throughout the neighborhood, the Society operates a small local history museum, distributes heritage tour pamphlets, and orchestrates educational and celebratory events. Two recent programs include the War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebration and the 150th Anniversary of the Fenian Invasion of Canada.²

Mary Ann Kedron, President of the BRRRA and the Black Rock Historical Society, is one of Black Rock's most active heritage advocates. In an interview, Kedron emphasized that the preservation of Black Rock's history, both physical and ephemeral, is even more important now as the neighborhood faces change and redevelopment in the 21st century. Referencing the 10 community plans that the BRRRA drafted, Kedron made this statement:



*Jacob Smith House located in the Market Square Historic District, April 2017,
Photo by Michelle Van Meter.*

If you look at the history, the plans themselves, there is this resurgence of history that keeps coming through every one of these plans. You know, our history is important, and it was the reason that we picked the history as the point of starting off with the historical society, because it rang true to everybody in our community and it gave them instant pride of place, which I think is so critical when you have people who have lived in a community and seen that community change dramatically from when they were kids to what it is now, to be a new wave of immigrants and tenants who don't understand where they are living. So, we are using the historical society as a vehicle to educate the community, the new community people, and to reinvigorate the people who have been here for a long time. It has been incredibly effective for us.³

In this statement, Kedron alludes to the growing immigrant population in Black Rock. She explained that most longtime residents are very accepting of immigrant newcomers. Kedron believes that the neighborhood's history will act as a binder between these two groups. The members of the BRR and the Black Rock Historical Society hope that their ongoing efforts will bring about unified pride and sense of place in this increasingly diverse community.

A recent addition to Black Rock's community development and heritage preservation influencers is the Buffalo Maritime Center (BMC). What began as a boat building course taught by design professors at Buffalo State University during the 1980s and '90s, the BMC has evolved into a comprehensive community learning center and makerspace. The BMC's connection to local preservation activities is threefold: its adaptive reuse of underutilized industrial space for the Center's museum and workshop, community engagement through hands-on education, and promotion of Buffalo's intangible maritime heritage.



Signage outside the Buffalo Religious Art Center, April 2017, photo by Michelle Van Meter

The BMC opened its doors to the public at its 90 Arthur Street location in December of 2013. Through a fortuitous series of events and connections, the BMC found its new home in a rather nondescript factory building on the edge of Black Rock's residential core. This formerly vacant property now serves as a cultural anchor in the northern section of the neighborhood, conveniently located adjacent to the Riverside Academy and just a few short blocks from the Niagara River. The BMC's volunteer staff has implemented several renovation campaigns to stabilize the building and adapt it to fit its new use as a multipurpose community space. Here, individuals of all ages can try their hand at boat building for academic credit, collectors can have their antique watercraft restored, and academics and enthusiasts can conduct research in the BMC maritime archive. Soon, the BMC will be open a brass foundry and artist workshop, with the intention of providing a creative makerspace serving the Black Rock community.⁴

Buffalo Religious Arts Center

The Buffalo Religious Arts Center was established in 2008 by Mary Palmeri Holland with a mission to collect and preserve fine art from abandoned places of worship. When Mary bought the church, it already contained an impressive collection of religious art – murals painted in the Beuronese style developed by Benedictine monks in Germany in the late 19th century and one of a kind stained glass windows depicting the Stations of the Cross, notable because they were made by F.X. Zettler in 1911 in Munich.⁵ The Art Center is uniquely one of the few galleries in the United States housed in a former church building. Spearheaded by a group of volunteers, it is a threefold preservation effort which not only involves perpetuating the former St. Francis Xavier Church in which it is located, but also carries an assortment of stained glass windows, statuary and religious artwork from various decommissioned churches, providing a unique insight into Buffalo's culture and artistic history. The artifacts present a glimpse into the ethnic style of the European immigrants who settled in Buffalo over many centuries.⁶ Founded by the large community of German immigrants who settled in Black Rock, St. Francis Xavier is a Romanesque revival church, evincing a traditional Basilica plan.⁷



*Exterior of the Buffalo Maritime Center,
April 2017, photo by Melanie Collter.*



*Buffalo Maritime Center, April 2017,
photo by Michelle Van Meter.*



Gothic City utilizes the former Jubilee Library building as its warehouse, April 2017, photo by Melanie Colter.



Gothic City, 1950, Niagara St., April 2017, photo by Michelle Van Meter

Gothic City

Gothic City Architectural Antiques is a family run business, active since 1971. It consists of a 9,000 square foot showroom, a 10,000 square foot warehouse and an acre full of outdoor elements.⁸ The business is an example of how Black Rock's residents are undertaking small scale preservation activities through adaptive re-use in an individual capacity. The business is spread out over two properties – the Jubilee Library (1915, H. Beck architect) at 1924-16, Niagara Street and the Unity Temple (ca. 1905, Green & Wicks) at 1940, Niagara Street – both of which are in the Neoclassical style.⁹ Gothic City works with local demolition contractors, paying them a lump sum amount for the contents of the house before it is razed. They have an established network of specialty buyers which comprise most of their sales. The company claims that the business is much more difficult and less profitable than it was years ago as less people are buying, there is increasing competition from cheap big box stores, as well as many houses have already been stripped of value by tenants, homeless and drug addicts.¹⁰



The Black Rock Canal Park is a crucial bird migration corridor, October 2017, photo credit: Buffalo Rising.



Colorful paving and newly installed benches enhance the character of the river walk, October 2017, photo credit: Buffalo Rising.

Black Rock Canal Park and the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRRGNPA)

The park, formerly known as the Ontario Street Boat launch and Cornelius Creek Park, is an Erie County-owned site along the Niagara River occupying approximately 8.3 acres, of which approximately 4.7 acres is dry land (the property lines extend into the water). The project area, however, extends beyond the property line to include approximately 0.4 acres of New York State Thruway Authority land under the I-190 overpass and the 0.2-acre park entrance road owned by the City of Buffalo to create a total area of 5.3 acres of dry land. The views over the park toward the river are observed by the 69,000 vehicles per day that travel on I-190 directly adjacent to the site. The site also contains a segment of the Erie County Riverwalk which is a continuous pathway along the Niagara River running from downtown Buffalo to the City of Tonawanda at the County's north border. This provides a link to numerous other shoreline parks and allows pedestrian access to the site. Furthermore, the site has historic value as public access along the New York State Canal System, given its location between Canal Gateway in Tonawanda and the City of Buffalo Inner Harbor.¹¹

Prior to the revitalization efforts, the Ontario Street Boat Launch property was uninviting due to its state of disrepair, the expanses of featureless paving and the relative isolation of Cornelius Creek Park. The 2,300 –foot shoreline was monotonous, generally consisting of a simple railing and narrow walkway. Another problem was of the project area being bisected by Cornelius Creek, the City's largest combined sewer overflow (CSO). By design, untreated sewage would overflow into Cornelius Creek whenever precipitation caused a spike in sewer flows leaving an unpleasant odor in the park.¹²

Members of the Black Rock/Riverside community who frequent the park were keenly aware of the challenges and opportunities at the site and decided to create a plan for improvements. The organization known as the Black Rock-Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance (BRRGNPA) formed a subcommittee to address the project. In 2006, the group, later reformed as the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee, completed an award winning plan for the park which was based on extensive public input and meetings. Major features included a mixed-use building; reconfigured parking; a dog park, playground; covered creek; improved bike path, a deck over the river; and an improved entrance road.

In 2009, Erie County commissioned the landscape architecture and planning firm, peter j. smith & company, inc. (PJS) to conduct a feasibility analysis of the BRRGNPA plan for Black Rock Canal Park. Funding for the feasibility study, master plan, and Phase I of construction amounted to approximately \$1,000,000, and was provided by the NYS Department of State – Environmental Protection Fund, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Canal Corporation, Niagara River Greenway Commission, Erie County, and the City of Buffalo. The second leg of the project cost \$850,000 and was completed in October 2015.¹³

Equity Opportunities

With only 25% of its properties occupied by homeowners, it is a challenge to preserve Black Rock's historic buildings, many of which remain in a dilapidated state due to neglect. There is a perceptible difference in the level of maintenance of buildings based on occupation; those occupied by homeowners tend to be in an overall better condition as opposed to the renter occupied homes. Due to their estrangement from Black Rock's history, there is lack of sweat equity in the latter. As the commercial activity gradually shifted downtown and local industries went out of business, Black Rock found itself in the possession of thousands of abandoned buildings and vacant lots. Yet in spite of the hardships and declining profits, several residents have held onto their heritage and there is a smattering of local businesses spread throughout the neighborhood. Although small and isolated, there are numerous community-led efforts to preserve its rich cultural diversity and history. Through these the neighborhood offers glimmers of regenerative activity which signal a real potential for organized preservation efforts and implementation of policy tools to promote equity.

Small Business Incubators and Makerspaces

With no major localized business and commercial activity, employment opportunities within the neighborhood are scarce and dispersed, especially where white collar jobs are concerned. When questioned about the main economic drivers for Black Rock, Mary Ann Kedron responded saying:

The economic generator for this community is outside of this community, and it has been my biggest issue. We need incubator space here. We need to employ people in this community because I see, every day, people getting up at dawn, literally, to jump on a couple buses to go and work someplace else. They are very much working, but they are working outside of this community. And that's a little different than the way it was.¹⁴

There is a pressing need to support the local small businesses to prevent them from shutting down and the

former commercial and industrial spaces present immense opportunity to be repurposed as incubators or for small scale light industry manufacturing. An existing example of a multi-purpose makerspace/artist incubator is the Buffalo Maritime Center, which will soon open the doors to its brass foundry and machine workshop, giving impetus to the dying arts and crafts of the region.¹⁵

Already, there is a precedent for makerspaces like these in other cities, such as the Portland Made Collective which has been successful in fostering relationships within Portland, Oregon's local economy to grow and build a robust urban manufacturing sector. A digital platform and advocacy center for Portland's maker movement, Portland Made Collective recently launched a real estate service that matches Portland makers with property owners based on the needs of both. Called the Industrial Grange, the service is twofold: real estate matchmaker and network, creating an ecosystem of makerspaces that will span across the city at a range of price points.¹⁶

Placemaking Through Leveraging History

Black Rock's unique history as a long-settled and separate municipality is a source of local pride for its long-time residents. It has more pre-Civil War buildings than any other area of its size in Buffalo. Among these are the Samuel Howell House at 189 Dearborn (1830), the Jacob Smith House at 73 Amherst St (1835). Also, it has significant late 1800s-early 1900s structures like the North Buffalo Building at 1920 Niagara St (1873), St. John's United Church of Christ at 85 Amherst Street (1890), and the former St. Francis Xavier Church (now the Buffalo Religious Arts Center) at 151 East St (1911). Further, the Black Rock-Riverside GNPA Historic Restoration Committee is discovering the local War of 1812 legacy in Historic Black Rock, identifying sites and participating in the Erie County War of 1812 Planning Group led by local historian and neighborhood advocate Chris Brown.¹⁷

Today, Black Rock is at a crossroads when it comes to utilizing its remaining historic architecture as a tool for redeveloping and rebuilding its economic base. One untapped idea to achieve this can be by leveraging Black Rock's heritage as a unifying force through placemaking efforts and community building events that highlight the significant historic events that occurred in the neighborhood. In 2010, the City enlisted the help of Clinton Brown Company Architecture to conduct a Historic Resources Survey of Black Rock to give it the level of recognition it deserves. The City's leadership in commissioning this Historic Resources Survey as a means of identifying, recording and developing a greater understanding of the previously undocumented architecture in the neighborhood is an excellent precursor. This report can serve as an invaluable tool for ascertaining areas viable for placemaking interventions and to further raise public awareness of the value of Black Rock. Future possibilities to explore include restoring sites related to the Erie Canal and establishing a Scajaquada Creek historic district.

Mary Ann Kedron gave us an example of how a small celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Fenian Invasion of Canada instigated a pattern of community rejuvenation. Following the Civil War, a group of Irish nationalists set off from Black Rock to capture Canada, which they intended to trade with the British for Ireland's freedom. Although this mission was unsuccessful, it created momentum for the subsequent Irish independence over the following century. The anniversary began as a low key soiree organized by the Historical Society, but it triggered a chain of events that managed to catch the attention of high ranking officials in Ireland.

"We had 50 people here, all incredibly proud, totally decked out in every Irish thing they've ever had in their lives, and I mean it was such an empowering moment for them, and just so prideful, and they're here in this little building,' Kedron said about the time the Mayor of Dublin came to visit Black Rock. A few weeks later a celebratory parade was hosted along the commercial stretch of Niagara Street, for which the Chancellor of Ireland was present. 'There has not been a parade along this stretch of Niagara Street since WWI. So, you're bringing a 100-year tradition to reality, and people are going you realize that there's not been this for a hundred years on this street."¹⁸

Adaptive Reuse with a Community Focus:

As mentioned previously, the areas in Black Rock with the highest potential for new development consist of defunct industrial buildings flanking the southern areas of Tonawanda and Niagara Street. The City has recently incentivized adaptive reuse activity in this area through the Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area. Its purpose aims to mitigate incompatible land use patterns around greater Black Rock and Buffalo State University while stimulating reinvestment in vacant properties concentrated along Tonawanda Street.¹⁹ More specifically, the opportunity area overlay intends to strengthen surrounding commercial and residential development in Black Rock, Riverside, West Hertel, and Grant Amherst.²⁰

In general, developers in Buffalo are using State and Federal Historic Tax Credit incentives more often than in the past, which means recent building reuse activity is typically facilitated by for-profit developers.²¹ The latest adaptive reuse plans involving former industrial buildings within the Tonawanda corridor have proposed to retrofit the historic railyard buildings into market-rate housing,²² a vision guided by the highest and best use for profitability.²³ This is a concern expressed by local stakeholders of the Black Rock Riverside Alliance and Black Rock Historical Society, as projects like this do not extend access to low-income groups. Compounding this concern is the fact that the poverty rate in the Black Rock's neighborhood stands at approximately 46% and large market-rate housing projects can be drivers for rapid neighborhood change. There is concern in general that new development without a focus on equity may lead to affordability issues for local residents. It is a double-edged sword that tenured residents of Black Rock's west side acknowledge. The neighborhood has experienced prolonged periods of disinvestment, so that any new signs of development is a welcomed sign of revitalization, however at what cost is not fully understood.

To make adaptive reuse projects on the neighborhood scale more equitable, a holistic perspective is imperative. Projects should attempt to build cross-sector partnerships with community organizations with a vision toward reinvestment in communities. For example, in a large-scale redevelopment project, the developer could partner with local carpenter unions to offer apprenticeship training in the building trades for local job development. To incentivize investment in local the workforce, the city could establish policies to hire locals, such as implementing a local hiring ordinance for certain skill-related jobs.

New development with a holistic perspective should also consider the indirect impacts on the surrounding area as much as the property itself. For example, the Buffalo Maritime Center, a well-networked, strong not-for-profit, is active with the neighborhood in terms of its mentorship program with Riverside Institute, however the organization could extend its project trajectories to engage with the broader initiatives of the Black Rock community organizations, such as ameliorating the disconnect to the local waterfront and environmental degradation. There is the capacity to grow this connection to equity through a holistic perspective on how long-term projects may attract outside resources and political clout to the neighborhood.

Equity in adaptive reuse projects should attempt to address community needs.²⁴ Black Rock's business activity has been declining since the advent of Interstate 190. Entrepreneurs and local businesses alike would benefit from additional economic development and small business services, such as office and incubation space. There are several building vacancies to accommodate this service, such as the former Black Rock Academy school building. Members of the Black Rock Riverside Alliance have discussed this need and the opportunity vacant buildings provide, however, as they have divulged, the neighborhood lacks the political clout to allocate funding interests of local government and private developers to make this community service come to fruition.

Conclusions

Black Rock distinguishes itself from Buffalo through its history, place, and identity. It also distinguishes itself through its approaches to equity preservation. Our analysis of Black Rock has identified several existing trends that we believe should be encouraged and sustained in the ongoing development of the neighborhood. The Black Rock Historical Society is doing an excellent job of celebrating the neighborhood's rich history, portraying it in a way that is relevant and exciting for Black Rock's residents, new and old. Furthermore, several small-scale manufacturing and arts institutions are animating the neighborhood's curiosity and creativity, especially with regard to the maritime heritage of the area. We also observed many challenges within the neighborhood. Although Black Rock's separation from Buffalo is by-and-large a positive feature of the community, it is geographically isolated from Buffalo's commercial core that is driving reinvestment in the city. Black Rock is also isolated from its own waterfront. The construction I-190, which run parallel to Niagara Street, has negatively affected Black Rock's urban character and economy by decoupling the neighborhood from its maritime resources. In response to these challenges, we have proposed potential strategies and policy tools, including small business incubators, placemaking initiatives, and equitable adaptive reuse. Finally, while Black Rock is indeed separate from Buffalo, geographically and ideologically, several characteristics seem to be consistent throughout the city. The physical result of decades of disinvestment is troubling. However, innovative, motivated community leaders are implementing non-traditional approaches to bring vibrancy back to Buffalo's long neglected urban fabric.

ENDNOTES

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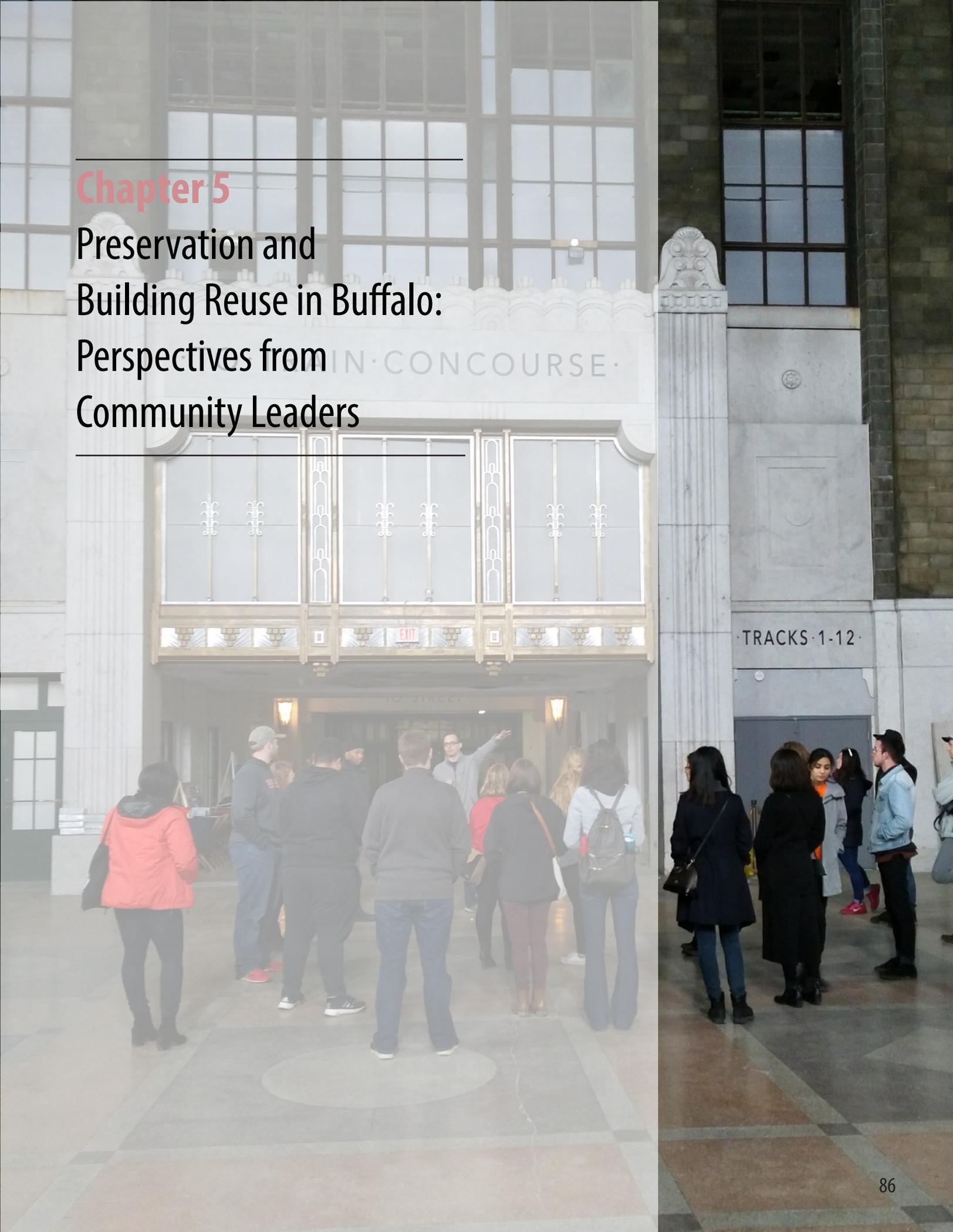
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Chapter 5

Preservation and Building Reuse in Buffalo: Perspectives from Community Leaders



CHAPTER 5 - PRESERVATION AND BUILDING REUSE IN BUFFALO: PERSPECTIVES FROM COMMUNITY LEADERS

This chapter is an analysis of how preservation and building reuse is both perceived and executed in Buffalo from the point of view of community stakeholders. In order to ascertain this information we conducted interviews with a 16 community leaders in the city. We interviewed a professionally diverse array of stakeholders, from those working for nonprofits, including preservation advocacy organizations, community development and arts organizations, representatives from neighborhood associations, and local government officials. The majority of the interviews were conducted by one person. Some took place over the phone, others through email, and some in person in Buffalo. Some of the standard questions that were asked of all interviewees are as follows:

- Please tell me a little about yourself and your role with your organization.
- Could you share some thoughts on historic preservation, and more generally, building reuse, in Buffalo?
- What role do you think preservation should play in Buffalo?
- Have you seen a lot of physical change in the landscape of Buffalo in the past few years?
- Have you seen successful examples of preservation (related to your organization, within your neighborhood (if applicable), city as a whole)?
- What do you think are opportunities for building reuse and preservation in Buffalo?
- What are challenges for, or barriers to, historic preservation projects in Buffalo?
- Do you have ideas as to how to overcome those barriers or challenges?
- Can you think of some ways to increase the capacity for nonprofits/community groups to engage in preservation projects or encourage residential rehabilitation and building reuse
- What actions could the City of Buffalo take to increase opportunities for preservation and building reuse?
- Is there a place that you personally feel is an important to understanding preservation or building reuse in Buffalo?

Based on the information provided to us through these interviews we then conducted an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOT) to understand how preservation and building reuse is playing out in the city. The results of this work can provide a foundation for future research that the Preservation Green Lab could conduct, such as a Partnership for Building Reuse effort in Buffalo. The results of our interview analysis are as follows.

CITY OF BUFFALO SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Lots of historic resources
- Green Code
- Preservation awareness
- Development
- Downtown investment
- Historic buildings viewed as crucial to character of city
- Tax credits

WEAKNESSES

- Preservation code inadequate
- Stigmas die hard
- Development pressures
- Rising rents = rising inequality
- Preservation too much about money
- Benefits of preservation don't benefit everyone

Citywide SWOT analysis from interviews with community leaders in historic preservation and building reuse. By Olivia White

- Green Code
- Lack of affordable housing
- Education as a tool for awareness
- More local designations
- Develop more relationships with communities

- Demolition in impoverished neighborhoods
- Over-development in wealthier neighborhoods
- Stigma of preservation
- Economics over character
- Development pressures are a threat to affordability

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

Strengths

One of the most frequently mentioned by interviewees was that the city has a wealth of historic resources. This is a strength seen across the city in both residential and commercial structures. Several stakeholders mentioned that these historic buildings are seen as crucial to the character of the city. Another strength for the city is that in recent years there have been increasing amounts of development, particularly downtown. Jessie Fisher, Executive Director of Preservation Buffalo Niagara noted that "Downtown especially has seen buildings that have been vacant or underutilized for literally decades, are now filled with people and restaurants. There are also houses on the west side that no one would have looked twice at fifteen years ago that now have bidding wars and are attracting folks from outside the immediate blocks and even from outside the city." Interviewees were hopeful that this increase in development would both strengthen the city's economy, as well as create a way to reuse more vacant properties. Many noted optimism that the city's new Unified Development Ordinance, commonly known as the Green Code, would help encourage building reuse by allowing for preservation projects to happen that were previously difficult to achieve. Some interviewees described how the city's shared history helps to unite it in regards to preserving its built fabric. Several noted that historic preservation has helped to boost the local economy.

Weaknesses

With regards to building reuse, some interviewees commented on a lack of equity in the process. They noted that wealthier neighborhoods tend to receive the benefits of preservation, whereas in poorer, disinvested neighborhoods, demolitions are rampant. Many also commented that in downtown and certain neighborhoods that have been doing well or have just recently started to prosper, there are significant development pressures that threaten to destroy the historic built environment. In some areas, these pressures have led to rising rents, making some areas of the city increasingly unaffordable. In some areas of the city such as the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood, the large number of demolitions have compromised the integrity of the neighborhood fabric, a factor that can make it difficult to nominate places facing these problems to the local or National Register of Historic Places. This creates a cycle of continued disinvestment and demolition. Some interviewees even expressed the view that municipal policy actually incentivizes demolition over preservation. Many mentioned that Buffalo's current historic preservation code, which is over 50 years old, is inadequate, and unable to properly address the preservation climate of the city today. Several noted that the notion that preservation is an elitist activity still plagues the city. As described by Tim Tielman, Executive Director of the Campaign for Greater Buffalo "There's always been this notion of preservation as being namby-pansy elitist, placing value in art over the practicalities of daily existence."

Opportunities

Education and community engagement emerged as two commonly mentioned opportunities for expanding preservation efforts. Many interviewees mentioned that educating more people in the city about preservation and how it can benefit their communities is an opportunity for Buffalo. Others noted that expanding the scope of community engagement can help typically disadvantaged members of the population feel more included and have a greater understanding of historic preservation. Some interviewees observed that the city has a large number of vacant buildings, while at the same time lacks enough affordable housing, and that there is the opportunity to use vacant properties to fill that purpose. Many noted how historic preservation can help to spur the local economy in places where it happens. Several mentioned how better leveraging historic tax credits at the federal and local level can help support preservation efforts.

Threats

There were a number of threats to building reuse mentioned, development was chief among them. Tony Maggiotto Jr., Executive Director of the Elmwood Village Association noted that "The biggest issue I see is that some people view development and progress as anti-preservation." While some view preservation and development as being antithetical, others noted that this does not always have to be the case. As described by Tim Tielman, "There's always been a longstanding notion that there's a duality between preservation and development. That's something people not involved in preservation often say. But, over the last thirty years we have been able to demonstrate that any development that has occurred in Buffalo has been preservation based." Some noted that at times preservation can, through development, become more about developers profiting off of historic buildings than about the historic character of structures, or benefiting the communities surrounding these structures. Misconceptions about historic preservation can also pose a threat to the process. Some suggested that there are not enough funding sources in order to make preservation a feasible activity in some neighborhoods in the city that are already economically disadvantaged.

-Olivia White

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES:

We are incredibly grateful to our community leaders who took time to share with us their thoughts and opinions about preservation and building reuse in Buffalo.

Jessie Fisher, Preservation Buffalo Niagara

Chris Hawley, City of Buffalo

Jennifer Kaminsky, PUSH Buffalo

Mary Ann Kedron, Black Rock-Riverside Alliance

Derek King, Citizens for Regional Transit

Paul Lang, Buffalo Central Terminal Restoration Corporation

Sam Magavern, Partnership for Public Good.

Tony Maggiotto Jr., Elmwood Village Neighborhood Association

Dennis Maher, Fargo House

John Montague, Buffalo Maritime Center

Katelin Olson, Cornell University

Yanush Sanmugaraja, Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI)

Tim Tielman, Campaign for Greater Buffalo

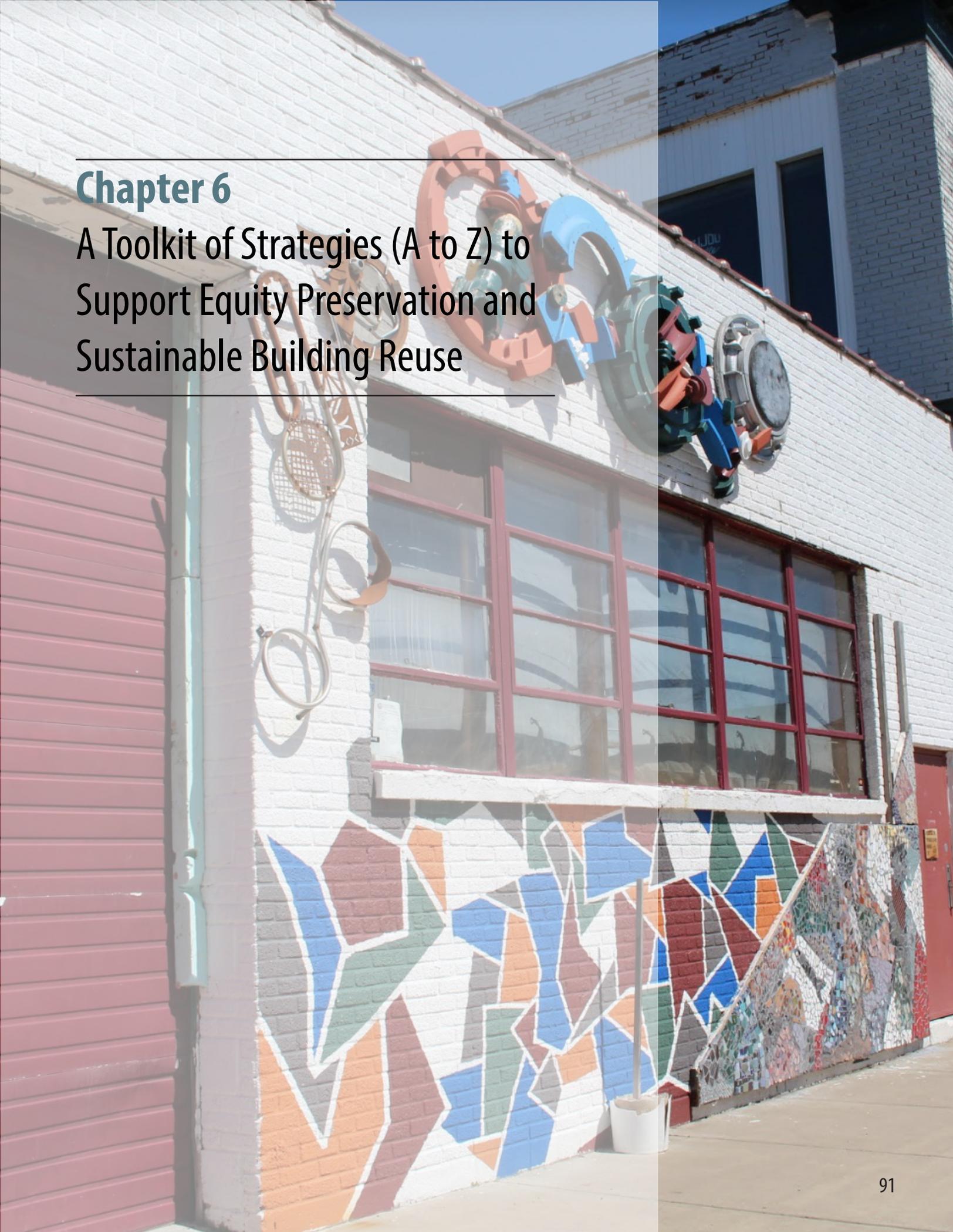
Kerry Traynor, University of Buffalo

Johanna Walczyk, LISC Buffalo

Thomas Yots, Preservation Studios

Chapter 6

A Toolkit of Strategies (A to Z) to Support Equity Preservation and Sustainable Building Reuse



CHAPTER 6. A TOOLKIT OF STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT EQUITY PRESERVATION

This chapter provides eighteen possible policy tools and strategies to support equity preservation and sustainable building reuse efforts, all of which could be utilized in Buffalo. These policies are derived from research conducted on tools and strategies that are currently being used in communities across the United States such as Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Austin, New York City – just to name a few. The policy tools range from government action at the local, state, or national level, to actions to be taken by non-profits groups, to actions that could be utilized by the private sector. In other words, a diverse array of possible strategies that could support equity preservation and sustainable building reuse efforts are described in the following pages.

The goal of this chapter is to provide policy ideas and strategies that could be utilized by groups in Buffalo regardless of the type of organization, the level of capital the group is able to invest, or the amount of time the group has to implement a new strategy. By selecting a varying degree of policy tools our aim is to give suggestions to as many organizations throughout the Buffalo area as possible, with the aim of being able to provide concrete, feasible policy tools and ideas for strengthening equity and social justice through preservation and building reuse.

-Claire Meyer

ADAPTIVE REUSE AS THE KEY TO REURBANIZATION: POLICY TOOLS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Strategy

Reusing existing building stock is an important sustainable development strategy. It uses materials that are already installed on site; therefore it is environmentally and economically viable by decreasing waste. This method also respects the city's cultural heritage and allows for community revitalization through increased ownership and participation in the decision-making process. The community around a vacant, historic structure can often be quite knowledgeable about its context, history, or ideas for future successful uses. These buildings can often house personal memories for community residents. Adaptive reuse involves reconfiguring an obsolete building to fit a new role. It presents a sustainable alternative to wasteful demolition for vacant buildings in both growing and shrinking cities. It is a way for inner cities to recreate themselves with minimal environmental or economic cost, and to preserve cultural heritage. Looking at different cities' unique approaches on how to develop reuse policies can provide a wide range of policy options to support future projects and act as a springboard to ease their initiation. This section compares adaptive reuse methods in Buffalo with those in Los Angeles and Phoenix.



Buffalo's Central Terminal is one major example of building stock waiting to be reused. Built in the city's golden days of manufacturing, the structure's enormity is a challenge waiting to be overcome. Photo by Sena Kayasu

Adaptive Reuse in Communities across the United States

According to a 2013 Partnership for Building Reuse report: “Smaller, simpler buildings are more likely candidates for adaptive reuse as the complexity of the project increases with the height.”¹ In the United States historic preservation often receives attention based on the scale of a single parcel or building. However, consideration for repurposing older urban fabric must expand to a planning scale (in other words a city-wide scale). By addressing preservation at a citywide scale, the concept of sustainability can be more fully realized and preservation can be a leading tool for urban core revitalization.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Preservation Green Lab and the Urban Land Institute are national non-profit organizations that have stressed the importance of adaptive reuse becoming a default choice and not just an alternative to demolition. Their efforts have culminated in the launch of the Partnership for Building Reuse, an initiative that investigates the opportunities for reurbanism.²

Across the US, a number of existing planning and preservation tools are supportive of adaptive reuse are offered at the federal, state and local level. These come in the form of Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Tax Increment Financing (TIF), among others.³

Analysis

The needs of a city change in tandem with its growth dynamic. Los Angeles is the second largest U.S. city by population and Phoenix the sixth, while Buffalo is the seventy-eighth.⁴ Many former metropolises in the Northeast are now Legacy Cities. The needs of Legacy Cities are very different from a growing, global hub like Los Angeles. These two, in turn, are very different from Phoenix. While adaptive reuse is viable and relevant in any city with historic fabric, places as disparate as these will have to approach the issue differently. Phoenix couples adaptive reuse with transit-oriented development to prevent sprawl, while Buffalo is more focused on equity for an increasingly diverse population to create growth. Los Angeles was one of the first cities in the country to adopt an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance focused on removing the “red tape” that disadvantaged reuse compared to new construction. All three receive federal funds that are channeled through their states as Certified Local Governments (CLGs), but additional, private funding is available in Buffalo and Phoenix.

Phoenix

The City of Phoenix’s Adaptive Reuse Program was adopted by the Planning & Development Department in April 2008 and since then it has been a guide for other cities such as Los Angeles and Dallas.⁵ The program awards financial and regulatory assistance to “existing buildings of up to 100,000 square feet constructed prior to 2000” that changes the occupancy or use of the entire structure.⁶ Funding is given on three-tiered categorization system that references the square footage of each project. As of June 2015, more than 100 buildings have been repurposed through the program. This has led to the development of 80 new businesses in the urban core.⁷

Prioritized adaptive reuse projects in Phoenix are located around an extensive light rail public transportation project that was launched in 2002 to counteract sprawl.⁸ The city encourages growth and infill along this transport corridor more than other areas, in fitting with smart growth and transit-oriented development policies. This, in turn, is in line with the surge of reurbanism in the 21st century. (Note: Phoenix is one of the upcoming cities on the Atlas of Reurbanism, with plans to analyze its built environment in the next few months.)

Los Angeles

Downtown Los Angeles is home to significant early 20th century architecture. The majority of these buildings were vacant for many years before the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety implemented an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance (ARO) in 1999.⁹ ARO “removed regulatory barriers, provided incentives, and helped make it possible to repurpose more than 60 historic buildings over the past 14 years”¹⁰. They became apartments, lofts and hotels, resulting in 3164 new units.¹¹

Major obstacles to adaptive reuse in Los Angeles included market, financial, technical and regulatory barriers. Examples included permits that took too long to obtain, buildings that were on the commercial market for unrealistic prices, regulations that presented difficulties and, lenders that were not willing to finance projects in risky areas.¹² ARO actively saves developers time and money by removing some of the “red tape” by streamlining the project approval process and providing flexibility in parking, density and zoning requirements.¹³

Los Angeles was also the site of a pilot project for the Partnership for Building Reuse, a combined effort by the National Trust’s Preservation Green Lab and the Urban Land Institute to analyze ways in which adaptive reuse can become a tool in the sustainable development of cities. The report mapped approximately 10,000 square feet of vacancies that remain in the downtown area and suggested strategies such as integrating adaptive reuse into the Los Angeles zoning code update, aligning three of the City’s departments (Planning, Building and Safety, Fire) to streamline the approval process and documenting success stories.¹⁴

Comparison to Buffalo

After decades of population loss, the City of Buffalo aims to increase its population through the incoming immigrant and refugee groups. In order to foster equitable neighborhoods that can be developed rapidly, Buffalo has begun to focus on the use of its existing building stock through regulatory tools such as the Green Code, which is supported by community groups and sweat equity. The equity aspect of preservation is strong in Buffalo-- the Preservation Green Lab’s research shows that older, smaller, mixed-use neighborhoods house more than twice as many women- and minority-owned businesses.¹⁵ To facilitate this process, adaptive reuse has a significant role that the city of Buffalo just instituted in 2017, with the newly adopted Buffalo Green Code. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in the Green Code, for example, utilizes a form-based code instead of traditional zoning, as it emphasizes neighborhood character, contingent upon the presence of older buildings.¹⁶

Connection to Equity Preservation

Repurposing historic building stock is necessary for equitable reurbanization in all three of the case study cities, as well as nationwide. Sprawl has become an issue for both shrinking cities and growing cities with prosperous suburbs. Sprawl not only drains a city’s resources, but most of its negative effects are felt in inner cities, which creates problems with equality. To decrease this effect, cities should utilize public and private funds in order to create adaptive reuse incentives based on their needs. This will aid reurbanization efforts significantly, especially when used with other smart growth and urban infill principles.

-Sena Kayasu

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BOTTOM-UP PRESERVATION AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ART

The Strategies

Historic preservation in the United States is usually a local matter, where local government, businesses, and non-profit organizations work together to implement regulation aimed at preserving designated historic landmarks and districts or plans to address property vacancy and revitalization. This section explores alternative methods and strategies for historic preservation oriented by efforts from grassroots, and the influence of social art, through which people get involved in community projects using their creative skills and then contribute to social change. As Dolores Hayden describes in *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, public art can take on a special evocative role in helping define the city history when complemented by a strong community process establishing the context of social memory.¹

Uses and Importance

As mentioned in previous sections, suburbanization, deindustrialization and economic crisis have caused the emergence of shrinking cities in the U.S., including Buffalo. Legacy cities have responded to the resulting issues of abandoned buildings, community safety, and economic disinvestment with aggressive and ad hoc demolition projects that in many cases are undermining their historic contexts.² Though the preservationists' voice has directed some of the attention from demolition to rehabilitation, the financial pressure and the fact that many vacant historical buildings are not eligible for the national or local registers still exposes many properties to the high risk of being demolished. Therefore, some unconventional bottom-up approaches are called for to complement traditional preservation strategies in order to save more buildings that possess historic importance. Regarding the significant number of Legacy Cities losing population, discovering and pursuing more innovative methods is crucial at a national scale. Social art can act as a great medium for innovations to occur because of the nature of its creativity and inclusiveness.

Analysis – Case Studies in Buffalo

The Fargo House is an example of how individual effort can contribute to revitalization. Dennis Maher, an architect and professor, acquired a building slated to be demolished and through transformation by using his artistic creativity he turned it into a place to live, to work and to exhibit. He describes the Fargo House as where “patterns of daily living contend with the instability of matter,” and “the reality that is continuously remade within the house reflects the indeterminate, albeit coordinated exchanges of the surrounding city: circulations of matter, re-processes of reconstitution, and associated environmental affects.”³ In this case, by renovating an unstable vacant property and changing the surrounding streetscape, one can encourage other residents who live or care about the community to follow a similar path and make an individual contribution to the vacancy problem.

Another case is the grain elevator project in Silo City, in which locally directed and hands-on practices take the advantage of the “as is” condition and build a cultural campus around the vacant grain elevators.⁴ Local organizations collaborating with each other to make this site vibrant, include Arts Service Initiative, Explore Buffalo, and

Push Buffalo, among others. Together they turned the 12-acre site into a home for various cultural events such as music festivals, poetry readings and climbing programs.⁵ For example, a craft beer and music festival called “Silo City Tapped” has been held annually in September since 2015. By accommodating several hundreds of visitors each year this event attracted people to explore the site and its historic significance.

The Vacant Home Tour in Wilkinsburg, Philadelphia is another example of how to increase social awareness of disinvestment. Developed from a class project by students from Carnegie Mellon University, the project is a self-guided tour of abandoned properties that reveals the fascinating stories associated with them and thereby connects people who have tools and resources to acquire them.⁶ Similarly, the Funeral for a Home in Philadelphia also aims at telling the stories of properties, but in this case about vanishing ones. By organizing a “funeral,” Temple Contemporary and The City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy work together to honor the life of a single Philadelphia rowhouse as it is razed.⁷ Through the event they commemorate the to-be-demolished buildings and trigger reflections.

Although each of the cases is unique in the ways they either revitalize abandoned properties and arouse public awareness, they all represent alternative, grassroots approaches that utilize social art, in the form of either architectural design, cultural events, or exploration tours, which relies on little to no public funding. They not only suggest the feasibility of bottom-up approaches, but also reveal the importance of social art as an effective tool to promote rehabilitation and save historic identity. Artists are beginning to experiment with ways of connecting art to the history of place, and moving away from a sense of marginalization towards centrality in the city.⁸

Additional Applications in Buffalo

Buffalo is undergoing the pressure from a high vacancy rate of more than 15%. Traditional preservation approaches are not sufficient so alternative methods involving public art can provide us with opportunities to re-imagine and supplement historic preservation.

Connection to Equity Preservation

In urban planning, many scholars and practitioners emphasize the importance of local participation, but there is often a tension between professional and local forms of knowledge. As in the cases mentioned above, it can be self-motivated artists, as well as non-artists, who can contribute to their community through social art in an incremental way. When all these modular efforts converge, networks of every single preserved historic place begin to reconnect social memory on an urban scale.⁹ People recall the community history and the stories happened years ago whether it was what they personally experienced or have heard about. In the communities with a weaker real estate market, incorporating alternative approaches in addition to conventional tools may help to accelerate historic preservation objectives.

-Vivian Zou

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MAKING PLACE, SEEKING EQUITY: ARTS-BASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

The Tool

Creative placemaking represents an approach to equity preservation that has particular potential to advance objectives associated with community ownership. It is a framework for civic engagement rooted in the arts, centering on the role of the artist as a “change agent” who has the responsibility to articulate a community’s relationship to “place.” Broader than a specific policy, creative placemaking is a powerful collaborative tool as well as an ongoing process of transformation, rather than a desirable outcome in and of itself.¹ Tactics range from traditionally ‘artistic’ interventions (i.e. murals, sculptures, landscapes), to educational programs, to neighborhood gatherings, and may be undertaken by community organizations, artists themselves, or by the public sector.

Artplace America, a leading organization in the field, has identified four essential components of creative placemaking:

1. Defining a community based in geography, e.g. block, neighborhood, region
2. Articulating a change that people living and working there would like to see
3. Proposing an arts-based intervention to help achieve that change
4. Developing a way to know whether the change has occurred²

Uses and Importance

On a national level, numerous professional and community-based efforts are elevating, enriching, and expanding the field of creative placemaking. Artplace America stands out as one force that is advancing a wide range of placemaking activities by granting funds to arts-oriented projects, investing in community planning efforts, and developing research strategies toward determining best practices. Benefits associated with the creative placemaking approach, as documented by Markusen and Gadwa (2010), include recirculating local wealth; repurposing vacant or abandoned land, buildings, and infrastructure; creating jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for artists, designers, and cultural workers; fostering a sense of community identity; improving public safety and aesthetic quality; preserving intangible heritage; and finally, protecting existing affordable housing stock.³ However, in the context of the framework described above, these benefits are not targeted outcomes as much as they are the natural consequences of creating intentional opportunities for people to express their relationship to the physical and social environment around them (i.e. placemaking).⁴

Case: Creative Citymaking in Minneapolis

In 2014, the Minneapolis City Council approved a vision for the city that established a set of goals relating to equity, safety, health, vitality, connectedness, and growth. As a subset of this vision, the “One Minneapolis” plan identified a ‘strategic direction’ for eliminating existing racial disparities in areas of housing, education, income and health. Recognizing that conventional efforts to include marginalized communities in civic decision-making needed to be improved, the city’s Long-Range Planning division partnered directly with experienced community art practitioners to undertake a multi-year, arts-based initiative that would “increase the participation of under-represented communities in determining the city’s future.”³ Titled *Creative Citymaking*, the ongoing program is facilitated by local nonprofit Intermedia Arts and included six city planners and seven artists (primarily people of color) working together on four projects during its first annual cycle.⁵

One of these projects, a partnership between city planner Joe Bernard and artist Witt Siasoco, shaped Minneapolis' preservation priorities by implementing place-based educational and engagement initiatives for local residents. Working together, they developed three creative interventions: an integrated curriculum on art, architecture, and urban planning for high school students; a 'portable drawing studio' in which participants traced outlines of their neighborhood's architectural features on a large glass window; and the development of a team of fourteen students who worked with Siasoco during the summer to produce a preservation-themed art book, later distributed throughout the city.⁶

Application in Buffalo

Buffalo is on the forefront of pioneering creative placemaking strategies. As one example, the WASH (Westside Art Strategy Happenings) Project is a small benefit corporation in the city's West Side supported by PUSH Buffalo. As an enterprise that includes impact on society, workers, the community and environment in its bottom line, WASH combines free participatory art programming, a fully functioning Laundromat, and a human services and information hub for the Burmese immigrant community.⁷ By forging innovative partnerships across sectors and harnessing creativity to engage an underserved population, WASH has transformed an ordinary Laundromat into a neighborhood landmark and community space. Throughout the city, there remain numerous opportunities for artists, as well as entrepreneurs, city staff, and educators to support and advance creative placemaking activities in a coordinated effort to address systemic inequalities.

Creative Placemaking & Equity Preservation

Debra Webb of Seattle University calls for a more expansive definition of placemaking, which goes beyond the built environment and can be expressed with qualitative indicators such as empowerment, cultural stewardship, and community attachment.⁸ Public investments in art installations, for instance, are commonly made as a beautification strategy, but such projects may not contribute meaningfully to placemaking in terms of cultivating a sense of community ownership. As Roberto Bedoya claims, creative interventions in planning processes can play a key role in establishing community ownership and creative interventions in planning may not contribute meaningfully.⁹ In this way, art is a medium, which enables people to negotiate the form of a living environment that is responsive to their needs and lived experiences.

-Cole Norgaarden

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BRIDGING THE GAP: THE IMPACT A HIGHWAY DECK PARK COULD HAVE ON BUFFALO

The Tool

The idea of tunneling automobile traffic under parkland is as old as Robert Moses' (b. 1888 - d. 1981) 1939 construction of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Expressway in Manhattan, and the strategy of decking, capping or lidding existing urban highways in order to mitigate their negative impact has gained popularity in the United States since the era of urban renewal.¹ In this section, I examine three highway capping projects that have been completed since 2000 in order to help assess the impact the Humboldt Parkway deck might have on the built environment in Buffalo neighborhoods. The case studies include South Riverwalk Park in Trenton, Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston, and Klyde Warren Park in Dallas.

Use and Importance

Opened in 1976, Seattle's Freeway Park began the national trend of trying to alleviate the noise, pollution and the substantial physical barriers produced by urban highways with deck parks. While construction costs are relatively high, the expense is often seen as an investment that will attract private development to the surrounding area. The ability of similar proposals from San Diego to St. Louis to attract significant public and private funding is a testament to the potential return on this investment²

Analysis - Capped Highways in Trenton, Boston, and Dallas

Opened in 2004, the South Riverwalk Park in Trenton, New Jersey, covers six lanes of State Route 29 along the Delaware River that once cut off Lambertson Street from its historic waterfront. The park was designed and built with input from community stakeholders, whose primary concerns were gaining accessible and visible waterfront recreation space, as well as relief from high-speed traffic passing so close to their homes.³ The park had an immediate impact on adjacent property values. One parcel originally worth \$120,000 was subsequently developed into six units that each sold for \$200,000.⁴

Development proposals for the adjoining former Champale brewery site began soon after the park's plans were finalized. Though construction of an 84-townhome project did not begin until 2009, some homeowners along the construction site faced eminent domain seizures if they could not reach a deal with the developer over the years.⁵ One building in the midst of the new townhomes was saved due to its locally designated landmark status. The Historic Delaware Inn at 1024 Lambertson Street was used as the Champale Brewing Co. office from 1949 through 1986. The three-story brick building dating from 1798 has been the recipient of sporadic restoration funding since 2007. The hope is to eventually open a museum and visitors center dedicated to the port of Trenton in the space.⁶

Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway opened in 2008 after the completion of the Big Dig project that buried the Central Artery of Interstate 93 in the heart of downtown. The 1.5 mile long strip of park over highway runs from the North End neighborhood to Chinatown.⁷ Chinatown, in particular, has since felt the pressures of gentrification increase in what struggles to remain an affordable ethnic enclave for Asian immigrants, who are predominantly renters. The Chinatown Land Trust and Boston Redevelopment Authority disagree on the boundaries of the historic neighborhood. This has recently led to developments such as "One Greenway" in 2015, a group of primarily luxury apartments situated on land overlooking the Rose Kennedy Greenway that was reclaimed after the Big Dig.⁸



The Kensington Expressway, Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

Two blocks north, a similar development on the Greenway originally proposed to at least reuse the façade of the former Dainty Dot hosiery company building for a proposed 27 story residential tower. Opponents of the project objected to the height of the building in what was otherwise a low-rise neighborhood, but the Boston Redevelopment Authority was able to use the city's flexible zoning code to circumvent the 100-foot limit.⁹ The over 120-year-old building was eventually completely demolished to make way for the new apartment tower. Notably, the Boston Landmarks Commission denied the Dainty Dot building's application for historic status in 2007 since part of it was already demolished to construct the original elevated Central Artery.¹⁰

Klyde Warren Park in downtown Dallas opened in 2012 and spans the Woodall Rodgers Freeway. Though just over 5 acres in size, this park appears to have achieved the project's stated goals of promoting connectivity and increasing residents' quality of life by reconnecting uptown and downtown Dallas both physically and economically. A 2016 survey found that 90.9% of participants thought the park reduced stress and supported a sense of place, and that \$1 billion worth of new development has poured in to the area adjacent to park has since 2009.¹¹ High-rise residential development has become commonplace, as the population and real estate values surrounding the park continue to swell creating greater demand.^{12 13} The impact of the park's economic draw has also helped rejuvenate building stock as far away as downtown with projects such as the recently completed Statler Hilton renovation.¹⁴

All three of the case study cities saw the parks hasten adjacent economic development, but they are distinct from Buffalo in significant ways. Trenton is the state capital, Boston is experiencing a period of sustained rejuvenation, and Dallas has been a powerful economic center for decades. However, Buffalo is experiencing its own form of rebirth in recent years and an injection of money from the state for a public park project could bring more momentum to that evolution, and possibly more private investment.

Application in Buffalo

During the spring of 2016, Governor Cuomo announced a budget that included \$6 million to fund a NYSDOT environmental and design assessment of capping the Kensington Expressway (State Route 33).¹⁵ The expressway currently cuts through the East Side and Humboldt Park neighborhoods of Buffalo in a 1.5-mile section recessed below grade. The proposed capping project seeks to restore a portion of the Frederick Law Olmsted designed Humboldt Parkway that was destroyed during the mid-20th century to accommodate the expressway by covering a ¾ mile section with at-grade parkland and reconnecting the divided neighborhoods. The construction estimate for this project was \$560 million in 2015 dollars.¹⁶

As the Humboldt Parkway project moves forward, it is important to keep in mind how the construction of each case study park impacted the adjacent built environment. As in Trenton, the residential neighborhoods around the Kensington Expressway are of older stock and could become targets for demolition if historic district designation is not considered instead of individual building designations. The Buffalo neighborhoods that would be most impacted are, like Boston's Chinatown, predominantly populated by minorities. Community organizations, such as land trusts, need to remain educated and outspoken about how zoning and building reuse can complement potential projects in their neighborhoods and keep an open dialogue with city officials about the type of development local residents want to see, including affordable housing. As the example from Dallas shows, the economic impact of park can be much greater and far reaching than originally assumed.

Extrapolating from the case studies, it is very likely that the Humboldt Parkway project would raise adjacent home values. However, according to the 2014 Humboldt Parkway Deck Economic Impact Study, there are 600 residential and 110 commercial vacant commercial parcels within the study area. This gives the East Side and Humboldt Park neighborhoods an extensive capacity to absorb new development through infill. With the right zoning, historic district designation, and affordable housing regulations in place the potential for gentrification could be mitigated. Vacancy could be turned into an opportunity for the residents of Buffalo that Dallas, Boston and Trenton did not have.

Connections to Equity Preservation

The Humboldt Parkway Deck project has the potential to increase business activity and home values in the surrounding neighborhoods. The type of drastic change that is often associated with such a large and expensive project also includes an amplified threat of gentrification and displacement.¹⁷ As the project moves forward, developers and community leaders must engage neighborhood residents in order to ensure they help proactively guide the oncoming changes to their own benefit.

-John Ladley

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COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS: GIVING COMMUNITIES CONTROL

The Tool

Community land trusts (CLTs) are nonprofit corporations that collectively own land in a community in order to create permanently affordable housing. The organizations are governed by a board of directors, and work to ensure that communities have control over what happens to the land in the neighborhood. CLTs are able to guard land from the pressures of the real estate market by ensuring that it is never resold. The community land trust model was first implemented in the United States in 1969 in Albany, Georgia by Civil Rights leaders who bought and leased plots of land to African-American farmers who needed an affordable way to maintain their lifestyle.¹ While affordable housing is often the primary focus of the land trust, CLTs also work on other issues in the neighborhood including managing vacant land through the creation of urban farms, pocket parks, or other greening initiatives. Land trusts are primarily used in urban areas although this is not an exclusive rule. CLTs are land ownership models that allow communities to have greater control over how land in their neighborhoods is used.

Uses and Importance

In cities across the country, development pressures on low-to-middle income neighborhoods have led to direct and indirect forms of displacement and gentrification. These communities are often experiencing new development and rising property values, have frequently felt left out of decision making processes that have determined how land in their neighborhood will be used. CLTs have formed as a model of how the community can respond and have greater control to keep communities physically and socially intact.

Community Land Trusts are tested models that have been executed successfully in cities across the country. The first urban community land trust was established in Washington D.C. in 1976.² One of the most successful examples of a CLT is the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston, Massachusetts. DSNI started in the 1980s when over 20% of the land in the Dudley Street neighborhood was vacant. Residents formed the land trust because they were concerned about impending gentrification because of the city's plans to develop hotels and office spaces in the area to extend downtown. In 1988, it became the first land trust to ever be granted eminent domain powers when it was able to seize 60 acres of privately owned 'blighted' land to develop it.³ Today there are approximately 243 CLTs operating in 42 states.⁴

Analysis – How CLTs Work

In order to establish a land trust, first an organization or group of individuals that wants to create a land trust needs to incorporate as a nonprofit organization. The CLT then has to acquire the capital necessary to buy parcels of land from the city or other owners. A CLT may rely on public subsidies to cover the cost of the purchase. The CLT is then able to establish a long-term ground lease, frequently 99 years, for the land, and either develop properties on it, or rehabilitate existing properties to be sold as affordable housing.

The process of a homeowner buying a house through the CLT begins with the purchaser obtaining a mortgage. This mortgage goes to pay down the principal on the loan, thereby allowing the homeowner to build equity in the improvement on the land. The purchaser also pays an annual fee to the CLT that pays for the land that the organization is leasing to the homeowner. If and when the owner decides to sell the house, the price for the house is set at an affordable rate for the neighborhood based on a formula that has previously been agreed upon in the Land Trust Agreement. The homeowner can subsequently gain some price appreciation from the housing market, and a secure return on their equity, but the house remains affordable for the next buyer to purchase.⁵

Application in Buffalo

In 2016, community groups in the Fruit Belt neighborhood of east Buffalo joined together to form the Community First Alliance. The Fruit Belt neighborhood is a predominately African-American community located adjacent to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The organization seeks to create a land trust in part to control impending development pressures on their community from the neighboring medical campus. In 2016, the Alliance was able to win back some of the street parking in their neighborhood that had been recently overtaken by medical professionals. Longtime resident of the neighborhood and president of Fruit Belt United describes the perspective of the Fruit Belt: “We want development, we want businesses, we need businesses in our community, but we don’t want to do it at the expense of dismantling what has been a viable, community spirit that we have built for many many years.”⁶

The non-profit organization Open Buffalo has partnered with Community First Alliance since 2013 to implement the first community land trust in the city. Open Buffalo is an organization that describes itself as “a civic initiative” that aims to make long-term improvements that make Buffalo a more equitable place for all city residents. The organization seeks greater economic and social justice through focusing on three key issues: employment and worker equity, criminal justice reform, and fair economic development that benefits a broader scope of Buffalonians than just the wealthiest. Other organizations that have been helping the Alliance with their campaigning have been Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers, Open Buffalo, PUSH Buffalo, the Coalition for Economic Justice, and the Partnership for Public Good.

Connection to Equity Preservation

Community land trusts are models of fair and equitable housing in cities for these reasons. They help to ensure that new development in neighborhoods does not lead to the displacement of people already living there. CLTs are one of the more sustainable tools of neighborhood redevelopment because they are long-term initiatives, instead of single-shot solutions.

-Olivia White

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CROWDSOURCING PRESERVATION PLATFORMS: INFORMATION COLLECTING, IDEA SHARING, AND CROWD FUNDING

The Strategy

With the rapid development of web-based technologies, multiple uses of information resources are widely used in planning. New web tools "aim to enhance municipal decision-making by incorporating the willingness of citizens to volunteer their time, perspectives, and knowledge."¹ These technologies can be applied to various fields, including the preservation of historic resources.

Use and Importance

In 2012, the City of Austin set up an online Austin Historical Survey Wiki, which was aimed at facilitating public participation in preservation. The Wiki encourages citizens to add and provide information about their own neighborhood. Using this website, the public can now share information about historic buildings and the built environment. Thus the data can be easily updated. A crowdsourcing preservation platform can provide easy access to the public and updated information among the government officials, professional researchers and citizens.

Advantages of Crowdsourcing Preservation Platform

With the help of crowdsourcing preservation platforms, transformation of historic sites and the built environment can theoretically be more thoroughly tracked. Through an online crowdsourcing platform, the government, the nonprofit organizations and citizens can view historic buildings and the built environment. In this way, information can be shared through an online platform for preservation use and it can be updated in real time. Also, crowdsourcing preservation platforms can incorporate Geographic Information System (GIS). Generally, it is difficult for local government to complete a large scale survey of the area. "Bottom up GIS" can help and has the potential to increase citizen participation in planning processes."²

Application in Buffalo

Buffalo's architecture is diverse and represents building stock that dates primarily from the 19th and 20th centuries. A well-organized on-line platform could not only collect information from the public, but also encourage more people to get involved in preservation.

A crowdsourcing platform in Buffalo could provide three functions in preservation: information collection, ideas sharing, and crowd funding. Information collection includes the basic information about buildings, such as the age, the size, and history. An Ideas sharing platform would enable citizens to add their favorite places in Buffalo, share interesting stories, and give recommendations on how to preserve and reuse historic buildings. Whenever a person is eager to contribute, he or she can share his or her ideas on the platform. Anyone interested in an idea could provide financial support or cooperate with that person. Thus, a crowdsourcing platform could help overcome financial barriers that preservation efforts face.

Table 1 The function of crowdsourcing preservation platform in Buffalo

	Content
Information collection	<p>The basic information of historic buildings and the built environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of the buildings • The age of buildings • The size of buildings • The history of buildings • The function of buildings • The materials of the buildings • How well the buildings and the built environment remained intact • The characteristics of the neighborhood • The surrounding environment • The vacancy of the neighborhood • In corporation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) • The architect
Ideas sharing	<p>Creative ideas and recommendations shared by the citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' favorite places in Buffalo • Shared stories about historic buildings among citizens • Recommendations and ideas about how to preserve historic buildings and the built environment • How to maintain buildings in keeping with neighborhood character • Citizens can share ideas and recommendations and get responses from others and the government
Crowd funding	<p>Getting financial support from others and find corporate partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever a person who has creative ideas and is eager to create, he or she can share his or her ideas on the platform. Anyone who is interested in this idea can provide financial support or cooperate with that person. • The citizens in Buffalo can get financial support from worldwide. Anyone who invests can get dividends according to sharing holding system. • People can also set up their own communities on the platform, such as historic buildings community, culture community, built environment community. Communities can set up their own financial system.

Generally, it is difficult for local government to create a resource that does all three things: 1) gathers information for historic surveys/inventories; 2) encourages people to share ideas for adaptive reuse and preservation; and 3) serves as a crowdfunding platform. Thus, the online crowdsourcing preservation platform can be separated into two platforms: 1) online historic survey, which could be set up by local government or a public organization. It could have two major functions: information collection and ideas sharing. 2) Online crowdfunding platform, which could be set up by a private company or a nonprofit organization. The local government could be a stakeholder.

Connections to Equity Preservation

Nowadays, equity planning has become an essential topic among professional researchers, government officials, and city planners. It is widely applicable to urban design, landscape architecture, as well as historic preservation. As noted by Leichenko and Listokin (2001): “Generally, designation of historic districts is increasing used as a tool to revive or halt the deterioration of central-city neighborhoods.”³ However, equity preservation does not only provide an opportunity to revive the abandoned neighborhoods, but also impact the allocation of government resources and policy-making. An online platform for preservation could give citizens an important platform to engage in preservation.

-Mengbing Du

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CULTURAL DISTRICTS: A PRESERVATION TOOL FOR NEW AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURS ALONG URBAN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The Tool

Immigrant-owned businesses are unique compared to other local businesses and cultural venues in that they typically appeal to their own communities, which can create a self-sustaining network.¹ As several researchers have demonstrated cultural activities generated by immigrant businesses in older mixed-use corridors have been shown to strengthen community relationships and stimulate long-term reinvestment in built environment.² However, the marketing and branding of existing urban clusters of cultural businesses and institutions could be better cultivated to draw broader consumer support. This cultivation could likewise draw outside funding resources and provide intangible heritage preservation of learned skills, culinary knowledge, traditions, arts, festivities, and cultural services.

Cultural districts are “well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use areas of a city in which the cultural assets serve as an anchor of attraction.”³ While not traditionally used in the context of organically-formed clusters of immigrant businesses, cultural district designation remains a flexible and broad policy tool that could be utilized by Buffalo’s immigrant community. The policy tool is applicable where a cluster of small, cultural businesses have developed an interdependent relationship. Two such examples in Buffalo are the vibrant new gift shops and restaurants at the intersection of Grant and Lafayette Streets and at the Westside Bazaar, both on Buffalo’s largely immigrant-occupied Westside.

Uses and Importance

Given the rise of the national political climate, in regards to xenophobic sentiments and anti-immigration policies, it is paramount to elevate the contributions immigrants make to the holistic well-being of cities. Recent research acknowledges the vital role immigrants play in contributing to the economy on a local, regional, and national scale, however sufficient barriers to equitable growth exist.⁴

Policy tools that have a long-term trajectory to expand access to resources and promote the unique contributions immigrants make to entrepreneurial and employment activity are important catalysts to maintain stable communities. In several cities, immigrant entrepreneurs enhance the vitality of economically-distressed cities by reactivating commercial corridors, adding a new layer of cultural narrative over the built environment.⁵ Cultural districts have worked across the nation on a local scale to promote cultural narrative around a given geography, as well as expand access to resources.

Application in Buffalo

Within a seven-year period beginning in 2006, Buffalo’s foreign-born population increased by 95%, many of which have political refugee status.⁶ For Buffalo’s economically-distressed urban core, grappling with lingering effects of a declining industry- and manufacturing- based economy,⁷ immigrant resettlement is a welcomed sign of revitalization of the city’s population. In 2015, the Byron Brown Mayoral Administration opened a new city agency to address the unique challenges and needs of the immigrant population, called the Office of New Americans. Meanwhile, Buffalo Billion’s Better Buffalo Fund (BBF), an economic development initiative that strives “to support projects that enhance the development of vibrant, mixed-use, neighborhoods and ‘Main Streets’ in the City of Buffalo,” was established and expanded by Governor Cuomo.⁸ The purpose of cultural districts runs parallel to the goals of recent government initiatives.

The private sector in Buffalo has been filling in with resource-allocation services for employment, entrepreneurialism, and home-ownership for immigrant communities. The Westminster Economic Development Initiative

(WEDI) is one such organization that had its' beginning as a religious center initiative to assist immigrants with launching business start-ups. They've grown into a 501(c)3 that has the capacity to provide micro-loans and business counseling, steered by a clear mission- to increase access to resources for communities on the Westside as well as to assist existing small business owners throughout the city.⁹ WEDI along with other organizations such as Buffalo LISC and People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH) have leveraged funds from the Billions Better Buffalo Fund to invest in the commercial areas on the Westside. While this has trickled into on-going façade restorations and streetscape improvements, there lacks a mechanism for business community-led planning in resurging urban commercial corridors. More is needed to promote, enhance, and provide continual economic development resources to support the City's local fledgling businesses.

Case Studies

Case studies of grassroots-led cultural districts provide a qualitative approach to assessing the outcomes of this policy tool. Generally, when led and controlled by local businesses and resident stakeholders, the tool has desired results. The following case studies provide insight to the utility of districting from grass-roots efforts.

Leimert Park, Los Angeles, California:

The Leimert Park Cultural District is an example of minority community-led effort to brand an existing cluster of cultural businesses and venues to break a stigma of crime.¹⁰ The district aims to promote tourism and foster local African American heritage preservation.¹¹ The designation of a cultural district around existing cultural assets, in the way that the Leimert Park district formed, is referred to by a growing number of researchers and critics as a "Natural Cultural District" or NCD.¹² NCD's form a progressive model of cultural district policy tool implementation, as they aim to enhance an established community's presence for the purpose of preserving cultural heritage.¹³

Little Mekong District, St. Paul, Minnesota:

The Little Mekong District is located on a section of University Avenue in downtown St. Paul between Mackubin and Galtier Streets. It features a multitude of Southeast Asian restaurants and shops, and is administered through the Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA), a local nonprofit founded by local Asian business owners in 2009. The organization's activism reaches back to 2006, but came together strongly in response to the Green Line light rail plan.¹⁴ Historically, the commercial urban area was site to some of the first South Asian businesses in the city, and it retains this cultural identity today. The mission is to promote equity and cultural traditions within the community of small business owners, by fostering business support services, placemaking activities, and coordinated events that enhance the district. The most prominent event and successful economic driver is the Mekong Night Market. The Night Market concept was modeled after the traditional and vibrant Asian night markets, prevalent in Southeast Asian countries, which feature a variety of traditional Asian cuisine, goods, arts and crafts, and community performances.¹⁵

Connections to Equity Preservation

The scope of equity preservation goes beyond stabilizing infrastructure; it depends on a holistic approach to resource-generating initiatives. Expanding access to resources and opportunity are the basis for equity preservation policy. Because of immigrant communities' direct impact on the built environment, it is important for equity preservation policy to adapt to an applicable scale and support community goals and assets. Enhancing cultural exchange has been correlated with increased urban quality, which in turn, stimulates continued reinvestment.¹⁶ This equity preservation tool takes a socio-economic empowerment approach to preserving and revitalizing the built environment while helping to foster entrepreneurial networks and economic opportunity within immigrant communities.

-Melanie Colter

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DECONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

The Strategy

Deconstruction is an effective way to take advantage of the salvageable materials as much as possible while dismantling a structure, which demonstrate the goal of deconstruction to discourage demolitions and to keep the affordability and character of the neighborhood.¹ Even when a building must be torn down, its materials can be salvaged and reused. Taking apart buildings in a way that allows for salvaging valuable materials benefits the community, economy, and environment.

Importance in the U.S

Examples of deconstruction strategies can be found nationally. Portland, Oregon's City Council adopted an ordinance that requires projects seeking a demolition permit of a house or duplex to fully deconstruct that structure. In doing so, it became the first local government in the U.S. to ensure that valuable materials from the demolished houses and duplexes are salvaged for reuse instead of crushed and landfilled. The Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability generated deconstruction strategies to partially replace a demolition strategy that simply tears buildings down, for Portland City Council's recommendation, which requires the deconstruction of houses that were either built before 1916 or designated as a historic resource regardless of age.² There are also many other organizations across the nation that focus on deconstruction and building reuse, such as Architectural Salvage Warehouse in Detroit, Michigan; Building Materials Reuse Association in Beaverton, Oregon; Deconstruction Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin; Green Deconstruction Services in Cleveland, Ohio; and Buffalo Reuse Inc. and Tree Hugger in Buffalo, New York.

Deconstruction is an environmentally-friendly alternative to demolition. Professional deconstruction crews carefully identify salvageable materials and separate them from the local landfills. According to several sources: "Salvaged items typically include doors, windows, cabinets, lighting and plumbing fixtures, framing lumber, roofing materials, and flooring."³ Deconstructing buildings could significantly reduce the waste when a building comes down. Almost 80 percent of materials could be kept and reused and deconstruction is a much more cost-effective way compared with pure demolition, especially for the cities like Buffalo with a wealth of historic structures and a high vacancy rate.⁴ Furthermore, as a more labor-intensive process, deconstruction requires more trained labors compared with demolition, which uses more heavy machinery to knock down the buildings and destroy them. Deconstruction could also provide more job training and employment opportunities for the local residents, which could help stimulate the local economy. The deconstruction strategy could also be a desirable incubator for small businesses that focus on handling the salvageable materials.⁵

Applications in Buffalo

In Buffalo, the local government faces the significant abandonment of buildings and record-high rates of vacancy, which resulted from the poverty, segregation and depopulation. It is reported that during the last decade, the government spent a large amount of money on the demolition in Buffalo and the cost of demolition has proved a costly choice for a financially strapped city. Much of the wood in the old homes is old-growth timber. Salvaging old-growth timber and other valuable materials can provide a source of materials for home rehabilitation, restoration, and repairs. Buffalo Reuse, a local non-profit, offers comprehensive services for deconstruction. These services include offering supportive documents for tax deduction for the material donors after deconstruction and operating retail store called "ReSource" to help to sell materials.

Connections to Equity Preservation

Deconstruction is a more cost-effective strategy than demolition when looking at solving the problem of what to do with vacant and abandoned buildings. A far more laborious process than demolition, deconstruction strategies could provide more job training opportunities, which ensures the changes in the community affects the community members positively.⁶ A proper deconstruction ordinance could also encourage the reuse of buildings, rather than demolition or deconstruction, by increasing costs associated with demolition relative to preservation and rehabilitation of existing building stock.⁷ Furthermore, the reused materials in other buildings could also be regarded as another form of preservation and the deconstruction could also be considered as a desired incubator for the small business, which could not only keep the capital within the community to stimulate the local economy and to enhance equity, but also combined with the historic preservation perspective to make the community better.

- *Mengyu Guo*

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TAKING OFF THE BLINDERS: THE ROLE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PREVENTING GENTRIFICATION

The Tool

In a recent article in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, McCabe and Ellen (2016) warn that “historic preservation can contribute to economic revitalization in urban neighborhoods, but that these changes risk making neighborhoods less accessible to lower-income residents.”¹ The policy tool discussed in this section is the addition and continuation of low-income housing in historic districts to address this potential threat. Case studies in Austin, Texas and Cincinnati, Ohio are evaluated based on the general success of the policies implemented to counteract displacement. By evaluating policies such as these from other cities across the US, the City of Buffalo and the preservation community can proactively address the potential for displacement and development pressures in neighborhoods experiencing reinvestment.

National Importance

For preservationists at the local, state, or national level, the evaluation of our own practices is important to make sure that the histories and structures we are attempting to save are not at the expense of the current fabric of the neighborhood or city. At times, I believe preservationists can put on the “blinders” and be very concerned solely about the built environment. Unfortunately, the importance of preserving historic fabric can take precedence over the needs of existing residents. Protecting residents from displacement needs to be a part of the equation for preservation.

Analysis

While studies based on economic growth have been plentiful that show that preservation helps to revitalize downtowns, brings in tourism, raises property values, and creates more mixed-use residential and commercial districts, the study of neighborhood composition in relation to race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status has been largely ignored.² To begin to address this gap, McCabe and Ellen (2016) evaluated the neighborhoods in New York City before and after the designation of historic districts in the area. According to their regression analysis the “socioeconomic status of a neighborhood increases following historic district designation, and the increases tend to be greater in census tracts that have a greater share of parcels in historic districts.”³ In four New York City neighborhoods, “census tracts in which between 25% and 75% of parcels are designated as part of a historic district, household income increases by approximately 14% following designation relative to census tracts in the same community district without historic districts,” showing the relationship between historic preservation aims and changes in neighborhood composition that lead to gentrification.⁴ This study shows that in areas where preservationists in New York City neighborhoods have attempted to maintain the historic fabric, the household income increases following the designation of these historic districts.

Gentrification and displacement is discussed in detail in a selection of Karen Chapple’s book, *Planning Sustainable Cities and Regions: Towards More Equitable Development*. Chapple explains that:

Researchers have generally struggled to show that it [gentrification] causes displacement. In fact, a number of studies have found that rather than displacing low-income households, gentrification induces them to remain in the neighborhood. At the same time, new low-income households may have a hard time moving into the neighborhood as its identity changes.”⁶

In other words, while gentrification does not force the current residents to move out of an area or neighborhood, it prevents future low-income residents from moving into the area as new high-income residents continue to

move in. A reason discussed in both Chapple's book and McCabe and Ellen's article is that high-income residents can afford to buy single family homes (or convert properties to single family homes); whereas low-income residents often live with multiple tenants in properties converted to apartments or two-family properties.

In Austin, Texas a city taskforce was created to investigate the relationship between preservation and gentrification on the East Side, an area comprised of traditionally African American and Hispanic neighborhoods. While a large majority of African Americans were moving out of East Austin and, "the population had dropped by over 25 percent since 1980, while the white population in at least one neighborhood near downtown increased by 30 percent. . . The African American population in Austin had actually been in decline for years, marked by a steady flight to surrounding suburbs."⁵

In order to prevent the displacement of low-income residents in Austin, Chusid (2006) discusses the policies that Austin wanted to implement moving forward after the research completed by the task force:

First, preservation can be of assistance to communities facing gentrification by saving community institutions and cultural practices, stabilizing property values, valuing and protecting affordable working-class housing, and providing financial and technical support to low-income owners of historic properties. Second, significant structural issues still impact East Austin, making it vulnerable to gentrification. Ignoring them in order to attack preservation has served no one well – least of all the vanishing African-American community. Thirty years ago, just when Austin was described as 'most affordable,' the city changed its zoning regulations so that only uses specifically permitted in an area could be constructed. Consequently, housing could only be built in areas specifically zoned as residential. That helped subdivision developers, but not the cause of affordable housing.⁷

Essentially, while gentrification can help to preserve and save community institutions by bringing in further resources to an area (a sentiment echoed by Chapple), zoning regulations have to be in a place where affordable housing and multi-family housing can also coexist. By changing zoning regulations, the current residents of the area (at the time African Americans) were essentially pushed out of the neighborhood.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, a city that is similar in size and population to the City of Buffalo, the low-income housing policies currently utilized in their neighborhoods could be also be applied to Buffalo. For example, between 1994 and 2009 in Hamilton County (the county in which the Cincinnati metro area is located) lost over 2,000 units of project based subsidized housing.⁸ This loss of low-income housing was addressed in the City of Cincinnati's 2015-2019 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), a five-year plan in which the evaluation of different grants and housing plans are discussed. The 2015 CAPER explains:

Cincinnati and its neighborhoods has been strengthened by the strategic efforts to increase the quality and diversity of housing, reduce crime and blight, and improve the vitality of small neighborhood business districts as well as large employment centers. The City's overall development goal was to develop and support comprehensive efforts to expand choices and opportunities for individuals and families to enjoy decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. Decent housing is affordable, safe, and accessible. A suitable living environment is safe, livable, free from blighting influences, and economically integrated."⁹

According to the CAPER, a multitude of plans for the City of Cincinnati are currently in the works to continue to increase the number of affordable housing units available in the City of Cincinnati metro area. One such project is Beasley Place located in the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) neighborhood of Cincinnati, directly north of the central

business district of the city. Over the past ten years, OTR has seen a dramatic shift in the demographics of this neighborhood. After years of population decline and an increase in crime, the neighborhood was at a crisis point. Today Over-the-Rhine boasts, "Two-hour lines for organic fried chicken . . . condominiums going for \$500,000, [and] office rents [which] rival those in the high-rises of the Central Business District."¹⁰

In order to prevent this highly profitable area from gentrifying due to the changes in socioeconomic status, the City of Cincinnati has attempted to combat this issue by adding additional low-income units in the neighborhood. According to the CAPER, Beasley Place is currently being renovated to create 13 rental units (there were 16 originally), along with a commercial storefront on the first floor of the property. Additionally, "most of the newly renovated buildings [in OTR] are being designed for market rate renters and owners, this project will enhance the current efforts of stabilizing these particular units for low-income households."¹¹

Additionally, the City of Cincinnati has put a tax abatement plan in place in order to prevent the typical patterns of socioeconomic gentrification. The Cincinnati Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Residential Tax Abatement allows for all condominiums and one-, two-, or three-unit structure within the City of Cincinnati (new construction or rehab) to apply for the tax abatement program.¹² This program indirectly incentivizes the creation of multi-family housing to allow for low-income residents to continue living in their preferred neighborhoods. This can help to address indirect displacement that can occur due to economic factors such as when housing becomes prohibitively costly, often because of high rents or property tax increases in places without limits.¹³

Connections to Equity Preservation

By evaluating these findings and the low-income policies in other cities across the United States, the City of Buffalo can begin to apply findings to their own neighborhoods. By making sure that historic preservation policies are affecting neighborhoods in positive ways instead of solely benefitting those with higher incomes, preservation can begin to have a more equitable relationship with neighborhoods across Buffalo. These policy tools relates to two major themes discussed earlier in the document: (1) Widened Sphere of Engagement and (2) Awareness of Risks and Benefits of Preservation.

The connection to a widened sphere of engagement applies to low-income housing policies because this theme includes tailoring the preservation process to meet the needs of various groups and to seek partnerships across community groups. By making sure that the housing needs of various groups are met, preservation can have a more equitable goal and outcome. The designation of historic districts and other preservation related tools does may not lead directly to gentrification. However, historic designations can be contributing factors. By creating and implementing low-income housing policies in historic districts, preservationists can help meet the needs of various groups within a city. By engaging directly with community groups, the needs of the community members in terms of housing and preventing relocation and displacement can be heard.

The connection to "Awareness of Risks and Benefits of Preservation" is obvious, but important. By acknowledging that historic district designations may have some impact on the affordability of a neighborhood, preservationists can choose to take a proactive approach to preventing widespread changes in the neighborhood fabric and acknowledge the potential impacts that preservation can have on a surrounding community. Thus, the field of preservation can begin to ensure that neighborhood change will affect the existing community members positively by bringing in additional resources and economic opportunity to the community.

By creating low-income housing policies in historic districts in order to prevent designation from becoming a catalyst for gentrification, one can increase choices for those who have the least number of present choices, especially in terms of housing. As discussed earlier, once a neighborhood begins to experience the effects of

gentrification in terms of changes in the housing stock and rental options, displacement (whether voluntary or involuntary) can occur in these neighborhoods. Evaluating policies that encourage low-income housing options can give more choices to those members of a community who in fact have the least number of housing choices. By creating low-income housing policies in newly designated historic districts (or reactively in previously designated historic districts) one can begin to make sure that an inclusive vision is being utilized for the City of Buffalo or any other city where these policies could be applied.

-*Claire Meyer*

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INDUSTRIAL REUSE AND INNOVATION

Strategy

Many former industrial cities are currently facing the problem of how to reuse their abandoned factories. These structures have been notoriously difficult to renovate due to their large size, industrial aesthetic, and lack of a heating and cooling system. In response to these challenges, many developers have converted these buildings into loft housing. However there are many other ways to adaptively reuse industrial spaces in a way that can benefit and serve communities in a more equitable manner. The goal of the adaptive reuse of industrial spaces should be to serve the community.

Uses and Importance

It is important to consider other ways to repurpose industrial buildings so that their future use can benefit people in a community of all different socioeconomic levels. One such way to do so is to create a reuse projects that include spaces that offer community services. Industrial adaptive reuse projects that are focused on community development provide a stepping stone for a more productive community. With the right tenants, industrial spaces can be a major asset to empower and strengthen communities. Workshops, classes, business incubation space, community centers, and community kitchens are all services that can benefit communities. Some of the most successful adaptive reuse projects of industrial spaces include these and services like them.

Case Study: The Pajama Factory in Williamsport, PA

Williamsport, PA is a small city in Central Pennsylvania that was once a manufacturing hub due to its placement on the Susquehanna River and access to railroads. Since the height of its manufacturing era, many factories have left the area, along with a large percentage of its population. Williamsport's population peaked at 45,729 in the 1930 census. From 1910 to 1930, there was an increase in population of over 13,869. The population began declining in the 1950s, and has only recently stabilized. The 2015 population of Williamsport was 29,201.¹

Weldon's Pajamas, initially began as a small operation in 1934 at 1307 Park Avenue in Williamsport. The operation grew, and eventually became a complex of eight industrial buildings with a total of nearly 300,000 sq. ft.²



The Pajama Factory in Williamsport, PA. Photograph by Jessica Stevensen

One of their buildings was originally constructed for the Williamsport Rubber Company in 1884, with additions built on over time. Weldon's Pajamas grew to become the largest pajama factory in the world by the 1950s, but by 1979, it had closed. The city was left with a large vacant complex that city officials and developers were unsure of how to reuse. There was an attempt to turn the building into a factory outlet in the 1980s, a project that ultimately failed. The building once again became vacant.

In 2007, New York architect Mark Winkelman purchased the building with the intent to transform it into a creative incubator that fosters small business development. The site is now home to 85 tenants that include artist studios, a coffee shop, an arcade, a bridal shop, a cake bakery, ceramic center, radio station, an event space, soap manufacturers, an independent film company, a marketing firm, a print and design company, a theatre company, a community kitchen, a bicycle recycle center, and a community woodshop.³ Winkelman knew from the outset that his efforts would be focused on community revitalization. "Part of the marketing plan was to develop a community," he said. "We knew we weren't going to rent large blocks to large companies. The people who wanted these spaces wanted a community."⁴ His goal was to keep rent at an affordable rate to encourage artists to utilize the space and for small businesses to develop.⁵ The tenants of the Pajama Factory are already members of the community which means the use of the space is not displacing current residents in an attempt to bring development to an area.

Williamsport Community Kitchen is a tenant whose purpose is to act as an incubator space for new and small businesses in the food industry. The kitchen also hosts fundraising activities, workshops, and special food related classes. Members of the community can become a member by paying the \$100 membership which covers supplies and utility usage. Hourly rates are \$25 per hour per work area.⁶

The Factory Works is a nonprofit organization founded by the Pajama Factory owners, Mark & Susie Winkelman. The Factory Works maintains a community wood shop, clay studio, darkroom, and bicycle shop. The Factory Works also sponsors an artist-in-residence every summer. The purpose of the bicycle shop, Bicycle Recycle, is to empower people through bicycling with the belief that bicycles can make the community a better place to live. Services for the community include instruction on how to repair one's bike and the option to rebuild a bike that has been donated to Bicycle Recycle. The shop holds classes and community bike rides, facilitates art projects using recycled parts, and also sells refurbished bicycles for an affordable amount.⁷

The Pajama Factory is an excellent example of an equitable reuse of an industrial space. The Pajama Factory is a great environment that not only empowers community members through classes and workshops, but also provides an incubator space for those at the beginning stages of starting a business. The incubator space is an excellent way for a business to grow without the expensive overhead of paying for a storefront and equipment. The incubator allows the business to figure what works for them and highlights areas where the business can grow. Once a business is ready to expand, it can graduate to a storefront and provide space for another business to incubate in its place.

Application in Buffalo: An Adaptive Reuse Strategy for Industrial Buildings

In 2008, The Erie County Industrial Development Agency created its adaptive reuse strategy which allows the ECIDA to offer tax incentives for

The rehabilitation of buildings that are at least 20 years old and have been empty for three years or more. The structures are often functionally obsolete and suffering from long-time neglect. The results can present unforeseen restoration costs for developers.⁸

Before work is done on a structure, community meetings are held to gain input from nearby residents and businesses. To date, the ECIDA has reported over \$400 million in private investment generated through adaptive reuse projects with over 2.4 million square feet of rehabilitated space.⁹

One commonality with the tax credit is that it has mostly been used for housing, especially luxury housing. Loft apartments can be excellent uses for such massive, underutilized structures but there should be also ways for the building to be a major contributing asset for the neighborhood as the structure had been before.

-Jessica Stevenson

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LIVE/WORK HOUSING FOR ARTISTS

The Tool

Artists' live/work housing is a type of mixed-use development that can be a single building, a block, or an entire neighborhood. Having more live/work housing in Buffalo would benefit the city by creating greater housing variety and density; providing more affordable housing; reducing distances between housing and workplaces; generating more efficient development; and fostering stronger neighborhood character.

Artist live/work housing is a tool that connects historic preservation and economic development. It can contribute to the improvement of a community and the revitalization of a downtown area. The overlay housing in this model allows the adaptive reuse of upper floors, as well as vacant and underutilized historic structures¹ The fewer the restrictions in adaptive reuse, the greater the rehabilitation opportunities - enabling the projects to be more financially promising.

Providing additional live/work housing within a downtown area promotes more lively, around the clock activity.² With incoming arts-focused inhabitants, downtown areas are able to maintain current businesses and generate more business opportunities.

Importance

Lowell, Massachusetts has a rich history of housing historic, cultural, and educational institutions. Lowell had a huge planned industrial community during the 19th century, with a flourishing textile industry. The weakening of the textile industry resulted in the long term vacancy and underutilization of buildings. More recently, these buildings are starting to be reused for homes, businesses and cultural activities. This is due in part to the establishment of the Artist Overlay District in the city zoning codes.³ The City executed this policy to encourage artists to both live and work in the historic downtown and Lowell National Historical Park areas- motivating the growth of a concentrated arts, cultural, and entertainment district. This policy has facilitated a vital, around the clock downtown life, and generates increased economic opportunities for the district.⁴

Between 1998 and 2000, this policy was the fundamental element in the restoration of four unutilized properties in the center of the downtown historic district and National Park. The City of Lowell acquired the properties through tax foreclosure and later transferred them to two private developers who converted them into artists' space. Two National Register-listed buildings in the National Park were converted into 51 units at a cost of about \$4 million. Two other buildings are presently being converted into nine units. Many other downtown condominium units were likewise transferred with the condition that they be used for artist live/work housing. The "Artist Overlay District" policy has also created positive spillover effects such the development of new, privately developed art galleries and working spaces. The Artist Overlay District has been such a success in Lowell because of the outstanding network of historic and creative art culture; the accumulation of over twenty years of historic preservation efforts; and the continuous efforts to boost economic development through culture tourism.

Application in Buffalo

Buffalo is losing its population and at the same time sprawling without growing. Some of the lack of interest in moving to declining areas may be fueled by high rents or the cost of living; limited housing options; poor living conditions; lack of sufficient amenities; lack of quality education; and/or lack of economic activity.

Adopting adaptive reuse could revitalize the old and vacant buildings or sites for purposes other than those for which they were originally designed. Many of the vacant sites in Buffalo were previously warehouses and factories. These buildings can be renovated and reused as cultural and creative centers, or platforms for arts displays to promote cultural tourism. These actions would provide an economic agglomeration that attracts artists and professionals bringing culture, character, identity, creativity, and vitality into the area. When job opportunities are created and enough space and freedom are given to these talents, the market of cultural tourism will generate greater benefit to Buffalo.

Additionally, transforming these vacant sites into live-work space provides housing for new talent already in and coming to Buffalo. As the cost of living increases across the country, utilizing affordable live/work housing could make Buffalo more competitive in retaining talent.

Connections to Equity Preservation

Every city and every region has cultural legacies from its human history such as architecture and industry. It is critical to pay close attention to preserving this heritage, especially through preservation and building reuse. A city that retains its historical heritage can be culturally vital. Buffalo, filled with special cultural histories, has great potential for further development as a rich and vibrant 24-hour city.

-Joey Jiayun Zou

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MAKERSPACES: PRESERVATION WITH POWER TOOLS

The Tool

Makerspaces offer an opportunity for equity preservation through the use of empty building stock to promote community development and encourage innovative creation. The average person looking to learn woodworking or welding skills typically cannot purchase all of the heavy equipment that might be necessary without extreme cost. Makerspaces can offer a community the space to house these tools with a membership fee to access and utilize them. The community of “makers” can support these larger machines and more detailed projects together through shared resources. As a result, a joint space, which offers more than just tools, is created. In addition to machinery, sharing of knowledge and skills among members is common. By sharing tools collectively, makerspace offers those looking to work on specific projects or those interested in trying a new hobby the perfect place to do so. In an article exploring the extension of schools to revitalize surrounding communities it is noted that: “renovations of older buildings, repurposed as venues for learning and community building, become three-dimensional opportunities for public outreach and shared resources, serving to reignite a city’s spirit, restore its pride, and lift up its own”¹

These makerspace shops are beginning to pop up around the country and the globe with many creative names and business models. Many are non-profits, some housed in schools, libraries, and museums, while some opt for a for-profit business model. Policy literature on these spaces is limited and primarily relates to technology use, infrastructure changes, safety issues, and equal access. There is great opportunity to preserve old building stock with makerspaces. Older and historic buildings have the potential be reused in their raw state without remodeling or renovation. These not only become places for local business to occur, but also for community engagement to prosper.

Uses and Importance

The national and global popularity of makerspaces is on the rise, with over 400 sites in the United States alone, and over 1000 world-wide- 14 times the number in 2006.³ These spaces range from Portland, to Austin, to Milwaukee and Ithaca. More cities around the nation could utilize this trend to occupy vacant historical buildings, even in less than livable conditions. As the space is used for projects work rather than residential, office, or restaurant purposes, little rehab is required. Urban areas are home to a multitude of vacant light industrial space and open floor plan buildings. The likelihood of these types of spaces being available in Legacy Cities is even greater as industrial spaces has largely been abandoned with the decline of industry. The potential for building reuse also grows as members outgrow the makerspace and require a space of their own to continue their craft on a larger scale.

Makerspaces in Dallas and Los Angeles are each run as non-profit community centers for those looking to create. A makerspace in Dallas offers classes on a multitude of skills ranging from computer programming to welding. Their website explains how they “use these resources to collaborate on individual and community projects in order to promote science, technology and art, while working and experimenting on innovative ideas to encourage learning within our community.”⁴ Their mission statement explains the impact they aim to have on the community; one that encourages educational growth and spurs community engagement through creative making. The Dallas makerspace is one of a few units in a light industrial and commercial park. In LA, the makerspace’s goal is to offer “all youth in L.A. the opportunity to learn STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) skills. The “maker” education style is a project-based and confidence-building way to learn challenging concepts.” This makerspace takes the initiative to foster youth development in its community by offering an equal opportunity to further their education and gain valuable job skills.

Application in Buffalo

In Buffalo, this trend could serve to occupy vacant buildings as well as to promote community development and economic growth. Buffalo struggles with the challenge of managing underutilized building stock. As the Dallas makerspace has occupied previously used commercial/industrial space so could a makerspace in Buffalo. While restoration and preservation of commercial buildings can be a difficult and costly process, utilizing them as makerspaces allows using the building “as is” to become much more viable. In Buffalo, this is no exception. Preserving the history of light industrial buildings can be achieved by allowing makerspaces to utilize these spaces for what they were intended.

Connections to Equity Preservation

Makerspaces can promote equity throughout communities by creating a sense of commonality in a shared working space.² Relationships among members are inevitable as they share experiences and skills with each other. Buffalo is also home to many immigrants. With a multitude of languages and dialects being spoken, communication can be difficult. Yet, as members of immigrant communities come to makerspaces to create, learn, or teach new crafts, both bonding and the growth of economic opportunity can occur. Those in search of new and marketable job skills can come to the makerspace to learn skills and trades that will allow them to enter the job market.

-Lucas Raley

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MATCH-MAKING FOR PRESERVATION: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF A BUSINESS-TO-PROPERTY MATCHING TOOL

The Strategy

Entrepreneurs need space to grow their businesses. All too often, those same entrepreneurs lack the necessary means and support to acquire property. On the other side of the equation, property owners of vacant or underutilized buildings seek mindful tenants, but have difficulty promoting their real estate in communities experiencing population loss. A business-to-property matching tool, connecting local entrepreneurs with complementary property owners, could serve as the bridge between the two parties. This approach, as implemented in various cities across the United States, takes several different forms. While some employ a competitive applicant system and others are membership based, most employ a mapping or spatial element, and all emphasize the importance of business productivity across a range of neighborhood markets.

In this report, two recently developed match programs, Detroit's Motor City Match and Portland's Industrial Grange, will be discussed as case studies. An analysis will be provided on the national relevance of this tool, and its implications in terms of equity preservation. This tool will also be examined through the lens of Buffalo, NY, a Legacy City looking to promote community driven preservation and economic growth.

Uses and Importance

America's Legacy Cities need innovative solutions to address losses in industry and population. Local small business investment is a potential approach to focus on the resources that are already present in our cities: local residents and their entrepreneurial instincts. In 2014, start-ups created approximately 805,000 new jobs across the United States¹, outpacing the deficit left by closing businesses. The industry is increasingly diverse, as well. Between 2007 and 2012, there was a 38.1% increase in minority owned small businesses.² The growth of and interest in the small business industry is apparent and should be fostered by policymakers. A business-to-property matching tool is in-line with these trends, and is an approach that Legacy Cities should consider.

Case Studies

Forward thinking planners in Detroit are combatting what has plagued their city for nearly half a century: population and economic decline. Motor City Match, an economic reinvestment program organized by the City of Detroit, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), the Economic Development Corporation of the City of Detroit (EDC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), matches motivated entrepreneurs with building owners, and vice-a-versa.

Motor City Match explains Detroit's predicament as such:

"Entrepreneurs looking to start or expand their businesses in Detroit face two major hurdles: 1) It is not easy to find the right space; and 2) Even when the right space is found, business and building owners may still have financial gaps that need to be addressed before they are ready to open³."

Motor City match has developed a competitive system by which selected participants are eligible to receive marketing support, renovation assistance, grant and/or loan funding, and various training resources. Businesses and properties are selected based on size and potential for success. The end goal is to establish permanent, self-reliant businesses that benefit their surrounding communities. By introducing business to property, Motor City Match is bringing capital back into Detroit's commercial districts in a way that utilizes the city's existing fabric. The way that Motor City Match is addressing some of Detroit's obstacles makes this innovative program a model with potential applications in Buffalo, and in similar former-industrial

cities across the Northeast and Upper Midwest.⁴

Portland's small-scale manufacturers, also known as makers, have developed a similar program, the Industrial Grange. The Industrial Grange was born from the Portland Made Collective, an advocacy coalition for Portland's maker movement. The Industrial Grange is a web-based real estate service, matching makers with commercial property owners throughout Portland. The city is separated into seven distinct districts, each with varying price points. Unlike Detroit, widespread vacancy is not the major concern in Portland, but rather a lack of affordable rental space. Thus, the Industrial Grange provides a means of matching creative entrepreneurs with like minded property owners that support the maker movement.⁵

Application in Buffalo

The groundwork for a business-to-property tool is already in place in Buffalo. Several small business advocates and incubators have established themselves in neighborhoods throughout the city. One example, located in Masten Park, is the Foundry. The Foundry is a maker space and small business incubator sponsored by Net+Positive, a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The mission of the Foundry is to promote entrepreneurship through providing affordable rental space, education, and connections to local support services. The Foundry encourages membership from across the city, but they especially advocate low-income, minority, women-owned businesses.⁶

Another active organization is WEDI, the Westminster Economic Development Initiative. WEDI provides a space for entrepreneurship to financially disadvantaged individuals, particularly among Buffalo's foreign-born community. Small businesses gain their footing through technical training and affordable incubator space, then eventually graduate to their own brick-and-mortar locations.⁷ A business-to-property matching tool could build on the resources that these organizations already provide by facilitating the transition from business incubator to independent storefront.

Another asset is the newly released Atlas of ReUrbanism for Buffalo. The Atlas of ReUrbanism, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Green Lab, identifies connections between older, smaller, diverse building stock and robust local economies. Hot market commercial areas, in Buffalo and in other cities analyzed by the Preservation Green Lab, are overwhelmingly characterized by high Character Scores. This indicates a positive economic response to dense, historic urban environments. However, spatial Character Score data overlooks certain important variables, such as vacancies. Aside from gentrified districts near downtown and various pockets of the Westside, many of Buffalo's neighborhoods with the highest Character Scores are those that have the highest vacancy rates. This highlights an opportunity to match local entrepreneurs with these underutilized spaces. The existing Character Score data for Buffalo may serve as useful tool in mapping historic, high-character areas for potential reinvestment through small businesses.⁸

Connections to Equity Preservation

Equity preservation, in a broad sense, is community driven heritage advocacy and reinvestment. To promote equity within a community, that which is preserved should be reflective of the residents and their specific needs. A business-to-property matching tool, if catered heavily towards local entrepreneurs and property owners, has the potential to spur economic growth from within neighborhoods. Affordable rents, business education workshops, and renovation assistance provided by such a program would create avenues to entrepreneurship for community members that may lack the necessary means to get their business up-and-running. Such a tool would also promote reinvestment in the historic fabric of a neighborhood, as an alternative to the demolition of vacant properties. In short, a business-to-property tool would promote equity by promoting local entrepreneurs, promoting local economy, and promoting the local built environment.

-Michelle Van Meter

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SELLING TAX FORECLOSED PROPERTIES: PURCHASE PROPOSAL SYSTEM

The Tool

The purchase proposal system is a transparent procedure for the sale of tax-foreclosed properties which requires the review of a 'purchase proposal' before a property is sold. Within this policy, a building's intended reuse is given greater importance than the proposed purchase price. For each blight-affected neighborhood in Buffalo, the identified rehabilitation uses should be systematically ranked in an order of priority with demolition assigned the lowest priority. The higher priority uses would be given greater preference while considering purchase proposals. Ultimately, the best financial offer with the highest preferred use would be chosen. This process ensures that the City has greater control over the new usage buyers assign to their prospective purchases.

Use and Importance

In recent years, policymakers and housing advocates have focused on the home mortgage crisis. The unprecedented rate of foreclosure filings has prompted federal legislation, inspired the creation of foreclosure mitigation programs, and spurred local and state efforts to preserve homeownership. As a result, foreclosures are down nationally, and the number of mortgages that are current on their payments is on an upward swing. The number of homeowners who are "underwater," with a house that's worth less than what they owe on their mortgage, dropped to 4.3 million in the third quarter of 2015, compared to 5.2 million in 2014, according to real estate analytics firm, CoreLogic.¹ As heartening as these statistics might appear, the United States' foreclosure crisis is far from over. In 2013, Christy Goldsmith Romero, special inspector general for TARP, warned that homeowners were defaulting on their modified loans at an "alarming rate." The national aggregate drop in foreclosures masks troubling trends in many of the communities where property values have continued to drop, pushing more families deeper underwater, according to John Powell, director of the Haas Institute at the University of California at Berkeley.²

From Threat to Asset

Facing the threat of tax foreclosures several cities have come up with innovative ways to capitalize on property acquisition as a strategy for rehabilitation. One of these is the property disposition proposal system devised by the City of Troy, New York. In Troy, the strategy of property acquisition proactively favors rehabilitation over demolition. This policy is enacted through the means of a local ordinance, which specifies that the City of Troy is required to offer foreclosed properties for sale by the "purchase proposal" method. To promote this process, the city hired Troy Architectural Program (TAP), a private, nonprofit community design center, and assigned city staff to work specifically on its promotion. Together the city and TAP photograph all of the available tax-foreclosed properties and prepare information sheets for each one.

Additionally, foreclosure signs are displayed prominently on all properties, local news coverage is generated, and applicants are directed to TAP for assistance in completing the proposal application. The City also posts detailed property descriptions on its website. When property proposals are reviewed, the intended use is considered to be more important than the bid price, and only after a property has failed to sell by the proposal method will it be offered at auction.³

In 2000, the City of Troy took the initiative to aggressively promote the proposal process, and the results were tangible. Over 110 parcels have been sold for rehab. Following Troy's near bankruptcy in recent years, the city is finally experiencing some regeneration, which has been facilitated by this program. It has inspired a renewed interest in Troy's rich architectural heritage and has encouraged a newfound preservation ethic in the upcoming generation of the city's residents.

Application in Buffalo

Buffalo, too, is increasingly finding itself in possession of dilapidated or abandoned buildings whose property taxes have not been paid. These buildings often lie dormant, continuing to decline until the city 'seizes' the property through a tax foreclosure process. Thereafter, the property is auctioned off to the highest bidder with no concern for the building's architectural or social value, historic relevance and future use. While these foreclosures are spread throughout the city, they are heavily concentrated in the Masten and Fillmore districts. The Masten and Fillmore sections of the city are plagued by high crime rates and housing decline.

Connections to Equity Preservation

While Buffalo could potentially benefit by the application of a similar policy model as Troy, it must be tweaked to fit the city's contextual needs to enhance equity preservation. This can be achieved in the following ways. (1) Inclusivity + Widened Sphere of Concern- by going a step further from what the City of Troy did with TAP, by involving a local neighborhood sustainable housing initiative like PUSH, policymakers should identify key rehabilitation uses which can uplift neighborhoods based on suggestions from the community itself. (2) Community Ownership and Increased Capacity - This participatory approach would ensure that the local homeowners' voices are not drowned among the clamoring of developers and political lobbyists with vested interests. It would result in strengthening existing community institutions by empowering them, as well as increasing the city's capacity through shared distribution of efforts among citizens and civic bodies. (3) Awareness of Risks and Benefits of Preservation - To promote equity, those rehabilitation uses should be prioritized, which may potentially generate employment for, displaced homeowners. For example, regional arts and crafts enclaves in immigrant neighborhoods could be utilized.

-Akanksha Chauhan

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SOLAR POWERED PRESERVATION

The Tool

Sunlight is distributed evenly, without regard for ethnic or class divides. Decentralized energy generation presents a unique opportunity for struggling legacy cities to build capacity and stem the outward flight of capital that leads to building decay. While solar energy has so far been a mostly middle to upper class phenomenon, the recent proliferation of innovative financing schemes, decreasing costs, government subsidies, and technological innovation in the solar energy sector could increase solar access for low to moderate income (LMI) communities. This policy brief thus approaches historic preservation in legacy cities as a neighborhood economic capacity issue and asserts that building solar energy infrastructure is a viable community-based response.

Uses and Importance

It has long been recognized that historic preservation initiatives should not – and indeed cannot – solely focus on strong market cities. Each year, America’s historic resources are lost not only to make way for new development in expanding metros, but also to abandonment, neglect and condemnation in contracting markets. Unfortunately, established strategies such as landmark designations, historic districting, rehabilitation incentives and even tax credits are under-equipped to handle both the scope and the nature of the preservation problem in legacy cities. When government preservation intervention is inadequate, residents in historic yet depressed neighborhoods must find ways to build and retain wealth so that capital may be freed up for investment in the built fabric. Historic preservation may only emerge as a priority once LMI families and communities meet basic needs such as public safety, employment and housing.

Policy: Issues and Responses

Solar energy has not always had a peaceable relationship with historic preservation. Primarily in wealthy historic neighborhoods, conflicts have erupted between homeowners’ desire to save money while “going green” and local historic preservation considerations. Indeed, rooftop solar panels can drastically alter building aesthetics and their installation can even necessitate structural changes. In cases that involve preservation ordinances and planning boards, homeowners frequently must reach compromises that alter the size, positioning and components of the proposed solar array. Such compromises have the effect of making the installations less visually conspicuous and hidden from the street, but usually result in decreased energy production. Energy production becomes limited when panels are required to be sited in shaded areas, laid flat along the roofline, limited to aesthetically pleasing models, or separated from the building via ground-mounts. Some states have responded to such historic preservation requirements by mandating that such legislation can only reduce the efficiency of a proposed array by a certain percentage.

Aesthetic issues are not likely to take on such salience in distressed legacy neighborhoods. Rather, financial, housing tenure, and cultural barriers to solar energy are more prominent. Historic legacy neighborhoods tend to be heavily comprised of LMI renters of diverse cultural backgrounds. LMI residents rarely have the financial resources to pay upfront for a solar array or complete requisite roof repairs, despite the long term financial benefits of doing so. Poor credit may further prevent residents from acquiring a loan. Many are precluded from installing solar altogether because they rent rather than own their homes. Landlords, who often delegate responsibility for utilities to tenants, lack incentive to install renewable energy sources on their properties. Finally, cultural barriers and transience hinder attempts to connect residents of legacy LMI neighborhoods with public, private and philanthropic programs that could make solar feasible for them.

Fortunately, private sector programming and public sector policy is starting to fill the void. Moderate income homeowners have been able to enter the solar market thanks to government policies such as the Federal Solar Tax Credit, solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs), and favorable net-metering rates that decrease the costs and increase the returns of solar systems.^{iv} Leasing options allow lower-income homeowners without sufficient startup capital to rent their roof space to the solar provider in exchange for a monthly electric bill credit.

Options are more limited for renters, but progress is being made. Community solar presents the most viable avenue. In this model, residents purchase or lease a variable number of solar panels at a remote solar array and receive a monthly bill credit based on the amount of electricity produced by their panels. The strategy is a boon to historic preservation and LMI residents alike. Historic structures remain undisturbed because the panels are sited remotely and LMI renters benefit because the panels remain linked to their electricity account whenever they move and no land ownership is necessary. Spurred by financing incentives, developers are also starting to embrace solar. Inclusion of solar energy in a historic redevelopment can increase a project's long-term financial viability and chance of receiving grant funding.

Case Study Solar Projects

For brevity, three case studies exemplifying solar's potential to advance preservation, social and environmental goals will only briefly be outlined here.

Case one describes the redevelopment of the former middle school in Fort Madison, Iowa into the mixed-income School House Apartments. A 300kW solar array atop this historic 1920s gothic revival school building moved the project to the top of the list for Iowa historic preservation tax credits and Community Development Block Grant funds. The project generates free electricity for all residents.

Case two recounts the renovation of the former Viceroy Hotel on Chicago's West Side into the Harvest Commons Apartments. The six-story art-deco building combines 89 apartments with a suite of social services to help reintegrate formerly incarcerated and homeless residents into the community. Solar energy provides 50% of the building's hot water and solar tax credits provided one of many funding streams employed in the \$22 million project.



Case 1: The former Fort Madison, IA middle school was recently converted into 38 apartments at a cost of \$4.6 million. The rehabilitated building features a 300kW solar array that offsets residents' electricity costs by up to 100%.¹¹

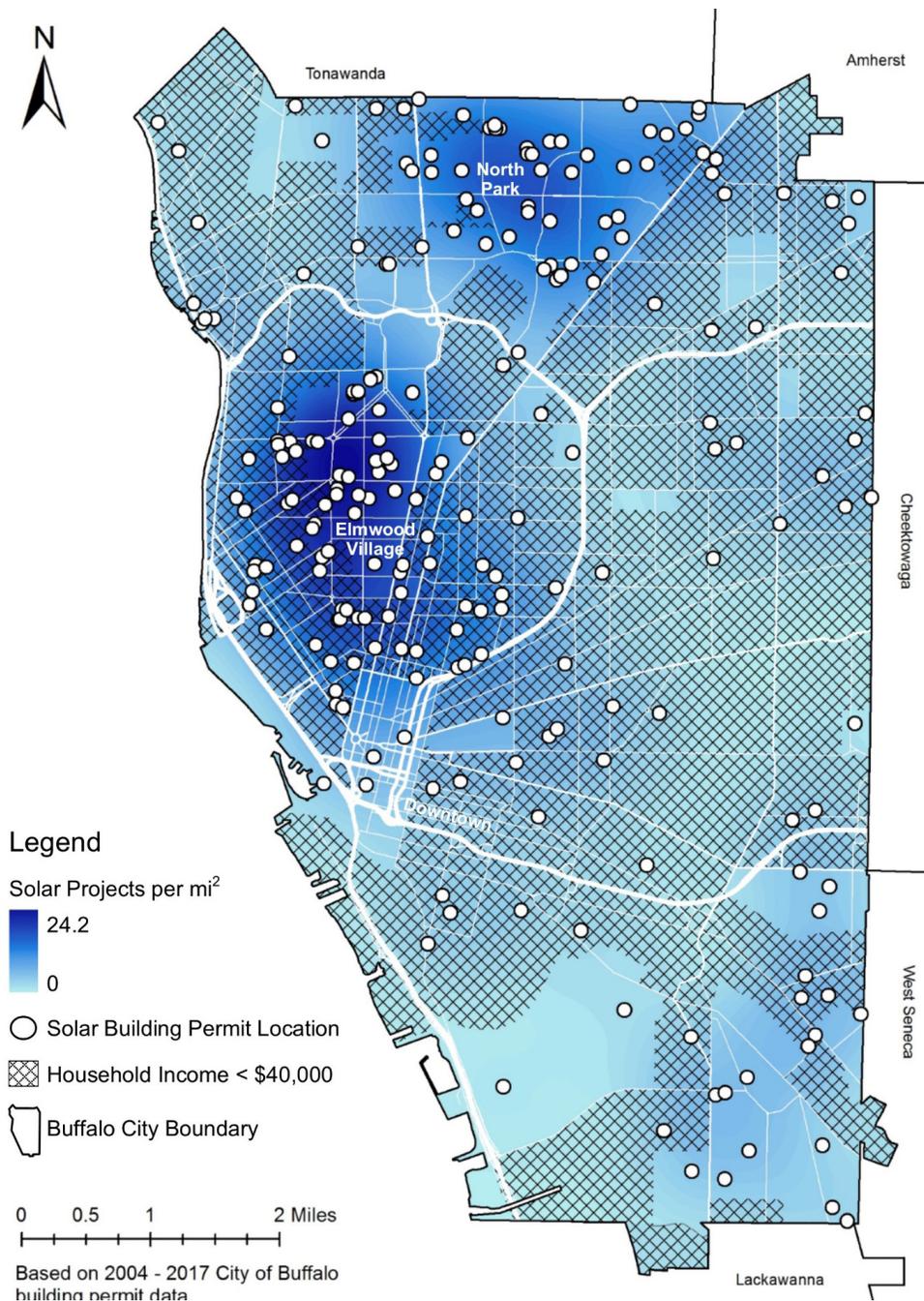


Case 2: The Harvest Commons Apartments provides 89 housing units to formerly homeless tenants in a building that is 22% more efficient than comparable structures. Residents are surrounded by a network of services and social outlets including a public computer room, teaching kitchen, resident-managed gardens and community café.¹⁴



Case 3: Remotely-sited community solar projects present a viable option for low income customers who would otherwise be precluded from the renewable energy market due to financing, credit, rental, transience and roof issues.¹⁰

Case three outlines an innovative public-private partnership in Colorado founded to connect low-income residents to the nation's first low-income community solar project. The solar array provides seven households with electricity at a rate of just 2 cents per kWh for up to four years. Participants save approximately \$600/year in electric utility costs and contribute sweat equity to promote energy efficiency. To construct the array, a "barn raising" model was used to rally community members and defray costs.



*Distribution of Solar Energy Projects in Buffalo, NY
2004-2017, source: City of Buffalo Building Permits*

Applications in Buffalo

It is easy to imagine such projects taking hold in Buffalo, a legacy city with a population of 259,000 and average household income of just \$32,500. Google’s Project Sunroof estimates that 78% of buildings within Buffalo have solar-viable rooftops that could accommodate a median 5.8kW system covering 405 square feet. Buffalo’s 2,680 acres of vacant land (almost 20% of all lots) present further opportunities for solar development. Based on these calculations, the City’s solar-viable roofs could produce 1.6 billion kWh of electricity per year, enough for 211,000 average New York homes and valued at \$280 million. Given these opportunities, Buffalo clarified ordinances governing solar in its recently adopted Green Code and New York State continues to vigorously incentivize solar development through its NY-Sun program.

Connections to Equity Preservation

As the map on the previous page indicates, solar investment in Buffalo has passed disadvantaged areas by, favoring instead the City's wealthy north end and Elmwood Village. Impoverished areas to the south and east of Downtown have largely gone without. However, as the above cases indicate, solar systems could be deployed in these areas to expand existing residents' access to capital (thus avoiding cataclysmic money), build camaraderie through sweat equity, and repurpose vacant land to build preservation capacity. Scattered vacant parcels could be leveraged for ground-mounted residential solar projects and embedded non-profits like PUSH Buffalo could be called upon to connect language-isolated residents with public programs. For developers, inclusion of solar in building projects could draw in public grants and tax credits, as well as reduce overhead costs long term, thereby making rehabilitation feasible even in cool real estate markets. Finally, as seen in the Grand Valley Power case study, community solar can be a rally point, a way to build community cohesion around a shared resource, while not jeopardizing historic structures.

-Andrew Varuzzo

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TRANSPORTATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND REINVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The Strategy

In the cannon of planning literature, the link between historic preservation and transit investment has been well defined. Transit-oriented development (TOD), marked by proximity to transit infrastructure (such as light rail or subway), contributes to the creation of more compact, walkable cities. TOD creates patterns of development that invite infill, and the reuse and adaptation of existing building stock.

By the same token, the preservation of historic train stations can also invite the perfect meshing of cultural resources, accessibility and economic development. These stations have the potential to be repurposed into multi-modal transit centers that reconnect urban fabric and create an attraction for the community. As with light rail, this reinvestment has a spillover effect, allowing greater reuse of the neighboring building stock.

Uses and Importance

Clipper Mill, Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore's Clipper Mill was once home to the largest machine manufacturing complex in Maryland. The buildings that comprise the Mill date back to the 1850s. Sadly, the site fell into disrepair, partly due to underutilization- redevelopment involved transforming the site into a mixed-use community with single and multi-family residential units, and retail and office space- making use of federal historic tax credits.

Immediately prior to redevelopment the site was home to several artists who utilized the mill as a live-work space. The project sought to create a safer, affordable community that would represent the input of those local artists and craftspeople. The Mill also benefits from being situated at the entrance of a light-rail stop which allows tenants quick access to additional transit hubs. In addition to creating new community, the developers worked with the state of Maryland to conduct extensive environmental remediation and greening.¹



*Clipper Mill, Baltimore,
Maryland, Image source:
Wikimedia Commons*



Clipper Mill, Baltimore, image source: Wikimedia Commons



Hattiesburg Depot, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, image source: Wikimedia Commons

Hattiesburg Depot, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Mississippi's Hattiesburg train depot was constructed in 1910 by the Southern Railway Company. Designed in the Italian Renaissance style, the depot was the largest and most architecturally significant of the city's three passenger depots. In the 1970s the area fell into decline and the depot began to suffer. In the early 2000s the city took steps to restore and improve the depot in an attempt to revitalize the city's core.²

The depot was redeveloped as an intermodal center, as well as a space to host local events. Surrounding property owners began to follow suit in investment and enhancement. In 2007, then mayor Johnny Dupree noted that "the depot is key to understanding the city's past and is the key component of Hattiesburg's future."³

Applications in Buffalo

Light-rail TOD

The above case studies point to models of transportation redevelopment that have significant applicability in Buffalo. In terms of transit-oriented development, Buffalo is currently home to a central light rail line that primarily runs along Main Street. The light rail is owned and operated by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), which in addition to the rail operates 400 buses.⁴ In recent years there has been talk of extending the line from Buffalo's central neighborhoods to reach more parts of the city. There have been several proposed alignments for extension of the NFTA light rail- including building out the line beyond Canalside (Buffalo's vibrant waterfront) through the Cobblestone District, eastward above ground to Larkinville, the Buffalo Central Terminal, and eventually the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport.

While many in the city recognize the benefit of an airport terminating line expansion, much of the initial push from the state has been to provide funding for extension of the line to the University of Buffalo at Amherst. According to Mayor Cuomo, this alignment "will provide 20,000+ students with access to downtown Buffalo and to the waterfront, as well as connect urban job seekers with suburban employment centers."⁵

Historic Station Renovation

The Central Terminal very closely mirrors the histories of the Hattiesburg and St. Paul Depots. As with those renovation projects, Buffalo now has an obligation to recognize the Terminal's potential to reconnect urban fabric and create a major attraction for locals and tourists. The Central Terminal could be the site of a major inter-modal transit hub, not only reviving traditional rail service, but also catering to light rail and cycling. The Terminal also has the potential to be built into a mixed use site including retail and office space which could attract job creation and trigger economic growth. The key to this project will be leveraging as much federal funding as possible- including historic tax credits, remediation credits and transit improvement credits to create a scheme that is attractive to developers.



Buffalo Light Rail Line, image source: Wikimedia Commons



Buffalo Central Terminal, image source, Wikimedia Commons

Future Steps & Connections to Equity

Vacant Properties, Smart Growth, and Responsible Land Use

Transit-oriented development has the potential to alleviate some of the challenges created by vacancy- it increases accessibility and encourages infill development of existing building stock.⁶

Anchor Institutions

Large anchor institutions should play a greater role in revitalization efforts in the community. As an example, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus has partnered with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council to produce a study that identifies major streets that ripe for upgrading through traffic-calming measures.⁷

Community leaders

As aforementioned, the City and developers must make use of community engagement as a tool to ensure the equitable distribution of good in Buffalo. Development projects must provide opportunities for job access, education, vocational instruction, and affordable housing. Projects can only work to meet community needs if local leaders are involved in planning and development processes.⁸

Zoning

Buffalo recently unveiled its Green Code which offers an updated perspective on Land use in the city. One of the critical elements here is to focus on removing barriers to adaptive reuse. Like the Clipper Mill project, Buffalo must be sure to embrace new uses for old buildings- including the creation of affordable housing, and mixed-use, live-work neighborhoods.⁹

-Ashley Pryce

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EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT: A MEANS OF PRESERVING AND CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy Tool

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a community development model that attempts to create mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods that are within a half-mile of public transportation. While TOD considers the methods of mixed-use, walkability, and location-efficiency, it does not focus on people and equity. While ultimately a positive way of planning, TOD can become too focused on economic improvements, and can ultimately lead to gentrification and displacement. Equity Transit-Oriented Development, or eTOD, however, recognizes the importance of preserving and creating affordable housing around transit stations. As the practice of eTOD is growing throughout the United States there has been numerous studies from which to garner an understanding of protecting and creating affordable housing. The principle drive for this study is the negative impact of Buffalo's commitment to the Medical Campus and its extending physical and economic scope.

Use and Importance

Two important case studies for examining eTOD are the San Francisco Bay Region and Atlanta, Georgia. The implementation of eTOD in these markets provides inspiration for legacy cities; as such, Buffalo, New York has the benefit of having a light rail system. However, with a new Medical Campus, Buffalo is at risk of investing in economics over equity. In the pursuit of development, cities should not favor economics over equitable practices; instead cities should preserve their character, as in the long-term preservation is more cost-effective than building anew. In October of 2014, Buffalo ranked 10th in United States vacancy rates with a vacancy rate of 14.58%.¹ To commit to the Medical Campus and TOD, to commit to economic prosperity over equitable practices is to commit to short-term success. The practice and usage of eTOD ensures a transformative experience for the city, economically and in respect to low economic status families and individuals.

Benefits of eTOD

Inclusivity is the greatest benefit of eTOD, yet it is indeed expensive, in the short term, to meet needs equitably. Investment in equity does not simply have a return of a more equitable city, other benefits include: jobs, economic growth, social inclusion, greenhouse gas reductions and healthy, walkable communities.² Through better connectivity and its location-focus efforts, eTOD allows for local investment in neighborhoods. Physically, eTOD also creates an environment in which individuals have the opportunity and access to a healthier lifestyle. Development that focuses on equal access to opportunities for all people allows for a reduction in poverty and segregation, greater mobility, a combative response to isolation, and a counter to sprawl. The reimagining of the physical fabric and interaction

There is a difference between gentrification and displacement, as well as between opportunity and access. Decreased affordability pushes people out into the periphery of the city and does not create sustainable experiences for individuals and families, this is displacement. Gentrification on the other hand is the positive change of property values which enables the higher presence of middle-upper and upper income people. Gentrification typically leads to gentrification however, eTOD focuses on making gentrification feasible without moving people out into the displacement.

Applications in Buffalo

TOD has emerged as a powerful tool in Buffalo, in which the Medical Campus was created near the existing light rail system, however, specifically in the East Side, gentrification has created an imbalance. The imbalance led to a vacancy rate of 26.3%, 1,704 vacancies among 6,471 units.³ Equity in development practices is necessary for the overall benefit of Buffalo residents.

The difference between opportunity and access has large ramifications for the potential prosperity of Buffalo. Amongst the possible opportunities that could emerge from the Medical Campus the level of access to low-income people does not equally match. It is more than attracting employers and companies, success includes giving low-income people access to jobs.

Connections to Equity Preservation

ETOD increases community capacity, allows for equitable distribution of efforts and outcomes, and community ownership. The community is the most valuable entity in development practices. Preserving character means nothing without maintaining the level of access for individuals who already call that community home. To invest for others to displace those from the exiting area is to not equitable, it is not preservation, and it is not beneficial for the city in the long term. ETOD may be slightly more expensive than TOD but it puts more back in the community.

-Luis Gravelly, Jr

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A TEST OF THE CORRIDOR HOUSING PRESERVATION TOOL

Testing a New Tool

This section applies the open-access scenario planning package *Envision Tomorrow's Corridor Housing Preservation Tool*. The tool examines the impact that access to light rail can have on low-income neighborhoods or neighborhoods with significant affordable housing stock. We adapt the *Corridor Housing Preservation Tool*—originally developed for Austin, Texas—to the Buffalo context, where light rail infrastructure is limited to a single line extending along Main Street and the *unsubsidized* affordable housing stock consists primarily of single-family dwellings, duplexes, and former single-family dwellings converted to multi-family usage. We consider six neighborhoods in Buffalo that are all relatively close to the Central Business District: Black Rock, Broadway-Fillmore, Elmwood Village, the Fruit Belt and Medical Campus, Masten Park, and the Upper West Side (figure A).

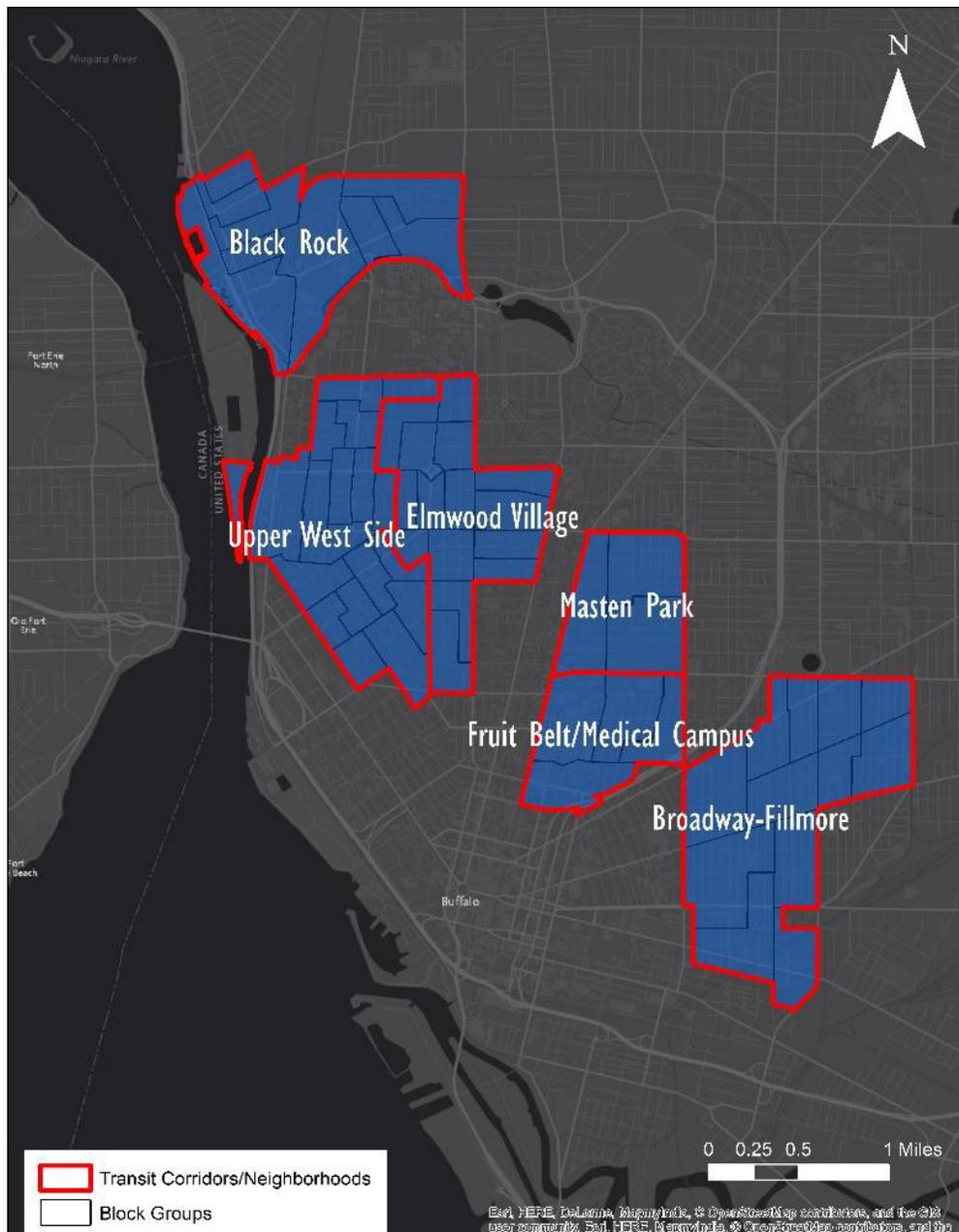


Figure A : Case study areas analyzed using the Corridor Housing Preservation Tool. Map by Tom Pera.

Use and Importance

The *Corridor Housing Preservation Tool* was designed for growing cities with significant development interest at the metro-area level. In such cities, the introduction of light rail transit provides a new amenity that attracts both new residents and developers looking to capitalize on increased property values. Affordable housing stock, consequently, is especially vulnerable to new development, causing existing residents to be strained by high rents, to be priced out of the neighborhood via rising rents or increasing property taxes, or to lose their home because of gentrification as a result of redevelopment. At the same time, light rail access is a resource that would be particularly beneficial to lower-income or transit-dependent residents who cannot afford a car and/or cannot drive.

The *Corridor Housing Preservation Tool* has the following three purposes in its examination of transit corridors:

1. Measure the transit access to employment provided to residents in these corridors.
2. Measure the vulnerability of affordable housing in the corridors.
3. Predict current and future development pressure that the corridors face or will face.

Application in Buffalo

Applying the tool to the Buffalo context requires significant adaptation. The present light rail infrastructure is extremely limited, as the one line—combined underground rail and light rail, depending on the area—extends only along Main Street and does not reach outside of the city boundary into the suburbs. Bus transit, then, is more important and more present in the daily lives of Buffalo's transit-dependent residents. In addition, even though gentrification and redevelopment is occurring in Buffalo, the level of development pressure is very different from the Austin, Texas context for which the *Corridor Housing Preservation Tool* was originally developed. Importantly, Austin is the eleventh most-populous city in the United States, and continues to grow rapidly, while Buffalo is shrinking in population.^{1 2}

We used Buffalo's public bus and transportation network, governed by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, to measure the transit sheds for each transit corridor studied. Instead of using multifamily housing, which is more prevalent as affordable housing in newer and growing housing markets, we examined Buffalo's older single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and single-family dwellings with accessory apartments.

Results and Analysis

The results were mixed. Overall, the Employment Access indicator (figure B) showed that case study neighborhoods had good transit access to employment opportunities.⁴ Additionally, the Affordable Housing Vulnerability indicator (Figure B) showed some affordable units were vulnerable. Redevelopment pressure appeared very limited in most neighborhoods (figures 4 and 5). The only neighborhood to experience anything approaching significant development pressure was the Fruit Belt and Medical Campus. We present the following indexes (calculated between 0 and 1).

As seen in the "Redevelopment Timing" measure, which indicates *when* a parcel might be developed, the development pressure on these neighborhoods, as a whole, is not substantial. The indicator suggests that no neighborhood has greater than five percent of available land being redeveloped within the next *ten* years.

Again, the tool suggests that redevelopment within ten years is unlikely. Based on the current results, we might conclude that the development pressure in these neighborhoods is not a significant threat. Yet discussions with community groups during workshop visits, along with the popular discussion surrounding affordable housing in

the City, indicates that communities in Buffalo are facing real strain with regard to affordable housing. Multiple community members voiced concerns about their ability, or their neighbors' ability, to afford rising rents, particularly on the West Side. In future studies, we plan to reevaluate the current results and adjust the tool to determine whether the *Corridor Housing Preservation Tool* accurately reflects housing affordability and development pressure in Buffalo. We are also considering how the tool could be modified as an indicator within legacy cities like Buffalo that differ significantly from the context of rapidly growing cities.

-Tom Pera

FIGURE B : EMPLOYMENT ACCESS

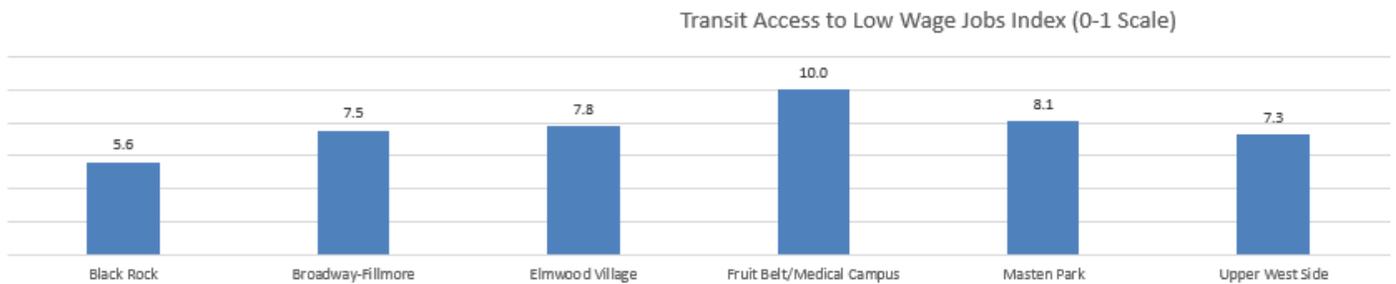


FIGURE C : AFFORDABLE HOUSING VULNERABILITY

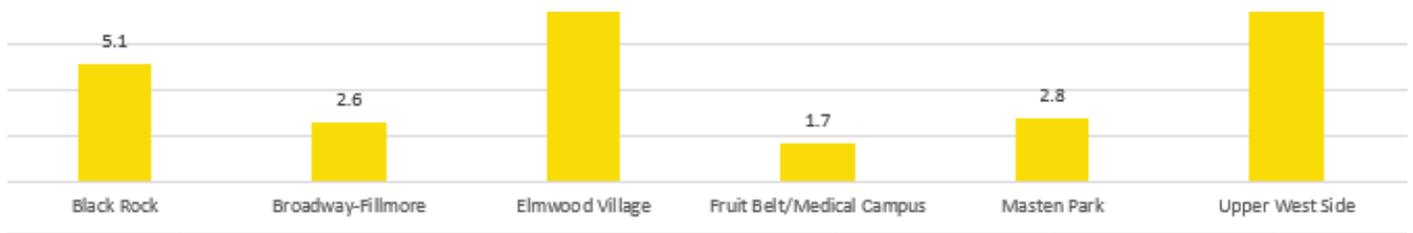


FIGURE D : DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

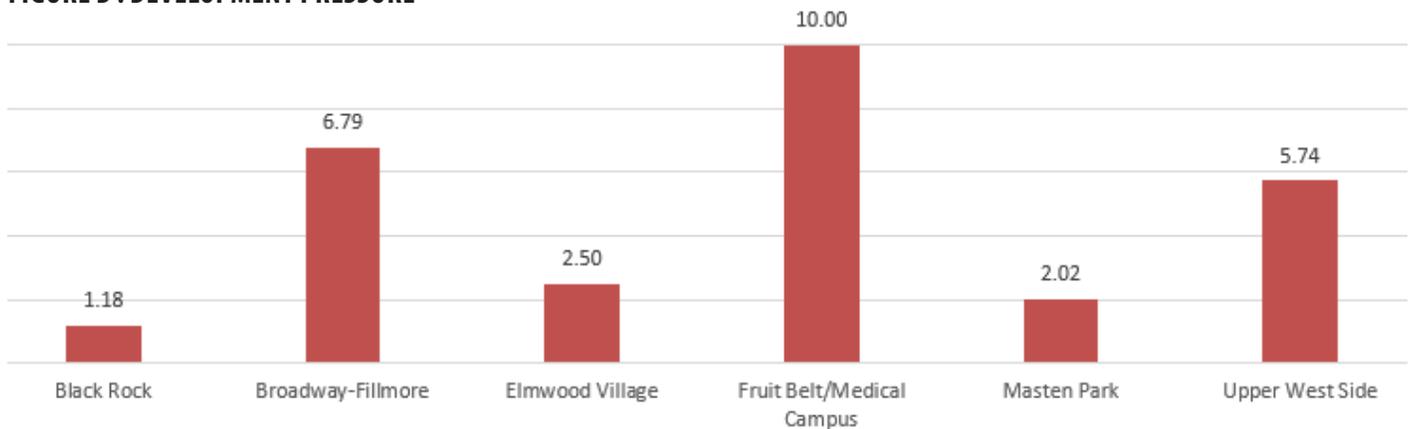


FIGURE E :REDEVELOPMENT TIMING



ENDNOTES

¹United States Census, “Five of the Nation’s Eleven Fastest-Growing Cities are in Texas, Census Bureau Reports”, United States Census Bureau, May 19, 2016, accessed April 21, 2017.

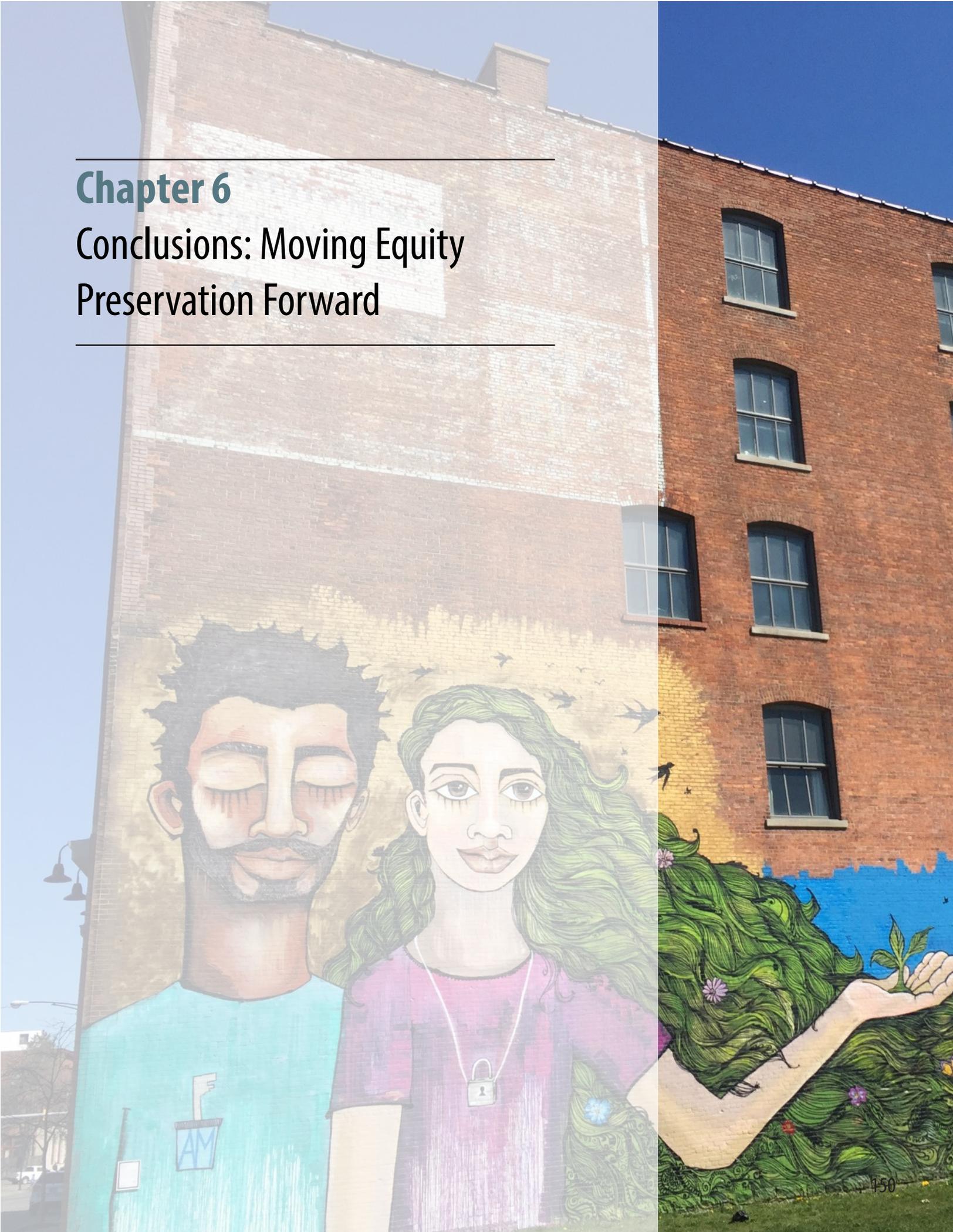
²Harold McNeil, “Buffalo population declines by 857, latest census estimates,” The Buffalo News, May 21, 2015, accessed April 21, 2017.

³ These were operationalized using Erie County parcel data and the New York State Tax Assessors Manual.

⁴Note: The tool is a relative comparison comparing the studied areas. The apparent effects seen in any one neighborhood, then, are only in relation to the other neighborhoods included in the study.

Chapter 6

Conclusions: Moving Equity Preservation Forward



CONCLUSIONS: MOVING EQUITY PRESERVATION FORWARD

The results of our semester long investigation and research have led us to several different conclusions. Our conclusions have also amounted to several suggestions for further research and investigation.

We have found that any approaches to historic preservation or building reuse need to be context-based. There is no one-size-fits-all policy to how to reuse buildings. In order to achieve the most equitable outcomes, urban policies need to address and seek to remedy the historical causes of inequalities in affected communities. Thus far in Buffalo, many of the most-heralded preservation victories have not necessarily been beneficial to a wide array of communities across the city. Buffalo should work to ensure that the benefits of preservation reach more disadvantaged communities. The city should not shy away from accepting and encouraging more nontraditional approaches to addressing the problem of high vacancy rates.

We also suggest that Buffalo develops a way to document and share information about preservation activities happening in the city. There should also be a network of tools, best practices, and experiences shared across legacy cities, something our partners with the Preservation Rightsizing Network have been working on.

The city should consider embarking on a comprehensive, citywide historic resource survey to gain a better understanding of what historic resources have yet to be identified. This process could help lead to more preservation activities by identifying properties that could be reused. This could also lead the city to creating a long-term equity preservation plan that outlines clear strategies and goals towards ensuring that the benefits of preservation extend to more communities, in a more inclusive and equitable manner. We would suggest facilitating more public participation in planning decision-making.

Part of this workshop was developing a wide array of policy tools which we discovered to be applicable in some form to Buffalo, either citywide or for specific neighborhoods. We hope that these policy tools will become part of larger discussions in the city.

We would also like to acknowledge that this process could not seek to address all preservation activities, controversies, or equity concerns in the city through one semester's worth of work. The students involved in this workshop were continually impressed with all of the efforts, organizations, and people who are working to benefit all different types of communities in the city. We hope that our contribution can further discussion, research, and policymaking that will make Buffalo a more equitable, as well as sustainable city, and that it will become a beacon for other communities to follow.

-Olivia White