

## **Appendix D1**

### Local Land Use and Transportation Plans Summary

## Local Land Use Plans

**City of Buffalo Four-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2027): Building an Equitable City (2023).** The City of Buffalo's newest strategic plan became effective on January 1, 2023. The plan outlines strategic priorities, goals and actions, and performance metrics for the City of Buffalo to progress forward in the coming years. To improve the equity and inclusiveness of the planning process, the city enacted the Envision Neighborhoods program, a community engagement strategy that aims to involve residents, community leaders, and stakeholders in conversations surrounding the City's development. Residents and stakeholders of historically underrepresented neighborhoods were prioritized for engagement. Through the Envision Neighborhoods program, the City's Office of Strategic Planning learned that residents are most concerned about housing affordability and quality, economic development, and job creation, and improved public safety across the city. In terms of their own neighborhoods, residents identified the condition of streets and sidewalks, safety, housing quality, and access to goods and services as the most in need of improvements. Regarding strategic priorities and goals, the plan identifies four major priority areas for the city at large: Thriving Neighborhoods and People, Smart and Sustainable Infrastructure, Climate Resilience, and Economic Opportunities and Mobility.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the city identified several action steps to further its goals laid out in the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Several of these action steps are relevant to the Kensington Expressway Project. One of the City's strategic goals is to reinvest in its assets and infrastructure; one of the performance indicators towards this end is the completion of a "Kensington Expressway small area plan to compliment State investment and maintain housing opportunities for existing residents." In terms of climate resilience, one of the City's goals is to encourage reductions in private-sector emissions. An action step that the city has identified to this end is to "expand dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the city, particularly in neighborhoods that lack such facilities." The Strategic Plan also identifies prioritizing street tree plantings per resident requests in historically disinvested communities, restoring health benefits and aesthetics."<sup>2</sup>

**Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan (2006).** The Comprehensive Plan identifies major quantifiable goals including reversing "Buffalo's long-term decline in population, employment, and the quality of the physical environment." The Comprehensive Plan's core vision is to re-establish the City of Buffalo as the "urban center of the Buffalo Niagara region," intending for the goals of the plan to be matched with targeted investments and built upon throughout the future as the City incorporates new approaches in urban planning and faces changing conditions. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan identifies "...Kensington Expressway enhancements, neighborhood traffic calming measures, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and streetscape improvements" as priorities to improve regional mobility, accessibility, and quality of life for residents.<sup>3</sup>

**City of Buffalo Unified Development Ordinance (The Green Code) (2017).** The Unified Development Ordinance, also known as the Green Code, is based on the City's 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and includes a form-based development

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.buffalony.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11089/City-of-Buffalo-2023-2027-Four-Year-Strategic-Plan-Draft?bidId=>

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/06/Queen-City-in-the-21st-Century-Buffalos-Comprehensive-Plan1.pdf>

code, a Land Use Plan, and several other implementation strategies for specific programs. The Green Code represents the first overhaul of the City's zoning code since 1953 and the first update to the land use plan since 1977. Combined, the Green Code is a "place-based economic development strategy designed to implement the City's Comprehensive Plan."<sup>4</sup>

**One Region Forward (2015).** One Region Forward is a plan for the Buffalo-Niagara region (64 municipalities within Erie and Niagara counties) published by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute in 2015. It identifies transportation as one of the five major priorities of the Buffalo-Niagara region and recommends a variety of strategies and actions, including complete streets, "corridor makeovers," and "bicycle infrastructure and incentives" as means to address health, mobility, and accessibility for those who do not have access to a car and/or those who choose to walk or bicycle as their mode of transportation around the region.<sup>5</sup>

**Buffalo Parks Master Plan (2021).** The most recent master plan for the Buffalo Park System was published in 2021. It identifies Delavan-Grider, Masten Park, and Broadway-Fillmore, all of which are partially within the Project's study area, as neighborhoods with the highest social, health, and built environment indicators – rates such as poverty, residents of color, obesity, diabetes, activity level, tree cover, impervious areas, etc. – and has identified these areas as having the greatest need for park investment. MLK Jr. Park was identified as a high priority park/area for investment. The city invested nearly \$12 million into the park between 2006 and 2020.<sup>6</sup>

**The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2008).** This plan is the guiding document for the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy (BOPC). This plan was published in 2008 and was the catalytic plan for the renaissance of Buffalo's Olmsted Park System. The first guiding principle of this plan is to "protect and rehabilitate the Buffalo Olmsted Park System to preserve and restore the historic integrity of Olmsted's vision." The restoration and completion of Olmsted's vision for Buffalo's Park System is of utmost importance to the Conservancy. This plan identifies 32 potential projects in MLK Jr. Park, many of which relate to the park's adjacency to the Kensington Expressway, for the BOPC to take on in the long term.<sup>7</sup>

**Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy 2020-2024 Five-Year Plan (2019).** As part of the 2008 plan for the Buffalo Olmsted Park System, the BOPC also published a Five-Year Plan for the implementation of projects deemed most salient at the time. Since then, the BOPC has published additional Five-Year Plans, including the most recent, the 2020-2024 Plan, issued in 2019. This plan identifies several priorities for improvements in all the Olmsted parks, circles, and parkways. Improved benches and park furnishings, installation of improved signage, playground and pathway reconstruction, renovations to the greenhouse complex, and improvements to park lighting were identified as needs for MLK Jr. Park. Furthermore, the BOPC identifies NYS Route 33 as a topic of "long-term advocacy and community conversations" beyond 2024, promising "continued coordination with City of Buffalo and NYSDOT and community stakeholders through the Restore Our Community Coalition."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.buffalogreencode.com/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://bap-home.net/solarize/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/05/1RF\\_A-New-Way-To-Plan-For-Buffero-Niagara\\_FinalPlan\\_reduced.pdf](http://bap-home.net/solarize/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/05/1RF_A-New-Way-To-Plan-For-Buffero-Niagara_FinalPlan_reduced.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.buffalony.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9917/Buffero-Parks-Master-Plan>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bfloparks.org/resources/buffalo-olmsted-park-system-plan-for-the-21st-century/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bfloparks.org/planning-the-future-of-your-olmsted-parks-5-year-plan/5-year-plan-report/>

**The Buffalo Housing Opportunity Strategy Plan (2017).** This plan identifies several housing sub-markets within the city that are most in need of investment and suggests strategies for achieving key outcomes in stabilizing or strengthening these markets. The plan also developed a toolkit and a set of principles for determining and implementing “market appropriate interventions.” This plan identifies several “Focus Areas” made up of residential blocks within and adjacent to the Study Area that it targets for these interventions.<sup>9</sup>

See Section 4.2 for further discussion on land use and zoning within the Study Area.

## Transportation Plans

**Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan (2020).** The Regional Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan was published by the region’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC). This plan identifies several gaps in the regional bicycle network, including along Best Street, Fillmore Avenue, and a small gap between East Utica Street and MLK Jr. Park on Humboldt Parkway. The plan outlines this corridor as one of its priorities, stating that “this collection of short on-street bikeway improvements is intended to close a variety of gaps in the existing on-road bicycle network just west and north of MLK, Jr. Park in Buffalo.” The proposal estimates 0.8 miles of new bike infrastructure in the general Study Area.<sup>10</sup>

**The Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan Update (2016).** This plan, published by the NYSDOT and New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) in partnership with GObike Buffalo, identifies NYS Route 33 as an “infrastructure barrier” that “hinder[s] movement by pedestrians and bicyclists either physically or psychologically.”<sup>11</sup> The bike lanes on the Humboldt Parkway are identified as routes suitable for confident bicyclists (defined as those who are fairly comfortable riders but choose low-traffic streets), an estimated 5% of Buffalo’s bicyclists; the majority (60%) of Buffalo’s bicyclists fall under the “interested but concerned” category, those of whom require safety measures and slow vehicular traffic to feel comfortable utilizing bicycle infrastructure.

**NYSDOT Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2016).** The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan was designed to provide actionable steps towards fulfilling one of New York State’s seven emphasis areas identified in its Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan “identifies current safety conditions and recommends a set of education, engineering and enforcement countermeasures to improve pedestrian safety.” This plan also seeks to implement New York State’s Complete Streets Law (2011). The plan makes several recommendations, including improving crosswalks, signage, road lines, signal timing, and intersection illumination. In terms of road design, the plan recommends traffic calming measures, road diets, sidewalk improvements, raised pedestrian refuge medians, curb extensions, and corner islands. A public education component, data management plan, and enforcement strategy are also part of the plan. Within this plan, the City of Buffalo was identified as a Focus Community and Erie County was identified

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.czb.org/work/buffalo-housing-opportunity>

<sup>10</sup> [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56ccbbfd3c44d8670dbd1d84/t/60f711e380c4d02ab3435fe2/1626804717477/Bike\\_Buffalo\\_Niagara\\_Chapter\\_5+%28Web%29.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56ccbbfd3c44d8670dbd1d84/t/60f711e380c4d02ab3435fe2/1626804717477/Bike_Buffalo_Niagara_Chapter_5+%28Web%29.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://gobikebuffalo.org/project/buffalo-bike-master-plan-update/>

as a Focus County, both being designations that warrant particular attention from the NYSDOT for experiencing particularly high rates and severity of pedestrian/vehicle crashes.<sup>12</sup>

**GBNRTC Moving Forward 2050 (2018).** The GBNRTC published its Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the region in 2018. Moving Forward 2050 is the long-range plan for transportation in Buffalo-Niagara, identifying long-term goals such as raising the region's standard of living, ensuring access to opportunities and services, supporting healthy and safe communities through targeted transportation investment, preserving a healthy environment, and ensuring accessibility to open spaces and waterways, and ultimately creating a "fully integrated and seamless transportation environment." The implementation of the Olmsted Park Plan and Complete Streets improvements to corridors are identified as projects that can support these long-term goals.<sup>13</sup>

**GBNRTC Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan (2018).** The region's Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan was published in 2018 in response to the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) moving forward with studying a potential metro rail extension into the Town of Amherst. The TOD Plan focuses on the existing metro rail system, of which three stations (Summer-Best, Utica, and Delavan/Canisius College) are located near but not within the Project's general Study Area. An extension of the NFTA metro rail system has the potential to improve accessibility and connectivity for those traveling within the region. TOD is based on several key elements, namely medium/high density development, a mix of land use, a high-quality pedestrian environment, an active center with a sense of place and community, multi-modal connectivity, and limited parking to encourage walking and bicycling.<sup>14</sup>

**GBNRTC Transportation Improvement Program (2022).** The GBNRTC released its most recent Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Federal Fiscal Years 2023-2027 in September 2022. Every MPO must – as required by federal law – develop and approve a TIP. The TIP reflects transportation investment priorities for the GBNRTC and is updated every four years. The Kensington Expressway Project is one of the projects in the 2023-2027 TIP.<sup>15</sup>

**The Future of Mobility: Remaking Buffalo for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2020).** Published by the Congress for the New Urbanism in conjunction with the City of Buffalo and Stantec's Urban Places, this plan focuses on innovations in mobility and transportation in Buffalo, particularly focusing on the Lower Main Street district of downtown. The plan proposes the creation of a Mobility and Equity Innovation Zone, a district focused on improving mobility and equity to attract new jobs and workers, establishing new transportation corridors (both east-west and north-south), reimagining downtown streets as public spaces, and championing universal (ADA-compliant and accessible) design. This plan aims to undo some of the damage caused by the highway-focused design choices in Buffalo throughout the 20th century.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pedestriansafetyactionplan.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gbnrtc.org/metropolitan-transportation-plan>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gbnrtc.org/todresources>

<sup>15</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56ccbafd3c44d8670dbd1d84/t/5de57348c10a1a142dd3cb24/157531835865/5/Final+TIP+2020-2024+Report.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cnu.org/our-projects/autonomous-vehicles/future-mobility-remaking-buffalo-21st-century>