



City of BUFFALO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUFFALO

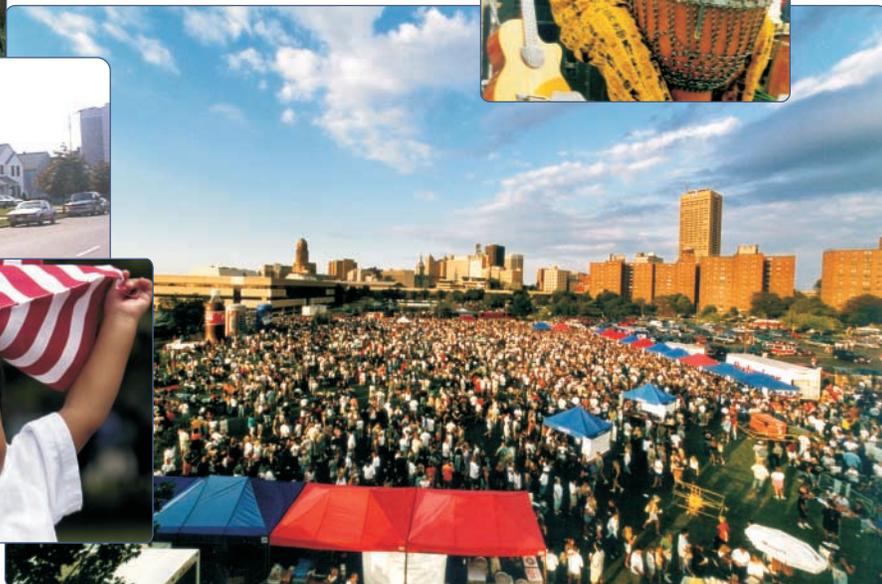
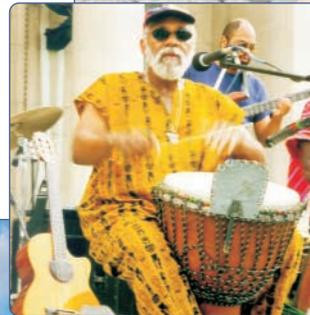


The City of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan is the blueprint for the growth and development of the community. The goal of the plan is to articulate a shared vision for the City's future. It also describes and

assesses the City's existing and projected characteristics and trends such as population, land use, the natural environment, economic development, and service provision. Lastly, the Comprehensive Plan provides a



benchmark for evaluating the compatibility and consistency of individual investment and public or private development projects and proposals with the long-range goals of the City of Buffalo and the region.



City of BUFFALO

A Message from the Mayor...



In 1995 and 1996, we held a series of neighborhood summits to ask for your help in shaping the future of our city. We wanted you to guide us as we sought ideas to make Buffalo better. We listened as you told us about improving social, living, working, and business conditions. We heard you as you raised questions about education, protecting our architectural heritage and more.

Your concerns have not fallen on deaf ears, but rather have been the focus of some of the most intense and serious work conducted by my staff since my administration took office. Over the last five years, with the dedicated efforts of many individuals, organizations and community leaders we are proud to present you with the initial draft of Buffalo's first Comprehensive Plan in over 25 years.

This draft is by no means a finished product, but a framework to build on your ideas, an outline to spark discussions, a catalyst for your contributions. Our purpose, once again, as it was five years ago, is to ask all of you to participate in a dialogue that will help reshape our city, and in turn the future of our families. Without your help this document cannot and will not be completed.

Consensus is a word we have had a great deal of experience with in Buffalo during the past few years. I believe we have all learned that consensus does not come easily, but rather is the result of a healthy exchange of ideas. In the end, our participation contributes to the strength of an idea and makes the struggle worthwhile.

The process we have established calls for public input at the draft stage and formation of community planning groups to focus on each area of the city. Once all of the public input is collected, agreed upon, and integrated, we will submit a final draft of the Comprehensive Plan for approval to the Common Council and the Planning Board this fall.

The final plan we submit needs to be one that works for all of us. This means we must look at our neighborhood ideas in terms of a broad picture of Buffalo. We need to engage in an aggressive, honest conversation about where we are as a city, where we need to go and how we are going to work together to get there.

In addition to areas of importance that will evolve as the community engages itself with the draft document, we believe the Plan must establish strategies to:

- Create a region that attracts young people through viable employment opportunities; and
- Establish a public education system desirable to families;
- Develop vibrant neighborhoods that offer a full range of housing opportunities;
- Deliver high quality public services at a reasonable cost for all city residents.

Meant to be an evolving document, the Comprehensive Plan is designed to change as our needs change, which is both the beauty and the challenge of it. We cannot create a document so rigid as to stifle our opportunities, yet we must be cautious to establish enough of a framework to allow Buffalo to reach its fullest potential.

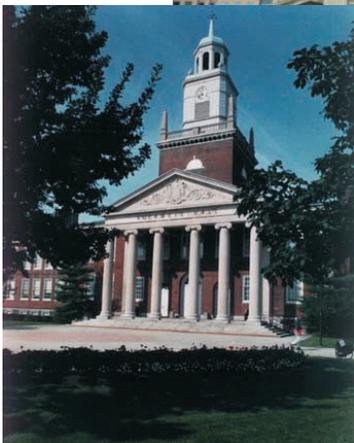
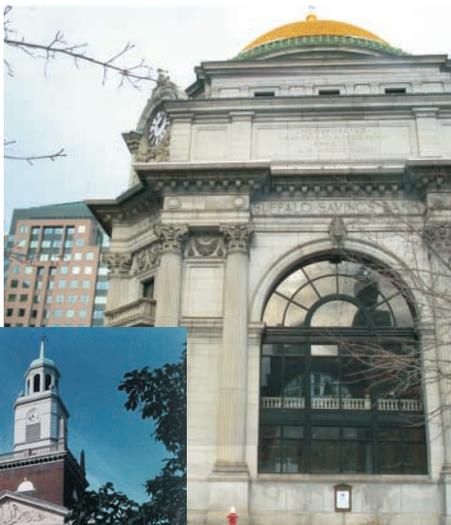
Buffalo can become the best mid-sized city in the United States through the careful crafting and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The talent and work-ethic of our citizens, combined with the richness of our resources, can lead us to a thriving, flourishing future if we are willing to move forward with our minds open to change. The challenge is great, the stakes are significant and the answers lie within us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Masiello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Masiello, Mayor

Goals for the Future

Based upon an extensive, five-year planning process that included a series of City-wide summits and the development of a neighborhood condition inventory, the City of Buffalo has developed 11 specific goals focused on the key issues impacting the City. Each goal represents the synthesis of community input and community analyses into a shared vision for the City of Buffalo. By following through on the vision outlined in the following goals, Buffalo will enhance its position as a spectacular city for all residents and one that attracts investments of all kinds.



Regionalism

GOAL—The City of Buffalo acknowledges its unique role in the Buffalo/Niagara region and will promote a collaborative approach to the future development of the region.

The City of Buffalo embraces its new role and leadership position within the Buffalo/Niagara region; this role includes serving Western New York as a residential, tourism, recreational, and cultural "center". While the City will retain a strong commercial and industrial presence in the region, a redevelopment process must occur to encourage new residential development to include the type of housing and living environments that will appeal to the current and future real estate market. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on a City which functions efficiently within the economy and land uses of the entire Western New York region. The City is prepared to work cooperatively with the municipalities surrounding Buffalo to accomplish this goal.



City of BUFFALO

Economic Development

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will capitalize on its resources, assets, and advantages to create and support economic opportunities and become the hub of a vibrant, diverse, and growing regional economy.



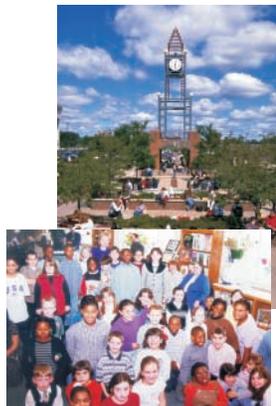
The City of Buffalo is aware that standing still is no way to capitalize on economic opportunity. The economic goals and objectives are action-oriented. Partnerships must be made, relationships established and cooperation encouraged throughout the Western New York region. With this goal, the City of Buffalo strives to create a positive business environment, aggressively seek new development opportunities, foster the development of new businesses, and coordinate incremental economic growth.



Education

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will promote quality educational opportunities for all City residents.

Education is the number one priority of families raising children and seeking a quality living environment. The City of Buffalo can fully succeed as a livable community only when the quality of education it provides equals or exceeds the quality of surrounding suburban communities. This education goal represents the City's commitment to improving the overall quality of education in Buffalo and thus attracting new families to live in the City.



Quality of Life

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of all its citizens.



The City recognizes its responsibility to caring for those citizens who choose to make Buffalo their home; this care involves working to ensure that each resident experiences



a high quality of life. The City also celebrates its diversity through

community events, celebrations, and promotions. With this goal, the City of Buffalo is committed to further actions that will improve the quality of urban living for all residents.

Public Services



GOAL—The City of Buffalo will ensure the delivery of high quality, cost-effective essential government services.

Making efficient use of City tax dollars is a priority for both City government and the residents who make the City their home. With this goal, the City



defines its commitment to providing government services that coordinate with regional initiatives to save money and improve overall service delivery.



Housing/ Neighborhood Development

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will support and maintain a network of vibrant neighborhoods and communities where our residents choose to live, work and play.



This goal is demonstrative of the City's commitment to rebuilding the existing environment. The development of a Neighborhood and Preservation Plan and a Revitalization Plan will enable the creation or redevelopment of safe, high quality neighborhoods that residents can be proud to call their own. Another important aspect of this goal is the inclusion of neighborhood groups and concerned citizens in the decision-making process. A neighborhood can only be successful if it serves the needs of those who live there.



Historic Preservation, Urban Resources and Design

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will promote, preserve and capitalize on our significant and unique natural, historic, and man-made resources.



The City of Buffalo appreciates and celebrates its unique history and its vast collection of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources. This goal reaffirms the City's dedication to preserving these resources and seeking new opportunities to showcase these treasures to the region at large.

Transportation

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will continue to support collaborative efforts to plan and implement an efficient regional transportation system that improves the City's living environment and economy.



The transportation network created for the City of Buffalo was designed to service the needs of a significantly larger population. As such, the network can efficiently service the existing and future needs of residents and commuters. The City's goal is to ensure that the network is properly maintained and interacts appropriately with the regional transportation network.

City of BUFFALO

Land Use

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will direct future growth and development in a coordinated way.



The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Buffalo creates a methodical, strategic plan for redevelopment of the urban environment. The Plan serves as a tool for each planning community and the City as a whole; funds can be distributed accordingly for demolition of deteriorated properties and redevelopment of individual neighborhoods as outlined in the priorities identified by the Plan. Future growth and development in the City must consider patterns of projected population distribution and market sentiment for housing type and style. The Comprehensive Plan represents an effort to consider these factors and redevelop the City of Buffalo to meet the needs of the future.



Open Space, Parks and Recreation

GOAL—The City of Buffalo will maintain and promote a premier open space system that recognizes and supports aesthetic, ecological, and recreational values.



The City of Buffalo is fortunate to have one of the nation's premiere urban open space systems to preserve, protect, and enhance. The Comprehensive Plan will target the creation of an integrated system of open space that incorporates and builds upon the existing system. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle trails and passive and active recreational facilities are all part of this open space enhancement strategy.



Environment

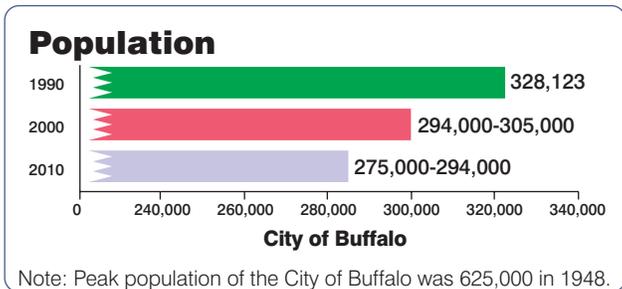
GOAL—The City of Buffalo will protect environmental assets and promote sound environmental practices.

This goal demonstrates the City of Buffalo's commitment toward creating a sustainable environment for its residents. Promoting a healthy living environment includes issues of brownfield redevelopment, protecting and enhancing wildlife resources, properly disposing of hazardous household wastes, and controlling non-point source pollution.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile can tell an important story not only about the existing and projected number of people that live in a city, but also can illustrate the general socioeconomic well-being of that city. The following demographic profile for the City of Buffalo is based largely on 1990 and projected 2000/2010 Census data and provides an accurate guide for understanding the existing and future needs of the City's residents.

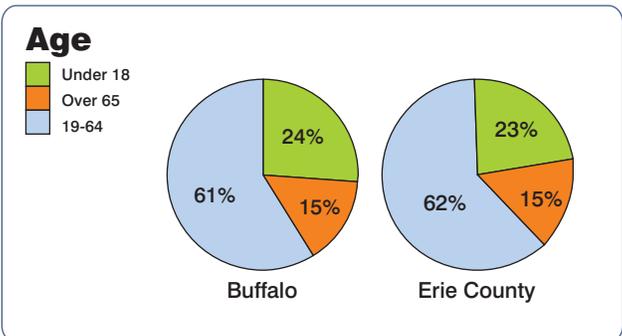
Population



The City of Buffalo's population in 1990 was 328,123. This number is expected to decrease by approximately 12 and 7 percent for the years 2000 and 2010, respectively. The population decline is projected to slow over the next 20 years within the City, stabilizing at around 275,000 people.

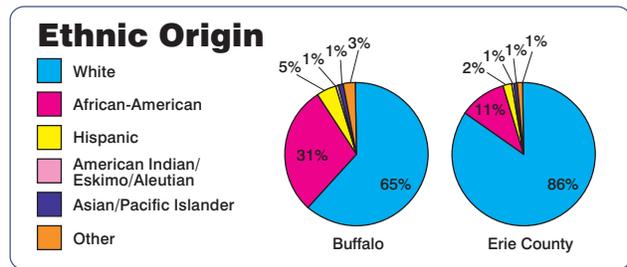
Age

The City of Buffalo is comprised of a population that can be characterized as family-aged. The majority of the City's population (61%) is between the ages of 19-64, which is a lower percentage than both Erie County and New York State.



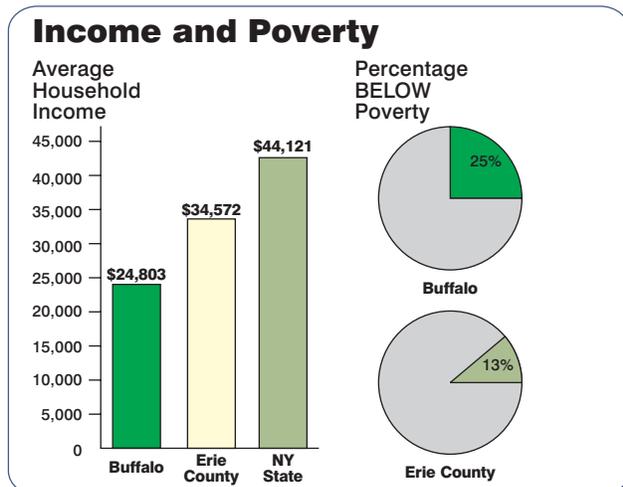
Ethnic Origin

As is typical with most urban centers, the City of Buffalo's population is ethnically diverse. The City is comprised of residents from over six different ethnic origins with the majority of the residents being white (65%), African-American (31%) and Hispanic (5%). The City's ethnic make-up is projected to experience gains in the African-American, Hispanic, and Asian populations and a decline in the number of white residents.

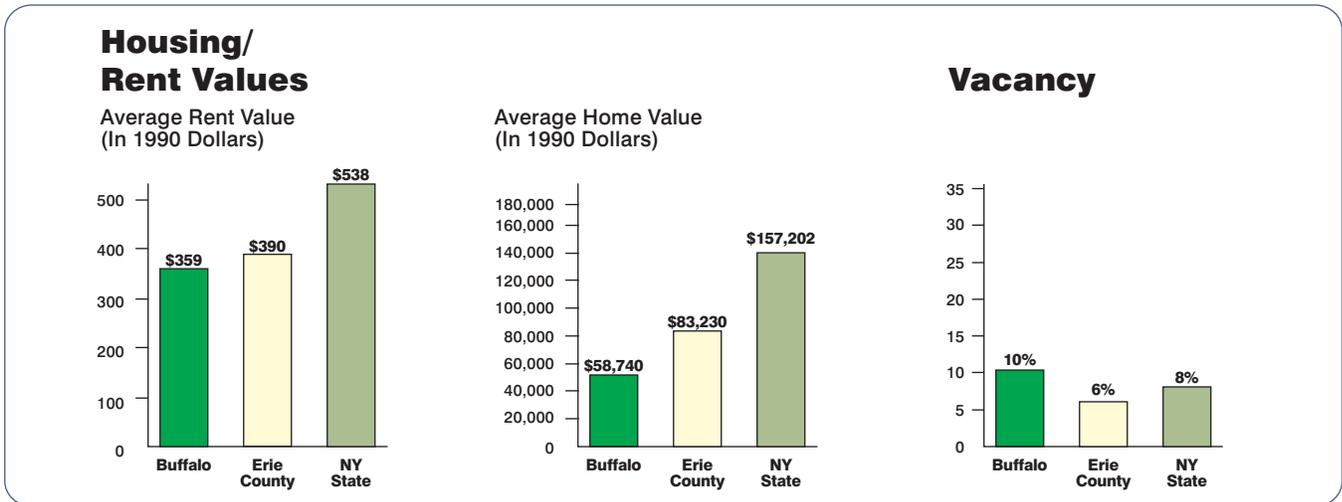


Income and Poverty

The City of Buffalo is a poor city. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development has previously designated Buffalo as one of the poorest Cities of its size in the nation. Rates of people living below poverty in the City of Buffalo are estimated to be 25%. This figure is significantly higher than the county (13%) and the state (13%). While poverty rates can be expected to increase over the next 20 years in certain portions of the City, they will generally level off at existing percentages.



City of BUFFALO

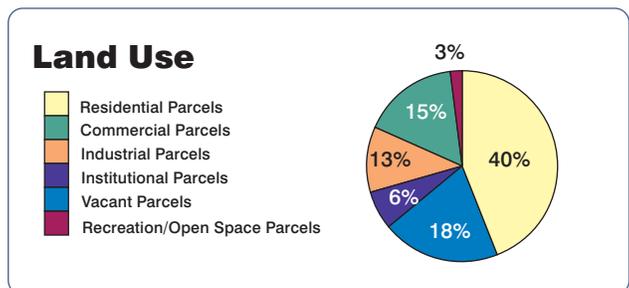
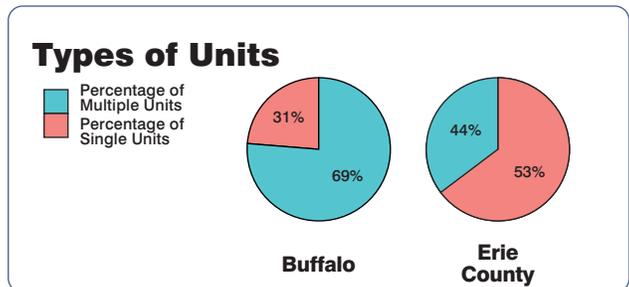
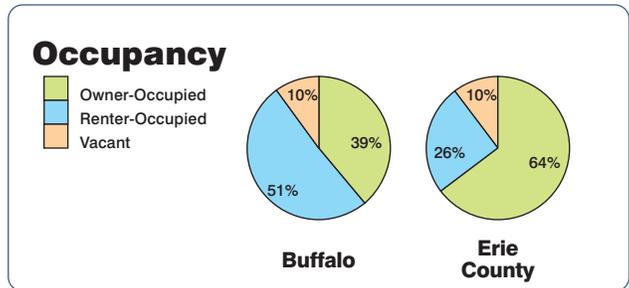


Housing

The housing stock in the City of Buffalo, like in other cities, is comprised of variety of housing types-single family detached and attached, multi-family and apartment complexes. The housing stock is generally in fair condition with pockets of residential decline present. Buffalo has a strong inventory of historic and architecturally unique housing as well. There are also numerous vacant, dilapidated housing units requiring demolition present throughout the City.

Land Use

The majority of the land use in the City of Buffalo is being used for residential purposes. The second most prevalent land use in the City of Buffalo is vacant land, which includes vacant residential, commercial and industrial sites.

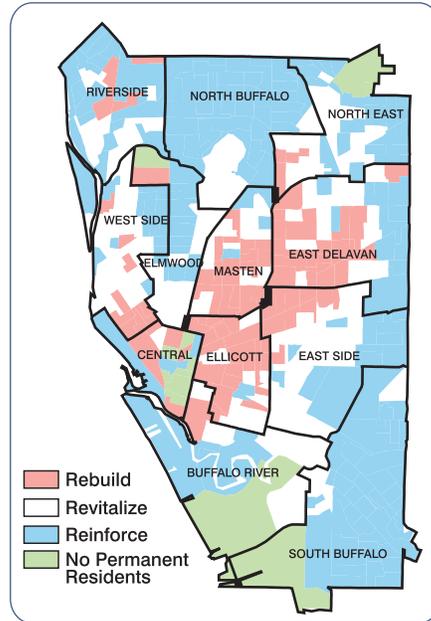


Rebuild, Revitalize, Reinforce

Through previous planning efforts, the City evaluated and ranked the condition of Buffalo's 12 Planning Communities (see figure to the right). Their ranking was based on several key socioeconomic indicators

including unemployment and poverty rates, housing costs, housing characteristics, and household demographics. From that assessment, a set of general policy guidelines was developed based on neighborhood ranking. This strategy, called the "3 R Strategy," makes the following general policy recommendations (Neighborhood rankings according to the 3 R Strategy will be adjusted once detailed 2000 Census data becomes available):

♦ **Neighborhoods ranking on the lower end of the index should be targeted for rebuilding.** Rebuilding entails addressing areas where there has been significant loss of urban fabric and declining public amenities and infrastructure. Substantial clearance and a related commitment to the management of vacant property are necessary. Priority will be the clearance of vacant and blighting structures, while emphasizing human service



programs and maintenance of remaining viable housing stock and economic development programs.

♦ **Neighborhoods ranked in the middle of the index should be targeted for revitalization.**

Revitalization entails focusing on areas where moderate amounts of the original man-made and natural urban features have been lost or threatened. Decline should be supported with demolition and infill programs that affect housing, commercial, or industrial land uses. The highest priority will be the improvement of

public services and amenities in combination with human service and housing rehabilitation assistance programs. Economic development programs may be called for in these areas and should be keyed to community needs. There will be moderate changes in the existing development pattern and average densities.

♦ **Neighborhoods ranking on the higher end of the index should be targeted for reinforcement.** Reinforcement entails focusing on areas where almost all of the original man-made and natural urban fabric has been well-maintained and is in good condition. It is necessary to install public confidence in neighborhood conditions. Maintenance effort programs affecting neighborhood housing, commercial and industrial land uses, and public streets and amenities will reinforce such areas. The highest priority will be the delivery of public services, human services, and home-ownership promotion. There will be no major changes in the existing development pattern and average densities.

City of BUFFALO

Action Items

The following summary of Action Items will function as the guide to all City of Buffalo programs, plans, and capital improvements instituted over the next 20 years. Many of these Action Items will begin immediately. Each city-wide Action Item is linked closely to the 3R Strategy discussed previously. The Action Items are intended to be flexible and evolve over time as city and regional conditions change.

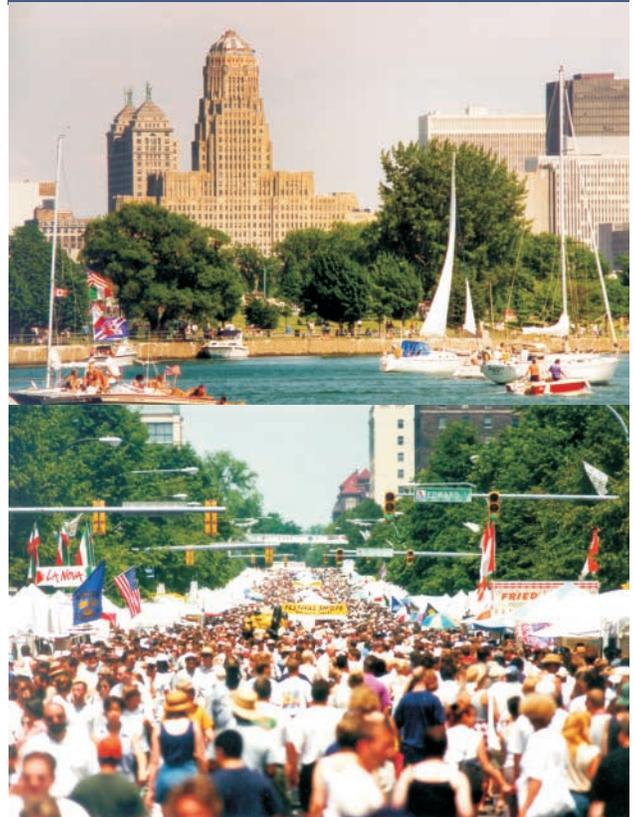
The City will help establish Community Planning Groups in each Planning Community to act as a liaison to City Hall and assist the City with implementation of the Action Items. These groups will be comprised of a variety of interests and will be responsible for scheduling regular public information and education sessions to discuss relevant issues and concerns as they relate to the Action Items.

Detailed explanations of each of the Action Items and associated information on timeframes and agencies responsible for the Action Item are provided in the full Comprehensive Plan document.

Regionalism



- ◆ Initiate and support the formation of an urban growth boundary
- ◆ Support the formation of a regional planning organization
- ◆ Improve the image of the City to surrounding communities
- ◆ Project growth, vision, and City resources
- ◆ Promote the expansion of NYS Route 219
- ◆ Support Toronto's 2008 Olympic bid
- ◆ Determine potential for consolidating water and other services



Economic Development



- ◆ Reaffirm the role of the city's Central Business District
- ◆ Streamline development process
- ◆ Define the need for a convention center
- ◆ Prioritize brownfield redevelopment
- ◆ Promote development of the medical corridor
- ◆ Determine need for incubator space
- ◆ Prioritize development of the Byte Belt
- ◆ Develop City-wide retail strategy
- ◆ Determine location for supermarket in the Masten, Ellicott, East Side, and/or East Delavan Planning Communities
- ◆ Promote open space, parks, and cultural resources as tourism attractions



Education



- ◆ Integrate school board plans with the Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Develop training center near target populations
- ◆ Upkeep and upgrade libraries
- ◆ Utilize neighborhood schools as multi-use centers
- ◆ Support higher education investment in the City's businesses
- ◆ Utilize community access for public education



City of BUFFALO

Quality of Life



- ◆ Establish community planning groups
- ◆ Coordinate community-based organizations and human/social service agencies
- ◆ Promote the Buffalo 2002 program
- ◆ Link cultural facilities
- ◆ Develop calendar of events
- ◆ Work with and promote local sports teams
- ◆ Support cultural organizations in the City of Buffalo



Public Services



- ◆ Develop composting facility
- ◆ Complete distribution of covered disposal containers
- ◆ Require residents to reduce the waste stream
- ◆ Offer hazardous waste drop-offs
- ◆ Supply garbage and leaf removal service
- ◆ Track potential trouble areas
- ◆ Increase interaction and understanding between police and residents



Housing/ Neighborhood Development



- ◆ Develop neighborhood preservation and revitalization plan
- ◆ Develop an acquisition and disposition plan
- ◆ Develop a relocation plan
- ◆ Analyze housing delivery systems
- ◆ Develop a model for rebuilding neighborhoods
- ◆ Invest in, reinforce and revitalize neighborhoods
- ◆ Conduct annual inspections
- ◆ Develop rent-to-own program
- ◆ Develop program targeting resident involvement in safety
- ◆ Develop education and technical assistance program for new homeowners



Historic Preservation, Urban Resources and Design



- ◆ Prepare historic preservation plan
- ◆ Identify and promote viable commercial corridors
- ◆ Develop urban design plan for the entire City
- ◆ Seek historic designation for radial street pattern
- ◆ Initiate gateway design competition
- ◆ Develop tree planting and maintenance program



City of BUFFALO

Transportation



- ◆ Restore Genesee Street
- ◆ Repair/replace missing street signs
- ◆ Create way-finding system
- ◆ Implement CBD transportation recommendations
- ◆ Promote the elimination of tolls
- ◆ Maintain sidewalk system throughout the City
- ◆ Enforce speed limit of trains in the City
- ◆ Support goals of GBNRTC and NFTA
- ◆ Redesign I-198, I-190, and Route 5



Land Use



- ◆ Develop a future land use plan
- ◆ Develop continuous waterfront access
- ◆ Update the City's zoning



Open Space, Parks, and Recreation



- ◆ Maintain parks
- ◆ Complete greenways plan
- ◆ Prepare comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space master plan
- ◆ Prepare comprehensive bicycle trail master plan



Environment



- ◆ Complete and adopt the LWRP
- ◆ Adopt zero-tolerance policy for illegal dumping
- ◆ Allow appropriate lands to revert to woodlots
- ◆ Improve lead-abatement program
- ◆ Prevent and mitigate negative environmental impacts
- ◆ Complete additional restoration projects along the Buffalo River
- ◆ Explore ecology-based technology



City of BUFFALO



How Can I Stay Involved?

Residents of Buffalo are encouraged to continue their involvement in the City's Comprehensive Planning process. Below please indicate the level of involvement you wish to have with this process. This form can be handed in tonight or mailed in at a later date. Thank you.



I want to comment on the Draft Comprehensive Plan:



I want to be kept informed of modifications and updates to the Buffalo Comprehensive Plan



I want to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Committees

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____



Your Comments and Ideas:

Public input is a vital component of the City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan and we encourage interested parties to contribute and become involved. You can review the complete document at www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/city/index.html by clicking on the **Comprehensive Plan** link. You can also view the document at the main branch of the Public Library. If you would like to be kept informed about the Comprehensive Plan, please include your name, address, telephone number, and email address with your comments. You can contribute your comments in the following manner:

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Email: planning@ch.ci.buffalo.ny.us