



# REGION CENTRAL

## Utilizing the Scajaquada Corridor to Create Vibrant and Healthy Communities

June 2023



# Table of contents

<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
6	Introduction to Region Central
7	Introduction to the new Scajaquada Parkway
<b>9</b>	<b>Part I: How we got here</b>
9	Chapter 1 – The Scajaquada Expressway
14	Chapter 2 – Region Central
18	Chapter 3 – Planning over the last two decades
<b>22</b>	<b>Part II: Building a new plan</b>
23	Chapter 4 – Putting a new planning paradigm to work
26	Chapter 5 – Engagement
28	Chapter 6 – Parks, heritage, and natural resources existing conditions
30	Chapter 7 – Inclusive development existing conditions
32	Chapter 8 – Mobility existing conditions
36	Chapter 9 – Planning and policy context
<b>37</b>	<b>Part III: The plan</b>
38	Chapter 10 – Vision and goals
42	Chapter 11 – Mobility scenarios
46	Chapter 12 – Evaluation
49	Chapter 13 – Recommended scenario
66	Chapter 14 – Project costs and funding strategies
<b>69</b>	<b>Part IV: Next steps</b>
70	Chapter 15 – Moving from a plan to construction
72	Chapter 16 – Stay involved!



# Introduction



## Why Plan Now?

Built more than half a century ago, the Scajaquada Expressway is outdated, an artifact of the post-World War II era.

A majority of the vehicles that travel the Scajaquada Expressway today in Region Central—the collection of diverse Buffalo neighborhoods that bear the brunt of the roadway’s negative impacts—are no longer traveling from the suburbs to the downtown core. These vehicles primarily enter and leave within Region Central, and the negative impacts are significant: destruction of Olmsted’s legacy, isolation from the Scajaquada Creek and its natural setting, fragmented neighborhoods, and reduced public health.

But why act now, after years in which the Expressway no longer serves its intended function and its host neighborhoods have suffered from its impacts? Because after two decades of deadlocked planning, the diverse communities that make up Region Central have stepped forward and said they are ready to plan a new future for Region Central and the Scajaquada Corridor.

This future will be shaped around 21st century needs and aspirations: enhancing neighborhood quality of life, repairing decades of environmental damage, promoting equitable economic and housing opportunities, and creating a transportation model that serves the real interests of Region Central and Greater Buffalo.



Scajaquada Expressway looking east over Grant Street. Source: Stantec.



## Why This Planning Process?

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) immediately recognized that after 20 years of planning stalemates, a new process was essential. Across the board, diverse stakeholders—elected officials, State and City agencies, communities, institutions, advocates, and others with a stake in the outcome agreed and came to the table to plan together. Five core qualities distinguished the resulting process:

- A recognition that the outcome had to **advance multiple perspectives**—mobility, neighborhood livability and cohesion, economic opportunity, equity and inclusion, environmental quality, public health, and similar goals. This recognition required a process that brought stakeholders to the same table who represented these multiple perspectives and an interdisciplinary consultant team who could address and integrate multiple issues.
- A planning area geography that enabled the process to effectively **balance costs with benefits**.
- A strong **focus on economic and environmental justice** that recognized past wrongs and shared future opportunities.
- **Data widely shared** and analysis and decisions shaped by this data.
- A **community-based planning effort** structured to give every stakeholder a voice and promote the collaboration essential to achieve a shared sense of mission and vision—and the ability to make the inevitable “cost/benefit” tradeoffs necessary to unlock progress.

## Why This Planning Matters

Buffalo’s Olmsted legacy is known, studied, and admired around the world. This Plan offers an opportunity to undo decades of damage to this legacy. A century and a half after Olmsted, this process has also offered a singular opportunity for diverse Buffalo voices to come together to renew and reinvigorate the benefits of his legacy for Buffalo today and for decades to come. Nurturing this renewed vision will require continued commitment across the Greater Buffalo community. Stay involved!



Public Meeting May 2022

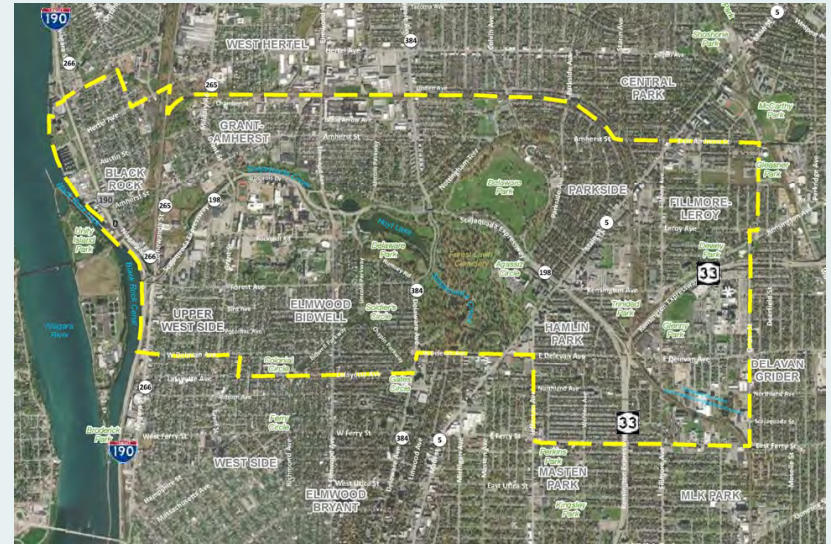
# Introducing Region Central

Until now, Region Central has not been a recognized district in the Buffalo Niagara Region. But knowing the common impacts and hopes of this area of Scajaquada Expressway's influence, GBNRTC began with the simple act of designating the collection of distinctive and diverse neighborhoods, as Region Central. Jointly, Region Central hosts Olmsted-designed parks and renowned institutions which mostly predate the Scajaquada Expressway. Region Central itself generates the majority of the Expressway's traffic, and experiences the brunt of the Expressway's impacts. These facts cast the process of planning for the Expressway's future in a very different light.

Home to 84,000 people and 11 distinct neighborhoods, Region Central also brings together some of Buffalo's most diverse communities. It includes wealthy and challenged neighborhoods. It is home both to third and fourth generation Buffalonians and immigrants from across the globe. Buffalo State University students and young people struggling to find a future pass each other on the street.

The Expressway's place in the regional transportation system has dominated previous planning for the Expressway's future and represented an important component in this planning process. However, recognizing Region Central as a place in its own right manifested two distinct benefits that played a critical role in moving planning past two decades of deadlock:

- The diverse stakeholders who together comprise Region Central came to recognize a shared stake in the outcome and a shared responsibility to work together toward an outcome all can support.
- This community, which for years has represented the Expressway's largest group of users and borne the bulk of its benefits and costs took the lead role in planning for its future.



Region Central Boundary



Region Central is situated about three miles north of Downtown Buffalo in between, I-190 and SR-33. 6

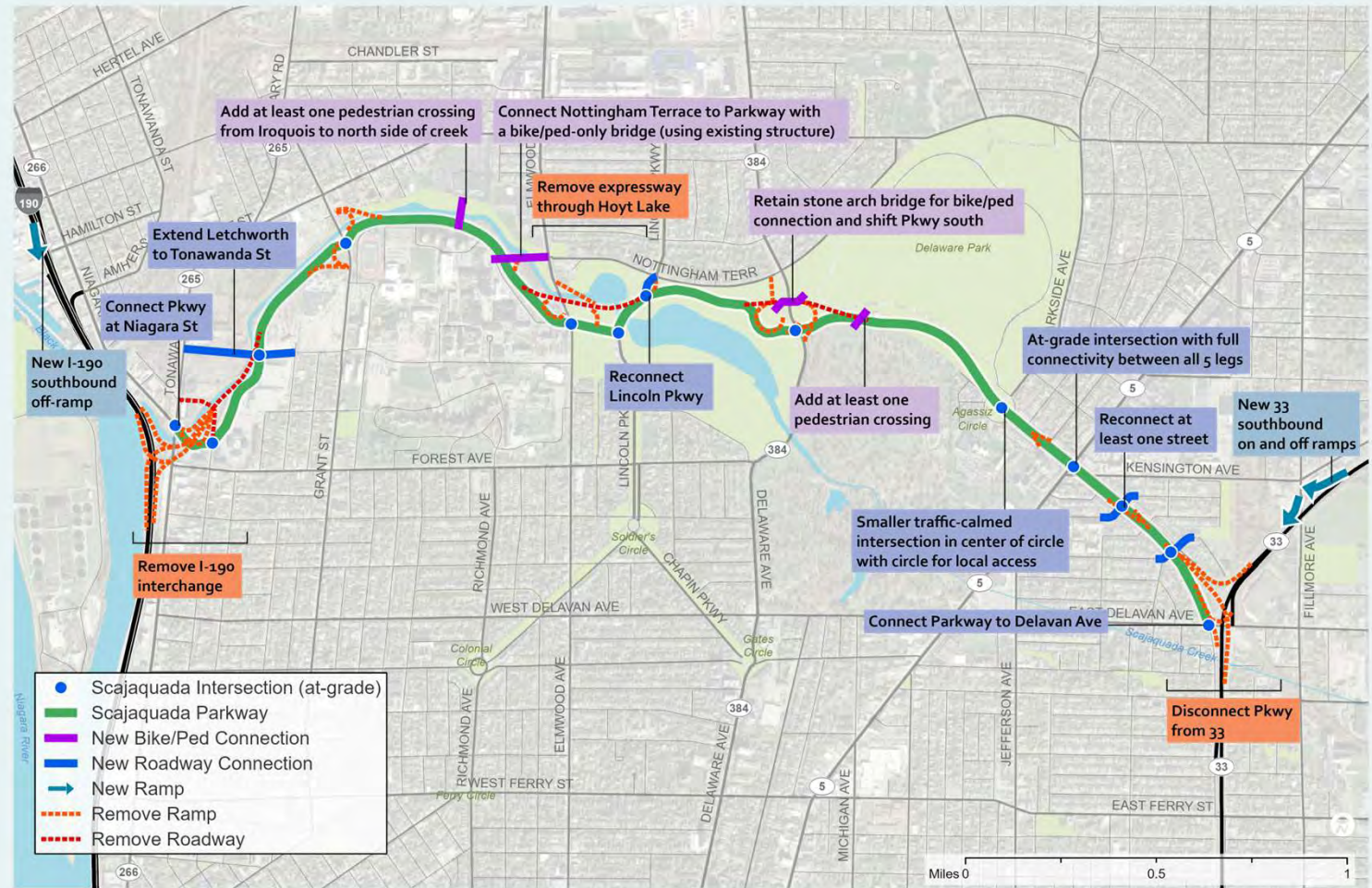


# Introducing the new Scajaquada Parkway

Within Region Central, the proposed Scajaquada Parkway would radically transform the Expressway into a two-lane roadway, multimodal corridor with a landscaping and frequent at-grade intersections that support connections across neighborhoods and between institutions.

Its design is the result of evaluating scenarios for the Expressway's future and creating an approach that best supports community goals.

The recommended scenario enhances equity and inclusive economic development, make local and regional mobility more effective, and support the replenishment of parks, waterways, and places.



Scajaquada Parkway. Larger map on page 50.



## Community benefits of the new Scajaquada Parkway

Planning for the Scajaquada Expressway's future is central to unlocking significant quality of life, economic opportunity, equity and mobility benefits for the full spectrum of Region Central's diverse population, as well as its institutions, parks, and natural areas.

This \$260-460M (see Chapter 14 for details on cost estimate range) project unlocks opportunities to support community goals beyond the Expressway footprint – through the implementation of nearby and intersecting regional mobility improvements, the clean-up of adjacent sites for park restoration or strategic redevelopment, and the selection of local and minority-owned businesses to carry out construction through a Community Benefits Agreement.

Buffalo has an opportunity to leverage investment in the Scajaquada to reap regional benefits that extend far beyond this right-of-way. Doing so will require coordination with other initiatives detailed later in this report.

This project has both direct and indirect impacts, the full potential of which will require significant partnership to unlock:

- Significant **direct impacts** that will largely be unlocked by removing the elevated Expressway itself.
  - Restore Buffalo's **Olmsted Legacy** by repairing the damage to Delaware Park and **restoring at least 40 acres of park area**
  - **Restore waterway quality** by removing the Expressway through **Hoyt Lake** and creating opportunities for reclamation of the **Scajaquada Creek**
  - **Reconnect neighborhoods** that were degraded when the Expressway was built in the 1950s through new and **safer multimodal connections** for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers
- Equally significant, but more **indirect impacts**—for example potential benefits for which this Plan sets the stage, but which will require partnership with the City, institutions, nonprofits, and other partners to fully unlock benefits and manage costs. These benefits include the supporting elements across Region Central as well as other benefits that are likely to incur over time.
  - Release sites for **inclusive economic redevelopment** and potential challenges related to ensuring affordability and diversity in neighborhoods made more desirable by the Expressway's removal
  - Interconnected **bicycle and pedestrian corridors** throughout Region Central
  - Improved **air quality** due to changing traffic patterns



PART I:

# How we got here

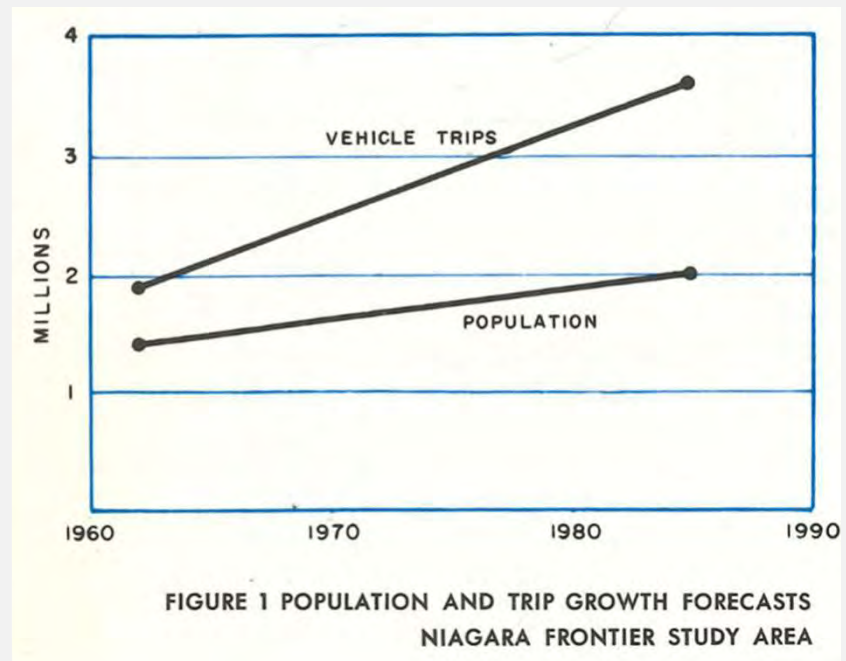
## Chapter 1 The Scajaquada Expressway

### The Scajaquada Expressway's history mirrors Buffalo's history

#### History of Buffalo: Post-World War II era

The Scajaquada Expressway's history is linked to the postwar history of Buffalo and the region. One of the country's fastest growing cities in the first half of the twentieth century, the City of Buffalo reached its population and economic peak in the early 1950s. After more than a century of growth, the city's population began to decline after 1950 and by 2020 had lost roughly half its 1950 population. Two dynamics drove this decline—both integrally linked to the decision to build the Scajaquada Expressway.

First, during the 1960's and 70s, the region lost many of the well-paid manufacturing jobs that had been the backbone of the regional economy since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. White collar jobs located in downtown Buffalo began to replace the traditional industrial locations along Buffalo's waterfronts. Second, white flight drove population growth in the suburbs, while emptying out many Buffalo neighborhoods. In fact, the region's population continued to climb until 1970 due to this suburban growth. But after 1970, the region's total population started declining as well. In 2023 the county's population stood roughly at its 1950 level of just under 900,000. These two forces, new jobs concentrated in downtown, and suburbanization of the work force are the twin dynamics that led to building the Expressway we are left with today.



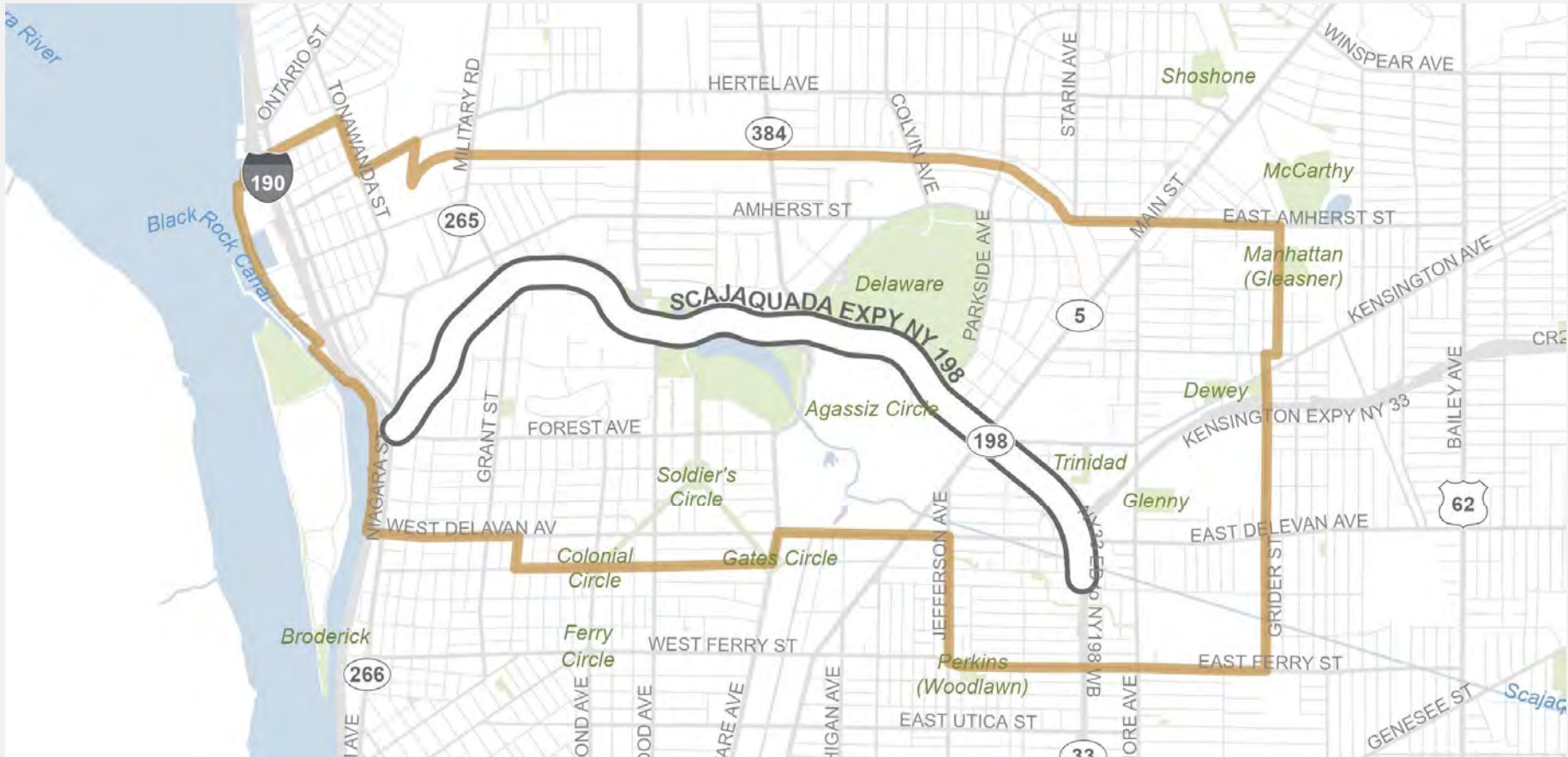
Following a period of strong growth in Buffalo over the first half of the century, the 1965 Basic Corridor Plan illustrates planned growth that never occurred – in relation to an anticipated steep increase in car infrastructure demand. Instead, the Buffalo region saw a steep decrease in population over the period represented, from the 1960s through the 1990s (and onward).



## The Scajaquada Expressway's original mission and planning process

First proposed in 1946 to accommodate booming post-war traffic, the Scajaquada Expressway was included in Buffalo's 1951 Major Traffic Ways Plan. At its core, the Scajaquada, Kensington, and 190 expressways shared a common mission: they represented critical elements of a more comprehensive strategy to stem the loss of people, jobs, and retail sales from the city to its suburbs by making the city readily accessible to its “bedroom” suburbs. Much of this effort focused on “saving” the Downtown from suburban competition. As was the case with expressway planning across the country, planning for the Scajaquada was “top down”—directed and carried out by State transportation officials without meaningful community input.

While some large employers stayed or came Downtown during the period following the expressways' construction, the Downtown benefits of these expressways were ultimately unequally distributed, if short-lived; the connectivity they afforded most directly benefitted suburban residents, while Buffalo residents paid the price.



Scajaquada expressway corridor

## Buffalo today

In 2023 the City of Buffalo is coming back. However, this resurgence is not because of the highways built in the 1940s and 50s, but because Buffalo has a high quality of life amenities—a walkable downtown, inviting traditional neighborhoods, visible history, strong cultural and educational institutions that appeal to today’s changing household demographics. Between 2010 and 2020, the City’s population has risen by more than 6.5% according to the US decennial census—significantly faster than the metropolitan area’s 2.8% growth over the same period. Historic loft conversions and new low and midrise multi-family housing construction is visible in many older neighborhoods. New Americans, immigrants from around the world, are also bringing a new vibrancy to many Buffalo neighborhoods, including some in Region Central. The City is also well-positioned to drive growth in the Region’s targeted industries including advanced manufacturing, tourism, and life sciences linked to entrepreneurship and innovation.

Buffalo’s quality of life provides a potent competitive edge in attracting new talent to the City. This economic growth also offers expanded opportunities to create better paying jobs and expanded career paths for Buffalo’s existing residents. Translating this economic revival into inclusive outcomes will require a focus on connecting local people to local jobs, providing quality housing affordable to households across the income spectrum, and leveraging those quality-of-life factors to improve community health and well-being for all.

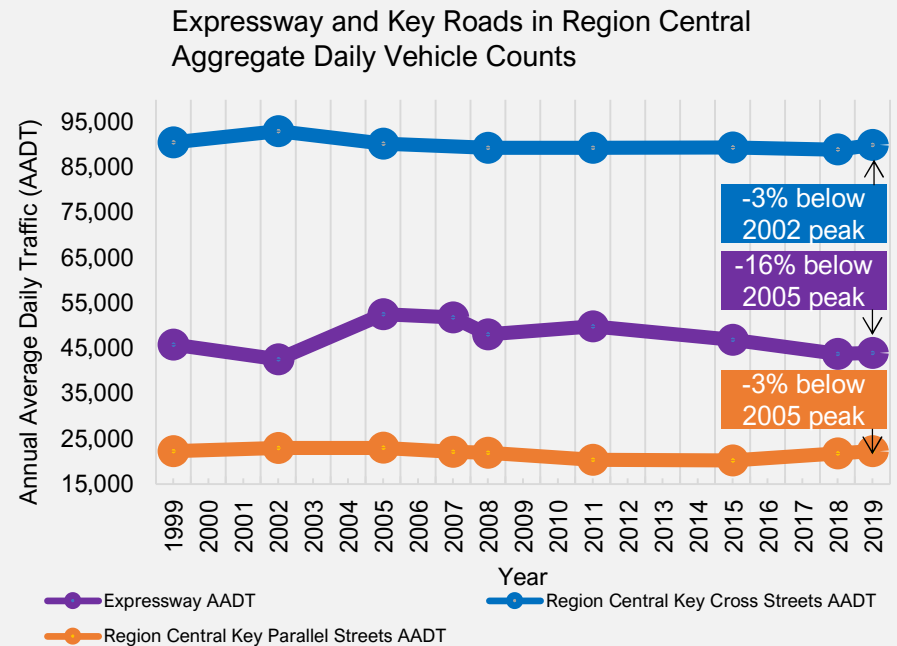
In this changing regional context, the Scajaquada Expressway is increasingly outmoded. **Today the city’s ability to attract jobs and people is grounded much more in the quality and character of Region Central’s neighborhoods and access to its parks and the Scajaquada Creek than in highway access.** At the same time, the expressway’s environmental justice impacts undermine the City’s focus on improving racial equity.

## Scajaquada today

The Scajaquada Expressway, New York 198, provides east-west connectivity between I-190 and SR 33. There are 11 locations to cross the Expressway and seven ramp locations along the Expressway. The Expressway is about three and a half miles in length and serves about 44,000 vehicle trips on an average day. The Expressway, along with I-190 and SR 33, are part of the National Freight Network. Most trips on the 198 use the Expressway to get on or off of the connecting highways, I-190 and SR-33.

In addition, most trips on the Expressway are not work trips, but serve other purposes such as school, shopping, appointments, and recreation.

The Expressway itself separates neighborhoods and undermines inclusiveness. Furthermore, even the Expressway’s former suburban users don’t need it as much as they once did. General vehicle traffic in Region Central has declined by roughly 6% between 2019 and the peak in 2005.



Roads included:

- NYS Route 198 (Scajaquada Expressway)
- Grant St, Elmwood Ave, Delaware Ave, Parkside Ave, Main St, Delavan Ave, Forest Ave, Amherst St

Source: NYSDOT & GBNRTC Historic Traffic Data

## Related transportation initiatives

### A. Kensington/33

The purpose of NYS Route 33, Kensington Expressway Project is to “reconnect the community surrounding the defined transportation corridor,” which includes the Kensington Expressway and Humboldt Parkway between Best Street and Sidney Street. The preferred alternative for the Project involves capping the sunken portion of the Expressway between Best Street and Sidney Street in order to create access between the communities that abut the Expressway, increasing greenspace and multi-modal transportation options, and addressing deteriorating infrastructure. A Scoping Report examining project alternatives was published by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in December 2022.

The project falls within the Region Central geographic area and includes a portion of the existing Humboldt Parkway, which traverses both the Scajaquada and Kensington Expressway Corridors. The recommended scenario for Region Central recommends infrastructural improvements to the existing carriage roads of Humboldt Parkway, and the construction of two center lanes, one in each direction, to carry through-traffic along the Scajaquada Corridor. This approach separates local traffic from through-traffic on a reimaged Humboldt Parkway within the Scajaquada Corridor. The recommendations for both projects are intertwined by Humboldt Parkway and its interface with both corridors.

### B. Main Street Improvement Project

The City of Buffalo’s Middle Main Street Streetscape Improvement Project provides a series of recommendations for redesigning Main Street between Goodell Street and Ferry Street (Phase I) and Ferry Street to Kensington Avenue (Phase II). Two design concepts were developed for Phase I of the corridor based on initial community input, and after subsequent community feedback sessions, a design was selected which includes one travel lane in each direction with a center turn lane and raised one-way cycle tracks on either side of the roadway. A design for Phase II has not yet been progressed.

Phase II of the project intersects with the recommended scenario for the corridor at the northern portion of the project at Humboldt Parkway. Several supporting elements recommended in this study intersect with Phase II of the Middle Main Street project. As the design for Phase II of the Middle Main Street project and the Region Central recommended scenario further develop, coordination will be crucial to ensure a cohesive vision.

*Refer to Chapter 8 of this report for a full list of related initiatives.*



Kensington and Main Street Improvement project areas in relation to Scajaquada



## Chapter 2 Region Central



### Region Central Past to Present

The area this plan refers to as Region Central was initially developed at a time when Buffalo was one of America's early economic powerhouses. Fredrick Law Olmsted was commissioned to develop a parkway system for Buffalo to create "the best planned city in America, if not the world." In 1868, he announced his vision for Delaware Park and a series of treelined parkways that connected the park to the growing city.

This world-famous legacy represented an armature around which roughly one-quarter of Buffalo developed. Today, Region Central hosts historic culturally significant neighborhoods including Black Rock, Central Park, Hamlin Park, Forest, Park Meadow, Parkside, and Trinidad; the 350-acre Delaware Park and the remnants of Olmsted's parkway system; the Scajaquada Creek—severely degraded but still offering the potential to be an exemplary urban waterway; and a cultural crescent that includes world renowned institutions—many of historic significance.



Region Central includes world-renowned institutions, many of historic significance. (top) Delaware Park circa 1908. (left) AKG Art Museum. Source (top): Detroit Publishing Company photograph collection (Library of Congress).



# Region Central is home to a concentration of cultural, educational, and historical institutions.

Region Central hosts a number of historic and cultural institutions, mapped below, that play a role in both the lives of people who live, work, and play in this part of Buffalo and in the process of developing this Plan. These include Buffalo State and Medaille College, a handful of museums and historical homes, parks and cemeteries, and medical facilities such as Erie County Medical Center and Sisters of Charity Hospital.



Region Central Historic and Cultural Institutions

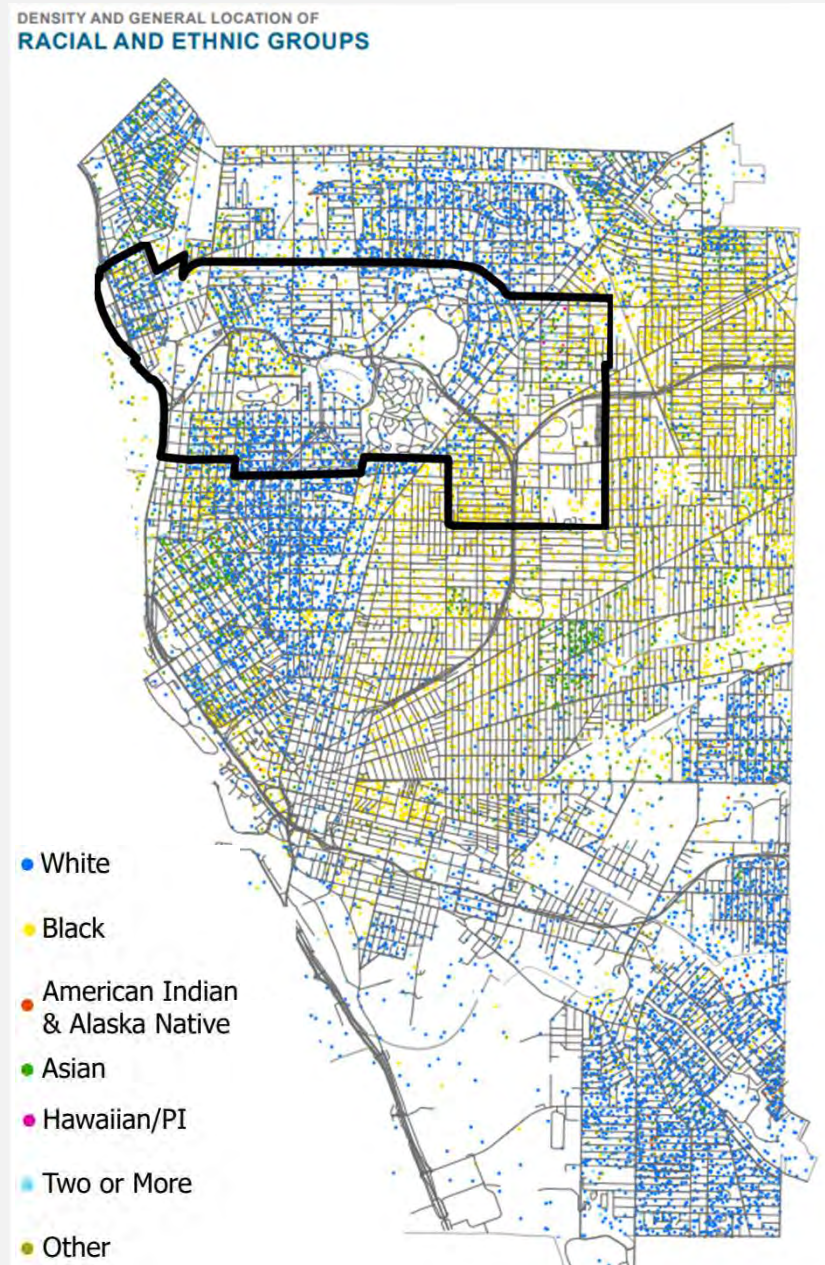


## Region Central: Historically diverse but changing population

Although Buffalo has lost population for many years, over half of the Region Central neighborhoods have grown over the past ten years. Many of Region Central's neighborhoods that have added population also have a preponderance of low- or moderate-income households. These include neighborhoods such as Fillmore-Leroy, Upper West Side, and West Hertel.

High income neighborhoods in Region Central have remained stable, but historically low- and moderate-income neighborhoods have seen their median incomes increase, suggesting that areas within Region Central are gentrifying.

The racial composition in Region Central neighborhoods is also changing. Population shifts are typically multifaceted with generational, gentrification, immigrant influx, housing supply, and housing cost as factors. First time homebuyers have been priced out of certain neighborhoods, making places like Hamlin Park a more affordable option. Some traditionally African American neighborhoods on the area's east side, including Fillmore-Leroy, Hamlin Park, and Delavan-Grider are losing African American households, while the Upper West Side and West Hertel neighborhoods have gained African American and immigrant populations. Most neighborhoods have also gained Latinx populations. These shifts signify both generational change on the east side, and the influx of new immigrants on the west side.



From the City of Buffalo Four Year Strategic Plan (2023-2027). Region Central is home to neighborhoods of varying densities and racial/ethnic group makeups.



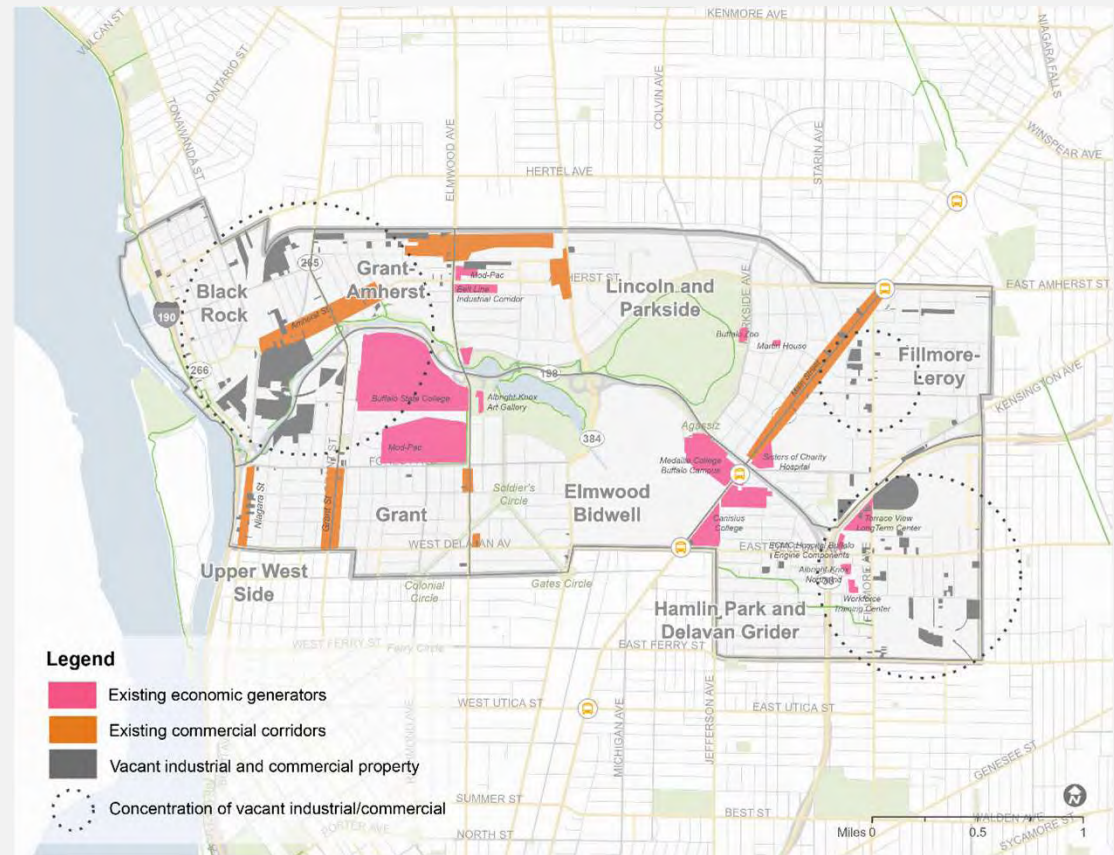
## Region Central: A concentration of economic generators and diverse job types

What makes Region Central such an exceptional place is that its 19<sup>th</sup> century legacy, Delaware Park, Forest Lawn Cemetery and the stately homes in the neighborhoods around the park were juxtaposed with a thriving industrial area extending along the Niagara River, multiple colleges and universities, and a rail network to move goods and materials.

In fact, the contribution that the Region Central area makes to Buffalo's economy seems almost hidden in plain sight. In 2015, Region Central had 45,453 jobs, comprising 28 percent of the City's jobs. Health, Education, and Government were the largest employment groups in Region Central, with over 18,000 jobs. And although manufacturing is no longer dominant, the manufacturing jobs in Region Central account for almost 40 percent of Buffalo's manufacturing jobs.

Historic buildings and older neighborhood business districts are also becoming desirable locations for small businesses of all sorts from tech start-ups to ethnic restaurants and pop-up shops.

These existing economic assets provide a strong foundation for future economic growth across a range of industries new and old, large and small. In addition, there are large vacant parcels that offer opportunities to build new modern buildings to house a wide array of industrial sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, life science related research and development, multi-media or other innovation driven sectors. These types of businesses are increasingly co-existing with each other, and within the neighborhoods where their workforce lives.



Major “anchor institutions” play an essential role as both local and regional employers, while commercial corridors offer opportunities for small businesses. Older industrial areas including the former Pierce Arrow Factory and Niagara Street are supporting an increasing number of small creative or innovative businesses, though there remain concentrated pockets of vacant industrial and commercial properties.

## Chapter 3 Planning over the last two decades

### NYSDOT planning for the future of the Scajaquada Corridor

#### Process

In 2017, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) recommended the reconstruction of a two-mile segment of the Scajaquada Expressway into a landscaped boulevard based on principles of “context sensitivity” and “flexibility in highway design.” The design was developed for a segment of Expressway extending between Grant Street on the west and Parkside Avenue on the east and included the installation of new at-grade intersections, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and aesthetic and lighting upgrades.

The recommendation was based on more than a decade of study; however, the NYSDOT did not reach a final decision and paused the project due to a lack of public support for the recommended design. Stakeholders called for additional options and an expanded study area for the entire corridor from Niagara Street to the Kensington Expressway interchanges, while taking a more comprehensive approach to address land use, Scajaquada Creek, multimodal mobility, and historic and cultural resources. The project was put on hold by the NYSDOT in January 2018, so that it could develop a new project strategy and re-initiate collaboration with stakeholders.

#### Participants

The NYSDOT’s Route 198 Scajaquada Expressway Corridor Stakeholder Group included representatives of more than 30 organizations, including neighborhood-based organizations, state and federal agencies, legislators, and cultural organizations, listed in the [Draft Design Report / Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft 4\(f\) Evaluation, Volume 12, Appendix G – Public Involvement Plan And Summary](#).

NYSDOT’s project webpage identifies 17 stakeholder meetings, public hearings, and public meetings that occurred between May 2007 and August 2017 which included workshops focusing on different sections of the corridor, presentations, and requests for feedback during design phases.



Proposed 2017 redesign including a roundabout | Source: NYSDOT

## Options studied

Two alternatives were studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) published in 2016 and 2017, respectively for the NYSDOT Scajaquada Corridor project. The preferred Boulevard Alternative sought to convert the expressway into an urban boulevard with two travel lanes in each direction, in a similar alignment to the existing expressway. The No Build Alternative assumed no improvement in the project area other than routine maintenance or advancement of already programmed projects.

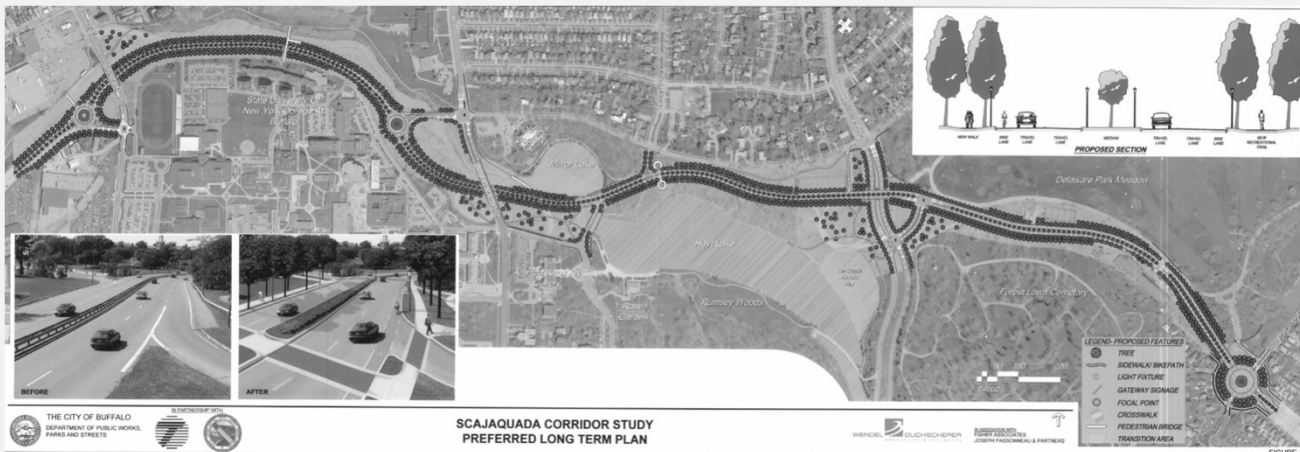
During the initial scoping phase, three alternatives were dismissed from further consideration, including an “Expressway” alternative which would redesign the existing Expressway while maintaining an expressway in the corridor; a “Street” alternative which would recommend a roadway with one lane in each direction, and “Removal” between Elmwood Avenue and Parkside Avenue. The three alternatives were considered not viable for various reasons and dismissed from consideration in the DEIS or FEIS.

## Key findings

The project was classified as a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Class I project requiring an Environmental Impact Statement, and as a State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) non-type II action with potential for significant environmental impacts or substantial controversy on environmental grounds.

The FEIS resulted in a determination that the Boulevard Alternative would:

- Accommodate motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians and conform to standards for urban arterials.
- More closely align with surrounding uses and visual character of Delaware Park.
- Result in construction of new shared-use paths and footpaths following the alignment of historic park pathways, and reconstruction of parts of the Jesse Kregal Pathway.
- Result in a net decrease of pavement and hardscaping in Delaware Park by 14%.
- Result in a decrease in pollutants entering into Hoyt Lake, Mirror Lake, and Scajaquada Creek.





# Input by Stakeholders and Community Groups for the Future of the Scajaquada Corridor (2016-2022)

Independent of the NYSDOT and FHWA design process, community and neighborhood-based interest groups formulated several recommendations and concept designs for the Scajaquada Corridor. The design recommendations focused predominantly on the design of the expressway and corridor. The missing element was that the recommendations generally did not consider surrounding neighborhoods and the corridor's impact on neighborhood mobility.

The resounding input from participant community organizations advocated for a reduction in the existing roadway. Community groups observed that the prior designs did not include a robust analysis of pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal transportation options within and around the Expressway. Additionally, an analysis of how cultural, environmental, and equity considerations within the corridor would be impacted by a changed Scajaquada Expressway was largely absent from previous projects despite the wide-ranging effects of the projects.

Vision for Black Rock Harbor (West Scajaquada)



Scajaquada Corridor Plan



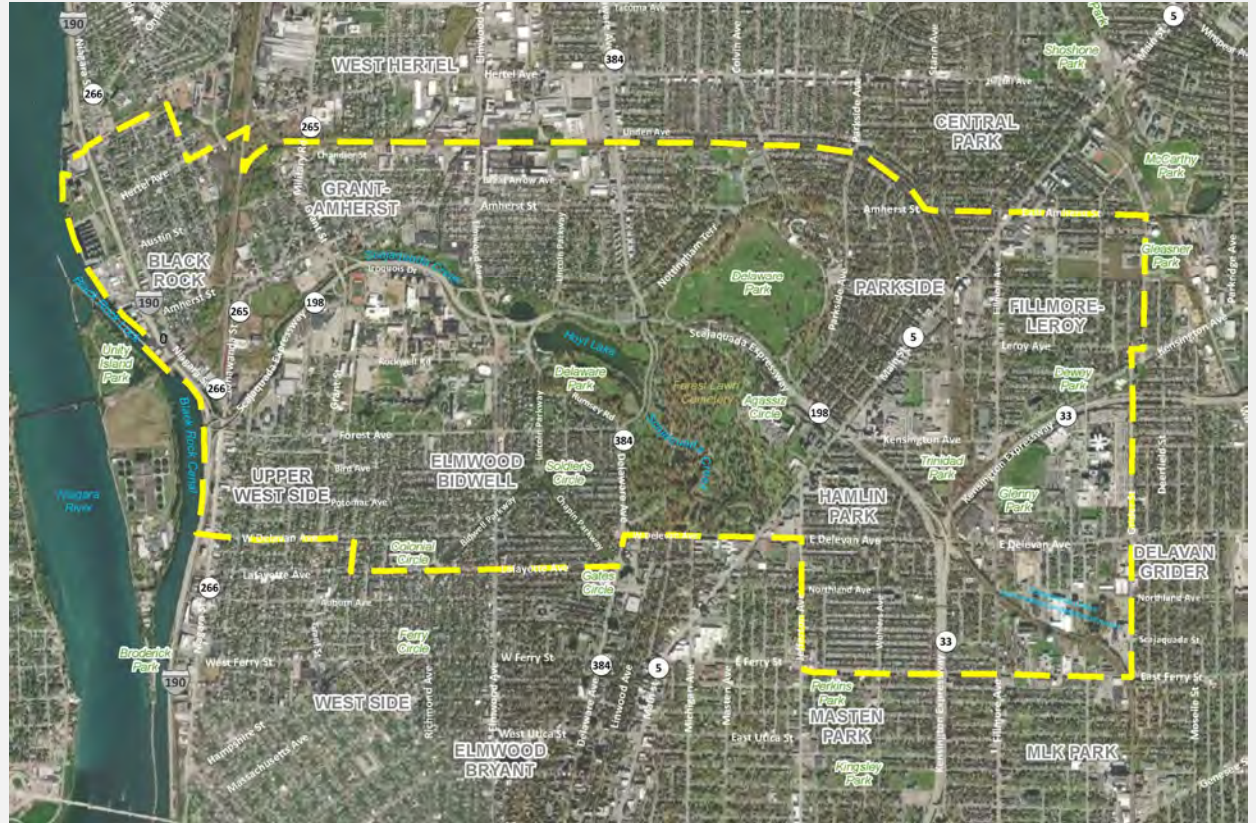
Scajaquada Coalition vision



## Moving forward: Time for a new paradigm

On January 8, 2018, the NYSDOT Regional Director issued a statement indicating that due to a lack of majority public support, the Scajaquada Corridor project would be paused, and that the NYSDOT “will continue to engage the community and make safety improvements as necessary,” and that the NYSDOT “will hit the 'reset' button and begin a fresh dialogue with stakeholders.”

Subsequently, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) was charged by NYSDOT with developing a comprehensive planning process to reimagine the Scajaquada Expressway corridor and surrounding neighborhoods outside of the confines of a standard, formalized environmental review process. The process included identification of a future land use and community development vision for a broader study area coined “Region Central,” a mobility assessment and recommendations, and a robust communications and engagement strategy to build support for the study’s recommendations.



Region Central Study Area



PART II:

# Building a new plan

## Chapter 4 Putting a new planning paradigm to work

### A new approach

The Region Central Plan introduces a new approach to mobility planning and consensus building that starts with a holistic set of community's goals and priorities. The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBRNTC) developed this approach in response to residents' desire for a more comprehensive and "bottom up" process to drive this once-in-a-generation planning opportunity.

### Team

#### GBNRTC

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Erie and Niagara Counties, and has led the Region Central planning effort. GBNRTC is focused on establishing a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning process for the Buffalo-Niagara Region.



#### Interdisciplinary Project Team

A consultant team assessed economic, land use, and mobility data, engaged the public, and assembled future mobility scenarios for the region. A team led by Stantec included consultants from Fisher, Strategic Economics, Highland Planning, and Clementine Gold Group and included guidance from Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.



# A new planning process

This planning process utilized a uniquely community-driven approach to analysis, planning, and consensus building to generate outcomes and recommendations informed by residents' goals and priorities.

## Phase 1: Background

Prior to developing analysis or design concepts for the corridor, the team reviewed dozens of recent and current plan documents, studies, and reports pertaining to the Region Central neighborhood and its position in the City's economy, transportation network, park system, and land use history. The team also launched an extensive community engagement process to build a foundation of first-hand knowledge about the corridor's role in the lives of Region Central residents. With this research and engagement as a baseline, the team began the technical analysis needed to formulate more specific planning and design concepts for the corridor's future.

## Phase 2: Goals

Before considering specific planning and design options for the corridor, the team developed a set of goals that translated the background work – especially the community outreach and residents' contributions – into a set of governing goals. These goals were organized into three "lenses" that together represent a holistic perspective of the opportunities and challenges presented by the project from the community's perspective: "Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development," "Replenished parks, parkways, waterways, and places," and "Effective local and regional mobility." Each lens was elaborated into a set of metrics which translate the goals into specific priorities against which planning and design options were measured and compared.

## Phase 3: Scenarios

The team developed a set of design scenarios for the corridor and additional Supporting Elements across Region Central that test the range of feasible options for the corridor while attempting to promote the community's goals and respond to the metrics as much as possible. Each scenario was then evaluated in terms of the metrics to gauge which components performed best relative to community goals.

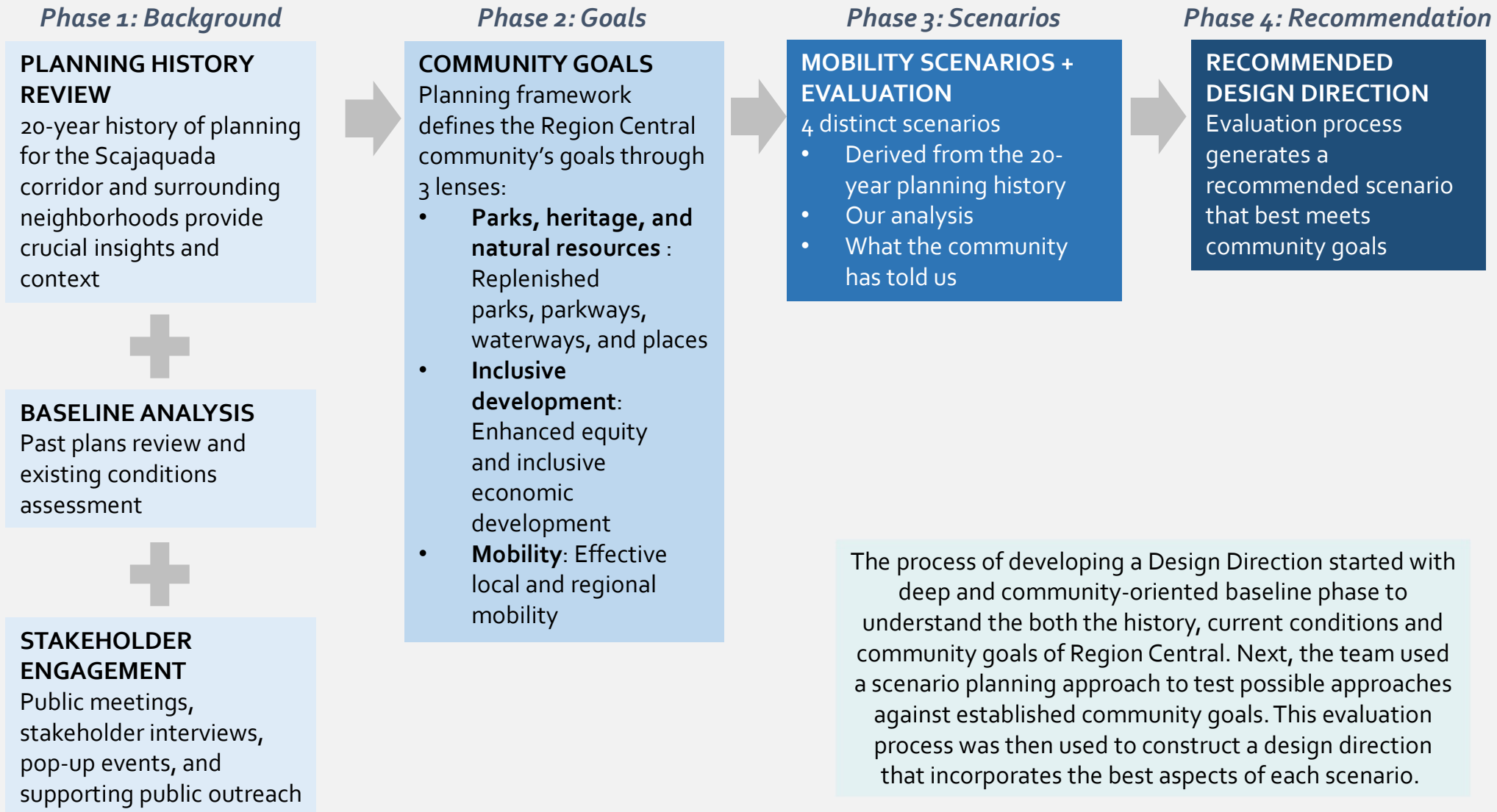
## Phase 4: Recommended design direction

The process concluded by developing a recommended scenario that draws the most successful components from the range of concepts tested during the previous phase. The recommended design direction is thus optimized to reflect the community's goals for the corridor in terms of all three lenses. The recommended design direction is accompanied by a set of "supporting elements" that are necessary to integrate with broader mobility networks and accommodate shifts in travel patterns that would result from changes to the corridor. The plan also includes supporting policy ideas that reinforce community benefits in the realms of economic development, equity, smart mobility, and parks and open spaces.



# A new planning process: The Region Central Plan

The flow chart below describes the planning process's progression through the project's phases, from foundational background research, analysis, and engagement through final recommendations. The process was designed to derive a recommended design direction directly from the community's goals and priorities.



## Chapter 5 Engagement

Engagement activities spanned the length of the project and offered opportunities to get involved both online and in person.

### Engagement activities included:



#### Interviews

31 interviews with 35 key stakeholders



#### Stakeholder Advisory Group

4 meetings with group of key stakeholders, including members of SAG



#### Public Meetings

5 public meetings reaching more than 900 attendees and generating thousands of comments



#### Pop-Up Events

7 pop-up events engaging 300 community members



#### Presentations

Presentations to stakeholder groups



#### Website

Hundreds of online comments through the project website portal

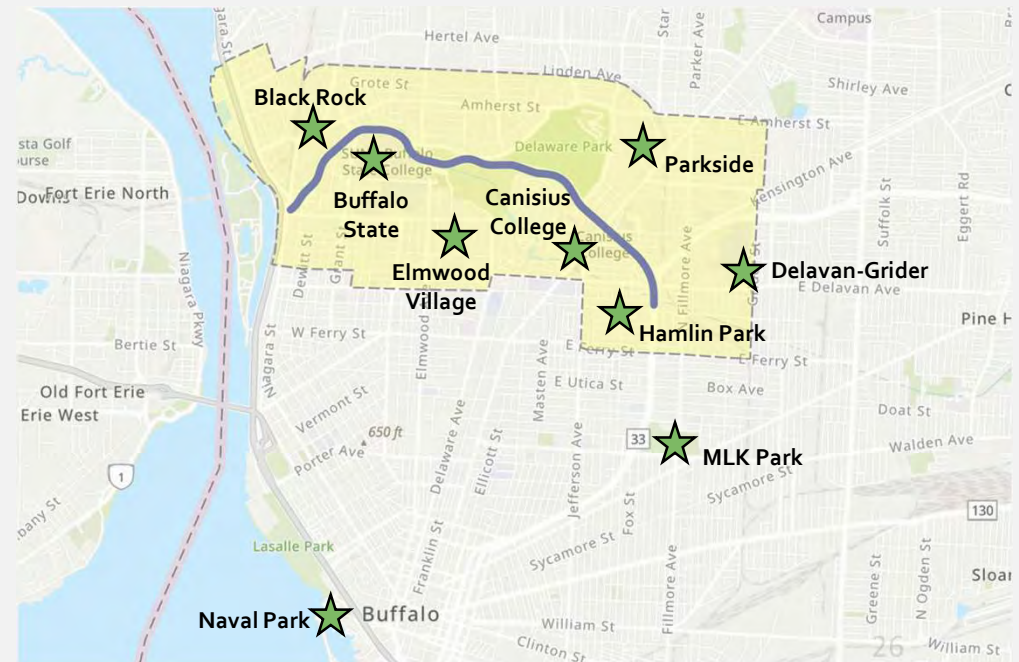


#### Door to Door Outreach

Dozens of residents reached in Hamlin Park

The Region Central planning process included an extensive public engagement program, interfacing with the community at several stages of the work and in a variety of forums, formats, and locations. The planning team successfully reached many stakeholders and community representatives to support a process and resulting recommendations that reflect residents' goals and priorities – and incorporate locals' ideas about how best to respond to their concerns and inspirations.

### Locations of engagement activities



# Key touchpoints and themes

## Visioning

Early outreach focused on identifying issues and opportunities related to the Scajaquada Expressway and adjacent corridor. The project team solicited input from residents and visitors across the region through pop-up events and presentations in Black Rock, Elmwood Village, Hamlin Park, Parkside, Delavan-Grider/Martin Luther King Park and other neighborhoods. Key themes that emerged from these early outreach efforts include:

- Overall, people dislike the 198, but reasons for this vary. Many drivers said they find the 198 unsafe, primarily because people typically far exceed the 30 mph speed limit. They also noted that exiting and entering the 198 can be difficult due to speeding drivers and dangerous ramps. On the other hand, some drivers dislike the 198 because they say it's not fast enough for a true highway.
- Cyclists and pedestrians have safety concerns in many areas of the Scajaquada Corridor including the Delaware Avenue "S curves," Elmwood north of the 198, Grant Street, the Buffalo State area, and the area around Delavan Avenue and Route 33.
- Drivers who do like the 198 find it indispensable. A few commenters raised serious concerns about elimination of the 198.
- Transit riders would like better connections and more frequent buses in the Scajaquada Corridor.
- Commenters value connectivity and would like to be able to walk or bike easily between Delaware Park, Forest Lawn Cemetery, and Hoyt Lake.
- People value Scajaquada Creek and would like to see it cleaned up, as well as more accessible.
- Many commenters support a parkway that would restore Olmsted's original vision.

## Scenarios

GBNRTC solicited input on four scenarios for the Scajaquada Expressway in May 2022. Public meetings were held at Buffalo State University and Canisius College and through the Region Central website. GBNRTC received nearly 600 comments on the scenarios, some of which are highlighted on Page 46 of this report.



The planning team solicited input at a series of pop-ups across Region Central, including one (pictured) at MLK Park.

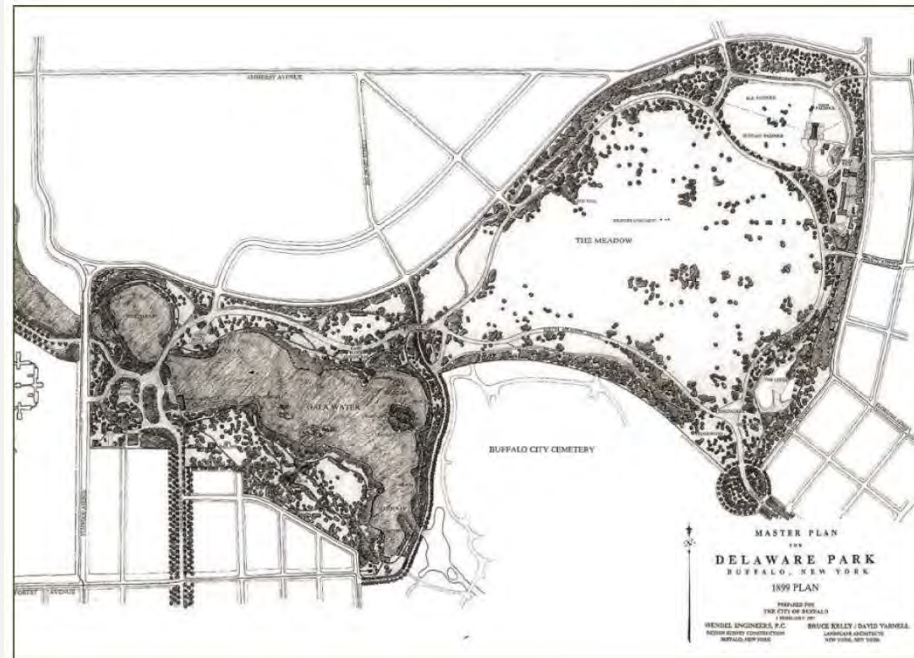


## Chapter 6

# Parks, heritage, and natural resources existing conditions

Region Central is home to Buffalo's Olmsted Parks and Parkways, several arts and history museums, and lost or degraded historic features with a potential for revival.

- Delaware Park, part of Olmsted's Park and Parkways system in Buffalo, is bisected by the existing Scajaquada Expressway. Residents and stakeholders called for a plan that would maximize park amenities and reconnect Agassiz Circle and Lincoln and Humboldt Parkways with Delaware Park the way Olmsted intended.
- Cultural institutions in Region Central include the Buffalo History Museum, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery), the Burchfield Penney Art Center, Richardson Olmsted Complex, and the War of 1812 Historic Trail, among others. The design direction for the corridor needed to maximize linkages between historic resources to strengthen the cultural corridor.
- Several degraded or lost historic features were identified within Region Central, including the historic stone arch bridge which currently carries the Scajaquada Expressway over Delaware Avenue, the historic South Scajaquada Parkway, Black Rock Harbor and Erie Canal, among others. The project team needed to consider how the recommended design direction for the corridor may be able to restore or pay homage to these degraded and lost features.



Original Delaware Park master plan by Olmsted (top) and Delaware park today (bottom)





The natural assets unique to Region Central experience significant pollution problems due in large part to the Scajaquada Expressway.

The Expressway traverses Scajaquada Creek and Hoyt Lake in multiple locations, contributing contaminated runoff in those waterways and exacerbating water quality. The runoff further impacts the Niagara River as the Scajaquada Creek discharges into the River, which is listed as an Area of Concern by the U.S. EPA.

Construction of the Scajaquada Expressway and years of inappropriate land development surrounding it has compromised Scajaquada Creek and its watershed through filling, diversions, and pollution.

In addition, the western portion of Region Central was once home to a thriving industrial sector, which has resulted in a significant number of parcels which are designated as brownfields in need of remediation.



Scajaquada Expressway crossing Scajaquada Creek. Source: Stantec

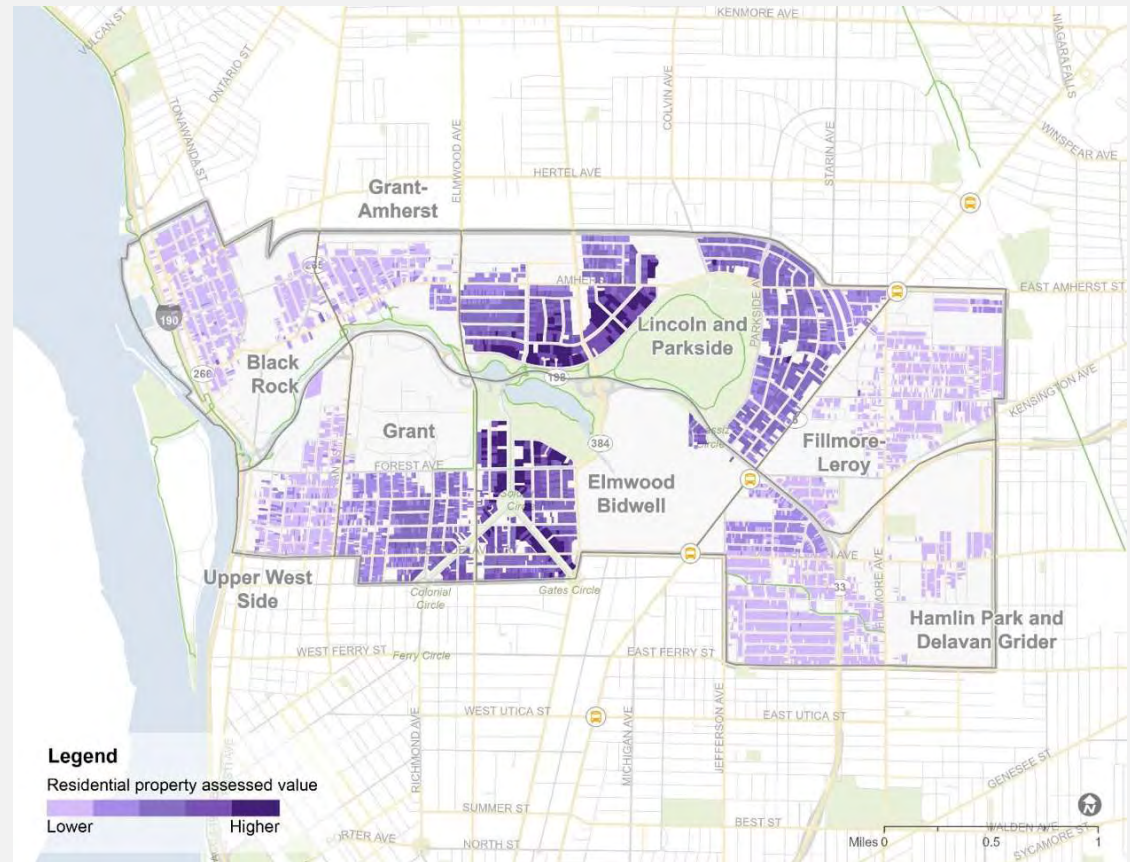


## Chapter 7 Inclusive development existing conditions

While Region Central has historically supported a diverse range of jobs and people, this diversity is starting to go away. These changes could impact the region's ability to foster inclusive economic growth and industry innovation.

Region Central is becoming a higher-end residential area.

- Existing housing prices are rapidly increasing compared to the larger region.
- Median incomes are inching up in neighborhoods that have historically served low- and moderate-income households.
- Residential segregation is an issue and spawns the problem of neighborhood inequality. Housing and neighborhood conditions in neighborhoods to the far-west and east such as Black Rock and Fillmore Leroy differ significantly from more central neighborhoods such as Elmwood Bidwell.
- Housing inadequacy appears to be a serious issue in communities to the far-west and east.
- Future projections show continued household growth primarily in what are now some of Region Central's lowest income neighborhoods.





Region Central is an important employment area for Buffalo and the Region, but the job-mix is changing.

- Historically, Region Central's business mix has been as diverse as its neighborhood residents.
- Future employment projections show this mix as declining while favoring more highly educated workers.
- Changes in the area's job mix could help the regional economy but could also accelerate displacement for low- and moderate-income households.



Infrastructure and "placemaking or placekeeping improvements" will continue pushing up real estate values.

- With appropriate policy interventions and investment strategies, these improvements can be made without accelerating residential displacement or losing future household diversity.
- A focused effort to increase educational opportunities for current Region Central residents will help these people find a place in the area's future economy.
- Without early and proactive interventions, changes driven by current trends could exacerbate "reserve sprawl," forcing lower-income households away from this regionally important employment node.



## Chapter 8 Mobility existing conditions

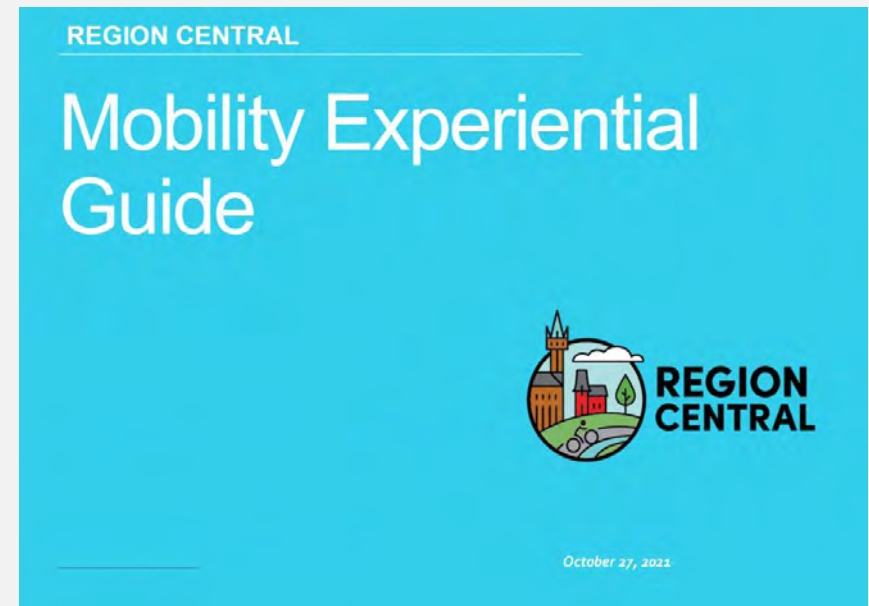
### Mobility Experiential Guide

The "Mobility Experiential Guide" to the Scajaquada Expressway provides a much broader perspective on existing conditions, incorporating all forms of mobility in and around Region Central, including the Scajaquada Expressway.

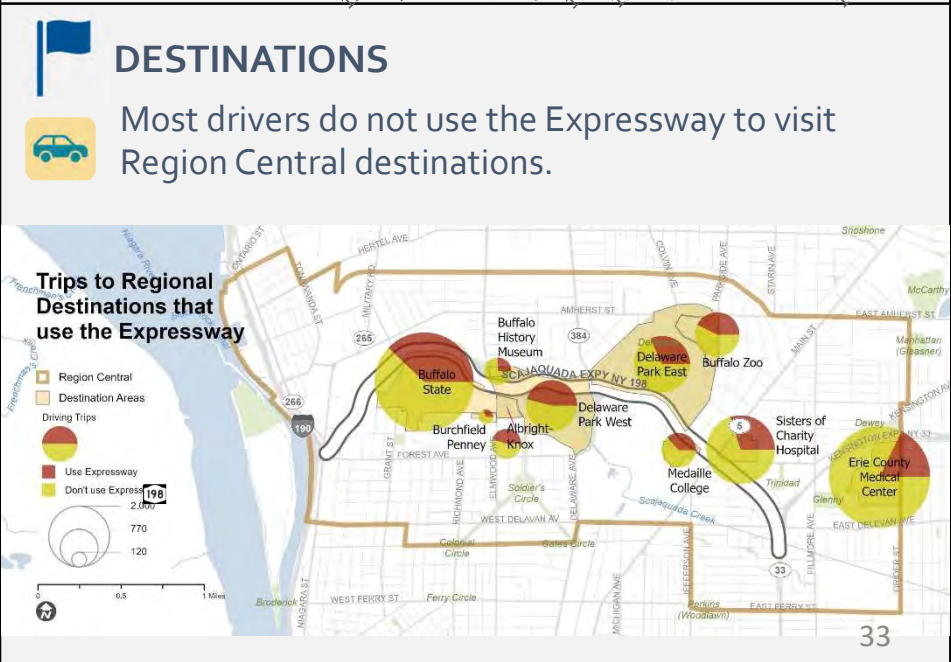
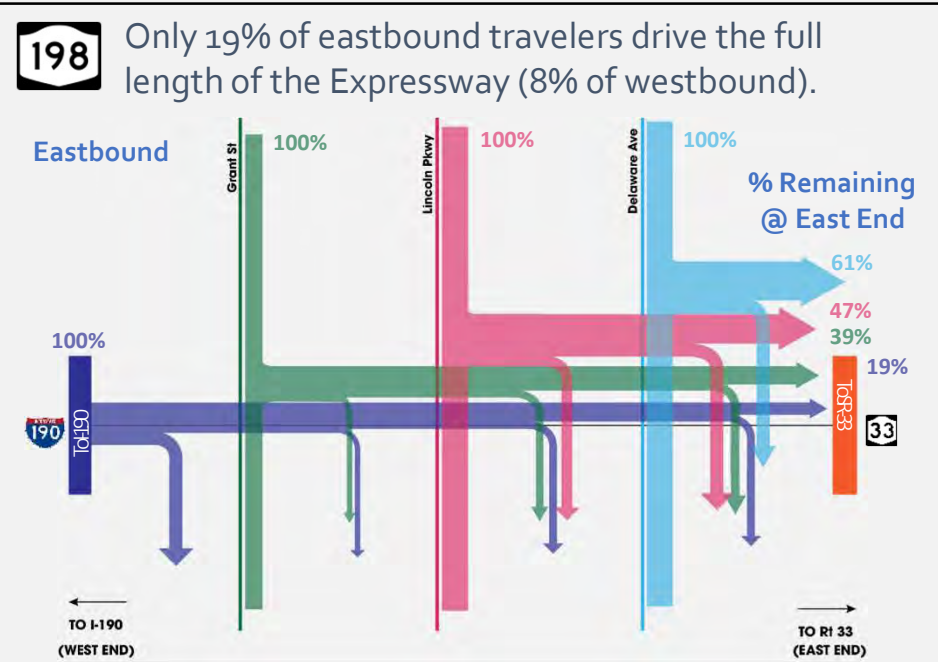
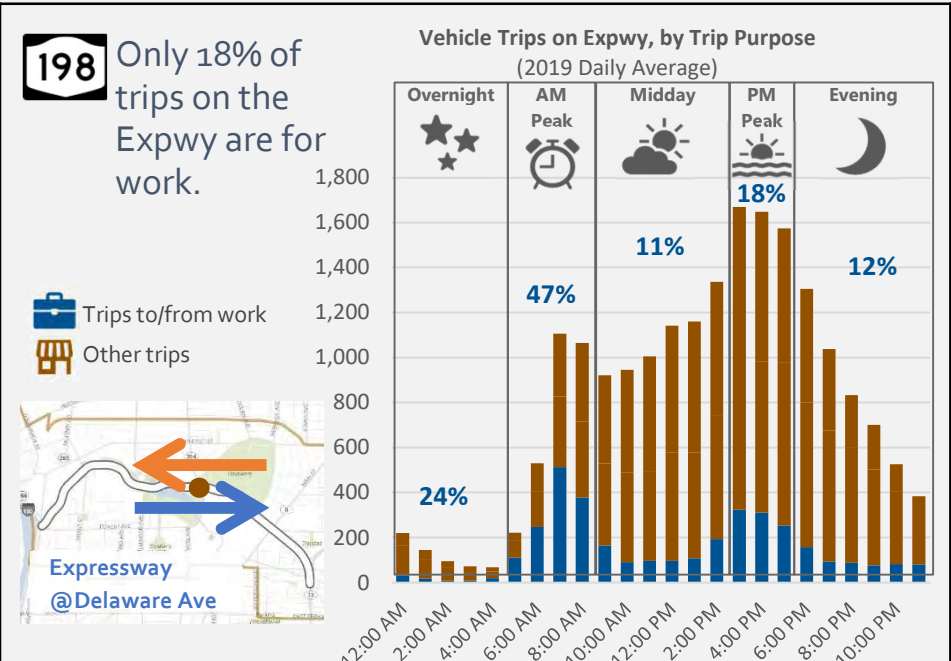
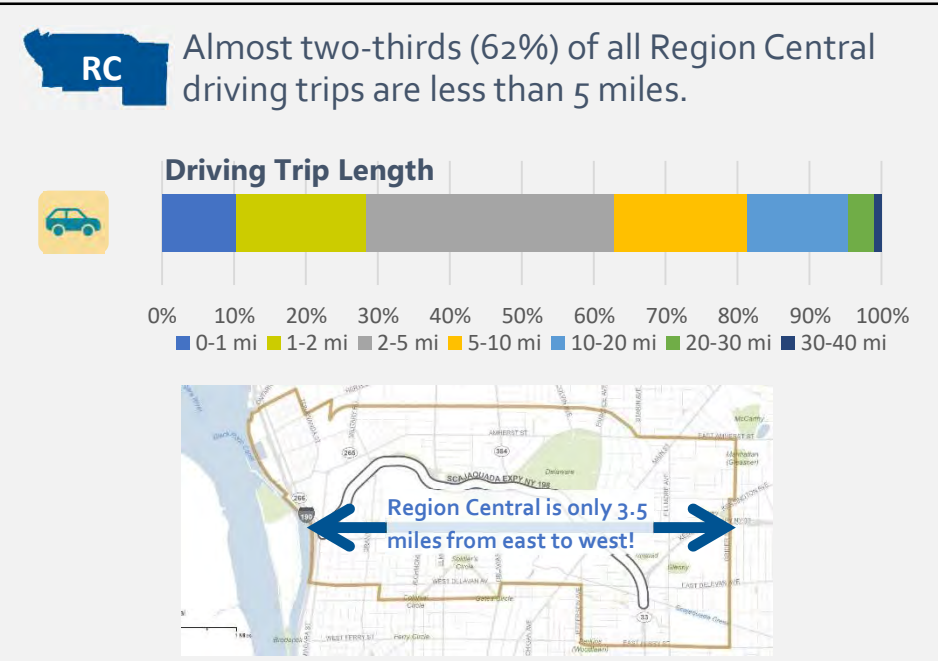
This document, published in October 2021, informed a deeper understanding of how travelers behave in Region Central so that potential solutions could comprehensively address the full range of mobility needs. By merging new data sources with traditional modeling data, the guide provides a complete view of transportation using all modes and all times of day and new insights into how people move around in Region Central.

#### *Key takeaways*

- Most driving trips in Region Central are relatively short (less than 5 miles).
- Traffic levels vary but have not been growing, even before the pandemic.
- The Scajaquada Expressway primarily serves as a long on/off ramp from Region Central to I-190 and SR-33. Less than 20% of vehicles travel the entire length of the Expressway.
- The Scajaquada Expressway acts as a barrier as most trips, even driving trips, stay on one side of the Expressway.
- There are significant regional destinations in Region Central. However, most drivers do not use the Scajaquada Expressway to reach them.
- Commercial traffic on the Expressway is significantly more regional than passenger vehicle traffic.



# Mobility Experiential Guide: Key Takeaways





# Coordination with other neighborhood initiatives

Even as this study was underway, Region Central did not remain static. There are a number of ongoing capital projects that are already programmed and funded and will occur regardless of the Scajaquada Design Direction. The map below and table to the right summarize these projects. In creating the scenarios and recommended design direction these projects were considered.

*The full inventory of Already Programmed projects and their corresponding details can be found in Appendix F.*

## Already programmed projects



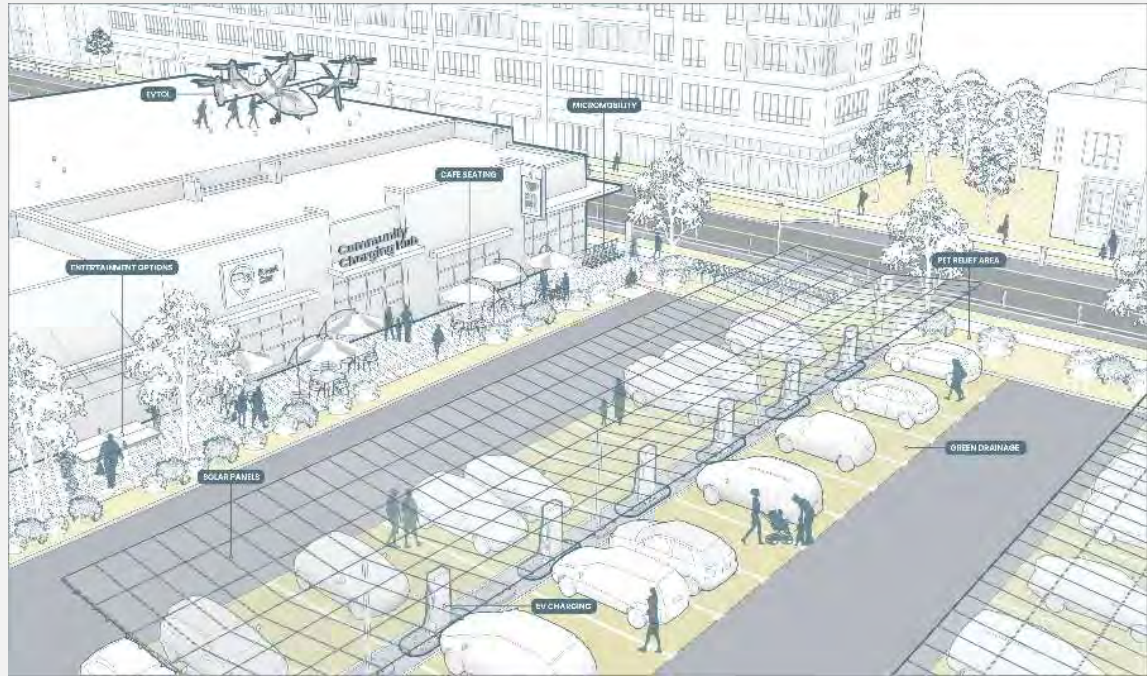
Projects already programmed in Region Central

## Already Programmed Projects

- Jefferson Ave. complete streets
- Niagara St. sustainable corridor
- Kensington Expwy from Goodell St to Harlem Rd. repaving and pedestrian upgrades
- Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning
- Amherst St. and Grant St. bus shelters
- Verdun sidewalk resurfacing
- Kensington Ave. bicycle facilities
- Delavan Ave. bicycle facilities
- Jefferson Ave. bicycle facilities
- Donaldson St. repaving
- Dewitt St. repaving
- East St. repaving
- Grace St. repaving
- Hartman St. repaving
- Dewey Ave. and Canton Alley bridge replacement
- Main St. and Kensington Ave. intersection improvements
- Niagara St. at Scajaquada Creek bridge repairs
- Main St. and Greenfield St. bridge repairs
- Kensington Ave. at Trinidad Park bridge repairs
- Fillmore Ave. repaving

# Evolving mobility landscape and future readiness

The integration of emerging mobility solutions that leverage new innovations like on-demand micro-transit, automated and connected vehicles, and zero emission vehicles present an opportunity to support integrated and multi-modal planning. With this project, prioritization of right-of-way to support efficient, equitable, and sustainable transportation options for Region Central can be considered through design and implementation.



Top: Conceptual examples of emerging mobility solutions. Source: Stantec Smart(ER) Mobility. Bottom: The wide range of emerging modes and technologies that Region Central should be equipped to accommodate in the future



# Chapter 9 Planning and policy context

## Related plans and policies

Numerous agencies, institutions, organizations, and developers are active throughout Region Central, and the area has a strong planning foundation to build on, with a diversity of perspectives and sense of a shared future.

Accordingly, the planning process included coordination with these entities to incorporate their objectives into our dialogue and mitigate conflicts where possible. This process began with a review of 80+ plans, studies, and reports by relevant agencies and organizations. Interviews with dozens of Region Central stakeholders were another key input.







PART III:

# The plan

## Chapter 10 Vision and goals

### Vision as lenses

A shared Region Central vision established a broader context within which mobility scenarios were developed and evaluated. This vision was shaped by previous planning, analysis and engagement.

The vision is expressed as **three primary lenses** through which the benefits and tradeoffs of mobility scenarios were assessed.

### Replenished parks, parkways, waterways, and places

**Purpose:** To ensure that future mobility investments in Region Central take into consideration the area's rich heritage and efforts to replenish culturally and environmentally significant elements that enhance our city and society for both today and the years to come.



### Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development

**Purpose:** To evaluate whether future mobility investments in Region Central will support job accessibility for all, housing stability and Improved health outcomes.



### Effective local and regional mobility

**Purpose:** To ensure that people travelling within, to/from, and through Region Central can do so efficiently, comfortably, and with options other than driving that support equity and accessibility.



# Detailed goals were developed for each lens, organized by broader goals

LENS

## Effective local and regional mobility

GOALS

### Access – The ability to get to places in and around Region Central

Meet accessibility needs of Region Central neighborhoods, institutions, and public spaces (museums, hospitals, colleges, Delaware Park, K-12 schools, etc.)

Maintain or improve access to Downtown and other regional destinations

Improve and encourage access and connectivity between Region Central neighborhoods

DETAIL GOALS

### Choice – Having effective options for travel

Minimize the extent to which the Scajaguada Expressway Corridor acts as a barrier in Region Central

Make Region Central’s facilities safer and more welcoming for all users

Ensure that the mobility infrastructure serves as an effective and inviting “front door” for Region Central’s existing and potential land uses and economic opportunities

### Character – Making Region Central’s facilities safe, pleasant, and accommodating

Create a transportation network responsive to all types of mobility demands in Region Central

Encourage “first-last” mile connections within Region Central for all types of users

Support and prepare for next-generation mobility (micromobility, autonomous-mobility, etc.) with focus on shared and electric modes

## What we heard: Quotes from early outreach

*Additional bike lanes would be incredible -- especially if they are protected*

*Restore creek to its original form to improve overall habitat and water access for stand-up paddle boards and kayaking.*

*Consider numerous crossings & traffic calming to connect Buff State to creek area*





## Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development

### Jobs, business, and workforce development

Support Region Central as an **important employment hub** focused on institutions, advanced manufacturing, and health and life sciences.

Support Region Central's role as a **destination for historic, cultural, and recreational tourism**

Improve access to **workforce development resources and employment opportunities** in Region Central

Support **small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurship**, and minority, women, and disadvantaged enterprises in Region Central

Support **reusing vacant buildings** for employment uses, especially for small firms in innovation or knowledge-based industries

### Housing and neighborhood stability

Support Region Central homeowners whose property values were negatively impacted by highway construction and related traffic impacts and **support the expansion of housing opportunities**

Promote **neighborhood stability and quality of life** for existing residents – renters and homeowners - across all incomes

### Healthy neighborhoods

Enhance **air quality, walkability, access to fresh food, connections to quality healthcare**, and similar determinants of public health outcomes

## What we heard: Quotes from early outreach

*My concerns are sewage overflow into the water, housing, long-term care facilities, potholes. We need more recreation and things for families. It's important to recognize cultural differences and provide large housing for multi-generational families.*

*The status quo is unacceptable; this highway, like the 33 which carves through the East Side polluting black neighborhoods, is an embarrassment.*

*Priorities: jobs with equitable pay, restoration of green space, remove 198 and 33. Normal speed limit for 198*

LENS

## Replenished parks, parkways, waterways, and places

GOALS

Replenishing part of our region's identity and heritage

Replenishing our natural assets

Replenishing our park systems and neighborhoods

DETAIL GOALS

Renew the **Olmsted legacy** in Region Central, including Delaware Park and associated parkways

Restore the quality and character of **historic waterways and natural habitats**

Expand **local and regional connectivity** of parks, parkways, and waterfronts as a system and destination for tourism, healthy recreation, and active lifestyles.

Reinforce and leverage Region Central's significant **historic places and buildings**

Emphasize **sustainability and climate change resilience** in both infrastructure and other public and private investments

Reinforce **neighborhood centers as the social and cultural heart** of local communities and places to celebrate community identity through sensitive investment in new and existing buildings and public spaces

### What we heard: Quotes from early outreach

*This is the time to go big and get it right. Reclaim the creek and access to park and amenities!*

*I go to UB South. There's nowhere to park so I walk. We need more parking or a better bus option. I'd like benches along the 198/bus route area with heated bus shelters. I need a clearer transit route to get from Niagara St to UB -- right now I have to take bus/train/walk/bus.*

*Pedestrians and bicyclists must be heavily prioritized over cars.*

*One lane would be ideal in [a boulevard/at-grade] situation. Reduce traffic and unnecessary trips. This could be a decent compromise as long as transit and bike infrastructure [is in place].*

## Chapter 11 Mobility scenarios

### Scenario planning

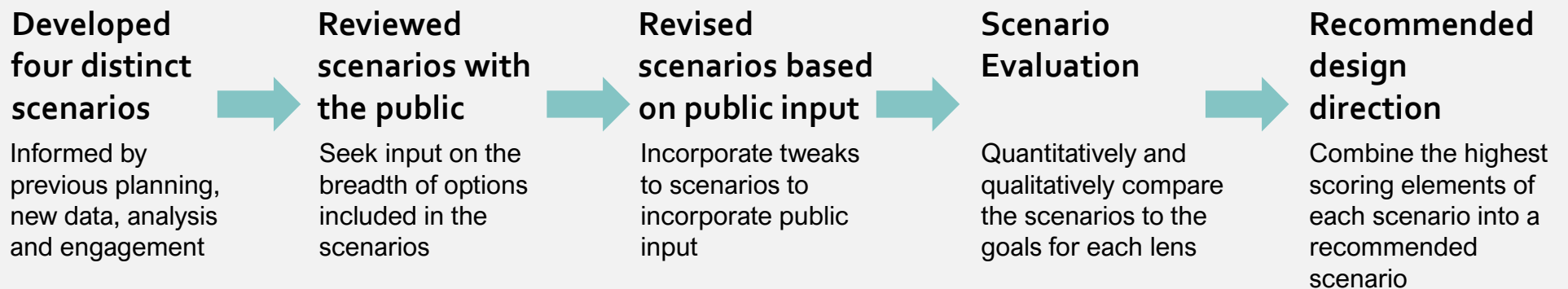
To decide upon a design direction that best achieves the community goals, four distinct scenarios were developed to test a range of options.

- Each scenario represents a bundle of coordinated, mutually supportive, pedestrian, bike, roadway, transit and related recommendations
- A recommended scenario was identified and refined to incorporate beneficial elements from other scenarios

### Three components of each scenario

1. **Corridor core elements**, such as how to maintain, reconfigure, or replace the current Expressway
2. **Supporting elements** beyond the corridor throughout Region Central that support the core elements
3. **Already planned projects** that the City of Buffalo or regional partners are carrying out regardless of the Scajaquada redesign (consistent across scenarios)

### Process of scenario development and selection





# Overview of the four scenarios

## Status Quo+

- Maintains present function of Scajaquada Expressway corridor
- Addresses safety through design changes
- Creates additional multimodal connectivity across Region Central
- Keeps sub-regional trips on the Expressway rather than on other Region Central roadways

## Partial Expressway Removal

- Removes Expressway within primary park areas
- Maintains neighborhood roadway access to the regional transportation network
- Retains portions of the Scajaquada Expressway to provide connections from Region Central to the regional transportation network (I-190 and 33)
- Responds to the finding that today, only 8% of vehicles at the east end of the Expressway travel all the way to the west end, meaning that the Expressway is primarily used as a means of accessing I-190 and SR-33

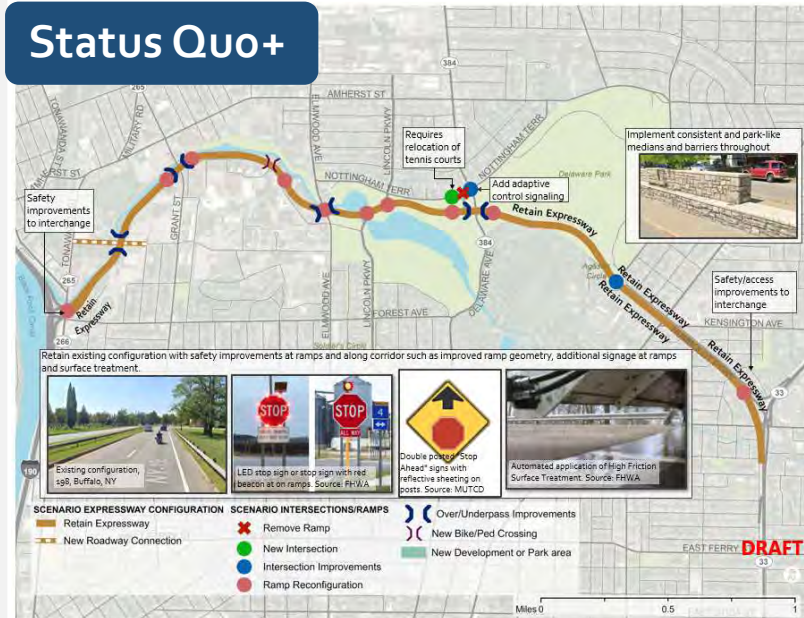
## At-Grade Roadway

- Balances regional access needs with at-grade character by replacing the Expressway with an at-grade tree lined boulevard
- Maintains neighborhood roadway access to the regional transportation network
- Creates opportunities for at-grade crossings and local access
- Integrates with surrounding neighborhoods

## Full Expressway Removal

- Removes Expressway throughout Region Central
- Local street network accommodates east/west regional movement through Region Central
- Add dedicated multimodal opportunities to cross the creek for north/south travel
- Allows for substantial creek restoration and increase in park areas

# Overview of the four scenarios





# From scenarios to evaluation

Scenarios were vetted with the public and refined based on feedback before advancing to evaluation. A public meeting was held in May 2022 to review and comment on the scenarios for completeness and ensure that a range of options were represented among the four. There were 459 comments received at the public meeting, as well as 219 comments received through the project website. In addition, there were many more meetings and briefings with key stakeholder and community members.

## What we heard:

To ensure that the scenario evaluation captured the appropriate breadth of options, the following additional elements were added before evaluating the scenarios, based on public feedback:

- In the Full Removal scenario, remove ramps and interchange with I-190
- In the At-grade scenario, test both one lane and two lane options
- Further definition of transit recommendations for all scenarios

Other public concerns and recommendations were tabled during the scenario evaluation phase, but incorporated into the final recommendation:

- Additional access to/from Rt. 33
- Relocate the Delaware Ave at-grade intersection to south of the stone arch bridge





# Chapter 12 Evaluation

## Metrics approach

### Translating the lenses to metrics

Each lens was translated into a comprehensive set of measurable metrics

- Mobility: 19 metrics
- Parks, Natural Assets, Heritage and Identity: 17 metrics
- Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development: 5 metrics

### Measurement

Each metric was first evaluated and scored using the most relevant methodology and metric

- For some metrics, the score was in linear feet or total population, for example
- For some metrics qualitative scoring was more appropriate
- Where applicable, scores were developed separately for the Corridor and the Supporting Elements. Then, each metric was translated into a 1-5 scale and aggregated according to the 3 sub-lenses under each goal

### Ranking

Each scenario was then ranked (1-4) according to the aggregated sub-lens scores

*The full metrics analysis can be found in Appendix H.*

## Metric examples

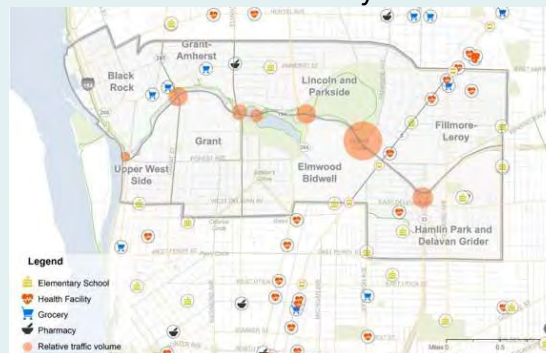
### Replenished parks, parkways, waterways and places

How many linear feet of park area is added in each scenario?



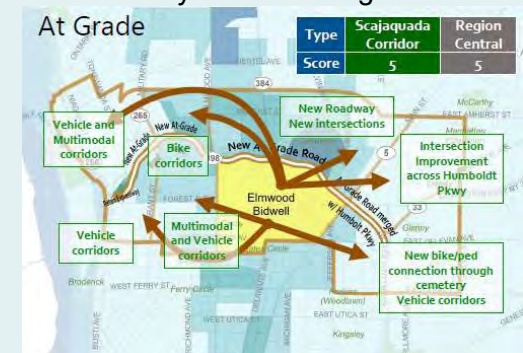
### Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development

How does each scenario improve access to health and safety resources?



### Effective local and regional mobility

How does each scenario improve connectivity between neighborhoods?



# List of all (41) evaluation metrics

Metrics are organized by lens.

## Effective local and regional mobility

### Access

- Physical number of connections to Region Central destinations, by mode
- Assessment of connection to key Regional locations
- Levels of additional connectivity between neighborhoods
- Travel time, by mode
- Changes on vehicle travel patterns
- Changes on congestion/delay on Expressway and key corridors

### Choice

- Assumed levels of new connections
- Overall coverage of transportation facilities by mode
- Miles of pedestrian, transit, and bicycle connections in Region Central
- Miles of the regional trail system
- Assumed transit coverage and frequency
- GIS-based measures such as average block size
- Availability of near-term next generation mobility options
- Readiness assessments and investments for next generation mobility
- Changes in vehicular patterns

### Character

- Number of Expressway crossings
- Proximity of neighborhoods to Expressway crossings
- Travel time across the Expressway between key destinations
- Estimated change in crash patterns
- Assessments of street character (including sidewalk width, curbside use, pedestrian crossings, etc.)

## Replenished parks, parkways, waterways and places

### Replenishing our natural assets:

- Ability to facilitate restoration of park and creek ecology such as park landscape patterns and plantings, and habitats
- Ability to facilitate restoration of historic hydrological function of the Scajaquada Creek through alignment, width, and riparian environment restoration
- Ability to facilitate reconnection and restoration of the hydrological function of Scajaquada Creek and Hoyt Lake
- Ability to improve water quality and facilitate reconnection of the Scajaquada Creek and Hoyt Lake
- Ability to introduce green infrastructure and reduce impervious pavements
- Ability to facilitate clean-up and re-use of brownfield and vacant / industrial land

### Replenishing our park systems and neighborhoods:

- Ability to restore Delaware Park's role in connecting Olmsted's Park System (connecting the East Side and West Side Parks and Parkways)
- Ability to improve access and recreation opportunities for Scajaquada Creek
- Ability to introduce new/improved multi-use paths and connections to water resources, adjacent neighborhoods, and regional paths/trails
- Ability to maintain or facilitate additional active recreation facilities
- Ability to mitigate or reduce the level of traffic that funnels off the expressway into our neighborhood centers such as Grant-Amherst, Parkside and Russell, Main and Kensington, and Elmwood Corridor

### Replenishing part of our region's identity and heritage:

- Ability to restore network of park roads, sidewalks, and paths and furnishings that are sympathetic to the original park design
- Ability to restore degraded/lost historic features such as the North Bay, Gala Lake shoreline, Scajaquada Creek Parkway, and the Stone Arch Bridge
- Ability to restore parkway quality, character, and continuity (Lincoln and Humboldt Parkways)
- Ability to facilitate multi-modal connectivity between cultural and historical resources
- Ability to facilitate restoration of the Scajaquada Creek alignment
- Ability to maintain or bring back additional parkland acreage

## Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development

- Job growth
- The ability to connect local residents and commuters to these jobs both physically and through their skill levels.
- Housing that is good quality and affordable so that vulnerable households will not be displaced by future investments
- Neighborhoods that are safe and healthy
- Productive land use patterns that leverage existing and planned public investments and provide tax revenues to support city services

# Metric summary table and design direction selection

The table below summarizes how the scenarios rank according to the evaluation metrics for each lens sub-category. The analysis revealed that the at-grade scenario scored the best, but certain elements of other scenarios scored better.

## Recommended design direction:

Hybrid built from the highest performing components from the 4 scenarios

	EFFECTIVE LOCAL AND REGIONAL MOBILITY			REPLENISHED PARKS, PARKWAYS, WATERWAYS, AND PLACES			ENHANCED EQUITY & INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
	Access	Choice	Character	Heritage & Identity	Natural Assets	Parks	Economic Develop.	Health	Housing
	<b>Status Quo</b>	●○○○	●○○○	●○○○	●○○○	●○○○	●○○○	●●●○	●○○○
<b>At-Grade</b>	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●○○	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
<b>Partial Removal</b>	●●●○	●●○○	●●●○	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	●●●○	●●○○	○○○○
<b>Full Removal</b>	●●○○	●●●○	●●○○	●●●○	●●●●	●●●○	●○○○	●●○○	●●○○

Low ●○○○

High ●●●●

This table only includes evaluation results for the Corridor treatments, not the Supporting Elements. Analysis of the Supporting Elements and full documentation regarding on the metrics analyses for all three lenses for the Supporting Elements and the Corridor are included in Appendix H.



## Chapter 13

# Recommended Scenario: The Scajaquada Parkway

Taking the best elements from each of the four scenarios, the recommended hybrid scenario took shape as the new Scajaquada Parkway, a multimodal corridor with landscaping and frequent intersections to connect to the neighborhoods and institutions.

The recommended design direction...

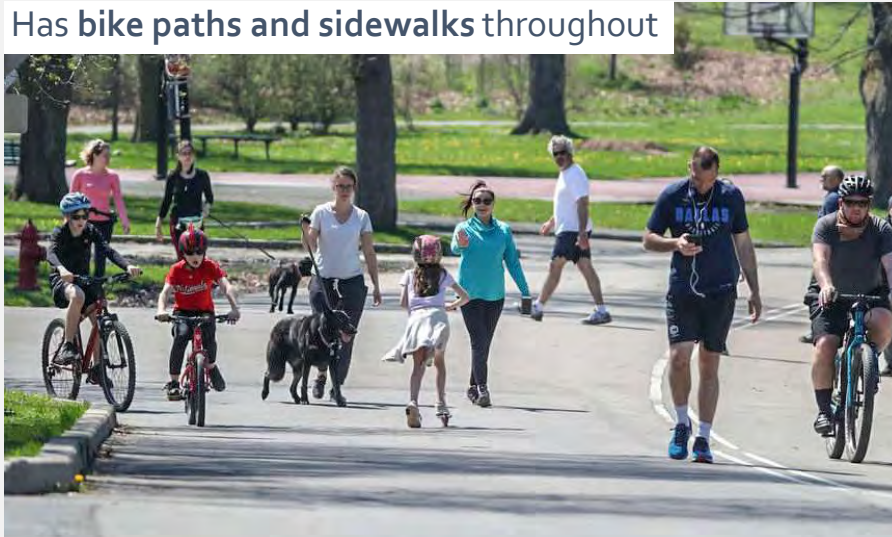
Is Olmsted parkway inspired



Has one lane in each direction, with the potential for carriage roads on certain segments



Has bike paths and sidewalks throughout



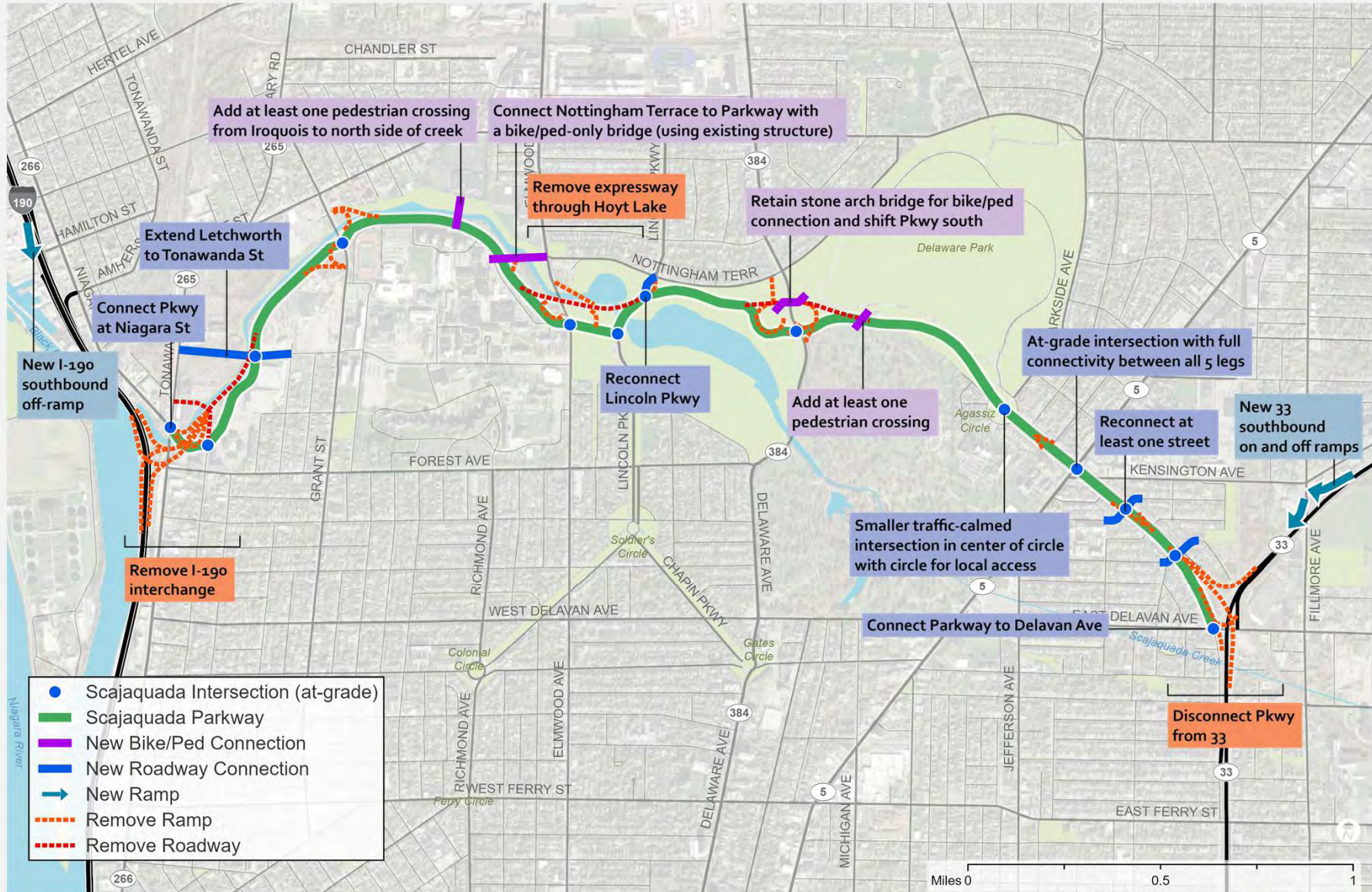
Has all ramps removed, unless otherwise specified for repurposing (Nottingham Terr.)



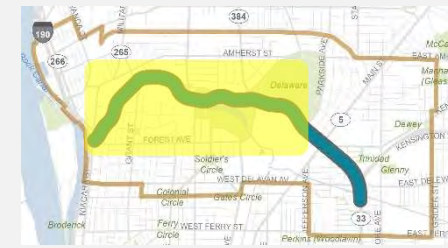


# Recommendation: Corridor design direction

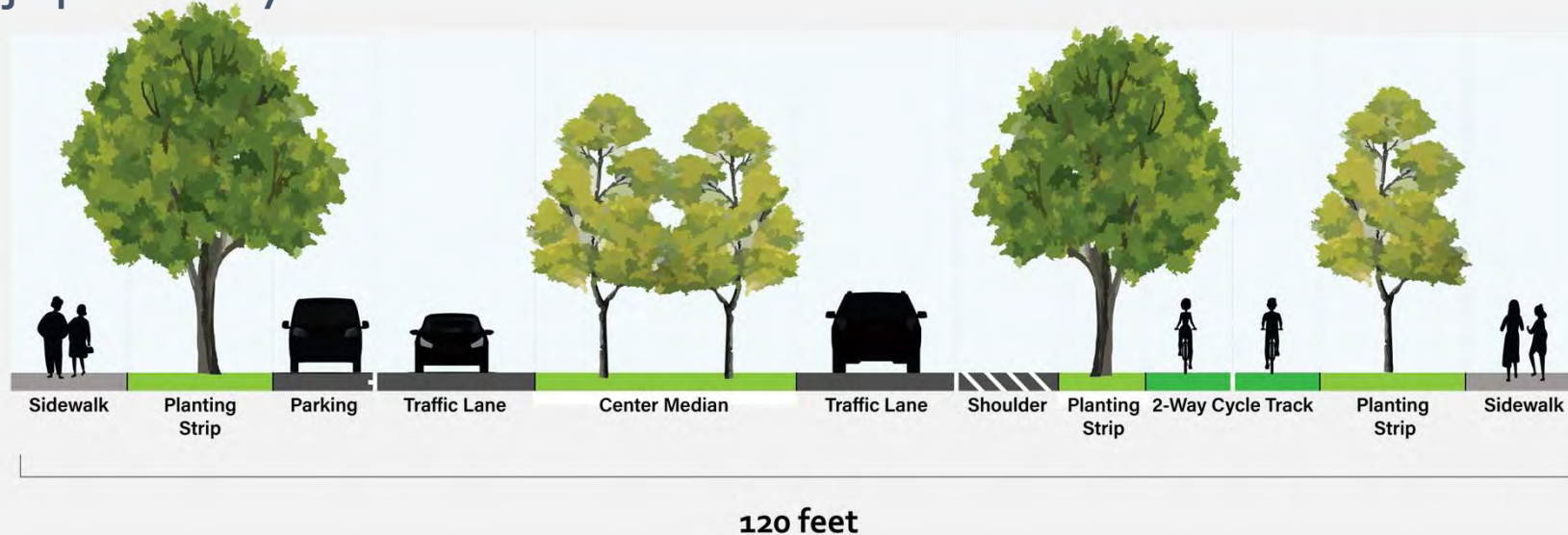
For the length of the corridor, all ramps will be removed or, in the case of Nottingham Terrace, repurposed into Pedestrian/Bicycle connections. Roadways will connect or reconnect across the corridor at Letchworth Street, Lincoln Parkway, and along the Humboldt Parkway. New Pedestrian/Bicycle connections will be added in Delaware Park and behind Wegmans. Over and underpasses will be replaced with traffic signals, designed to the latest safety specifications.







# Representative potential cross section, West of Parkside Scajaquada Pkwy

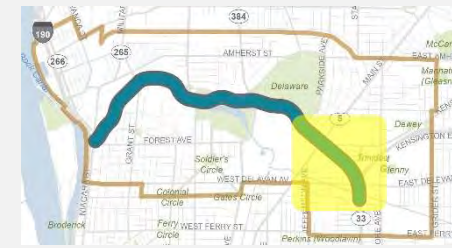


The cross section above is intended as a representative potential layout for the street based on the available right-of-way. The Parkway cross section is likely to vary throughout the length of the corridor. Subsequent design phases will determine detailed cross sections and may include variations in elements such as the turning lane, median, cycle track, etc.

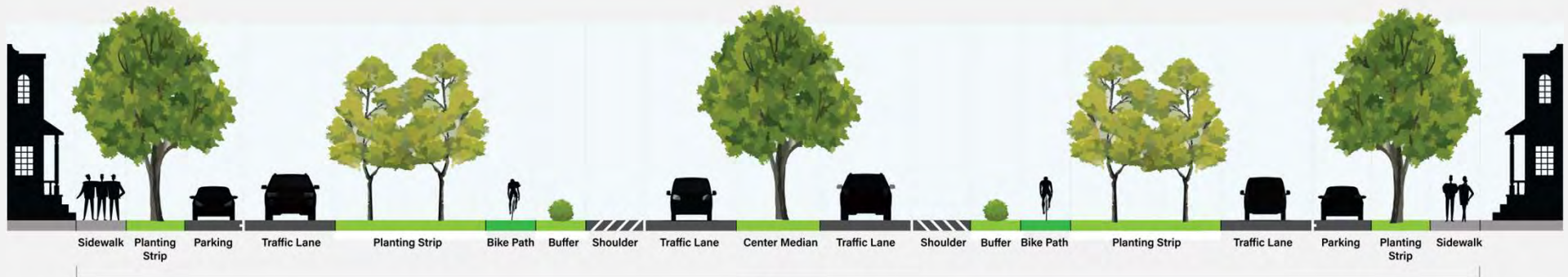
## Design goals

- Maximize center median
- Sidewalks - both sides
- Separated Bike Path (two-way) - at least one side
- "Capturable" space for right/left turn lanes as needed
- Main segment can float north/south within alignment to accommodate parks, access, creek restoration, resiliency, etc.
- On-street parking - some segments depending on land use and design

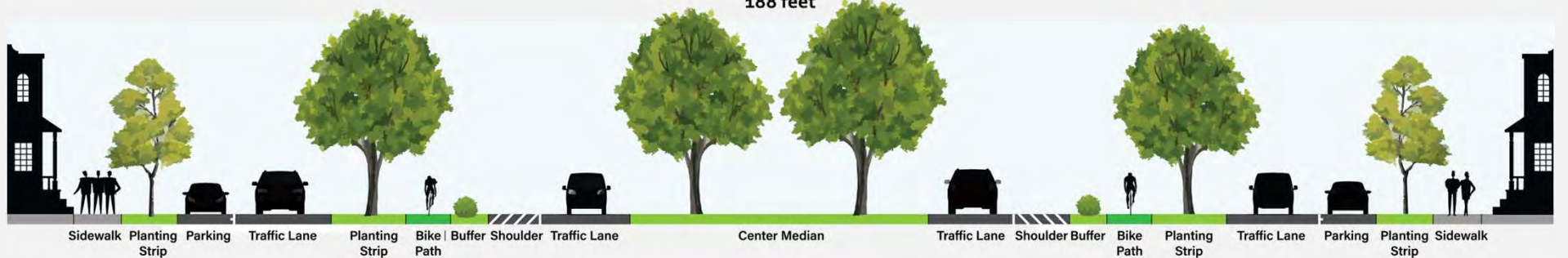




# Representative potential cross sections, East of Parkside Scajaquada Pkwy



188 feet



## Design Goals

- Separate interior roadway to carry through traffic
- Separate frontage/carriage roadway to serve homes
- Maintain buffer between carriage road and through road
- Bike paths in buffer area
- Maintain sidewalk and parking on carriage roads
- No parking on middle through road

The cross section above is intended as a representative potential layout for the street based on the available right-of-way. The Parkway cross section is likely to vary throughout the length of the corridor. Subsequent design phases of will determine detailed cross sections and may include variations in elements such as the turning lane, median, cycle track, etc.

## Supporting elements

The recommendations include a package of **Supporting Elements** crafted to ensure the new Scajaquada Parkway integrates with and complements the entire transportation system in Region Central. These additional projects are necessary to achieve the corridor design direction's full benefits and include:



Upgrade 13.73 mi of Region Central roadway



Anticipate next generation mobility



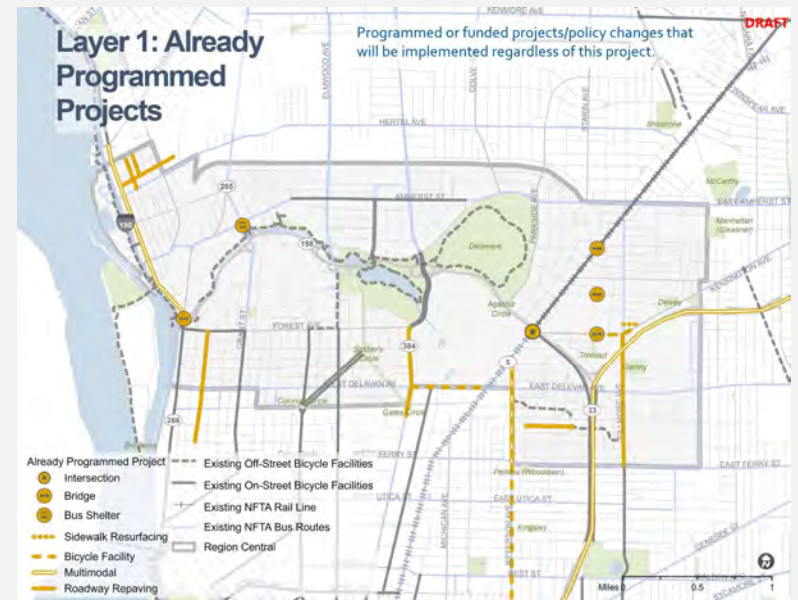
Protect residential neighborhoods



Assumed increases in transit service



Integrate 2 Mobility Hubs @ Main St Metro Stations



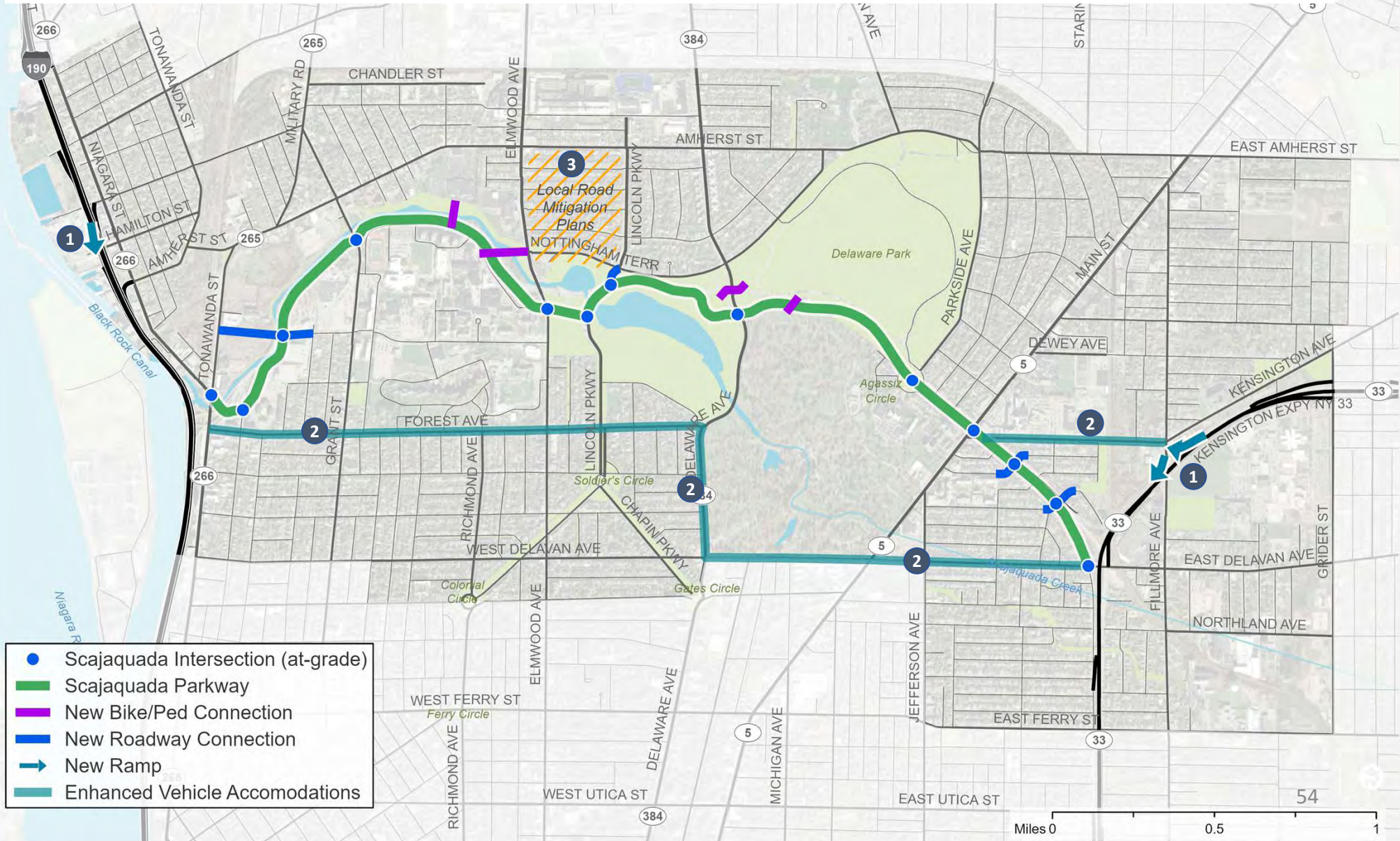
Supporting Elements are additive to existing and already programmed transportation improvements



# Key mobility supporting elements

Key supporting elements help serve east/west vehicle flow, including...

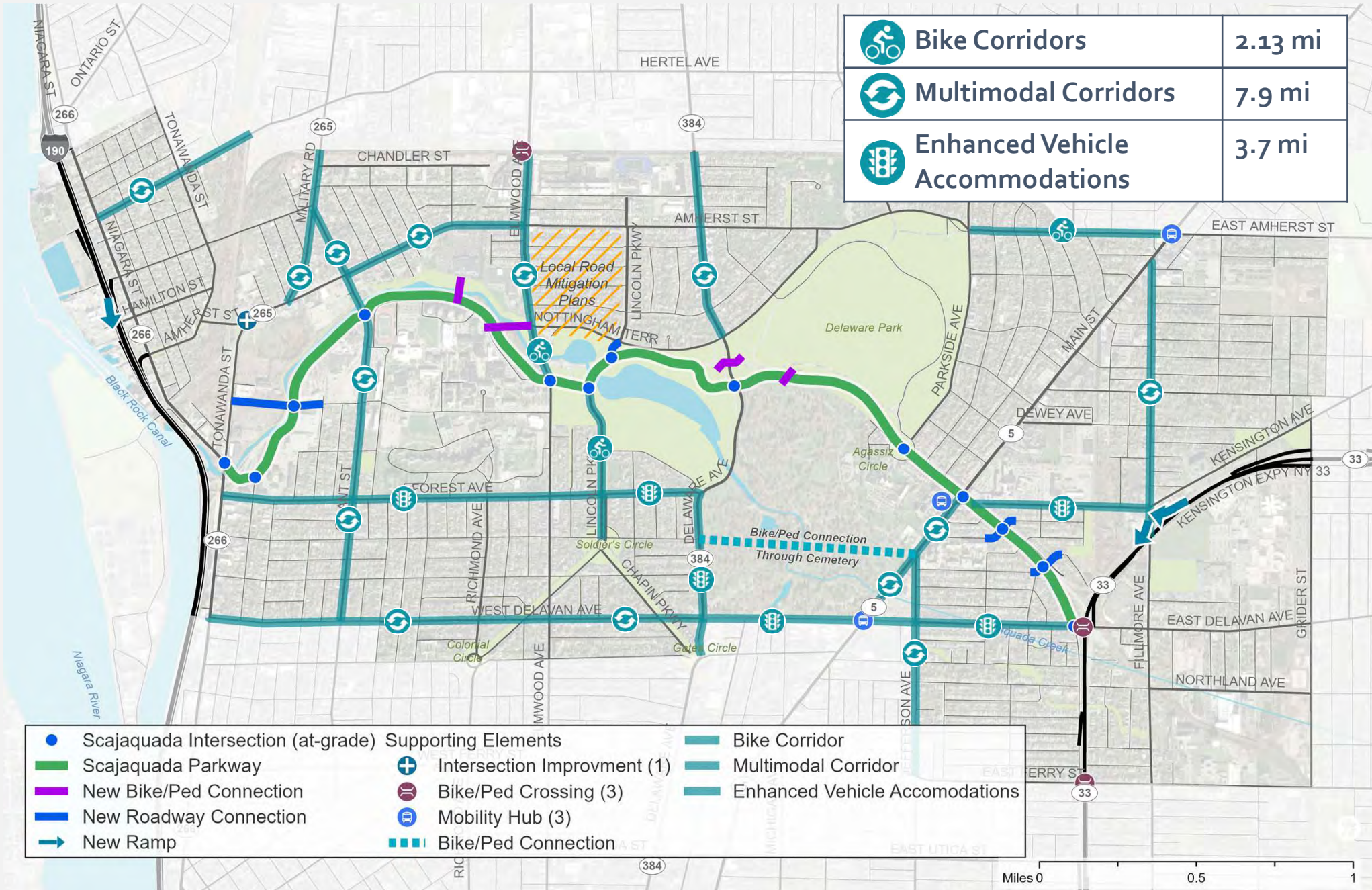
1. New ramps: Southbound I-190 off-ramp, SR 33 Westbound/Southbound on- and off-ramp
2. Enhanced Vehicle Accommodations: Forest Ave, Delaware Ave, Delavan Ave, and Kensington Ave
3. Local Road Mitigation Plan: Nottingham "Pan-Am" neighborhood





# Mobility supporting elements

Comprehensive set of supporting elements support a multimodal environment throughout Region Central



## Community benefit highlights

As stated previously, this transformational initiative will carry significant potential benefits for Region Central that extend far beyond its immediate mobility impacts. These benefits can be organized by lens, and include:

### Enhanced equity and inclusive economic development

This project could leverage the expected \$260-460 million investment in Scajaquada Parkway and Supporting Elements construction to support the creation of jobs and **contracts with small and minority-owned businesses**.

The removal of expressway ramps frees up over 40 acres of parkway-adjacent land for **park restoration** and **inclusive economic development**, while new mobility connections support the **redevelopment of nearby parcels** into uses that support workforce readiness and training programs. Region Central could add as many as 1,100 jobs through related redevelopment.

Improved access and connectivity as well as new traffic patterns bring ancillary benefits such as improved **quality of life, aesthetics, and air quality** which can be translated into increased community and household equity, especially when coupled with supporting policies that amplify benefits for local residents and businesses while counteracting forces of displacement.

### Effective local and regional mobility

The proposed scenario replaces the Scajaquada Expressway with an integrated connected roadway that provides opportunities for **multimodal travel along the corridor** by walking, biking, rolling, or using other micromobility modes via **shared use pathways** and **wide sidewalks**.

In addition to facilitating travel along the corridor, the **porous design** of the Parkway will allow **multimodal travel across the corridor**, reducing the role the Scajaquada plays as a barrier between the communities in and around Region Central.

The proposed corridor will **promote improved safety**, especially for vulnerable road users (people travelling outside of vehicles), through separated pathways and bike facilities, and through narrower travel lanes.

### Replenished parks, parkways, waterways, and places

The proposed alignment creates significant **waterway restoration** potential for North Bay, Hoyt Lake, and the Scajaquada Creek through removal of ramps and right-of-way realignment.

With one lane in each direction, the proposed Parkway would **reduce impervious surface** coverages, creating new opportunities for installation of green infrastructure and **restoration of the creek floodplain**.

New multi-modal connections **reinforce the historic character** of Region Central by providing for multimodal connections to/through parks and reconnecting the street grid.

The removal of ramps frees **up over 40 acres for restoration** of historic Delaware Park.



## Community benefits by segment, organized by lens

### ● INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- E Making Delaware Avenue a multimodal street that has an intersection with the Scajaquada will improve both local and regional employment accessibility for residents living in this high density neighborhood. This could also spur redevelopment and/or building reuse around the intersection of Delaware Avenue with Amherst Street.

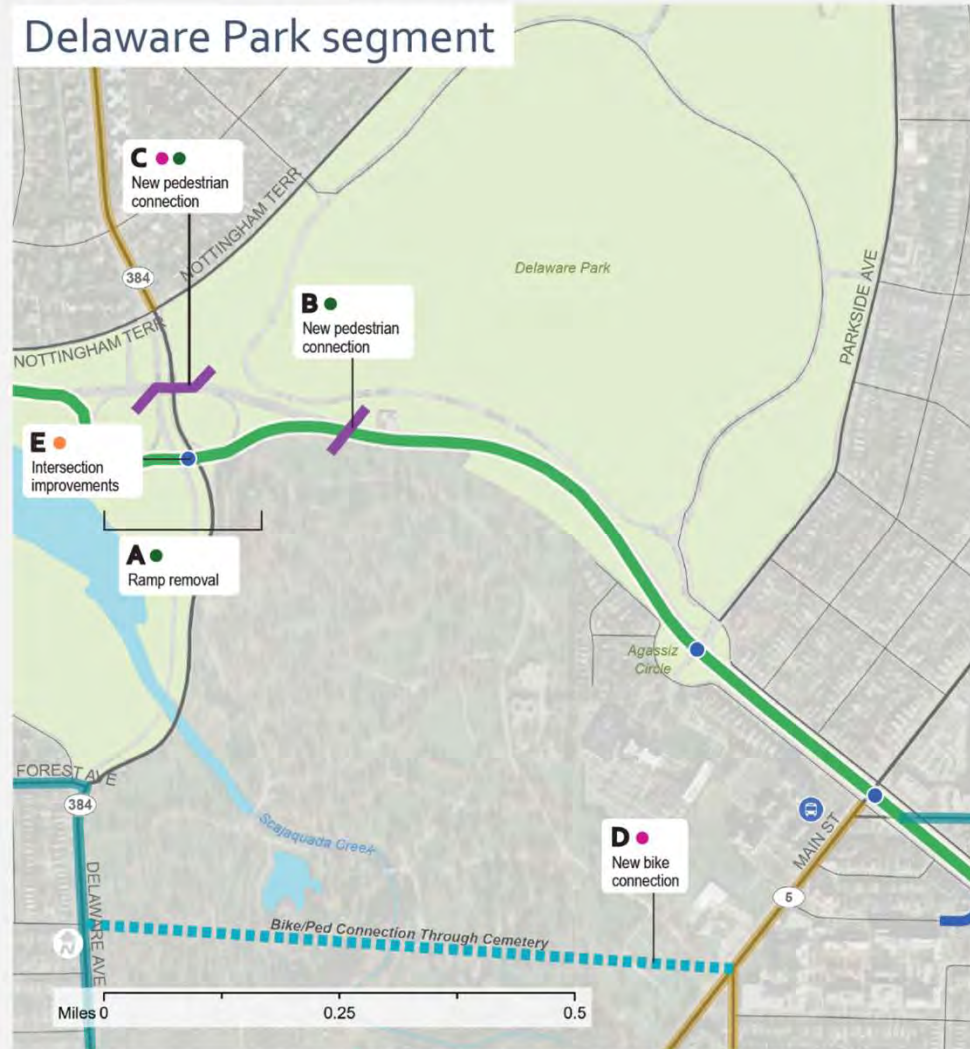
### ● PARKS, HERITAGE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES BENEFITS

- Overall Ramp and expressway removal increases opportunities for green space/park restoration potential, lake restoration potential, and reduction of impervious surface.
- A Removing ramps increases opportunity to restore pathways through park and facilitates connectivity between historic Park and Forest Lawn Cemetery
- B, C Removal of roadway from crossing over bridge allows for restoration of character and integrity of stone arch bridge
- C New pedestrian pathways facilitate connectivity between the Park Meadow and Hoyt Lake.

### ● MOBILITY BENEFITS

- Overall Improved all mode connections to Delaware Park
- Overall Frequent intersections that provide access to the Scajaquada Parkway
- Overall Continuous bike/pedestrian connection along the Scajaquada Parkway
  - C Improved bike/pedestrian connection between Delaware Park East and West using the stone arch bridge
  - D New bike/pedestrian connection through the Forest Lawn Cemetery greatly expands bike/pedestrian connectivity

## Delaware Park segment



- Scajaquada Intersection (at-grade)
- Scajaquada Parkway
- New Bike/Ped Connection
- New Roadway Connection
- Supporting Elements
  - Mobility Hub (1)
  - Bike/Ped Connection
  - Multimodal Corridor
  - Enhanced Vehicle Accommodations



# Community benefits by segment, organized by lens

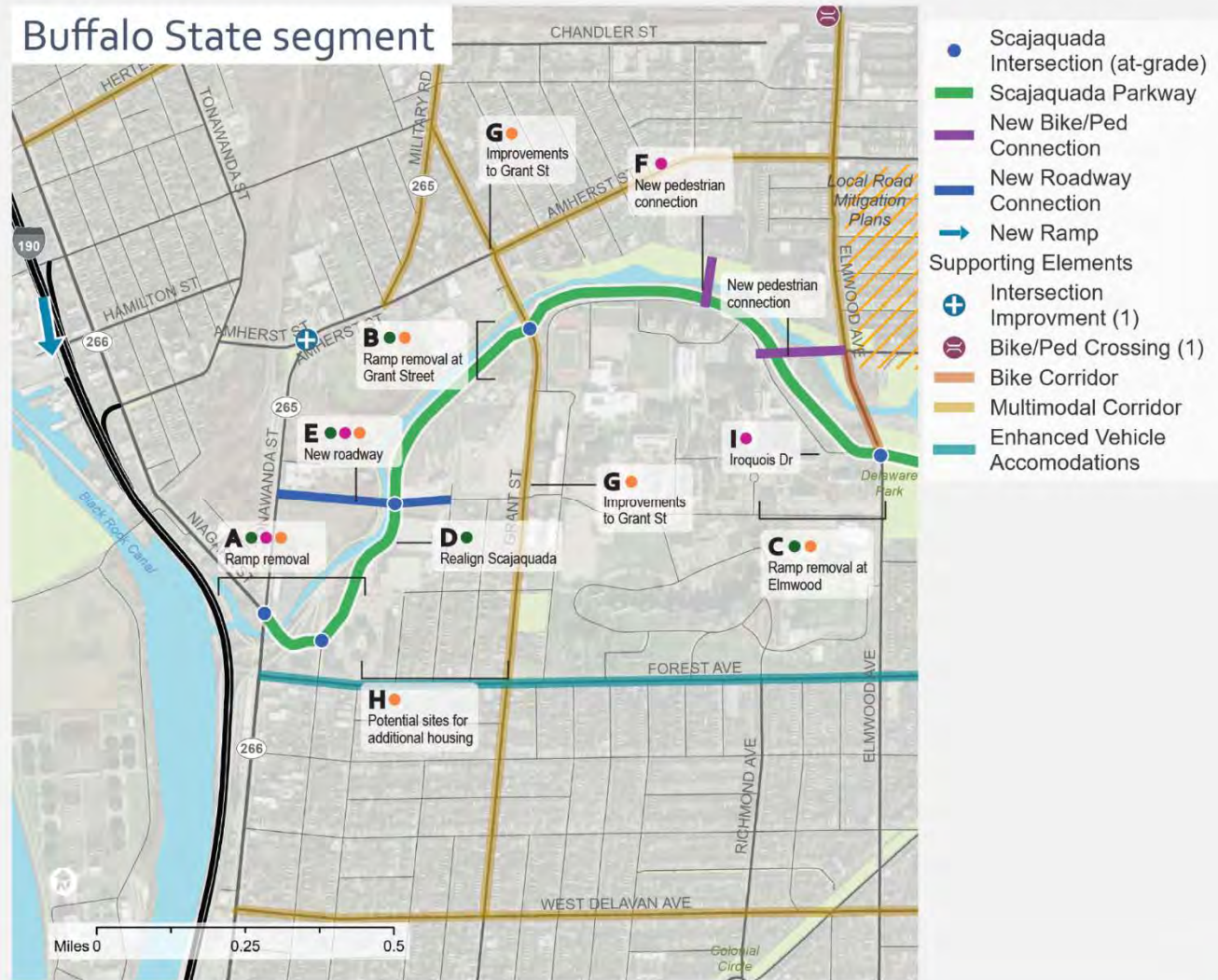
## ● INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- Overall** Roadway improvements to Forest Avenue will provide additional access to Niagara St. Increased accessibility could spark market support for industrial building reuse.
- A, B, C** New intersections facilitate multi-modal access to major economic generators, including Buffalo State, the Richardson Olmsted Campus, and emerging business districts along Niagara, Amherst, and Chandler Streets, while supporting existing/expanding small business clusters.
- E** New connections encourage redevelopment of large vacant parcels, which could add jobs to Region Central and increase the city's tax base. Larger parcels could support new manufacturing and life science facilities and expansion space for local businesses.
- G** Improvements to Grant Street will enhance grocery store access for people south of the Scajaquada, as there is a major grocery store just north of the intersection.
- H** More sites may become available for housing between the extension to Letchworth Street and Forest Avenue and west of Grant Street. The addition of mixed-income housing could offset some potential residential displacement in the area.

## ● PARKS, HERITAGE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES BENEFITS

- Overall** Narrower road width unlocks stream/North Bay restoration
- Overall** Keeping parkway south of creek increases creek restoration potential
- Overall** Narrower road width reduces runoff
- Overall** Narrower road width and road removal supports improved waterfront access and quality of recreation amenities
- A** I-190 interchange removal allows improved views and access to the waterfront
- A, B, C** Ramp removal creates opportunity for stream restoration
- A, B, C** Ramp removal reduces runoff from roads/decreases impervious surface
- B, C, D** Keeping parkway south of creek allows Jesse Kregal pathway to remain north of creek, improving continuity
- E** New roadway facilitates east-west connectivity from Grant-Amherst to Shoreline Trail, commemorating Erie Canal

## Buffalo State segment



## ● MOBILITY BENEFITS

- Overall** Continuous bike/pedestrian connection on the south side of the creek along the Scajaquada Parkway
- Overall** Continuous roadway connection along Scajaquada Parkway between Buffalo State and Niagara St
- Overall** Opportunities for additional Buffalo State driveways/multimodal access from the Scajaquada Parkway
- A** I-190 Interchange removal allows greatly improved bike and pedestrian experience on Niagara St
- E** New multi-modal roadway between Grant St and Tonawanda St @ Letchworth St
- F** New connections across the Scajaquada @ Elmwood Ave and Wegmans improve walking/biking access across Region Central
- I** Iroquois Dr remains in place until the Scajaquada takes over its ROW immediately west of Elmwood Ave



# Community benefits by segment, organized by lens

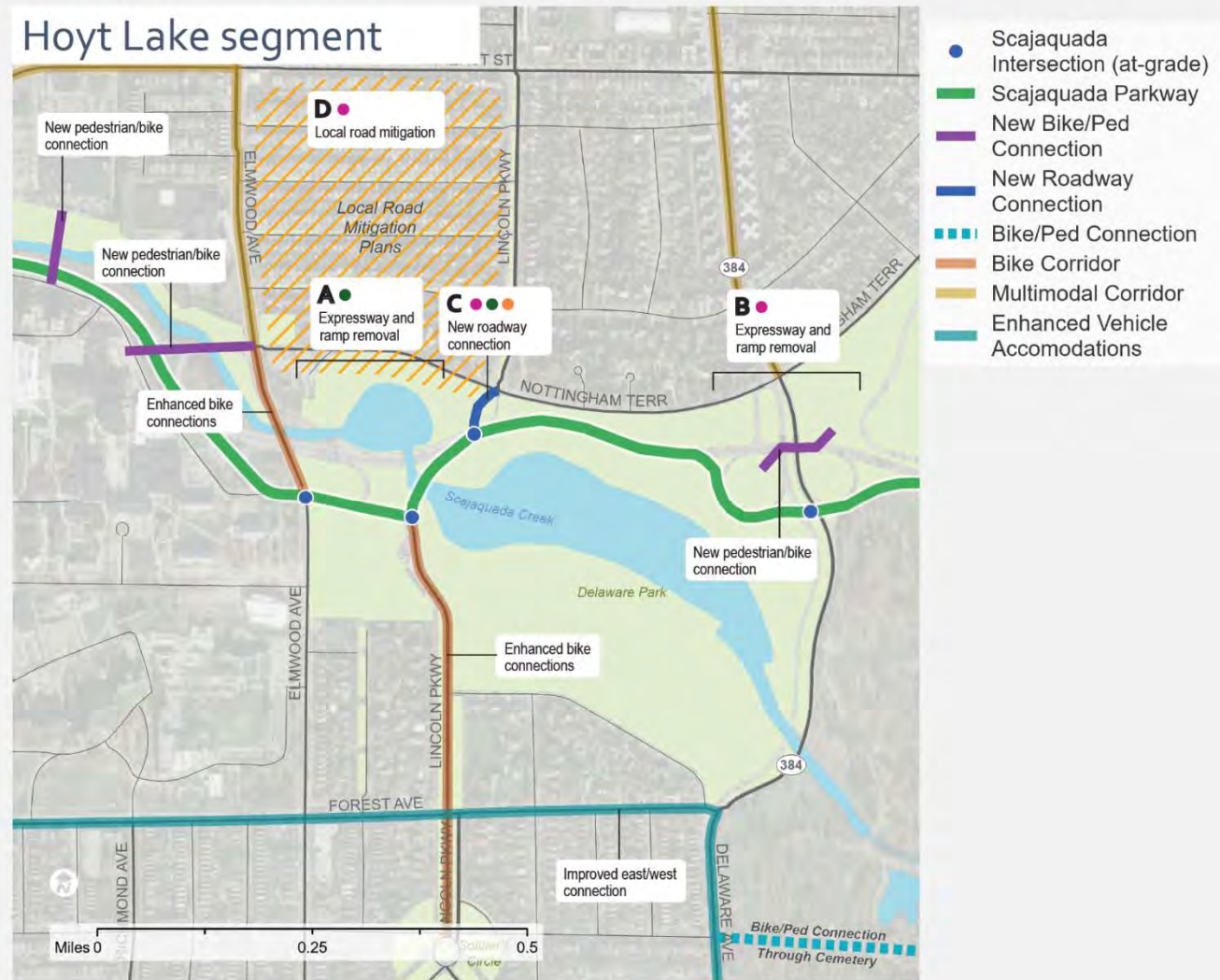
## ● PARKS, HERITAGE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES BENEFITS

- Overall Decreasing roadway width with fewer lanes creates opportunity for stream restoration
- Overall Restores historic South Scajaquada Parkway
  - A Improved access to waterfront with ramp removal, walkability improvements, possible creek restoration, fewer lanes, and additional connections over the water
  - A Removing expressway and ramps creates opportunity for stream restoration/North Bay restoration; decreases runoff; decreases impervious surface area
  - A Improves historic viewshed between the Marcy Casino, the Buffalo History Museum, and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum
  - A Opportunity to restore historic park paths between Buffalo AKG Art Museum and History Museum and paths around the North Bay
  - A Opportunity to restore historic North Bay alignment
  - C Retains viewshed while facilitating multimodal connectivity
  - C Improved connectivity to Elmwood Historic District, historic Pan American groups, within Museum District and between other historic resources in the vicinity

## ● MOBILITY BENEFITS

- Overall Frequent intersections provide access across the Scajaquada Parkway
- Overall Continuous bike/pedestrian connection along the Scajaquada Parkway
- Overall Enhanced area bicycle connections
- Overall Improved all mode connections to Delaware Park
  - B, C Improved bike/pedestrian connection between Delaware Park East and West
  - C Restored Lincoln Pkwy north/south connection
  - D Local road mitigation to manage diverted vehicle trips

## Hoyt Lake segment



## ● INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- C Connecting Lincoln Parkway north of the Scajaquada offers greater local connectivity to the economic activity center along Great Arrow Avenue.



# Community benefits by segment, organized by lens

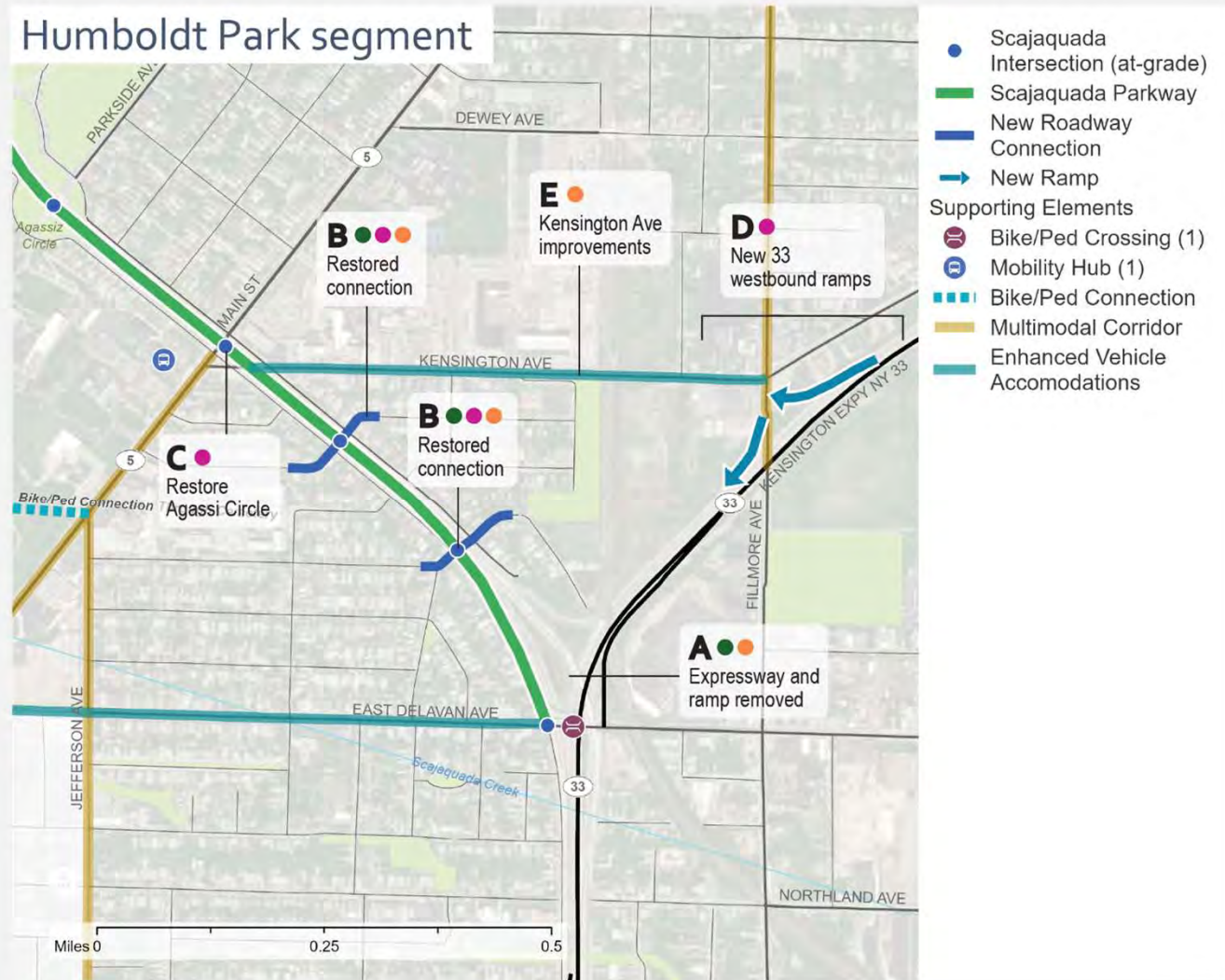
## ● INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- A Removal of major interchange and Expressway ramps will reduce traffic volumes and reduce the localized air quality impact associated with existing on- and off-ramps
- B The new road connecting Eastwood Place to Monticello Place creates better connections for the Canisius College Campus as well as allowing for better connectivity between the larger Delavan neighborhood and other important economic activity centers in this area.
- E Improvements to Kensington Avenue as it connects to Fillmore Avenue could help open up vacant and underutilized land in this area for more development, including both for employment and new high quality mixed income housing. This could add more employment opportunities to the east side neighborhoods. These improvements could also facilitate easier local access to grocery stores on Main Street.

## ● PARKS, HERITAGE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES BENEFITS

- Overall Expressway removal and new parkway help restore the character and continuity of the Humboldt Parkway
- A Removing major highway interchange decreases car exhaust emissions/air pollution in the vicinity of residential areas.
- B Parkway and improved intersections improve access for Hamlin Park, Fillmore Leroy, and Delavan Grider residents to parks and historic resources

## Humboldt Park segment



## ● MOBILITY BENEFITS

- Overall Continuous bike/pedestrian connection along the Scajaquada/Humboldt Parkway
- B Restored east/west connections at Eastwood Pl/Monticello Pl and Oakgrove
- C Full connectivity for all modes at the Main St/Kensington Ave Scajaquada Parkway intersection
- D New 33 westbound on and off ramps at Fillmore Ave provide an alternative way to access the 33



# Achieving the Expressway's promise: Related recommendations

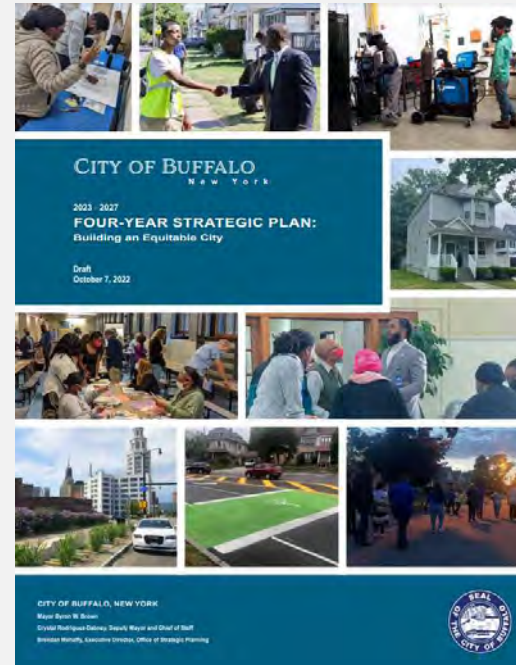
The Scajaquada Parkway, reimagined, can unlock direct and indirect benefits that make Region Central a more desirable place to live, work, and start a small business. With these benefits come challenges: the consequences of increased desirability of Region Central as a connected, lively, accessible place. To ensure the Scajaquada's success as an engine of inclusive economic development while minimizing displacement, affordable housing funds must be made available, and housing affordability monitored across all Region Central neighborhoods. Existing affordable housing should be reinvested in, to ensure that it meets today's standards.

The opportunities generated by reinventing the Scajaquada Expressway are not limited to the issues addressed in the Region Central process. The Strategic Priorities and Goals proposed in the Draft City of Buffalo's 2023 – 2027 FOUR-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: Building an Equitable City 2023 – 2027, emphasizes a series of related recommendations to more fully achieve this project's promise. These are collected in two groups: broad, underlying equity and inclusion recommendations spurred by the Strategic Plan's core approach to diversity, inclusion, and equity (note the orange circle in the diagram to the right), and then more targeted recommendations spurred by the four boxes to the right (more details on these recommendations can be found in the full [Strategic Plan](#)).

## Starting with equity and inclusion

Both the Strategic Plan and Region Central plans emphasize: "Building on our diversity to create an inclusive and equitable city." The current Scajaquada Expressway is a barrier that divides neighborhoods from each other and from a shared park. Removing it allows Region Central to realize its potential.

However, issues of equity and inclusion across race and other characteristics are complex and require constant attention to ensure that genuine progress is made. Over the next two decades, the replacement of the Scajaquada Expressway by a tree-lined boulevard will require this constant attention. It will be critical to manage this bold transition during rapidly evolving times to ensure that it does not trigger greater equity and inclusion challenges.



Buffalo Strategic Plan: Building an Equitable City, 2023-2027.



## Related recommendations

### Growing Region Central's stock of mixed-income housing

As North American households continue to shrink—fewer than one in four will include children by 2040—household growth will continue to be dominated by singles and couples, the strongest demographic market for Region Central's mixed-use, walkable urban neighborhoods.

Just as the Expressway comes down, enhancing Region Central's desirability as a place to live, learn, play...and innovate, changing demographics will generate the strongest housing market for these neighborhoods in decades. All while, knowledge industries push up salaries to compete in a global job market. Price competition from higher salaried knowledge workers—who have a particular preference for the mixed-use, mixed-income, and walkable quality of life offered by Region Central's neighborhoods—will place additional upward pressure on prices.

The answer should not be just a slate of additional affordable housing developments, but a commitment to Region Central's emergence as a living model of mixed-income neighborhoods celebrating how our increasingly fragmented society can come together to build an inclusive community. Preserving the character of these neighborhoods for all will require monitoring housing cost trends, securing large individual sites or multiple proximate sites for creating mixed-income housing in neighborhoods, and providing increased funding public private partnerships to close feasibility gaps.

Digging deeper, there are critical subsidiary tasks to address.

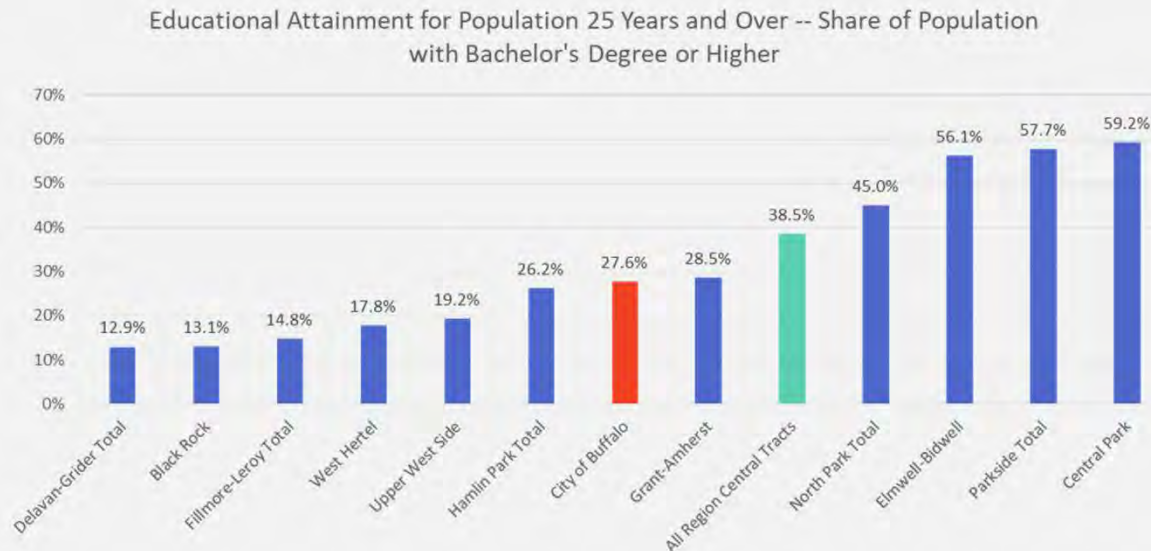


# Related recommendations

## Workforce readiness and development

Buffalo has had to join other formerly predominant industrial cities across North America in pursuing a new era of economic success based on growing a local knowledge economy. Like its peers, Buffalo has drawn on historic neighborhoods and institutions, relatively attractive housing prices, a diverse natural setting, and unique resources to attract a new generation of well-educated workers and the knowledge jobs and investment that follow. As a broad growth engine, Buffalo sees that one additional knowledge industry job can create five additional jobs—as well as opportunities to start new businesses—for a wide range of Buffalonians.

As calls for racial and economic justice resonate and competition for workers accelerates, the time is now to shift the focus from attracting educated workers—“talent”—from other regions to growing this talent locally. A large majority of net new jobs—and economic growth—require public and institutional leadership and investment. The fundamental challenge is making the new economy benefits accessible to many more people. This begins with removing obstacles—supporting single mothers, “curing” criminal records, providing access to good and consistent healthcare, and challenges that keep potentially skilled workers outside of the workforce. The next step is training Buffalonians in ever-changing marketable skills.



The City of Buffalo is below both the regional and the national average for workers with more than a high school degree. Region Central has an unusual mix of people with both very low and very high levels of educational attainment. Source: American Community Survey 2019 (5 Year Estimates), Strategic Economics, 2021.



# Related recommendations

## Buffalo's Common Ground

Region Central will benefit from one incomparable tool for promoting substantive equity and inclusion: transformation of the Scajaquada Creek and adjacent parks into Buffalo's common ground. A public realm deliberately envisioned, planned, designed, and programmed to proactively invite the full spectrum of Buffalonians to come together and celebrate shared community.



Railroad Park, in Birmingham AL. Source: Stantec. One example of a new public park created with this exact inclusive mission in mind is Birmingham Alabama's Railroad Park. A sign of that park's success is that Railroad Park is the place in Birmingham that everyone calls "mine".

## Opportunities related to the Strategic Plan's Priorities

### Scajaquada Corridor Partnership

Region Central hosts globally renowned and regionally significant institutions that include premier educational, art, architectural, and health care facilities as well as the region's strongest visitor destination—the historic Buffalo Zoo. While thematically linked by their connections to Olmsted's Legacy, the reinvigoration of the legacy suggests that all institutions explore new opportunities for partnerships related to joint programming, public information campaigns, and targeted efforts that make the Scajaquada Corridor a shared destination for all Buffalonians. The corridor shares and hosts extraordinary stories about the region's history, nature, economy, arts and culture—rights and wrongs, triumphs and renewed hopes. These can be re-told with the proposed Parkway

# Related recommendations

## The next transportation paradigm: Next-generation mobility and related transit needs

Region Central plans are future forward, recognizing that plans must lean into the next generation of mobility and technology, not the declining past trends.

The next steps for this project will include additional elements for incorporation to support the integration of innovative next generation transportation solutions focused on people-first approaches.

- Leverage major destinations for a station-based carshare program that could anchor mobility hubs.
- Create a micromobility implementation plan that considers service area, parking requirements, and charging hubs (if applicable).
- Integrate demand-response microtransit as a connector within a neighborhood as a feeder for fixed-route transit.
- Conduct an EV charging gap analysis for public charging infrastructure.
- Pilot freight mobility hubs with pick-up lockers and first/last mile personal delivery devices (PDDs).
- Pilot an east-west low speed autonomous vehicle (LSAV) shuttle that connects key destinations. Consider a shared automated mobility lane as part of the pilot.

## Leverage traditional public transit modes

- Consider operating an east-west bus route on the Scajaquada Parkway. Coordinate with NFTA on opportunities to leverage the new Parkway to serve Buffalo State University and other important institutions.
- Add mobility hubs to existing Metro Rail stations along Main Street, including bicycle, pedestrian, and shared mobility options.

## Local “last mile” deliveries

Our freight network will need to diversify to accommodate new services and expand so that deliveries can be made safely and efficiently on local streets using drones, delivery bots and package pick-up lockers.



GBNRTC Moving Forward 2050



## Chapter 14 Project costs and funding strategies

### Cost estimate

The estimated overall project cost, including demolition, new construction, and supporting elements is between \$260,000,000 and \$460,000,000. Additional analysis shows that simply maintaining and appropriately reconstructing aging infrastructure on the current expressway would cost between \$125,000,000 to \$220,000,000 over the next 20 years, essentially offsetting a portion of the overall project cost.

The estimated project cost of \$260-\$460M accounts for the elements listed in the table to the right, including pre-construction design and engineering, construction, incidentals, management, acquisitions, and inflation. Construction costs include construction for both the Scajaquada Parkway and the supporting elements, as well as demolition for the new, at-grade parkway. Contingencies and inflation are incorporated into the estimate by percentage. The low to high cost range represents current 2023 estimates and 2033 (10 year) estimates, respectively.

Estimated project cost is relatively low due to multiple factors including:

- A portion of the project is located in a park and sparsely populated area (west) vs. a typical, dense urban setting. Therefore, this project will likely have fewer impacts to infrastructure, utilities and right-of-way, and a lower cost.
- No large bridges are proposed to be constructed.
- Proposed roadway is only two lanes, will be at grade, and will not require new elevated structures or significant traffic control devices/treatments at intersections.

This cost estimate is a pre-conceptual estimate that does not have the benefit of detailed design and engineering. Future phases of the project will include detailed engineering which will be used to develop more precise cost estimates.

#### Cost Estimate Components:

- Design & Engineering
- Construction
  - Demolition
  - Scajaquada Parkway Construction
  - Supporting Elements Construction
  - Aesthetic Treatments including Gateways, Misc. Landscaping
- Incidentals
- General Conditions
- Contingencies
- Mobilization
- Acquisitions
- Construction Management
- Inflation

# Overall Funding Strategies

## For the Scajaquada Parkway...

Leverage the \$109M of currently programmed Federal and State Dedicated Funds. Apply for Reconnecting Communities (RC) planning grant for community engagement and environmental review process.

Consider Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) planning grant to complete NEPA and finalize design.

Pursue a Reconnecting Communities implementation grant for construction. The Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects (INFRA) program can serve as additional support; as project will receive advanced prioritization if already funding by Reconnecting Communities program.

Based on outcome of discretionary grants, access federal/state formula funds through TIP (2025+). The amount of State Dedicated Funds or other local match will need to be increased to reach the 20% local match requirement for the full project cost.

## For the Supporting Mobility Elements...

GBNRTC, with City of Buffalo, may consider packaging mobility projects for a larger Safe Streets for All implementation grant.

Activate additional federal formula funds, such as Congestion Mitigation Air Quality or Transportation Alternatives, through future Transportation Improvement Program processes.

Seek smaller state/local grants for local match support and to demonstrate partnership.

## Example Financial Plan

Funding Source	Target %
For Rt. 198...	
State Dedicated Fund	20%
Federal Core	35%
RC/RAISE Planning Grant	5%
RC/INFRA Implementation Grant	40%
For Supporting Mobility Elements...	
Local Match	20%
TA/CMAQ (Federal Formula Funds)	45%
Safe Streets for All Grant	35%



# Overall Funding Strategies

Maximize “generational investment” of federal funding opportunities for all project phases to deliver a reimagined Scajaquada Parkway.

Several sources **support environmental and design phase activities**, positioning the project for future construction funding.

Major federal transportation **grants are coordinating** with each other, expressing preference for projects that have received prior funding.

New funding program, **Reconnecting Communities**, directly aligns with scope of “removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways...that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development.”

Use the mobility supporting elements as collaborating scope or local match.

Depending on future scoping/sequencing decisions and cost-share requirements of potential funding source, utilize currently programmed Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) to bolster financial plan for Scajaquada Parkway project.

Seek climate and economic development and funding to increase competitiveness for funding.

Many funding programs are heavily weighting climate and economic development, as well as **partnerships**, as merit criteria for determining awards.

Representative Funding Matrix\*

Funding Program	Partnerships	Rt 198	Support Projects	Pre-Const	Const
National Highway Performance Program	GBNRTC/NYS DOT/ City of Buffalo				
State Dedicated Fund	NYS DOT				
Reconnecting Communities (RC)	GBNRTC/ NYS DOT/ City of Buffalo				
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)	GBNRTC/NYS DOT/ City of Buffalo				
Municipal ZEV Infrastructure Grant program	City of Buffalo				
Green Innovation Grant Program	City of Buffalo				
Safe Streets for All	GBNRTC/ City of Buffalo				

\*Over 30 funding sources were identified to support project costs.



PART III:

# Next steps



## Chapter 15 Moving from plan to implementation

### Re-initiating the NEPA/SEQRA and design process

Using the design direction developed during the Region Central planning process, GBNRTC will begin coordination with government agencies to determine the appropriate steps necessary to conduct the environmental review and design processes for the Scajagada Corridor and its supporting elements. The process will be heavily informed by coordination with state and federal agencies and will continue to put feedback from community and stakeholder groups at the forefront.

Due to the significantly different study areas evaluated in the previous and current projects, a new environmental review and design process with the FHWA and NYSDOT will likely be required. Through consultation with the FHWA and NYSDOT, it is anticipated that an appropriate first step would include additional traffic and environmental analyses to supplement the Region Central study and a NEPA re-evaluation prior to beginning a new scoping and environmental review and design process.



## Next steps

Consensus on a design direction has been achieved, which completes the mission requested of this initiative.

Next steps in this process include:

### Initiation Activities for Transportation and Mobility Infrastructure projects

- Develop infrastructure owner cooperation with New York State Department of Transportation, City of Buffalo, New York State Thruway Authority and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Commission to establish Plan sequencing and determination of required mitigation actions regarding any traffic capacity reduction on the Rt 198 Scajaquada Expressway
- Establishment of a reasonable timeline for Plan implementation activities
- Address the need for legal compliance of state and federal laws including, but not limited to, NEPA/SEQRA
- Establish interagency agreement regarding conduct of traffic analysis, environmental review and project design, as well as consultant needs to complete these actions

### Implementation Activities for Related Corridor Initiatives

- Build Action Matrix of key stakeholders with affected initiatives
- Coordinate corridor Transportation and Mobility Infrastructure projects with Stakeholders Action Matrix
- Perform regular project status and coordination of projects
- Establish continuing mechanism to ensure timely completion of infrastructure projects and related initiatives



## Chapter 16

# Stay involved!

Region Central is a collaborative process involving governments, agencies, institutions and members of the public committed to improving the central part of the Buffalo Niagara region by working together. The process is intended to deliver transportation infrastructure projects that will strengthen overall mobility in the area and leverage key initiatives to improve the environment, parks and natural spaces, equitable economic development, better neighborhoods and a host of related benefits.

### How can I stay involved?

- The best way to stay involved is to go to the project website: <https://www.gbnrtc.org/regioncentral>, where you can view all documents related to the project and see a status of current project activities.
- Staying involved also means taking an active role in the continued advocacy for the project. This includes talking to your neighbors, elected officials, agencies and organizations, etc. regarding your interest in Region Central and the projects included.
- Also watch for and participate in upcoming meetings relative to the activities needed to implement the Region Central projects
- Contact GBNRTC at any time to discuss by emailing [RegionCentral@gbnrtc.org](mailto:RegionCentral@gbnrtc.org)



# Appendices



# Appendices

- A. Previous Plans Review
- B. Setting the Land Use Context
- C. Mobility Data Review
- D. Mobility Existing Conditions Maps
- E. Housing Segregation and Inequity Summary
- F. Already Programmed Projects
- G. Mobility Experiential Guide
- H. Metrics Evaluation Package
- I. Cost Estimate
- J. Funding Matrix

## Engagement Materials

- A. Public Engagement Plan
- B. Engagement Decision Statement
- C. Phase 1 Engagement Summary
- D. Public Meeting Summary #1: Process Overview (June 2021)
- E. Public Meeting Summary #2: Values & Vision (Dec 2021)
- F. Public Meeting Summary #3: Input and Data Gathering (Dec 2021)
- G. Public Meeting Summary #4: Scenarios (May 2022)
- H. Public Meeting Summary #5: Recommendations (Jan 2023)
- I. Public Meeting Presentation #1: Process Overview (June 2021)
- J. Public Meeting Presentation #2: Values & Vision (Dec 2021)
- K. Public Meeting Presentation #3: Input and Data Gathering (Dec 2021)
- L. Public Meeting Presentation #4: Scenarios (May 2022)
- M. Public Meeting Presentation #5: Recommendations (Jan 2023)
- N. Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) Meeting Summaries
  - 1. #1 Jun 2021
  - 2. #2 Jul 2021
  - 3. #3 Oct 2021
  - 4. #4 Nov 2021