

Department of Urban  
and Regional Planning  
School of Architecture and Planning  
Center for Urban Studies



**University at Buffalo**  
*The State University of New York*

# Brown to Green

---

Building a 21st Century Sustainable Community  
A Strategic Plan for Regeneration of the  
Highland Avenue Community  
Niagara Falls, New York  
January 2007



# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE</b>	9
<b>THE WORK PLAN</b>	17
<b>SCOPE OF SERVICES</b>	37
<b>APPENDICES</b>	49
Appendix A: Project Organizational Structure	50
Appendix B: Budget - Consultant Fees, Duties, and Responsibilities	52
Appendix C: Highland Ave. Brownfield Considerations	59
Appendix D: Developer Solicitation Ideas for the Highland Ave. Plan	65
Appendix E: State of Michigan Brownfield Programs	68



# Introduction

# Introduction

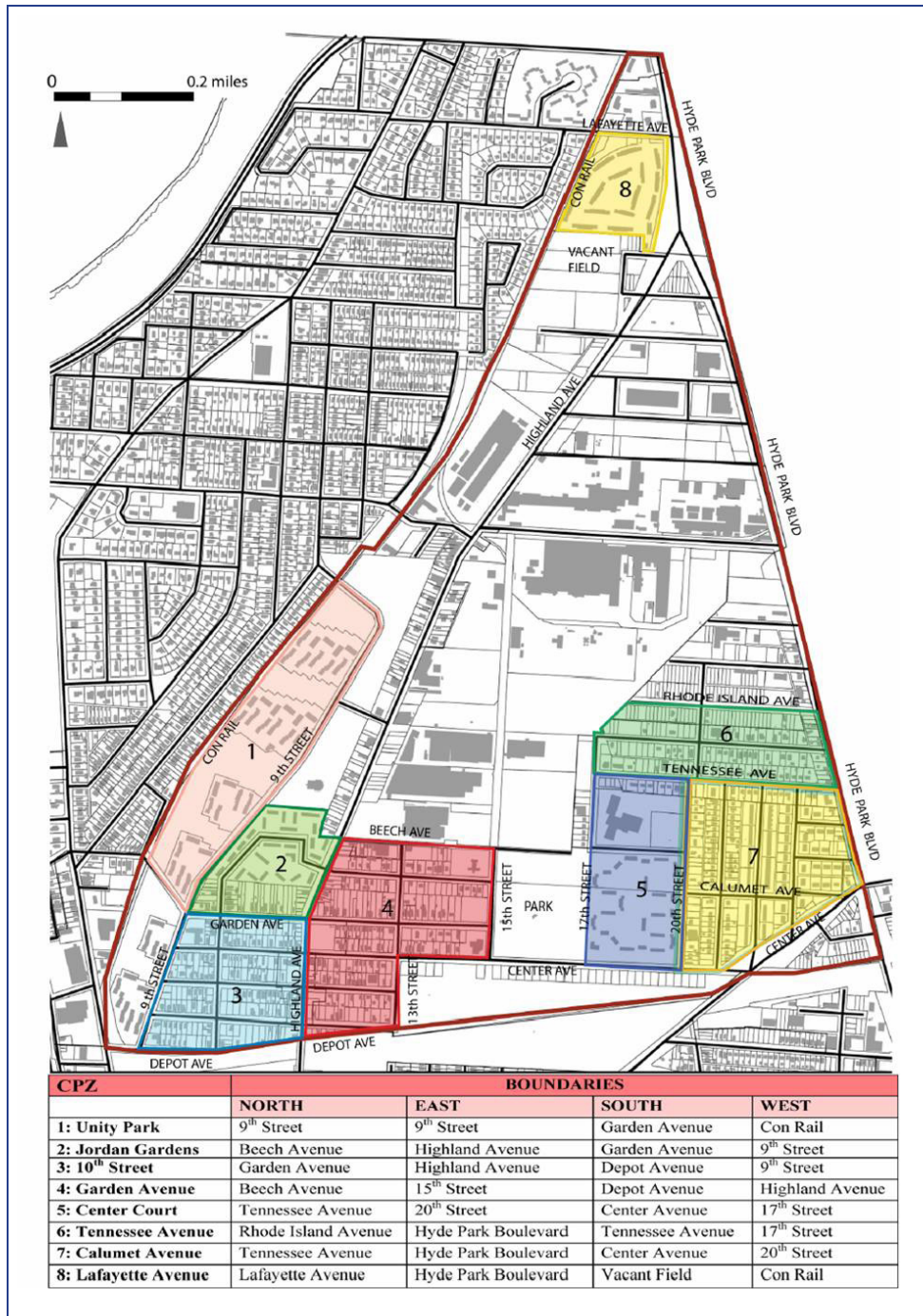
This proposal outlines a regeneration strategy for Niagara Falls' Highland Avenue Community. The goal is to develop a strategic plan that identifies five priority projects that will function as catalysts that will spawn the community's rebirth. The Highland Avenue community falls within Census Tract 202. Its boundaries are the Conrail tracks on the East, Hyde Park Avenue on the West, the intersection of Lewiston Road on the North, and the Conrail tracks on the South [Figure 1].

This proposal has four parts. The first part introduces the project, while the second part discusses the qualifications of the Center for Urban Studies, with a description of the key personnel. The third part describes the proposed scope of services and timetable for completing the tasks and the final part outlines the budget items and justification for the project. Supportive documents are included in an appendix. Once the scope of services and project budget are agreed upon by all parties, the University at Buffalo will issue a research agreement outlining the terms and conditions of a contract for services. Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. will lead the project team. He is a full professor in the University at Buffalo Department of Urban and Regional Planning, School of Architecture and Planning, and the Director of the Center for Urban Studies.

## Our Planning Approach

The goal of the project is to transform the North End from a community dominated by Brownfields, environmental degradation, and an unhealthy living environment, to a green designed, sustainable, healthy community with an active living environment, strong economic resources, revitalized residential areas, supportive social services, and interactive linkages with other communities.

Figure 1: Highland Avenue Community and Neighborhoods



Our planning and development approach stems from an understanding of how the industrial decline of the City of Niagara Falls affected the Highland Avenue Community. As many industries left the region, the Highland Avenue community experienced high rates of unemployment, increasing poverty, and crumbling infrastructure. Planners and builders designed Highland Avenue as a company town with the housing units built around the factories, situated in the community's center [Figure 1]. When the fleeing owners abandoned their factories and grounds, they became a community eyesore and impediment to development. Thus, redeveloping the Brownfields and reintegrating this land mass into the community complicates any regeneration scheme in the Highland Avenue area.

Within this context, the key planning challenge is to forge a strategic plan that centers on three interrelated concepts that "rethink and recreate" the community. The first concept is to move from "Brown to Green" by turning the Brownfields into shovel ready development sites using green design to regenerate business, residential and neighborhood based projects. The second concept calls for creating functional linkages between the Highland Avenue Community the Niagara Falls Core Area. The idea is to create a synergy between the redevelopment of Highland Avenue and the Niagara Falls Casino Resort area, as well as to economic development opportunities throughout the Niagara Frontier, including Southern Ontario. The third concept is to transform the Highland Avenue community into a hub that stimulates the revitalization of the entire North End.



## Planning Themes

### 1. Linking the Past to the Present

Our strategic plan builds upon the 1999 award winning Highland Avenue Redevelopment plan, written by DeLeuw, Cather and Economic Research Associates. Although this plan focused on an industrial reuse strategy, it nevertheless contains many ideas that can be adapted and integrated into a regeneration plan for the Highland Avenue community. Many of these ideas are particularly compatible to the City's Casino Resort Development strategy, and can create strong linkages to the City's downtown core and regional development plans.

### 2. Community Participation

Community participation is the foundation of our planning approach. The goal is to create a process that maximizes the participation of residents and stakeholders in all aspects of planning and development. To accomplish this objective, we will create learning experiences that enable the community to understand Brownfield reclamation and its importance to community and economic regeneration. We will establish a community planning board to provide oversight and guidance throughout the development of the strategic plan. This will ensure that the plan reflects the community's vision and full involvement in determining development projects.

### 3. Brown to Green Residential and Community Economic Development

By using green design in our planning approach, we intend to build a new sustainable community that promotes environmental improvements, an affordable quality of life, social equity, and economic growth. We will approach Brownfield remediation and

environmental concerns in safe and practical ways. Green design will create affordable housing that promotes health and energy conservation. Green space planning will include beautiful parks, playgrounds, community gardens and active living spaces for walking, jogging and biking. Contemplative gardens will provide quiet space for thinking and conversating. We will use supportive social services to promote better education, job training and address community problems. We will make the development of community based businesses and jobs with living wages top priorities. Our goal is to create a strategic plan that is practical, feasible, and that promotes a healthy, active living environment.

#### **4. Integrating the Planning and Implementation Processes**

Unlike most planning projects, we will integrate the planning and implementation phases. During the planning process, when we identify promising projects and initiatives, we will initiate a process to generate interest among developers and other public/private entities. If the idea for an important social initiative emerges, such as developing an African American-centered industrial heritage museum, we will explore its feasibility. If the project is practical, we will seek to implement it immediately.

#### **5. Job Training and Work Force Development**

Work force development, job training and access to education are important components of this project. Too often, in communities like Highland Avenue, planning and community development activities do not result in jobs and economic opportunities for the residents. Our approach seeks to establish programs and activities that will enable residents to take advantage of opportunities that emerge from the regeneration process. Building a sustainable community also means increasing the capacity of residents

and their institutions to grow, develop and maintain their own community. This plan will identify opportunities related to Brownfield cleanup and development. We will establish environmental educational training programs to prepare residents for entry-level jobs and careers in environmental technology. We will support these “Green Jobs,” and “Green Careers,” by establishing placement and educational services to encourage advancement. In addition, we will develop a strategy to link residents to jobs and placement opportunities throughout the City and Niagara Frontier Region.

## **6. Market-Driven Neighborhood and Community Economic Development**

We will use a market driven approach to determine the types of development projects that are feasible for the Highland Avenue community. Regeneration of the Highland Avenue community involves a competitive struggle with neighborhoods and communities throughout the city and Niagara Frontier region. As a result, we must transform Highland Avenue into a community that is attractive to both developers and new residents. This will happen by identifying bold, innovative, and practical ideas to guide residential, economic, and community development.

## **7. The Centrality of Community Design**

By community design, we mean not only the layout and structure of the physical environment, but also the mix of organizations and institutions required to transform the North End into a great place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The philosophy guiding this project is that a vibrant and sustainable community must contain organizations and institutions that have positive relationships with the residents. These organizations and institutions must have the capacity to provide leadership, resources, guide the community

development process, and assist residents in sustaining a high quality of neighborhood life over time.

## **8. Creating Linkages**

The isolation of the Highland Avenue community from the City's Core Area, the North End communities, and Niagara University present complex challenges to the community's regeneration. Therefore, creating linkages with these sectors through the construction of a physical arterial system and socioeconomic programs are central objectives of this project.

## **9. Pragmatic Idealism as a Developmental Guide**

The quest to identify the most innovative and creative development ideas to address the community's complicated needs and wants drives our planning process. We seek projects that offer solutions that are pragmatic, practical and achievable. We will identify key catalytic projects that will trigger other forms of development. At all times, we will root the solution of local problems within a larger regional context, and outline a clear set of actions to drive the development process and connect it to the City's current development strategies and priorities.

# Qualifications and Experience

# Qualifications and Experience

## The Team

The project team is a dedicated, multi-disciplinary one with extensive knowledge residential and economic development activities on the Niagara Frontier. The team has vast experience in transportation engineering, construction and environmental services, architectural design, housing, economic and business development, affordable housing, and residential development and community development. All team members have experience working in struggling neighborhoods and are deeply committed to formulating highly innovative and creative development strategies to solve problems in this type of community setting.

The UB School of Architecture and Planning Center for Urban Studies (the CENTER) will act as Project Manager and direct all strategic planning activities. The CENTER will lead the strategic planning process, guide community participation activities, and prepare the final report.

## The Department of Urban and Regional Planning - Center for Urban Studies

The Center for Urban Studies (CENTER) is located at the University at Buffalo in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, in the School of Architecture and Planning. Established in 1987, its mission is to help find solutions to problems facing central cities and their metropolitan regions. The CENTER works with residents, community-based organizations, and local governments to solve or ameliorate urgent problems facing distressed neighborhoods, as well as engages in action-orientated research.

Since its inception, the CENTER has worked on dozens of projects related to neighborhood planning, the evaluation of programs in the public and nonprofit sector, and applied research focusing on

community development and housing in Western New York. Over the past five years, the CENTER produced over twenty technical reports and neighborhood plans on community development in the Buffalo metropolitan region. For example, in 2000, the CENTER conducted a study that revealed a relationship between the poor health status of African Americans and neighborhood conditions (The Health Status of the Near East Side Black Community: Wellness and Neighborhood Conditions, Buffalo, New York, 2000).

Between 2000 and 2005, the CENTER developed comprehensive neighborhood plans for the Emslie and Old First Ward neighborhoods in the southeast corridor of Buffalo, the Masten Councilmanic District and the Main Street Neighborhood in the Village of Depew. In the summer of 2002, the CENTER worked with the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the University at Buffalo Law School's Community Economic Development Clinic, and a group of ministers to secure a \$120,000 grant from the Department of Commerce to initiate a business incubator on a major commercial strip in the African American community. In 2005, the Center for Urban Studies, along with Chan Krieger & Associates, received the Western New York Section of the American Planning Association Best Implementation Plan for a plan to improve the two inner city transit stations, which service the Fruit Belt neighborhood. In that same year, Dr. Taylor received the Distinguished Leadership, Michael J. Krasner Professional Planner Award, from the New York State Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association. Moreover, in 2005, the Center produced the a report (The Housing Service Agency Structural Definition Report) for the Buffalo Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, and the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning.

Since 2000, the CENTER has also worked closely with the City of Buffalo's Good Neighbors Planning Alliance, and the Fruit Belt and Martin Luther King, Jr. neighborhoods to develop comprehensive neighborhood plans to be incorporated into the City's Master Plan. Over the past three and half years, the CENTER worked with Fruit Belt residents to produce three interrelated neighborhood plans (Development of a Fruit Belt Turning Point Scenario: A Strategic Plan and Action Agenda for the Fruit Belt/Medical Corridor, January 2001; The Fruit Belt Site Plan: Preliminary Report, May 2002, and The Fruit Belt/Niagara Medical Campus Tax Increment Finance District, January 2003). During this period, the CENTER also engaged in traditional community organizing work in the Fruit Belt. Most recently, the CENTER received the prestigious Community Outreach Partnership Center grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to continue its work in the Fruit Belt and Martin Luther King, Jr. neighborhoods.

The CENTER is deeply committed to public participation in the neighborhood planning and development process. Over the years, it has created strong community outreach components for all of its projects. For example, in its study of The Health Status of the Near East Side Black Community: Wellness and Neighborhood Conditions, Buffalo, New York, 2000, it established a project steering committee to oversee the health study. Focus groups of community residents and physicians were set up to review the study's progress and make critical comments. In the Fruit Belt neighborhood, the CENTER developed a community outreach plan that involved residents in all phases of the planning process, including the setting up of a group to spearhead implementation of the plan.

In developing the Masten Neighborhood Plan, the CENTER established a neighborhood planning committee to participate



fully in all aspects of the planning and development process. In addition, the CENTER held focus groups and a district wide community fair, where residents had an opportunity to review and comment on a draft of the final report. Most recently, the CENTER is working with St. John Baptist Church as a community outreach coordinator for its townhouse development project.

## **Team Members**

**Watts Engineering** of Buffalo, New York is a full service engineering/architecture (E/A) firm specializing in civil, environmental, transportation, structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering and architecture. The firm supports a staff of over 50 permanent employees consisting of licensed engineers, architects, scientists, technicians and specialty consultants. The firm has also received 14 performance related awards since 1994.

**J. W. Pitts Planning and Development LLC** is an urban planning and real estate development firm located in the City of Buffalo New York. The firm specializes in green and sustainable design, offering services in project development, Brownfield redevelopment, site selection, community planning, public participation and government negotiations. James W. Pitts, the president of the firm is a professional urban planner with extensive experience in developing numerous public and private projects. Mr. Pitts is also affiliated with Norstar Development USA LP, an affordable housing development company, and the President of the Green Gold Development Corp. a not for profit environmental business development company.

**Foit-Albert Associates** is a 105-person firm, located in Buffalo and Albany, New York. Organized in 1977, the firm provides architectural, engineering and surveying services. Beverly Foit-Albert, R.A.,

Ph.D., is the president and founder of the firm. Furthermore, Foit-Albert Associates is a certified Woman-Business Enterprise (WBE). Foit-Albert Associates provides feasibility studies and inventories, programming, design, construction documents and construction administration for a variety of project types including educational, institutional, commercial and industrial for new structures as well as rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. In addition, the firm designs new projects for multi-building campuses, compressed urban sites, and overall environment continuity.

[Gar Associates, Inc.](#) is a real estate consulting, appraisal, and marketing services firm that has been in business for over 35 years. They have engaged in numerous projects across the Niagara Frontier for commercial, residential, and government clients. Their market analysis division specializes in market studies of housing and proposed developments using Low-Income Housing Tax credits. On an annual basis, they complete from 30 to 40 market studies in conjunction with a wide variety of multiple family housing projects.

[Environmental Education Associates \(EEA\)](#) has offered environmental training services since 1989 to a variety of clientele, ranging from professionals employed in the private and public sectors to individuals who may wish to obtain training to secure positions in the expanding environmental and safety industry. EEA provides full time environmental certification training for Asbestos, HazMat, Lead, Mold and Safety services. EEA is located at 346 Austin Street in the City of Buffalo, where it has established a new training facility and offices in the former Precinct 13 Police Station which was built in 1894. EEA offers local and national training courses which are accredited by a variety of state and federal agencies which include; the New York State Department of

Health, United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of Housing and Community Development. EEA has OSHA approved courses and certified instructors, providing unique state of the art training which can be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

**Videography by Frazier:** President/Owner of CityCam, Inc. Larry Frazier, has been working as a commercial television, studio and freelance videographer for over thirty years. His work has appeared on all three major networks as well as the Fox Network, ESPN, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC and cable pay-per-view. Additionally, Mr. Frazier's talents and state of the art production equipment have also served such clients as: the 1996 Summer Olympics, NFL Football, NBC's "Today Show" , "Inside Edition" and "American Journal" to name a few. Video by Frazier will work in conjunction with Knuckle City Films and Mustard Seed Productions



# The Work Plan

# The Work Plan

## **1 - Phase One: Creating Awareness, Capacity Building, and Community Engagement**

The work plan will consist of a number of key tasks needed to carryout this project. In this stage of the proposal, we are listing only the most essential tasks. In the scope of services section of this report, there is a more detailed listing of the tasks needed to complete the project.

### **Task 1.0 - Establishing a Community Planning Board**

The principle objective of phase 1 is to develop a collaborative framework for engaging the residents in the planning process. The main task is to set up a Community Planning Board [hereafter referred to as the Board] to guide all phases of project planning and implementation. We will select the Board from organizations and institutions in the community and representatives from each of the neighborhoods. Once established, the Board will select stakeholders from the broader Niagara Falls community.

### **Task 1.1 - Develop a Decentralized Strategy for Community Participation**

The Highland Avenue community consists of several neighborhoods. Only by developing an aggressive community participation strategy will it be possible to secure genuine community engagement. Based on interaction with the residents, we will divide the community into a series of Community Participation Zones [CPAs], which will serve as the framework for community involvement. We will select in partnership with the Community Planning Board zone captains for each of the CPAs. The zone captains will be responsible for creating project awareness in the community, and serving as a liaison between the Community Planning Board, the project team and neighborhood residents.

### **Task 1.2 - Project Initial Meeting**

The goal of this meeting is to ensure that key members of the community and stakeholders come together to learn about the project, its goals and objectives, and critical benchmarks. At this meeting, we will review the project, as well as the nature and timing of the deliverables. The meeting will provide the team with an opportunity to respond to questions and make any initial changes in the project schedule or operations to accommodate community concerns. The project's initial meeting officially launches the strategic planning process.

### **Task 1.3 - Creating Awareness of the Regeneration Planning Project**

Highland Avenue residents are busy and have priorities beyond participation in community development projects. As a result, residents will not participate in these types of activities unless the events are perceived as important and their involvement considered meaningful. Therefore, Task 1.3 has three objectives. The first is to make the residents aware of the Regeneration Project, while the second is to demonstrate that the successful implementation of this initiative will turn North End into a better place to live, work, play and raise a family. The third objective is to convince residents that their substantial participation in the initiative is crucial to its success. The awareness campaign will be an ongoing activity that lasts throughout the duration of the initiative. To accomplish this goal, we will formulate a series of activities based upon multiple contacts with residents, the development of accessible databases on the project, the distribution of information, and participation in meetings, planning charrettes, and visioning sessions.

### **Task 1.4 - Creating Communication Links with the Residents**

The principal objective of this task is to develop an effective communication link with the residents. This effort will focus on the development of a community e-newsletter, the setting up of community bulletin boards, and programming on public access television. We will establish a documents repository at a central location to facilitate access to project information and updates. Lastly, the project team will establish a website, which will provide access to project information from community leaders and stakeholders.

### **Task 1.5 - Develop a Mini-Course on Neighborhood Planning and Community Development**

To participate fully in the neighborhood planning and community development process, a common knowledge base and language must exist between residents and the consultants. Only then, will the residents be able to generate their most creative ideas about residential and community redevelopment and communicate them effectively. To achieve this goal, we will conduct a six-week mini-course on neighborhood planning and community development. The seminar will meet weekly for two hours and will cover a range of topics related to planning, neighborhood development, transportation, and community economic development. Within this context, the course will explore the challenges facing the North End community and speculate on solutions to various issues. We will hold the mini-course at a central location. We will tape each session and create DVDs for circulation among community residents. In addition, a summary of each session will be made available to residents in the various neighborhoods. We will also make efforts to broadcast the program on public access television.



### **Task 1.6 - Planning Charrettes, Vision Session, and Community Fair**

The purpose of the Neighborhood workshops and vision session is to flesh out the goals and objectives of neighborhood planning and development in the Highland Avenue community and to unite residents and stakeholders around a singular vision of the community. The workshops and vision session will take place after the mini-course. The outcomes of these sessions will serve as a scaffold and guide to the community planning process. A community-visioning fair in which residents will select prime projects to guide the planning process, will follow the visioning session. After completing the community visioning process, we will hold town meetings at key milestones in the planning process.

## **2 - Phase Two: The Neighborhood Planning Process**

After completing basic research and data analysis, the neighborhood planning process will consist of carrying out work in several foci: residential development, transportation, economic development, urban design, and social development. Once we complete this process, the team will integrate and synthesize this data and begin the process of producing the final draft of the strategic plan.

### **Task 2.0 - Analysis of Community Input**

This objective is to gain insight into the viewpoint of residents and to construct a framework to guide the remainder of our work. By developing a greater sense of the hopes and desires of residents and stakeholders, we will be able to construct a scaffold that frames our activities in the direction most likely to generate a strategic plan that mirrors the type of community that the residents wish to build.

### **Task 2.1 - Data Gathering and Analysis**

The project team will carry out an exhaustive study of all existing reports and documents on the planning and development in the Highland Avenue community, including reports on the City's economic development strategy. We will augment this database with studies of the existing land use structure and an assessment of Brownfields and industrial land uses. This task will allow the team to develop a thorough understanding of the planning context and construct a framework for data gathering, analysis, and neighborhood planning and design work.

### **Task 2.2 - Site Reconnaissance and Development of Reference Context**

We will augment data gathering and analysis by doing fieldwork in the community and surrounding area, including taking digital photographs and producing maps and other visual depictions of neighborhood conditions and everyday life and culture. The goal of this phase of the project is to deepen our understanding of current neighborhood conditions and the challenges facing the community. The outcome of these activities will be the development of a base map, which will serve as a reference point for the project.

## **3 - The Residential Development Focus**

The residential development focus will consist of three highly related activities: housing, residential land use and urban design, and branding and reimagining the community. The goal is to formulate a strategy for creating a highly competitive residential environment that attracts residents from all classes and racial groups.

### **Task 3.0 - A Housing Market Study**

We will conduct a housing marketing study to determine the market demand for the different types of housing units found in the Highland Avenue community. The study will assess the potential for new housing development, for homeownership and for rental, including upscale units. This study will consist of a demographic analysis of the existing population and a demand analysis, which will include a detailed analysis of current and projected demand for housing in the City of Niagara Falls. Included in this analysis, will be a study of the regional demand for central city housing with an assessment of the conditions needed to attract new residents to the Highland Avenue community from across the class and racial spectrum. In the study, we will identify the type of residential projects and neighborhood conditions that would achieve the broadest market demand.

### **Task 3.1 - The Housing Inventory: Assessment of Assets and Needs**

The Highland Avenue community has a complex residential environment. The goal of this phase of the project is to analyze the existing nature and character of the housing stock. The objective is to determine the number of housing units in need of minor/moderate/major repair, the number and quality of vacant/abandoned units, and to identify those units that need to be demolished. A secondary objective is map out the potential sites for construction of new housing units (townhouse, condominiums, mid/high rise, two-family and rental). The final segment of the study will map out the potential sources of funding available for housing rehabilitation and modernization and the construction of new units.

### **Task 3.2 - The Residential Land Use Structure and Urban Design**

The industrial era land uses and subsequent Brownfields have resulted in a “fractured” community fabric with structural barriers that hamper “cohesiveness” and “compatible” land uses. The objective of this assessment is to formulate a strategy that will connect and create interactive linkages between the different neighborhoods and residential areas in the Highland Avenue community. Within this context, the team will outline various scenarios of landscaping and streetscaping based upon green and sustainable designs that will make the community visually appealing and unique. The neighborhood design will stress walkability and healthy living based on the development of bike and jogging paths, green spaces, art parks, and outdoor recreational areas for all age groups. An essential element in this plan will be the landscaping and streetscaping scenarios, which celebrates the use and display of public art.

The creation of a sustainable urban design will also blend and preserve the existing eclectic neighborhood housing styles and will transform existing barriers into bridges and commons to recreate and reconnect the various neighborhoods. The creation of an active, healthy, green and sustainable residential development plan can transform Highland Avenue into one of the most unique and pleasing communities in the United States.

### **Task 3.3 - Branding and Reimagining the Highland Avenue Community**

The goal of this task is to positively rebrand and recreate the public and civic image of the Highland Avenue community. The City of Niagara Falls has generally excluded the area for redevelopment

and future projections for its viability are negative. The idea is to create an image of the Highland Avenue community as an exciting and wonderful place to live. We will want to be creative as possible in this phase of the work. For example, we may decide to change the name of the Highland Avenue to Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and even change the community's name from Highland Avenue to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community. This objective is to begin transforming the local and regional image of the community by marketing Highland Avenue as a dynamic area and a great place to live, work, and play.

## **4 - The Transportation Focus**

The development of the Highland Avenue neighborhood is the key to transforming the entire North End. The isolation of the Highland area from the DeVeaux neighborhood, Niagara University, and the Niagara Falls Core Area represent huge obstacles to its redevelopment. Within this context, the regeneration of the Highland Avenue commercial corridor needs a catalytic project that could trigger the transformation of the entire North End. To make that happen, it will be necessary to improve dramatically the linkages between the Highland Avenue community and its environs. The goal of the transportation focus is to explore various ways to increase the flow of traffic within the community and to create linkages between Highland and other parts of the North End and Niagara Falls region.

### **Task 4.0 - Create Linkages Between the DeVeaux and Highland Avenue Neighborhoods**

The principal objective is to determine the best ways to connect the DeVeaux neighborhood to the Highland Avenue commercial corridor. This task will explore the feasibility of developing an

extension of 9th Avenue that leads directly to Highland Avenue and examine the possibility of turning College and Garden Avenues into “parkways” that link DeVeaux to Highland Avenue. This task will also examine the various ways to beautify all roadways leading into the Highland Avenue commercial corridor.

#### **Task 4.1 - Explore Ways to Link Niagara University to the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor**

Niagara University represents potentially an important sub-market for the Highland Avenue commercial corridor. However, to realize that market potential it will be necessary to improve the access from the university to the commercial corridor. This task will explore various options, including the building of new roadways, signage, and re-routing traffic strategies.

#### **Task 4.2 - Explore Ways to Increase Traffic Flow from the Core Area to the Commercial Corridor**

Most traffic leaving the Core Area probably travels along the Robert Moses Parkway, Lewiston Road, and Hyde Park Boulevard. All of these roadways, along with Highland Avenue, converge at the intersection of Route 104. If we could channel a significant portion of the traffic flow along these arteries to Highland Avenue, the market potential of the commercial corridor would increase significantly. Therefore, the primary objective of this task is to determine ways of increasing the traffic along Highland Avenue from these sources.

#### **Task 4.3 - Explore Unique Ways of Connecting the Core Area and to the North End**

This task explores the various ways that we can create transportation linkages between the Highland Avenue and the Niagara Falls tourist areas. This task will explore jitney services, attracting tourist companies to the area, and other modes of transport. It will also

include Inter-Highland Avenue and North End transport systems to carry people to various tourist attractions [potential] within the neighborhood. This effort will also examine creative ways to make use of the Conrail lines running through the neighborhood.

#### **Task 4.4 - Explore Connections Between Niagara Falls, Ontario and Highland Avenue**

Niagara Falls, Ontario is the hub of the Niagara Frontier tourist economy. The millions of visitors to the falls represent a potential market of the North End community. Assuming that we can develop an attractive tourist venue in the North End, anchored by a vibrant commercial corridor on Highland Avenue, finding an efficient and convenient way to transport visitors to and from the Highland Avenue and the commercial corridor is crucial to such a successful venture. This task will explore these possible transport scenarios and evaluate their feasibility.

### **5 - The Economic Development Focus**

The economic development strategy will forge a plan to improve the economy in the Highland Avenue community by increasing employment and business opportunities for residents and by offering a range of projects to create investment and development opportunities for developers. Because of the Brownfield focus, the primary objective is to turn these sites into community assets and identify economic opportunities tied to their redevelopment. Four interrelated strategies will drive this inquiry.

- The first strategy is the identification of niche opportunities. We will analyze the regional economy with the goal of identifying unmet demands and/or opportunities for import substitution. For example,

we will examine the supplier networks of various industries, including the casino resort industry, to identify unmet needs and/or import substitution opportunities. We will also examine potential investment opportunities in the tourist industry by examining creative ways that we can exploit North End community assets. Within this framework, we will create a matrix of potential niche opportunities, which are suitable for the North End and consistent with our philosophy of green development.

- The second strategy focuses is on the development of market opportunities based on economic leakage within the North End and environs. The objective is to determine the retail market potential that exists within the North End and surrounding community.
- The third strategy relates to examining economic development opportunities that flow from Brownfield Reclamation and industrial reuse.
- The fourth strategy involves the interplay between planning and implementation. Once promising projects are identified, we will start the implementation process.

### **Task 5.0 - Identifying the North End Niche Market**

The primary objective is to analyze the regional economy with the emphasis on identifying potential niche opportunities for the Highland Avenue community. The strongest focus will be on the tourist and casino resort industries and their supplier networks. Another focus will be on business procurement opportunities



with emphasis on identifying the sources of economic leakages as the basis for determining the existence of import substitution potential. The outcome will be a detailed report that outlines niche opportunities and their feasibility for the Highland Avenue community.

### **Task 5.1 - The Feasibility of African American and Industrial Heritage Tourism**

The objective of this task is to determine the feasibility of developing African American and Industrial Heritage tourism as a viable economic and community development strategy. By examining community assets, local tourism programs, and marketing data, we will determine if it is possible to take advantage of the Highland Avenue industrial heritage and the rich industrial labor contributed by African American workers to create a tourist destination. The economic growth of cultural and historic tourism is well established and the team will identify the best practices nationally and internationally to determine the feasibility of establishing an historic and industrial heritage district.

### **Task 5.2 - Brownfield Reclamation and Industrial Reuse**

Brownfield reclamation and clean up, has the potential to produce economic opportunities by producing shovel ready development sites. The objective is to identify those opportunities and develop projects that will generate new development and reinvestment. The analysis will examine a variety of options for residential, commercial, and mixed-use redevelopment. The goal is to identify catalytic projects that are feasible and will spur spin off opportunities. The major objective in this process is to focus on policy and financial barriers to implementing projects. Rather than conduct research on this issue, the project team will analyze

existing documents, and based upon this information, focus our energy on implementation.

### **Task 5.3 - Commercial Redevelopment on Highland Avenue**

This task will outline a strategy for the regeneration of Highland Avenue. The central goal of this activity is to formulate a strategy that will enable Highland Avenue to become the regional economic hub of the entire North End of Niagara Falls. The marketing study will examine the regional market potential of the corridor, its possible retail mix, and other types of economic development activities that might spur the regeneration of the corridor. It will quantify existing and projected sales by various economic sectors and tenant categories [food service, retailing, entertainment, general merchandise, etc.]. The study will also outline the infrastructure required to physically accommodate a fully developed commercial corridor [new builds, square footage, performance data such as occupancy, rents, and sales per square foot for retailers, and estimate supportable rents based on sales per square foot], and the potential costs of this build out. In other words, this phase will provide an outline of what is required to turn the commercial corridor into viable enterprises, which services both the North End and its environs. Lastly, the study will examine the feasibility of integrating housing within the commercial district, as part of a plan to make the commercial corridor a lively, 24-hour community.

## **6 - The Social Development Focus**

The primary objective of the social development focus is to identify the types of projects and activities we need to build the capacity of residents and the community to take full advantage of the employment and economic development opportunities that

regeneration creates. This focus will examine three areas of social development. The first two deal with the development of the skills and capabilities of residents. Here, the idea will be to develop the work force and the entrepreneurial class. The third task will examine the institutional framework of the community. Here, the goal is to ensure that the residents have locally based institutions that provide them with the goods and services required to make this a great place to live.

### **Task 6.0 - Workforce Development**

The focus of this task will be to determine the type of workforce development and training program necessary to train residents for emerging opportunities in the community. We will identify and analyze the best practices in workforce development in the country and calibrate the programs and activities that fit the type of opportunities that might evolve in the community. We will place emphasis on designing a program that integrates job readiness [development of human skills that workers need for successful employment—dress, resume writing, interviewing skills, etc.], training for “existing” employment opportunities, job placement, and supportive services to help with childcare, family problems, and other personal issues.

### **Task 6.1 - Minority and Women Business Development**

To ensure that African Americans, women, and other entrepreneurs of color have the capacity to take full advantage of the opportunities that regeneration creates, we will design a business development program to provide entrepreneurs and business start-ups with the type of support they need to grow and develop. We will base our plans for a Highland Avenue business development institution on the best practices nationally, and the relationship of these practices to the specific business needs of minority and women entrepreneurs in Niagara Falls.

## **Task 6.2 - Highland Community Institutional Development**

The objective of this task is to conduct an institutional analysis of the North End community to determine if any critical organizations or institutions are missing from the community and to discover what existing organizations and institutions need to bolster their capacity. Based on this assessment, we will make detailed recommendations on ways to strengthen the community's institutional framework.

## **7 - The Urban Design Focus**

The objective of the urban design focus is to outline a strategy to beautify the community and make it a visually delightful place. This focus will develop landscaping and streetscaping schemes for the various neighborhoods, as well as for the Highland Avenue commercial corridor. The design work will also focus on the beautification of the community edges and develop signage schemes and dramatic gateways into different parts of the community.

### **Task 7.0 - Residential and Neighborhood Design**

The objective is to develop landscaping, streetscaping, and public art plans that reflect both the uniqueness of neighborhoods and a general theme that ties the Highland Avenue neighborhood together and that build an interactive bridges to areas throughout the North End and the City's Core Area.

### **Task 7.1 - Beautifying Main Thoroughfares**

This task focuses on transforming all the major thoroughfares into appealing arteries, which help to stitch the community fabric

together.

### **Task 7.2 - The Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor**

This task will focus on the landscaping and streetscaping of Highland Avenue from Ontario Avenue to Hyde Park Boulevard. Within this context, the goal is to focus on the commercial portion of Highland Avenue. Here, the idea is to formulate a plan that makes this segment of Highland an extremely exciting and dynamic area, where people from across the racial and class divide would feel comfortable shopping.

### **Task 7.3 - Beautify the Edges**

The objective is to beautify the community's edges by providing distinctive borders for the community. A major point of emphasis will be the Hyde Park border and the Ontario Avenue corridor.

## **8 - Preparation of the Draft Strategic Plan**

The principle objective of this phase of our work is to synthesize the findings for the various studies and prepare a first draft of the strategic plan. In evaluating this data, we will begin the process of determining the preferred direction that the final draft should take. This means deciding which scenarios are the best for the North End community in relationship to the broader regional and bi-national context. Based on feedback from the Community Oversight Board and the broader community, we will begin preparation of the draft strategic plan.

### **Task 8.0 - Synthesize the Data and Formulate the Preferred Direction**

The project team will analyze and synthesize the data and outline a preferred direction.

### **Task 8.1 - Focus Group with Community Planning Board**

The team will present the preferred direction to the community oversight board, along with scenarios not included in this document. At this session, we will discuss the process that led to the preferred direction and why other scenarios were not included. Based on feedback from the Community Planning Board, we will revise the preferred direction.

### **Task 8.2 - Town Hall Meeting with Community**

We will present the revision of the preferred direction document to the public at a town hall meeting. Based on feedback from residents and stakeholders, we will revise the preferred direction and begin preparation of the strategic plan

### **Task 8.3 - Preparation of the Strategic Plan**

The team will prepare a draft copy of the strategic plan, which identifies the five priority projects.

### **Task 8.4 - Focus Group Meeting with Community Planning Board**

We will give the draft to the community oversight board for review and feedback. Based on their comments, we will revise the plan.

### **Task 8.5 - Town Meeting with Residents**

We will present a revision of the draft for review and feedback at a town meeting with residents. We will place this document on the website and in the documents repository, so that those unable to attend the meeting will have an opportunity to review and give feedback on the draft.

## **Task 8.6 - Complete the Final Draft of the Strategic Plan**

### **9 - Phase Four: Develop Implementation Strategy**

The objective of this phase is to outline an implementation strategy for transforming the vision of Highland Avenue residents and stakeholders into a reality. This phase will focus on outlining plans for marketing the community to developers and potential investors. Lastly, the implementation strategy will examine the type of institutions that the Highland Avenue community needs to ensure sustained and broad-base support for the area's ongoing development.

#### **Task 9.0 - Marketing the Highland Avenue Community to the Development and Investor Community**

This task will outline a detailed strategy for attracting developers and investors to the Highland Avenue community.

#### **Task 9.1 - Institutional Requirements for Sustained Community Development**

Based on an assessment of the strategic plan, the team will provide a detailed description of the type of institutional framework the Highland Avenue community needs to guide the ongoing development of the community. This assessment will also include recommendations on the requirements for reconstructing the Highland Avenue's image.

#### **Task 9.2 - Final Presentation to the Community**





# Scope Of Services

# Scope of Services

This section of the report provides a more detail listing of tasks, along with products that the team will produce. The overall time table for the project is two years. We will present the timetable in six months modules with the activities that we will complete during each period.

## First Six Months - Schedule of Activities

### 1 - Community Awareness, Participation, and Preparation for the Neighborhood Planning Process

#### Task 1.0 - Establish a Community Planning Board

**Product:** A Community Planning Board consisting neighborhood residents and stakeholders—this body will elect its own officers.

**Time:** 1 week

#### Task 1.1 - Board Training for the Community Planning Board

**Product:** A Board that understands its responsibility and that possesses the skills to carryout those responsibilities.

**Time:** 1 day

#### Task 1.2 - Develop a Decentralized Strategy for Community Participation

**Product:** A map designating the different Community Participation Zones (CPZs) in the North End and a list of the residents selected to serve as the organizers for these CPZs. We will select the residents to serve as organizations in collaboration with the CPZ.

**Time:** 2 weeks

### **Task 1.3 - Project Initial Meeting with Community Planning Board**

**Product:** Meeting with Community Planning Board to discuss the project, timetable, and activities.

**Time:** 1/2 day

### **Task 1.4 - Town Meeting to Announce the Project**

**Product:** A Town meeting that celebrates the launching of the Brown to Green Neighborhood Planning and Community Development Project.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 1.5 - Community Links with Residents**

**Product:** These communicative products will be continually updated -

- A website and e-newsletter
- A centrally located Documents Repository
- A monthly newsletter distributed door-to-door

**Time:** Continuous throughout project

### **Task 1.6 - Teach a Mini-Course on Neighborhood Planning and Community Development**

**Product:** A six-week course on Neighborhood Planning and Community Development for Residents and Stakeholders (2 hours weekly). In addition, we will produce a DVD of the course, which will be made available to neighborhood residents, stakeholders, and other interested parties.

**Time:** 6 weeks

### **Task 1.7 - Site Reconnaissance and Development of a Reference Context**

**Product:** A Reference Map and Development Context.

**Time:** 2 weeks

### **Task 1.8 - Neighborhood Planning Charrettes**

We will hold a series of decentralized focus groups with the CPZs.

**Product:** Briefing Memo #1: Summary of Resident's Perspectives.

**Time:** 2 weeks

### **Task 1.9 - Team Meeting**

We will discuss and analyze the findings from the Community Focus Groups.

**Product:** Briefing Memo # 2: Analysis of the Resident's Perspective and the Site Analysis.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 1.01 - Meeting with Community Planning Board**

The purpose of the meeting is to review and comment on the Briefing Memo # 2 and outline suggestions for the community vision fair.

**Time:** 4 hours

### **Task 1.02 - Community Vision Fair # 1**

The goal is to determine the community's development preferences, which will serve as a guide to the research team.

**Product:** Briefing Memo # 3: Narrative of the Community Vision Fair.

**Time:** 1 1/2 weeks

### **Task 1.03 - Team Meeting to Discuss and Analyze Briefing Memo # 3**

**Product:** Briefing Memo # 4: Analysis of the Community Vision Fair.

**Time:** 3 days

### **Task 1.04 - Analysis of Community Input and Reconnaissance Data**

**Product:** Briefing Memo # 5: Development of Framework to Guide the Remaining Work of the Team.

**Time:** 2 weeks

## **Twelve Months - Schedule of Activities The Neighborhood Planning Process Begins**

### **2 - The Residential Development Focus**

#### **Task 2.0 - A Housing Market Study**

**Product:** A study that shows the market demand for different types of housing units found in the North End, including the demand for new owner-occupied housing units.

**Time:** 3 weeks

#### **Task 2.1 - The Housing Inventory: Assessments of Assets and Needs**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 6 on the Housing Inventory.

**Time:** 6 weeks

#### **Task 2.2 - Team Meeting**

The purpose is to discuss the market study and housing inventory and discuss ways to move forward in the development of a housing regeneration strategy, which includes the potential of new housing developments in the neighborhood.

**Product:** Briefing Report # 7: Summary of Team's Perspective on the Housing Situation.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 2.3 - Meeting with the Community Planning Board**

The purpose of the meeting is to review and community on Briefing Report # 7.

**Product:** Revision of Briefing Report # 7.

**Time:** 2 days

### **Task 2.4 - Residential and Neighborhood Design**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 8: Report on Ways to Connect and Creates Interactive Linkages between the DeVeaux and Highland Avenue Neighborhoods. This report will also include beautification designs for the community's main thoroughfares, the Highland Avenue commercial corridor, and the locale's boundaries.

**Time:** 5 weeks

## **3 - The Transportation Focus**

### **Task 3.0 - Explore Transportation Linkages between the DeVeaux Neighborhood, Niagara University, and the City Core Area to the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 9 on Transportation Linkages.

**Time:** 8 weeks

### **Task 3.1 - Explore Connections between Niagara Falls, Ontario and the Highland Avenue Neighborhood**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 10 on the Connection.

**Time:** 3 weeks

### **Task 3.2 - Team Meeting to Review and Comment on the Transportation Briefing Reports**

**Product:** Revision of the Briefing Report # 10 based on the review and comments of the team members.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 3.3 - Meeting with Community Planning Board**

The purpose of the meeting is to review and comment on the Transportation Briefing Reports.

**Product:** Revision of the Transportation Briefing Reports based on review and comments of the Community Planning Board.

**Time:** 1 week

## **4 - The Economic Development Focus**

### **Task 4.0 - Identify the Highland Avenue Market Niche**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 11: Market Study of the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor, which outlines a broad strategy for development the commercial corridor within the context of the Niagara Frontier.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 4.1 - Commercial Redevelopment on Highland Avenue**

**Product:** Strategic Plan for the Development of the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 4.2 - The Feasibility of African American and Industrial Heritage Tourism**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 12: The Feasibility of an African American and Industrial Heritage Tourism Focus for the Highland Avenue Community.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 4.3 - Brownfield Reclamation and Industrial Reuse**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 13: A Strategy for Removing Obstacles to Brownfield Development.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 4.4 - Team Meeting to Discuss and Comment on Briefing Reports # 11, 12, and 13**

**Product:** Briefing Report #14: The Economic Development Focus—this briefing report will integrate and synthesize the three briefing reports on economic development.

**Time:** 3 days

### **Task 4.5 - Meeting with the Community Planning Board**

**Product:** Revision of Briefing Report # 14 based on review and comments by the Community Planning Board.

**Time:** 1 day

## **5 - The Social Development Focus**

### **Task 5.0 - Workforce Development**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 15: A Workforce Development Strategy for the Highland Avenue Community.

**Time:** 3 weeks



### **Task 5.1 - Minority and Women Business Development Strategy**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 16: Entrepreneurial Development Strategy for the Highland Avenue Community.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 5.2 - Highland Avenue Community Institutional Development**

**Product:** Briefing Report # 17: Institutional Development Strategy for the Highland Avenue Community.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 5.3 - Team Meeting to Review and Comment on the Social Development Briefing Reports**

**Product:** Revision of Briefing Reports based on the critiques of the team.

**Time:** 4 days

### **Task 5.4 - Meeting with the Community Planning Board to Review and Comment on the Social Development Briefing Reports**

**Product:** Revision of the Social Development Briefing Reports based on Critiques of the Community Planning Board.

**Time:** 1 week

## **6 – The Urban Design Focus**

### **Task 6.0 - Residential and Neighborhood Design**

**Product:** Maps, drawings, and commentary depicting and explaining the urban design scheme.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 6.1 - Beautifying Main Thoroughfares and the Community's Boundaries**

**Product:** Maps, drawings, and commentary depicting and explaining the beautification strategy.

**Time:** 2 weeks

### **Task 6.2 - The Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor**

**Product:** Maps, drawings, and commentary depicting and explaining the urban design and beautification scheme for the commercial corridor.

**Time:** 2 weeks

### **Task 6.3 - Creating Connections Between Highland Avenue and the North End Community**

**Product:** Maps, drawings, and commentary depicting and explaining the urban design and beautification scheme that transform the Highland Avenue Community into the "Hub of the North End."

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 6.4 - Team Meeting to Review and Comment on the Urban Design Scheme**

**Product:** The Development of Briefing Report # 18, which integrates and synthesizes the Urban Design Plans.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 6.5 - Meeting with the Community Planning Board to Review and Comment on Briefing Report # 18**

**Product:** A Revision of Briefing Report # 18.

**Time:** 1 week

## 7 – Community Vision Fair # 2

### Task 7.0 - A Vision Fair to Determine the Community's Developmental Preferences

**Product:** Selection of the Community Developmental Preferences in all study areas.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### Task 7.1 - Team Meeting to Review and Comment on the Vision Fair and Outline Strategy for Completing Draft One of the Strategic Plan

**Product:** Strategy for completing Draft One of the Strategic Plan (the preferred direction).

**Time:** 1 week

## Final Six Months: Schedule of Activities Preparation of the Strategic Plan

## 8 – Preparing the Draft Plan

### Task 8.0 - Preparation of the Draft Strategic Plan

**Product:** Draft one of the Strategic Plan, which contains the Five Catalyst Projects.

**Time:** 8 weeks

### Task 8.1 - Team Meeting to Review and Comment the Draft Strategic Plan

**Product:** Revision of the Draft Strategic Plan based on the critique of the team.

**Time:** 3 weeks

### **Task 8.2 - Meeting with the Community Planning Board to Review and Comment on the Draft Strategic Plan**

**Product:** Revision of the Draft Strategic Plan.

**Time:** 1 week

### **Task 8.3 - Meetings with Residents in the CPZ to Review and Comment on the Draft Strategic Plan**

**Product:** Revision of the Draft Strategic Plan.

**Time:** 6 weeks

### **Task 8.4 - Community Vision Fair # 3**

**Product:** Community Consensus on the Strategic Plan and the Five Catalyst Projects.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 8.5 - Completion of the Strategic Plan**

**Product:** Final Draft of the Strategic Plan.

**Time:** 4 weeks

### **Task 8.6 - Present the Final Draft and Supportive Documents to the Community Planning Board**

**Time:** 2 hours

# Appendices

# Appendix A:

## Project Organizational Structure

### Project Sponsors:

The New York Power Authority and the Niagara Improvement Association

### Project Oversight:

The Highland Avenue Community Planning Board

### Project Management:

The U.B. Department of Urban and Regional Planning - Center for Urban Studies

Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., Project Manager

Mr. James Pitts, MUP, Associate Project Manager

Mr. Jeffrey Kujawa, MUP, Operations

Administrative Assistant, TBA

Ms. Gina Maramag, MUP, Public Relations, Information, and Graphic Design

### Community Participation:

Ms. Sandy White, Team Leader

Environmental Associates, Inc. – Community Education on Brownfield Development and Green Design

### The Neighborhood Planning Process:

James Pitts, Team Leader

Jeffrey Kujawa, Assistant Team Leader

- The Residential and Urban Design Focus – Foit-Albert Architects, Team Leader
- The Transportation Focus – Watts Engineering, Team Leader

- The Economic Development Focus – Gar Associates, Team Leader
- The Social Development Focus – The Center for Urban Studies, Team Leader. Environmental Associates will manage job and training opportunities in Green Development
- The Development and Policy Focus – James Pitts, Team Leader

# Appendix B:

## Budget - Consultant Fees, Duties and Responsibilities

### New York State Power Authority - Highland Community Project Budget

#### EMPLOYEE SALARIES

Dr. Henry L. Taylor, PI	\$50,000.00
Jeffrey A. Kujawa	\$24,512.00
Graduate Assistant	\$23,881.00
Graduate Assistant	\$23,881.00
Community Organizers (4)	\$8,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$130,274.00</b>

#### CONSULTANTS

James Pitts	\$100,000.00
Foit-Albert Associates, Inc.	\$100,000.00
Administrative Assistant, TBD	\$69,726.00
Watts Engineering, Inc.	\$60,000.00
Videography by Frazier	\$15,000.00
Sandy White	\$10,000.00
GAR Associates, Inc.	\$5,000.00
Environmental Education Associates, Inc.	\$5,000.00
Gina Maramag	\$5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$369,726.00</b>

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS** **\$500,000.00**

#### INDIRECT COSTS

University at Buffalo Indirect Costs (calculated at 22.6% - NY State Agency Rate)	\$113,000.00
---	--------------

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS** **\$113,000.00**

**TOTAL PROJECT COSTS** **\$613,000.00**



## **Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. - Project Director**

**[\$50,000]**

Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., as project manager, is responsible for the overall administration and success of the project. His job is to monitor, problem-solve, and handle all aspects of project management. Taylor will be responsible for managing all personnel matters and coordinating all project activities. He will work closely with the community participation, neighborhood-planning process, and the development and policy team leaders. Taylor will be responsible commenting and reviewing all drafts and will be responsible for producing the final draft of the strategic plan.

## **James Pitts - Associate Project Director, Team Captain - Neighborhood Planning Process and Development and Policy Focus [\$100,000]**

Mr. James Pitts is the associate project manager and the team captain of the Development and Policy Focus and the Neighborhood Planning Process. As associate project manager, he will assist the project manager in all phases of team building, project design and development, including preparation of all briefing reports and the final draft strategic plan. These activities will include attending all team meetings, community vision fairs, and community planning board meetings. As team captain of the neighborhood planning process, he will be responsible for oversight of the phase of the work, which includes regular interaction with the team leaders, monitoring progress, problem solving, and ensuring that the overall quality of work is high. As team captain of the development and policy focus, he will be responsible for identifying economic development opportunities and generating interests among developers. He will also be responsible for determining policy obstacles and then formulating strategies to get around them.

### **Jeffrey Kujawa - Operations and Assistant Team Captain, Neighborhood Planning Process [\$24,512]**

Kujawa will be responsible managing the project budget and will oversee day-to-day project operations. Consequently, he will handle all invoices and requisitions and will be the management link to the sponsors. Kujawa will also work closely with community outreach and assist with the neighborhood planning process by monitoring activities and solving problems.

### **Project Administrative Assistant - TBA [\$69,726]**

The project administrative assistant will be responsible for processing all paperwork related to the project, including appointments, requisitions, and the like. He or she will be responsible for answering the phone, scheduling appointments, filing, and handling all administrative matters relating to meetings, focus groups, vision fairs, etc. The project administrator will take minutes at all meetings and assist in the development of the project in any manner deemed necessary.

### **Gina Maramag - Public Relations, Graphic Design, and Community Education [\$5,000]**

Gina Maramag will be responsible for all public relations, design of educational material, layout and design of all reports, power point presentations, community educational boards, and the project website and newsletter. She will oversee the production of the final draft of the Strategic Plan. Moreover, she will be responsible for producing the visuals and graphics to use in the visioning fairs and planning charrette.

### **Sandy White - Team Captain, Community Participation [\$10,000]**

Ms. White will be responsible for coordination all meetings of the Community Planning Board, decentralized neighborhood planning charrettes, and community visioning fairs. These tasks will involve coordinating and defining the responsibilities of the neighborhood zone captains, facilitators and others involved in the outreach activities. She will be responsible for determining the type of visuals and graphics needed for the outreach activities and coordinating with Gina Maramag to ensure their production. She will be responsible for writing all briefing reports related to community outreach. Lastly, she will be responsible for the production of a DVD that documents the planning and community development experience in the Highland Avenue community.

### **Foit-Albert Architects - The Residential and Urban Design Focus [\$100,000]**

Foit-Albert will be responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Developing a Residential Urban Design - The industrial era land uses and subsequent Brownfields have resulted in a “fractured” community fabric with structural barriers that hamper “cohesiveness” and “compatible” land uses. The objective of this assessment is to formulate a strategy that will connect and create interactive linkages between the different neighborhoods and residential areas in the Highland Avenue community. Within this context, the team will outline various scenarios of landscaping and streetscaping based upon green and sustainable designs that will make the community visually appealing and unique. The neighborhood design will stress walkability and

healthy living based on the development of bike and jogging paths, green spaces, art parks, and outdoor recreational areas for all age groups. An essential element in this plan will be the landscaping and streetscaping scenarios, which celebrates the use and display of public art.

The creation of a sustainable urban design will also blend and preserve the existing eclectic neighborhood housing styles and will transform existing barriers into bridges and commons to recreate and reconnect the various neighborhoods. The creation of an active, healthy, green and sustainable residential development plan can transform Highland Avenue into one of the most unique and pleasing communities in the United States. Products will include:

Beautifying Main Thoroughfares.

Urban Design and Beautification of the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor.

Beautification of the Community's Boundaries.

Outline a Strategy for Branding the Community.

## **Watts Engineering - The Transportation Focus** **[\$60,000]**

Watts Engineering will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Create transportation linkages that connect the Highland Avenue Community to key neighborhoods and communities throughout the Niagara Frontier.
- Create linkages between the DeVeaux and Highland Avenue Neighborhoods.

- Explore ways to link Niagara University to the Highland Avenue Commercial Corridor.
- Explore ways to increase traffic flow from the Core Area to the Commercial Corridor.
- Explore ways to connect Niagara Falls, Ontario to the Highland Avenue community.

### **GAR Associates – Economic Development Focus [\$5,000]**

- Identify the Highland Avenue Market Niche.
- Commercial Redevelopment on Highland Avenue.
- The Feasibility of African American and Industrial Heritage Tourism.
- Brownfield Reclamation and Industrial Reuse.

### **Environmental Education Associates – Economic and Social Development [\$5,000]**

- Outline a strategy for developing job opportunities and training programs around green design and development.
- Develop a Brownfield educational component for the Mini-Course.

### **Videography by Frazier - in conjunction with Knuckle City Films and Mustard Seed Productions [\$15,000]**

Videography by Frazier will be responsible to the project team for capturing various images to be used in the planning process. This will include video shoots of the project neighborhood, including the commercial corridor, residential design, traffic flow patterns, and Brownfields situated in the neighborhood. In addition, they will film the charrettes and the mini-courses to be held with neighborhood residents.

## **Center for Urban Studies - Project Management**

- Graduate Assistants (2 for two years) [**\$47,762**]
- Four Community Organizers for CPZs for two years [**\$8,000**]

# Appendix C:

## Highland Ave. Brownfield Considerations

### **Brownfield Opportunity Area**

The community planning for the regeneration and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields in the Highland Ave. community is governed by the New York State Superfund/Brownfield Law, which was enacted in October of 2003. This new legislation provides for the establishment of Brownfield Opportunity Area Programs (BOA), which assists municipalities and communities to strategically plan and implement revitalization programs for contaminated Brownfield sites, especially in economically distressed areas.

The BOA program's goal is to clean up these Brownfields and find new productive uses for them. The strategic planning process under BOA, should address a range of existing problems associated with multiple Brownfield sites, create consensus in identifying new uses for priority sites, and form public private partnerships to leverage resources and investments for implementation.

### **Brownfield Clean Up Program**

While the BOA program provides funding for community planning around Brownfields, it is designed to blend with the state's remedial clean up program. Under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), separate incentives for property remediation are provided through the Brownfield Clean up Program (BCP) and the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP). Under the BCP, tax credits are offered for the site remediation and redevelopment of properties. A tax credit is also offered for the use of environmental remediation insurance. The ERP encourages the redevelopment of municipally owned Brownfields by reimbursing 90% to 100 % of its on and off site investigation and remediation costs. Under the ERP community based organizations that partner with municipalities are eligible for reimbursements.

The BOA and BCP programs together become important informational tools for site assessment and the unrestricted cleanup of properties. The collection and use of this important environmental property data helps analyze existing conditions, minimizes the uncertainties of Brownfield contamination, and gives guidance in determining reasonable reuses. The state's full array of publicly funded programs to assist in the redevelopment of the Brownfields, are not available until after a remediation plan agreement and Certificate of Completion (COC) have been approved by the DEC.

### **Growing Participation**

The BOA and BCP programs have increased investment opportunities for Brownfield redevelopment. In 2005, the DEC received 80 applications, approved only 11 remediation plans, and issued only 2 Certificates of Completion. Thirty six (36) of the applicants withdrew prior to being considered for a Certificate of Completion. As of March of 2006, the DEC has received 263 applications, 155 clean up agreements have been executed and there are 15 COC's pending approval.

### **End Use Strategy**

An important consideration for determining the potential success of projects in the Highland Ave. area, is the BCP's use of a strict "clean up," first policy. Cleaning up contaminated properties and restoring a healthy community environment as a first priority, supports our sustainable planning purpose. Low income communities like the Highland Ave. area are disproportionately impacted by the blight of Brownfields and removing toxic contamination is often a matter of environmental justice. However, too much time and money has been spent on many past projects during cleanup without having any concrete redevelopment plans. This has led to the stalling



of projects, loss of community support, loss of funding, and the prevention of viable future uses.

The most successful Brownfield projects tie the clean up to potential end uses of a site from its inception. By identifying these potential uses, the site assessment and remediation becomes more practical, and the planning process more effective. This approach also helps to focus on attracting particular investors, public resources, and builds support for the implementation of projects.

Our strategic planning is based upon this approach and is designed to integrate planning and project implementation. The community planning process will be used to identify and determine the market feasibility of potential projects. In our plan we will identify specific investors and developers who are interested in the Highland Ave. community and work with them from the beginning to meet planning and development goals.

## **Regional Challenge**

Brownfield redevelopment projects in upstate cities are occurring at a slower rate and are more difficult to implement when compared to downstate. The difficulties in implementing these projects are related to the depressed economic conditions, especially when compared to the economic growth downstate. Recent reviews of the successful projects completed in several cities in upstate New York have identified the following problems;

- There are fewer private sector developers applying for the BCP program.
- Local municipalities have limited resources to acquire properties which include condemnation, a lengthy and expensive process.

- Municipalities have to utilize public funding and tax credits to “jumpstart,” private investment because of depressed real estate values.
- Projects are often rejected because of eligibility restrictions.

The successful projects overcame these difficulties by identifying viable reuses and maximizing the resources of the BOA and BCP programs. Financial coordination with other state and federal programs were used to minimize private risk and extensive community participation was used from the start.

## **Public Private Partnerships**

In our sustainable planning and development approach we propose to identify catalytic projects which will attract new investors and generate spin off economic activity. The large amount of vacant and underutilized Brownfields in the Highland Ave community offers immediate opportunities to take advantage of regional market demands for “shovel ready” sites, and Canadian investment. The attractiveness of these catalytic projects will depend upon public private financing that creatively leverages existing tax credits, optimizes the use of all available local, federal and state development incentives, and minimizes risk to investors and lenders.

## **Local Leadership**

Local community and government leadership have the greatest interest for implementing Brownfield strategies. They are impacted the most by the sites and are in the strongest position to foster successful revitalization strategies and determine the long term success of projects. As more effective federal and state Brownfield programs are developed, local communities are in a unique

position to leverage more resources by partnering and joining forces with other government agencies to target Brownfields. Local communities have the knowledge, experience and relationships with key stakeholders necessary to integrate and build consensus around common revitalization goals. The involvement of local leadership increases community participation and outreach in developing feasible social and economic programs.

### **Building Local Capacity**

The effectiveness of a Brownfield regeneration strategy for the Highland Ave. area will depend upon building the local expertise and capacity for understanding and utilizing Brownfields as tools for revitalization. Significant barriers still exist around the remediation of very difficult sites which have been abandoned the longest period of time, such as old land fills, salvage and rail yards. Local governments and property owners are still concerned about exposure to liability. Regulatory inconsistencies still hinder redevelopment efforts and there is still inadequate funding to address the problem.

Our proposed use of green design and green building will also require educating the local community about the long term benefits of sustainable redevelopment. Highland Ave. can become a regional model for the use of low impact development practices, alternative energy, clean industry, energy conservation, environmentally friendly materials, green space and transit oriented development.

Establishing strong community based Brownfield teams of prominent local leaders, supporters in both the public and private sectors and stakeholder advisory groups will be necessary to project the positive message of the renewal of these properties.

These teams can also be used to address the marginalization of the community and broaden the support for its revitalization, by making connections between the Highland Ave. projects and larger city and regional development priorities.

## Summary

The impact of Brownfields in the Highland Ave. community has contributed to contaminated conditions that threaten public health, deters economic investment and marginalizes its low income residents from the mainstream activities of the city. New state Brownfield revitalization programs offers public incentives to encourage private investment to redevelop these abandoned properties for the creation of new jobs, community based services, residential, and commercial uses. A challenge will be to make the “clean up first policy” (for the properties) more timely, cost effective, and dependent upon a reuse plan. The redevelopment projects have to be linked to other city and regional revitalization priorities with developers being involved throughout the strategic planning process. Strong involvement of local community residents and stakeholders in planning and implementation of these projects will increase the potential for success. A sustainable planning approach, using green design and low impact development could make the Highland Ave. community a model for Brownfield revitalization in the region.

# Appendix D:

## Developer Solicitation Ideas for the Highland Ave. Plan

The Highland Ave regeneration plan will integrate the planning and implementation phase. Throughout the community planning phase, potential development projects that are identified will initiate a process to determine market feasibility and interest among developers. Each potential development project / concept will be assessed according to its compatibility with overall strategic planning goals, market support and interrelatedness with the local economy and support services.

The implementation process for targeted projects will include solicitations for developers, formation of public/private partnerships, application of incentives and inducements, negotiation of agreements, and problem solving activities. Extensive stakeholder and community interviews will be important in facilitating and evaluating a wide range of business and commercial concepts. These interviews will be essential in understanding the dynamic interests involved in potential projects, development issues affecting them and opportunities for the future economic impact. Close working relationships with existing property owners must be established to foster high quality and successful projects.

### **Public and Private Development Interests**

Brownfield remediation and redevelopment is just now emerging as key components of economic and community revitalization strategies in upstate New York cities. Depressed economic conditions have contributed to a slow pace for brownfield redevelopment, and limited developer interests.

The participation and commitment of interested and qualified developers in the Highland Ave. brownfield regeneration plan is dependent upon using and coordinating existing public sector resources to jumpstart private sector involvement.

The following list of public agencies will be essential in creating the public private partnerships necessary for the financing and development of projects:

### **Local**

- City of Niagara Falls
- Niagara County Industrial Development Agency

### **New York State Agencies**

- Department of Environmental Conservation
- Department of State
- Empire State Development Corporation

### **Federal**

- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- United States Environmental Protection Agency

### **Authorities**

- New York Power Authority
- New York State Energy Research Development Authority

### **Private**

The following list of potential private developers that may be solicited for their interest and participation in the Highland Ave.

plan are engaged in existing commercial, industrial and residential revitalization projects in the Cities of Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Western New York Region. They are familiar with local economic conditions and have the experience and capacity to develop projects.

- Benderson Development Company
- Ciminelli Development Corporation
- Cityview Properties
- Ellicott Development Company
- First Amherst Development Group
- MJ Peterson Corporation
- Norstar Development USA LP
- Seneca Casino Gaming Corporation
- Uniland Development Company

The solicitation of potential Canadian developers such as the Tri Main LLP, which has redeveloped former industrial buildings in the City of Buffalo, will also take place as part of a Binational marketing strategy.

Efforts will also be focused upon creating opportunities for minority entrepreneurs and community based organizations to develop projects by partnering with more established companies.

# Appendix E:

## State of Michigan Brownfield Program

### General Overview

The State of Michigan has what are considered the most effective Brownfield programs in the country. Brownfield redevelopment has become a central component of the state's economic development strategies producing increasing benefits in environmental quality and private investments. The state's programs were among the first to provide fairness in liability, where the polluter pays and new owners are allowed to remediate properties based upon the proposed land uses. The cost effectiveness of clean ups has increased because of due care provisions that protect public health and safety instead of using strict clean up standards in all cases to remove contamination. As a result, the number of Brownfields redeveloped has increased substantially because properties are put back to productive use faster. New funding and financial incentives have made the costs of clean up a priority for redevelopment, have increased tax revenues, provided a single business tax credit to developers to make business investments more attractive, and increased resources to local governments to support redevelopment projects. Michigan's leadership in Brownfield programs have been based upon practical legislation and innovative approaches to community and economic development.

### Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities

The establishment of local Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities (BRA) has been central to the success of Michigan's programs. The use of authorities is widely accepted in development approaches and increases the acceptability of environmental programs for public and private entities.



Under the “Brownfield Redeveloping Financing Act,” municipalities may establish a BRA to facilitate and administer revitalization plans and activities for targeted Brownfield sites.

The range of activities includes:

- Payment & reimbursement of clean up costs.
- Conveyance, purchase, and leasing of property.
- Acceptance of property, grants, and other valuable assets.
- Borrowing and investing authority monies.
- Acquiring insurance.
- Participating in loans and mortgages for property acquisitions.

BRA's can also establish revolving loan funds to finance and administer local site remediation through tax incremental bonding authority. These funds can also be used to evaluate and conduct feasibility studies of specific sites. Once a BRA has been established, a developer is eligible to receive a tax credit on Michigan's Single Business Tax, which is limited to 10% of capital investments, capped at one million dollars. Recent improvements to the BRA legislation have involved the use of the tax credits and the simplification of the process for the claiming of tax credits. Developers/Taxpayers can now claim tax credits for multiple assignments, and projects do not have to be completed before claiming a tax credit. In multiple phased projects, tax credits can be applied to each stage of development. Restrictions on the assignment of tax credits to new owners have also been reduced. These changes have improved the financing and investment opportunities for projects. Another important change in the overall BRA legislation is that small projects are eligible for funding without competing with larger projects. This ensures that a specific number of smaller projects are

funded each year. The smaller projects are predominately located in city neighborhoods, and involve former businesses such as gas stations and dry cleaners.

## **Renaissance Zones**

Under the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) there are a variety of financing incentives. These include assistance for companies relocating to the state, as well as those that are growing and expanding. The incentives seek to attract and retain high-quality jobs and maintain a vibrant economic environment for the business community. The Renaissance Zone program, which was developed in 1996, has been effectively used to encourage the development of selected areas and businesses across the state. The zones are virtually free of state and local taxes for businesses located within their boundaries. The zones include urban, rural, and agricultural areas, as well as former military bases.

## **Tool and Dye Recovery Zones**

As an example, Tool and Dye Recovery Zones are industry-based (company specific) zones that are designed to retain existing jobs and strengthen tool and dye business operations in the state. Among other requirements, tool and dye businesses must be in a collaborative agreement with other businesses to be eligible for a Recovery Zone designation and benefits.

## **Other Programs**

Specific financing and funding resources have been established which can be used to address specific business and community needs. Some of the key programs in addition to Brownfields include:

The [21st Century Jobs Fund](#) is used to spark new investment, creating high-tech companies and jobs to further diversify Michigan's economy.

The [Economic Development Job Training Program](#) is a major feature of the state's economic development efforts. The state is very active in maintaining a highly-trained, skilled work force. In recent years the program has developed trend-setting programs to deliver job training assistance to businesses.

[Capital Access Programs](#) are designed to use small amounts of public resources to generate private bank financing, for small businesses which normally do not have access to bank capital.

The [Charter One Job Creation Loan Program](#) is a new lending program that was created in 2006 that forms a dynamic public partnership between the State of Michigan and Charter One Bank to help businesses access affordable financing.

The [Michigan Next Energy Authority](#) promotes the development of alternative energy technologies. Tax credits and incentives are provided for business activities and property related to the research, development and manufacturing of those technologies.

[Smart Zones](#) are collaborations between universities, industry, research organizations, government, and other community organizations to promote the growth of technology-based businesses and jobs. The focus is upon the creation of recognized clusters of new and emerging businesses that commercialize ideas, patents, and other opportunities surrounding corporate, university, or private research institute research and development (R&D) efforts.

## **Lesson's from the Michigan Example**

New York State has similar Brownfield and economic development programs as the State of Michigan. However, Brownfield redevelopment is only now becoming a centerpiece for economic and revitalization efforts, especially in cities located in upstate New York. The State of Michigan's early recognition of the importance of reducing liability, providing tax credits, and adapting place specific resources to support private investment is just now being implemented in New York State. Additionally, New York State has not promoted, nor developed, the variety and coordination of financing and incentive programs as has occurred in Michigan. Each state is on the Canadian border and has similar economic conditions. In Michigan however, it seems the planning and marketing efforts are more successful in attracting businesses and regional investment.

In our strategic planning and implementation approach, the programs in Michigan will used as a model for proposing changes or adapting existing regulations and resources to the unique needs of the Highland Ave community. In order to assess development approaches, we will review several successful case studies of redeveloped Brownfield's in Michigan communities similar to Highland Avenue. The financing and funding programs will also be evaluated and compared to resources available in New York State.

## **Conclusion**

The success of Michigan's Brownfield programs is based upon increasing the resources, capacity, and expertise of local governments and communities to revitalize their economies. There is an underlying assumption that with the right incentives and protections from risk, private investment will occur. There is also a realization that targeted and coordinated state economic

planning and development will attract and create new economic opportunities. The state also realizes that programs must be adaptable to differing local conditions where the economies may be weak or strong. The willingness of private investors to participate in the redevelopment of Brownfield properties defines the success or failure of the programs.