

An aerial photograph of the Kensington Heights neighborhood. A large, irregularly shaped green park area is highlighted in the lower-left quadrant. The park has several winding paths and a central open field. Surrounding the park are various urban buildings, including a large multi-story building on the left, and a network of streets. The overall tone is muted, with the green of the park providing a focal point.

Building Together

**A Community Vision to Inform
the Future of Kensington Heights**

January 2020



Building Together

A Community Vision to Inform the Future of Kensington Heights

Upon purchasing the former Kensington Heights site in May 2018, **Erie County Medical Center (ECMC)** made a commitment to engage nearby residents and community partners in shaping the site's future. **Building Together** was launched to fulfill that commitment and create a formal process to understand what the community would like to see happen at the site.

ECMC invited The **UB School of Architecture and Planning** and its **Regional Institute** to lead this process and formed a **Community Advisory Committee** of 16 neighborhood representatives to oversee its development.

This report provides a synthesis of research and community engagement and serves as a guiding document to advise ECMC in its next steps in redeveloping the site. It looks at the site's history and where it sits within a broader geographic framework. Research on the neighborhoods surrounding the site is incorporated to shed insight on the community that lives nearby and various factors that shape their quality of life. It features a synthesis of the ideas and aspirations expressed by 620 community members collected at community meetings, local events, and via the project website.

Taken together, this report offers ECMC, its community partners, and the hundreds of neighborhood residents who participated in the project a roadmap to plan for future opportunities at Kensington Heights.

The Kensington Heights Site



Kensington Heights is a 17-acre site adjacent to Fillmore Avenue, the Kensington Expressway (Rte. 33), Glenny Park, and the ECMC campus. For much of its developed history, the site was used as a public housing complex known as Kensington Heights or the "Glenny Drive Apartments." With the site cleared and ECMC working with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to remediate the site, Kensington Heights offers opportunities to come back to life with new uses that meet the needs of ECMC, its community partners, and the neighborhood residents who live nearby.



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and Planning

Prepared by



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Our commitment to build this opportunity together

For over 100 years, ECMC has been one of the anchor institutions on Buffalo's East Side, providing every patient – from the most vulnerable to the most influential – the highest quality care delivered with compassion. Our dedicated caregivers are committed to maintaining our strong legacy of clinical excellence, ensuring that our patients have the best possible outcome. We have been and will continue to be a strong partner and advocate for the strength and viability of our immediate neighborhood and the broader region we serve, knowing that a vibrant, sustainable and diverse community will contribute to the improved quality of life for all.

In fulfilling our mission, we are mindful of the public's trust and are always striving to be responsive to the immediate surrounding community and our natural environment. This commitment is both as an organization and as individuals.

ECMC's continued and future success depends on a vibrant and healthy community. It is within this context that we launch Building Together and work with our neighbors to explore opportunities for the future of Kensington Heights, a vacant 17-acre property adjacent to our health campus, which ECMC purchased in 2018. This is an opportunity – for our patients, our neighbors, our community partners, and our city and region.

When ECMC purchased Kensington Heights, we stated that any future reuse would be informed by the community. Earlier this year, a group of neighborhood-based community partners came together to form the Kensington Heights Community Advisory Committee. Since March, the Committee members engaged in a truly unique and exciting opportunity to develop a process and planning for the Kensington Heights property, which will turn this long-vacant land back into productive reuse for years to come.

The 16-member Community Advisory Committee of neighborhood and community stakeholders has helped shape a redevelopment process that both supports the healthcare mission of ECMC and meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.

We are grateful to our community partners, the UB School of Architecture and Planning, and the hundreds of residents who participated in this process and shared with us their aspirations for Kensington Heights. We look forward to continuing to build this opportunity together with our neighbors and the community.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Quatroche, Jr., PhD

CEO and President

Erie County Medical Center

Community Advisory Committee

Building Together is guided by a Community Advisory Committee of 16 neighborhood representatives who oversaw development of this report and worked to ensure meaningful engagement of the broader community in this process.

Teresa Bianchi

Habitat for Humanity

Pastor Mark Blue

NAACP Buffalo Chapter

Sheila L. Brown

Vision Multi Media Group/Power 96.5 FM

Becky Delprince

Erie County Medical Center

Reverend Jeff Elgin Carter, Jr.

Ephesus Ministries

Beverly Crowell

Northland Beltline Taxpayers Association

Minister Dwayne R. Gillison, Sr.

Mount Olive Baptist Church

Reverend Dr. William Gillison

Mount Olive Baptist Church

Candace Moppins

Delavan-Grider Community Center

Pastor Kinzer M. Pointer, Jr.

Agape Fellowship Baptist Church

Rita Hubbard-Robinson

Neuwater & Associates, LLC

Eugenio Russi

Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo

John Somers

Harmac Medical Products, Inc.

Stephen Tucker

Northland Workforce Training Center

Dave Zapfel

Gerard Place

Karen Ziemianski, RN, MS

Erie County Medical Center

“This project continues to demonstrate the care and concern that ECMC has, not only for the health of its patients, but also the community in which it serves.

- **Reverend Dr. William Gillison**

“This project is making sure the community is involved before, not after, decisions are made.”

- **Candace Moppins**

“The potential to be a groundbreaking change to the way things are done east of Main St.”

- **Pastor Kinzer Pointer**

“Involving residents is critical because they stand to benefit most from this project.”

- **Beverly Crowell**

“Our city is ready to really look at the east side as an area of possibilities and not barriers.”

- **Dave Zapfel**

“ Neighborhood Revitalization is always most successful when it starts with the neighbors – what do they want for their community and how can we make that happen.”

- **Teresa Bianchi**

“ This is a continuation of Buffalo's Renaissance” - **Eugenio Russi**

“ An opportunity to design a community based on the present, yet continuous needs of a diverse population.”

- **Reverend Jeff Elgin Carter, Jr.**

“ This project has the potential to positively impact the lives of our community patients who struggle at times with many environmental and social barriers.”

- **Becky Delprince**

“ As committed as we are to the quality care of our patients, we are equally dedicated to working with and supporting our neighbors for the vitality and sustainability of their community.

- **Karen Ziemianski**

“ A once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure Kensington Heights' future reflects the culture and needs of the community.”

- **Sheila Brown**

This project has the potential to not only address the medical needs of the people, but also the community needs of our neighborhoods.

- **Minister Dwayane Gillison, Sr.**

“ I am excited about ECMC's leadership and commitment to ensuring community members have a seat at the planning table.”

- **Stephen Tucker**

“ Community development with a health lens is a model we can replicate across the city.”

- **Rita Hubbard-Robinson**

What went into this report

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ABOUT THE SITE

Kensington Heights Study Area

The Kensington Heights site sits at the intersection of various neighborhoods. To understand the surrounding neighborhood context, a 1.9 square mile area covering four census tracts was established as the **Kensington Heights Study Area**. This geography is used to understand the people who live near the site and the various factors that shape the quality of life in their community.

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History of Kensington Heights

The site's history is explored, looking back to its pre-20th Century days as a stone quarry, spanning the thirty years when it was a residential complex home to hundreds of Buffalonians (1949 – 1980), and the subsequent thirty years when the site sat vacant and ultimately resulted in the demolition of the towers.

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Assets near Kensington Heights Site

The site is placed within the broader context of an asset-rich environment, where numerous schools and community centers, religious institutions, and community anchors like ECMC and the Northland Workforce Training Center are mapped.

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Planning Context for Kensington Heights Site

What does past and ongoing planning in the nearby area tell us about community priorities? A look at 21 planning documents are analyzed and offer six planning themes or priorities for the general area around Kensington Heights.

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NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Residential Characteristics

The neighborhoods around Kensington Heights experienced demographic changes and economic transitions over a number of decades. A look at trends in racial and ethnic composition, poverty, educational attainment, and age offer a glimpse at who lives in the neighborhood and how it is changing.

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Neighborhood Connectivity

How are surrounding neighborhoods connected to one another and to the region's opportunities? A look at land use, transportation access, computer and internet availability, and environmental remediation issues provide a sense of some of the challenges neighborhood residents face.

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Jobs and Workforce

What does the neighborhood economy and workforce look like? A look at the job and business mix, along with where and how neighborhood residents engage in the regional labor force help provide a picture of the area as it relates to the economy.

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Housing and Neighborhoods

The communities where people live influence many aspects of their lives: where they work and how they get there, the quality of schools that their children attend, their health and safety, even their longevity. A look at key housing trends – homeownership, vacancy, residential sales, housing costs, and neighborhood crime rates help to describe key issues related to the housing in the neighborhood.

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Food Access and Community Health

Is there access to healthy food and other factors for community health? A look at food access metrics, health insurance rates, health behaviors and outcomes, and life expectancy provide a snapshot of key issues related to neighborhood community health and people's ability to access fresh and healthy food options.

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COMMUNITY VISIONS

Overview

Across 15 East Side events, 8 community meetings, 2 youth focus groups, and various other on-the-ground and online engagements, Building Together captured the voices of 620+ community members – nearby residents, employees who visit the area for work, and others – to express their visions for the future of the Kensington Heights site.

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What the Community Said

Across all activities, people were asked to weigh in on the same three basic questions: What makes the area around Kensington Heights special? What are the area's needs? And what would you like to see on the site? For each of these questions, patterns of the most frequent responses are highlighted and described.

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Guiding Principles

Looking across all comments, a series of guiding principles emerge that spotlight community priorities for what they want to see happen at the site. These key takeaways include: increase food access; create a mixed-use environment; expand economic opportunities for nearby residents; beautify and green the site and surrounding area; offer productive opportunities for young people; enhance neighborhood safety; promote community health and wellness; support those most in need; enhance local culture and heritage.

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DATA SOURCES AND NOTES

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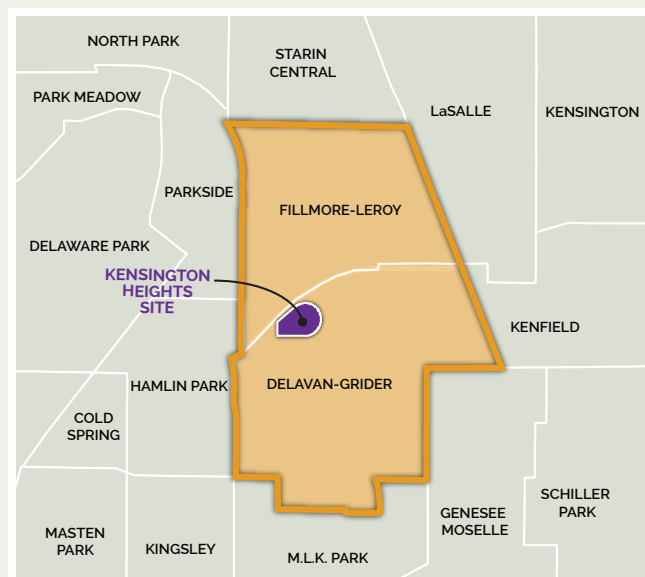
Where is the Kensington Heights Study Area?

The Kensington Heights site sits at the intersection of various neighborhoods in the Masten Council District on Buffalo's East Side. Located on Fillmore Avenue near Route 33, the site borders the neighborhoods of Fillmore-Leroy and Delavan-Grider (including Northland). Route 33 facilitates easy access to the site, ECMC Hospital, and surrounding neighborhoods for thousands of residents and visitors daily.

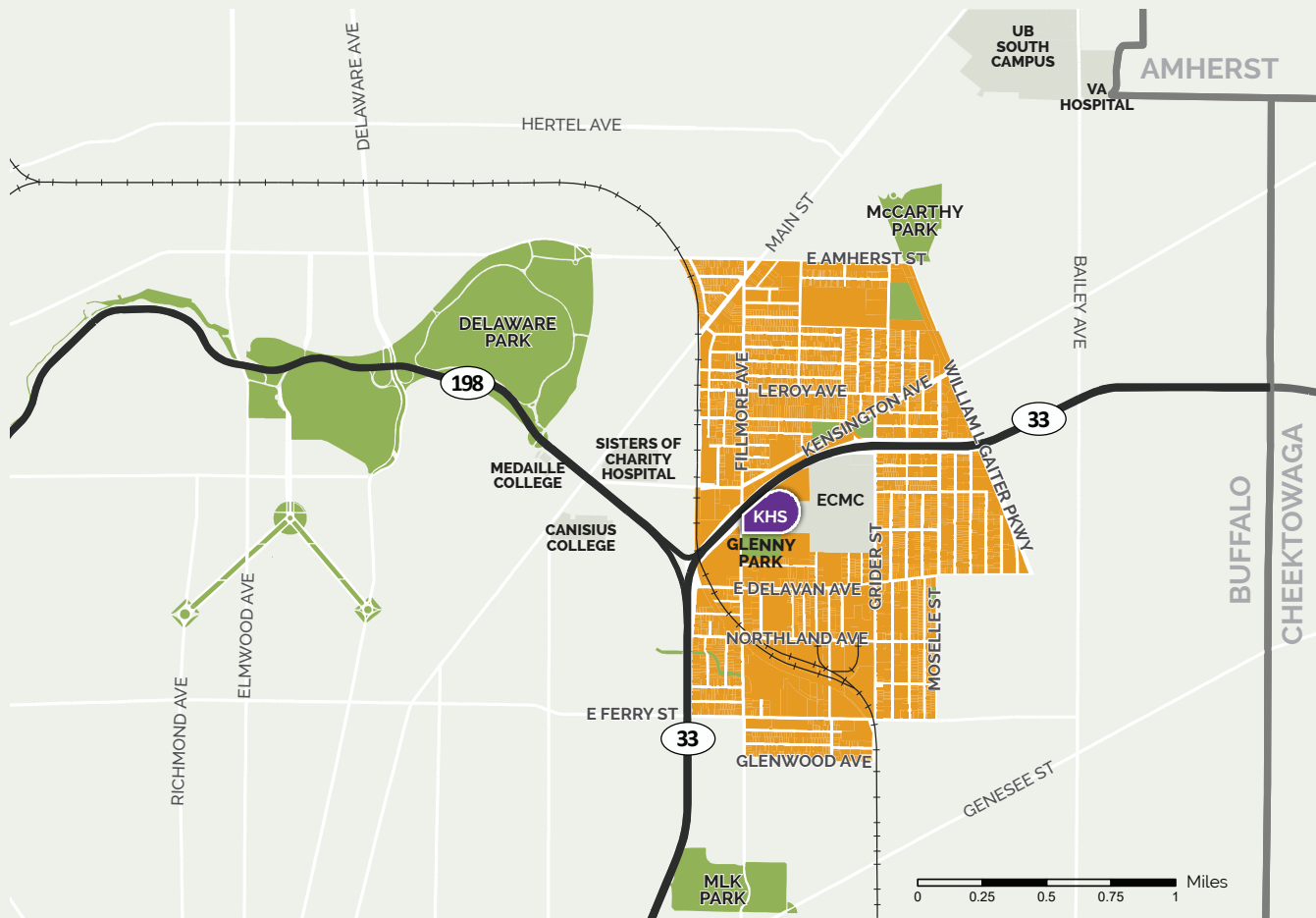
Outside of a mix of industrial facilities clustered along Northland Avenue, the area consists mostly of mixed-use neighborhoods characterized by residential streets of one- and two-family detached houses. Major commercial corridors such as Kensington and East Delavan differentiate distinct neighborhoods with a combination of residential and retail uses.

The area is also distinguished by the presence of the Kensington Expressway (Route 33). Beginning in 1961, the Kensington Expressway completely changed the nature of Buffalo's East Side—diverting automobile traffic away from local shopping districts, bisecting historic streets and neighborhoods, and contributing unwanted pollution and noise to formerly quiet residential areas. The expressway also destroyed Humboldt Parkway, a historically significant green space designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

Neighborhoods in the Kensington Heights Study Area



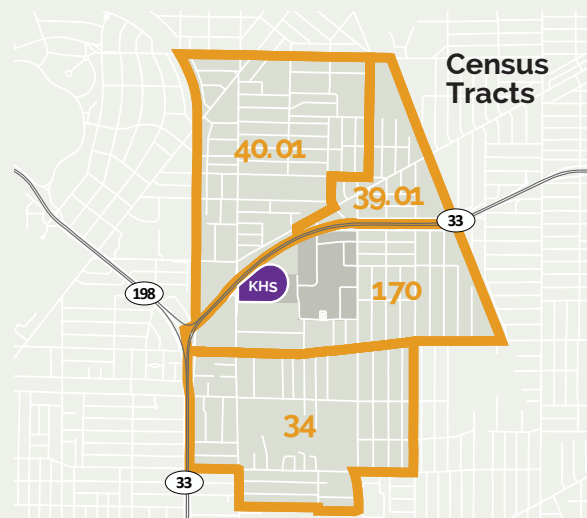
THE KENSINGTON HEIGHTS STUDY AREA



This geography encompasses approximately 1.9 square miles and is bordered by Main Street and East Amherst Street to the north, William Gaiter Parkway and Moselle Street to the east, East Ferry Street and Glenwood Avenue to the south, and Route 33 and a CSX rail line to the west.

CENSUS TRACTS IN THE KENSINGTON HEIGHTS STUDY AREA

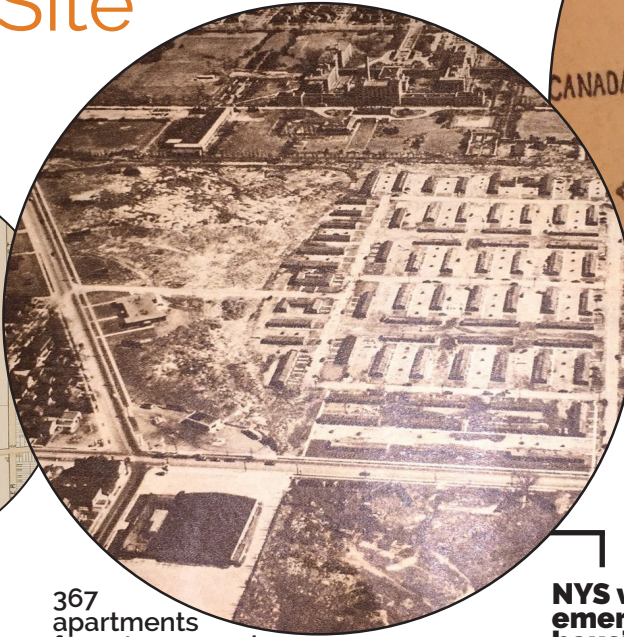
Although the edges of neighborhoods are often more ambiguous than lines drawn on a map, for the purposes of this analysis, the study area boundaries are defined by Census Tracts 34, 39.01, 40.01, and 170.



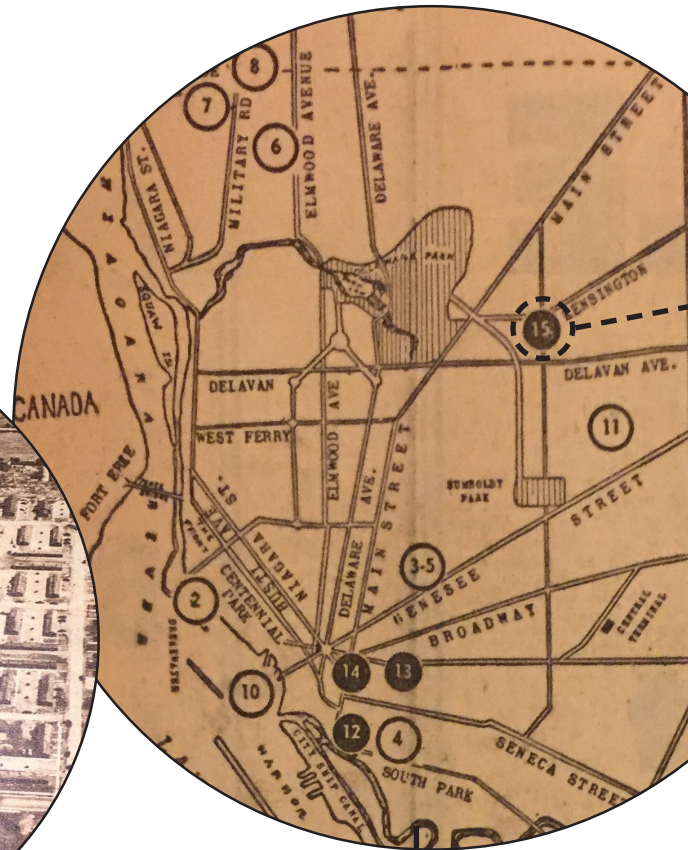
History of Kensington Heights Site



**Stone quarries
1891**



**367
apartments
for veterans and
their families**



**NYS veterans
emergency
housing project
1949**

**Start of new
housing
projects
1950**

1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950

1890s to 1940s. Laying the foundation for urban growth

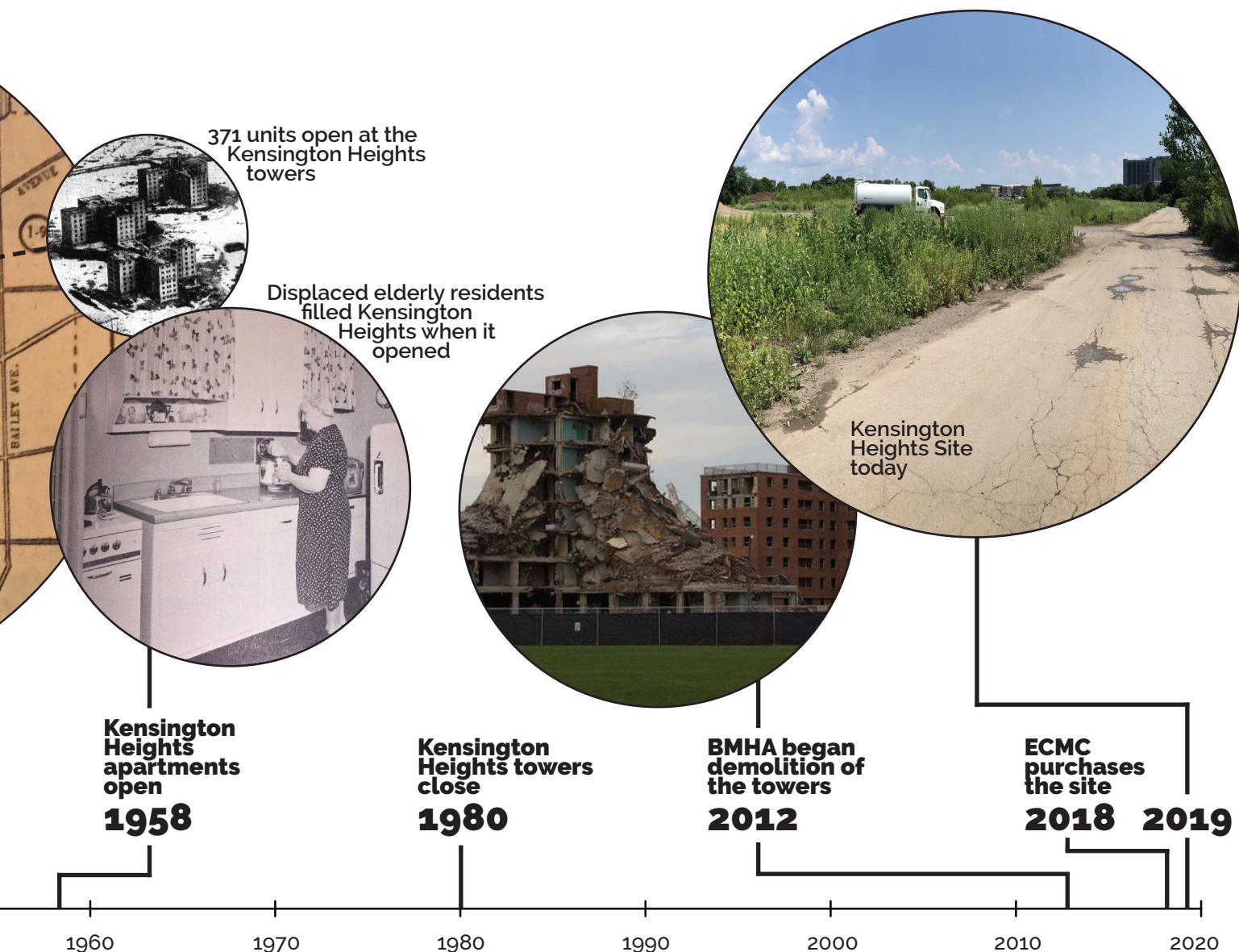
At the turn of the twentieth century, much of Buffalo's East Side was a vast forested area in the early stages of urban development. The area was cut with major streets and rail lines, and Scajaquada Creek flowed openly. As industries began sprouting up along the New York Central Belt Line railroad (constructed in 1883), residences, shops, and churches for workers soon followed. The large tract of land at the corner of Kensington and Fillmore was subdivided into a number of parcels used for stone quarries. For decades, the stone quarried at the site was used by local companies engaged in laying streets and sidewalks.

1940s. Providing temporary shelter for veterans amid a housing shortage

Beginning in the 1940s, the quarries were filled in to pave the way for development of the site itself. After World War II, returning veterans and new migrants pushed housing demand in Buffalo to unprecedented heights. By 1949, the property at Kensington and Fillmore contained 85 frame buildings—army barracks converted into emergency use as 367 apartments for war veterans and their families. But after a series of fires and other incidents, the temporary complex was targeted for demolition.

1950s. Housing hundreds displaced by urban renewal projects

During the 1950s, a wave of federal housing policies and state funds sparked a public housing construction boom in Buffalo. By 1957, the Kensington Heights towers began to take shape. While other housing projects across the city sought to clear and rebuild low-income housing areas downtown, the Kensington Heights project was built primarily to house hundreds of residents displaced by the construction of the Kensington Expressway. When the seven-story towers opened in 1958, all 371 units were occupied—many by White, elderly persons who were displaced.



1970s - 1980s. Emptying out as people and businesses flocked to the suburbs and beyond

By the end of the 1970s—just two decades later—Kensington Heights was two-thirds vacant, majority Black and in a state of disrepair. As federal and state funds for public housing were cut back, major repairs were put off and maintenance declined. The towers closed in 1980 and stood empty for three decades. This story of urban decline cannot be separated from the simultaneous flight of people, jobs, and capital to the suburbs during this time period.

2010s. Acquiring a new lease on life

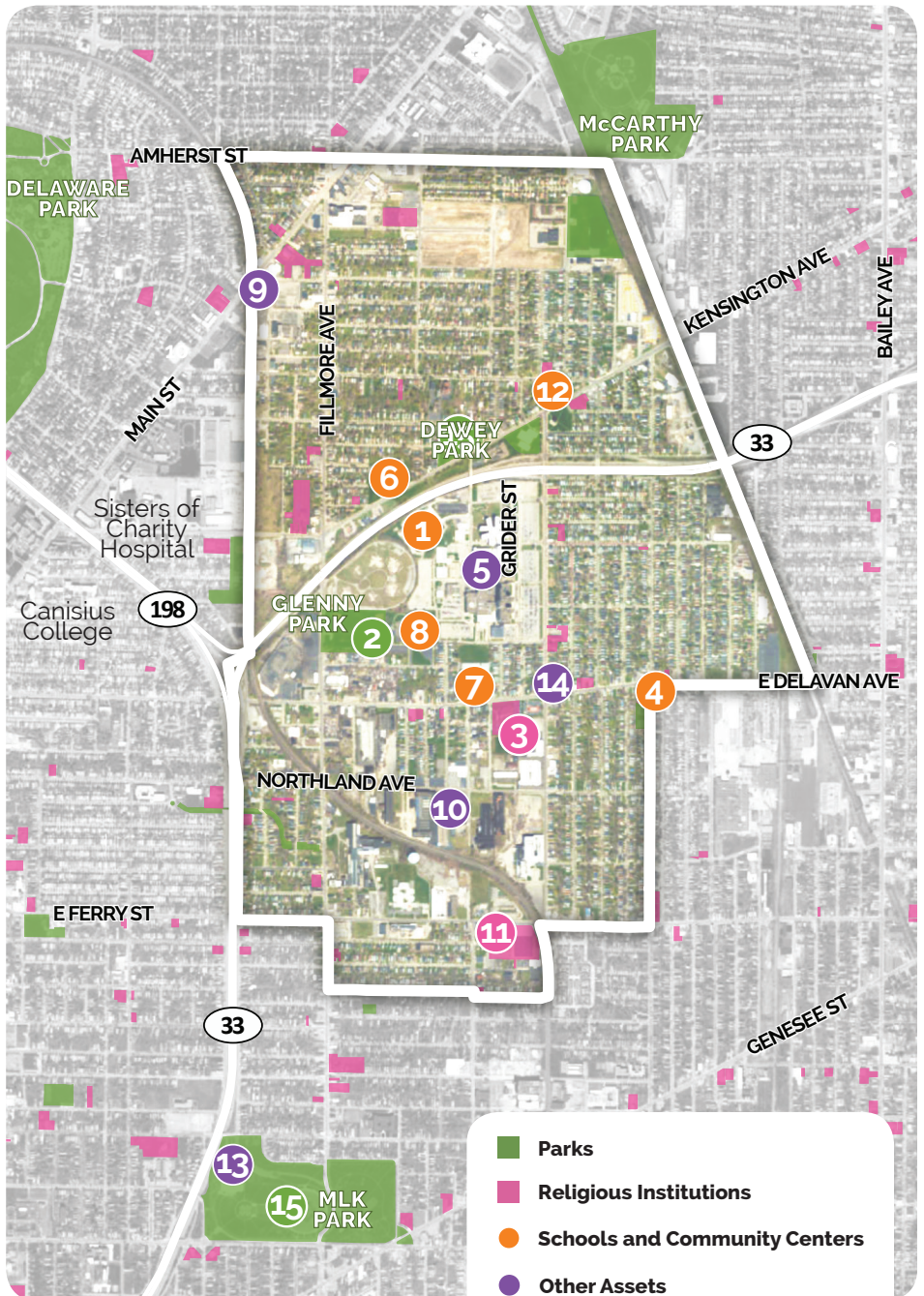
The Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) began demolishing the towers in 2012, an expensive and lengthy process that entailed asbestos remediation. By 2014, only one tower remained. Over the years, various development proposals have been made for senior housing and assisted living facilities on the site, none of which were realized. In 2018, Kensington Heights got a new lease on life when ECMC Hospital purchased the site from the BMHA, demolished the final tower, and began remediation of the soil.

See Data Sources and Notes for image credits and more information.

Assets near Kensington Heights Site

Taking inventory of community assets helps us understand what can be leveraged to strengthen a community. There are a host of assets scattered across the Kensington Heights study area, including two hospitals, the Delavan-Grider Community Center, and two occupational training centers. The Kensington Heights site is located near Glenny and Dewey parks, which are the only parks in the neighborhood.

Educational services are one of the greatest strengths of the Kensington Heights study area. Within the immediate neighborhood there are five Buffalo Public Schools. In addition to these formal education centers, there are two workforce training centers. The concentration of educational and training resources within the community not only aids in strengthening a pipeline into the job market, but these institutions foster social linkages between community members.



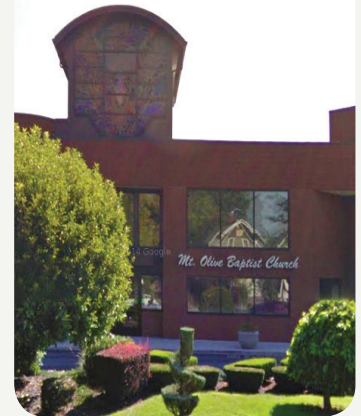
1 PS 84. HEALTH CARE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AT ECMC



2 GLENNY PARK



3 MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



4 DELAVAN-GRIDER COMMUNITY CENTER



5 ECMC HOSPITAL



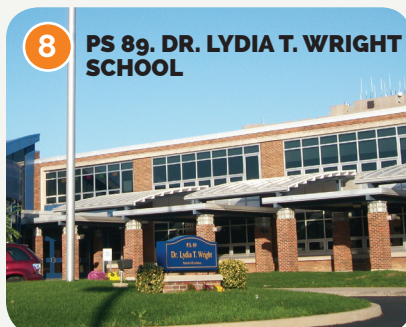
6 BURGARD HIGH SCHOOL



7 PS 197. MATH SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY PREPARATORY SCHOOL



8 PS 89. DR. LYDIA T. WRIGHT SCHOOL



9 TRI-MAIN CENTER SCHOOL



10 NORTHLAND WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTER



11 TRUE BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH



12 PS 61. EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



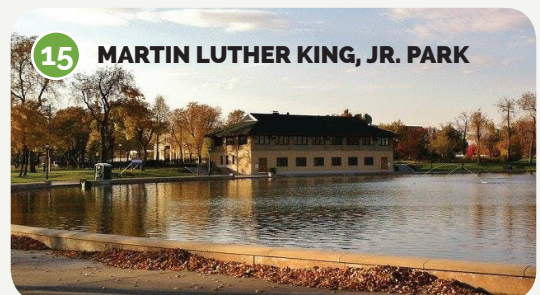
13 BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE



14 KEYBANK



15 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PARK



Planning Context for Kensington Heights Study Area

Over the last several decades, planning efforts at the neighborhood, citywide, and regional levels shaped development priorities in the areas surrounding the Kensington Heights site. A look at what these plans say about key priorities in the neighborhoods is an important starting point for understanding community assets, needs, and visions for the site and surrounding neighborhoods.

The research team reviewed 21 planning documents created between 1971-2019 that have something to say about the areas surrounding the Kensington Heights site. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to capture research, recommendations, and stakeholder input on a range of issues representing different sectors, stakeholder interests, and levels of government.

Key Planning Themes

Advance Food and Health Equity

Reducing health disparities and achieving equitable health outcomes for marginalized populations is a key focus of many community-led initiatives. Recent efforts include increasing access to affordable, healthy foods through farmers' markets and healthy corner stores and promoting health screenings through neighborhood businesses. Planning efforts also aim to create built environments that enhance community health through public amenities, remediated sites, and improved air quality.

Revitalize Commercial Corridors

Commercial corridors such as Fillmore, Kensington, East Delavan, and Grider are underutilized or a shadow of their former selves, with vacant storefronts and a limited range of goods and services. Coordinated efforts by local business owners, community-based organizations, and government agencies seek to revitalize commercial corridors and spur economic growth by upgrading the physical environment, supporting existing businesses, attracting new stores, and improving the reputation of the community as a place to shop.

Preserve and Expand Affordable Housing Options

Many plans seek to create healthy, safe, and affordable housing in the neighborhoods surrounding the Kensington Heights site. Plans at the neighborhood level describe the community character as one of long-term residents who take pride in the neighborhood and engage with one another. Many plans identified the need to develop policies and programs that allow anyone who wants to live in the community to do so, especially current residents, and discourage displacement of viable small businesses that serve community needs.

Foster Inclusive Economic Growth

With the presence of a regional medical center and recent investments in advanced industries, the area is poised for resurgence as a major employment center. Additional investments seek to strengthen public infrastructure, further attracting private development to the area, creating employment and training opportunities for local residents, and spurring revitalization of surrounding neighborhoods. Plans and assessments also seek to remove barriers residents and businesses face in accessing economic opportunities.

Strengthen the Public Realm

Maintenance and improvements to public infrastructure and public spaces such as roads, transit stops, sidewalks, high-speed internet, and parks can increase access to opportunity and improve quality of life for residents. Another priority is to remediate and redevelop publicly owned vacant land in the area. By strengthening the public realm, new developments can promote broader mobility and connectivity, healthy and safe communities, and community gathering.

Uplift Cultural and Historical Significance

Given the residential makeup and historical character of the neighborhoods surrounding the Kensington Heights site, various neighborhood-level plans suggest the need to uplift African American history and culture through creative placemaking. Using a combination of aesthetic makeovers and cultural landmarks, investments in arts and culture could transform physical spaces, secure cultural assets, build greater social cohesion, and promote economic vibrancy of the neighborhoods.

PLANS AND ASSESSMENTS REVIEWED

Neighborhood Plans

MLK Cultural District and Cultural Corridor (2001)
 Fillmore Avenue Commercial Redevelopment Plan (2003)
 Masten District Neighborhood Plan (2004)
 East Delavan Planning Community Neighborhood Plan (2006)
 Delavan-Grider Community Health Assessment (2012)
 Northland Neighborhood Strategy (2016)
 East Side Corridors Economic Development Fund (2019)

City Plans

Buffalo Master Plan (1971)
 Buffalo City Plan (1977)
 Queen City in the 21st Century Comprehensive Plan (2006)
 Greater Buffalo United Ministries Community Health Needs Assessment (2014)
 City of Buffalo Green Code Land Use Plan (2016)
 The Racial Equity Dividend: Buffalo's Great Opportunity (2016)
 Advancing Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Buffalo (2017)
 Rain Check 2.0: City of Buffalo Green Infrastructure Plan (2019)

Regional Plans

Erie County Initiatives for a Smart Economy (2013)
 The Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan (2013)
 Erie County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2016)
 Erie County Community Health Assessment (2017)
 Buffalo Billion II: Buffalo Niagara's Strategic Plan for Prosperity (2017)
 Moving Forward 2050 Transit-Oriented Development Plan (2018)

Neighborhood Context

Neighborhood environmental factors—from social interactions with neighbors, to the physical environment, to local economic opportunities, to safe and affordable housing, to services such as local grocery stores where people can buy nutritious food—shape the quality of life in communities.

This section presents data on neighborhood demographics, land use patterns, economic trends, housing stock, food access, health outcomes, and more. Combined with the themes taken from past and ongoing planning work, information on existing conditions in the Kensington Heights study area can help guide decisions, investments, and future development priorities in the neighborhoods surrounding the Kensington Heights site.

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Resident Characteristics

Who lives in the neighborhood, and how is it changing?

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Neighborhood Connectivity

How are neighborhoods connected to one another and to the region's opportunities?

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Jobs and Workforce

What does the neighborhood economy and workforce look like?

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Housing and Neighborhoods

What does housing look like for residents in the neighborhood?

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Food Access and Community Health

Is there access to healthy food and other factors for community health?

Resident Characteristics

Who lives in the neighborhood, and how is it changing?

Across Buffalo and Erie County, demographic changes and economic transitions are transforming people and place. The Kensington Heights site and the neighborhoods that surround it are no stranger to change. The Kensington Heights study area was 97% White in 1960, but became 80% Black by the 1980s. While the overall population declined for decades, in recent years it began to stabilize and grow more diverse. However, economic insecurity is pervasive among residents and people of color are disproportionately affected.

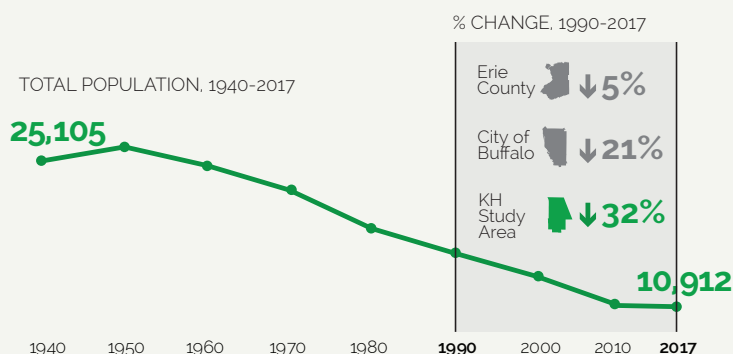
Residents in Kensington Heights Study Area

Population	10,912
Households	4,810
Children Under 18	2,860
Older Adults Age 65+	1,789

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

The overall population declined for decades, but stabilized in recent years.

The Kensington Heights study area is home to about 11,000 residents. The population steadily declined since the 1950s, mirroring trends for the city and county. However, the area lost a greater proportion of its residents in the last several decades relative to the city and county. In recent years, population loss started to stabilize.

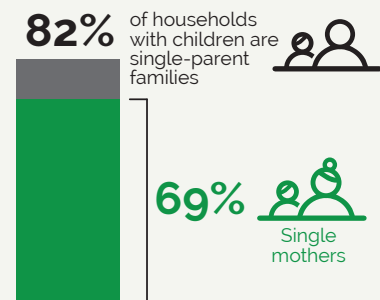


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2010 Census; 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

The majority of children live in single-parent families.

Families (in comparison to people living alone or with unrelated individuals) make up 57% of households in the study area. The majority of children under age 18 live in single-parent families, and most of these families are headed by a woman.

HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE, 2017

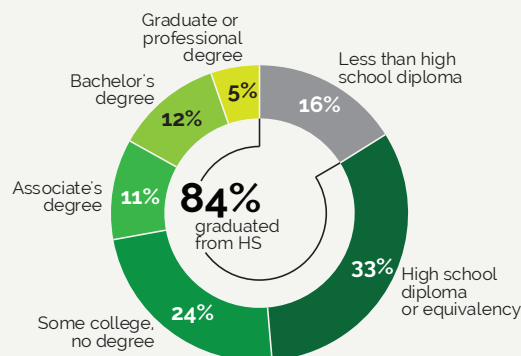


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Half of adults completed education beyond high school.

In 2017, 84% of adults age 25 years and over in the area graduated from high school. Half of adults completed some education beyond high school, and one in five earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Educational attainment is comparable to the city.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION (AGE 25+), 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

The population is aging.

Long-term trends indicate the population is aging—the proportion of residents age 65 and over is increasing, while the share of residents under age 25 is decreasing.

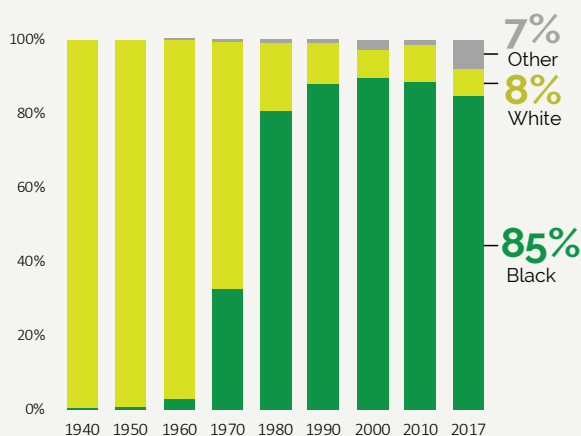
	AGE COMPOSITION, 2017	% CHANGE BY AGE, 2010-2017
Under 18	26%	-7%
18 to 24	10%	-4%
25 to 44	25%	16%
45 to 64	23%	-14%
65+	16%	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

The neighborhood is predominantly Black, but diversity is increasing.

Through the 1960s, the neighborhood was almost exclusively White. This began to change in the 1970s, and by 1980, the population was majority Black—85% in the most recent estimate. Since 2010, the neighborhood became more diverse, as the number of White and Asian residents increased.

RACIAL COMPOSITION, 1940-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2010 Census; 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Three in five children live in poverty.

POVERTY RATE BY AGE, 2017

	KH Study Area	City of Buffalo	Erie County
65+	18%	17%	9%
18-64	37%	28%	14%
Under 18	61%	47%	23%
Overall	40%	31%	15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Poverty rates in the Kensington Heights study area are generally high for all residents. In 2017, 40% of residents were living below the federal poverty line—including 61% of children under age 18.

Household incomes are significantly lower compared to the city and county.

The median household income in the Kensington Heights study area is significantly lower than that for the city of Buffalo, and less than half that for Erie County overall.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Neighborhood Connectivity

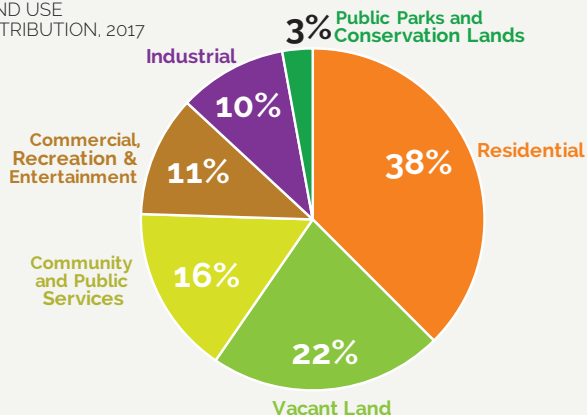
How are neighborhoods connected to one another and to the region's opportunities?

Communities of opportunity allow residents to live healthy and productive lives in their own neighborhoods, connect to jobs and services throughout the city and beyond, and interact with their neighbors in parks and open spaces. The historical development of the neighborhoods surrounding Kensington Heights as a manufacturing center along the New York Central Belt Line railroad resulted in a mixed-use community marked by the integration of residential blocks with extensive industrial sites and transportation infrastructure. Today, many of these structures are vacant or underutilized and pose challenges for neighborhood safety and public health.

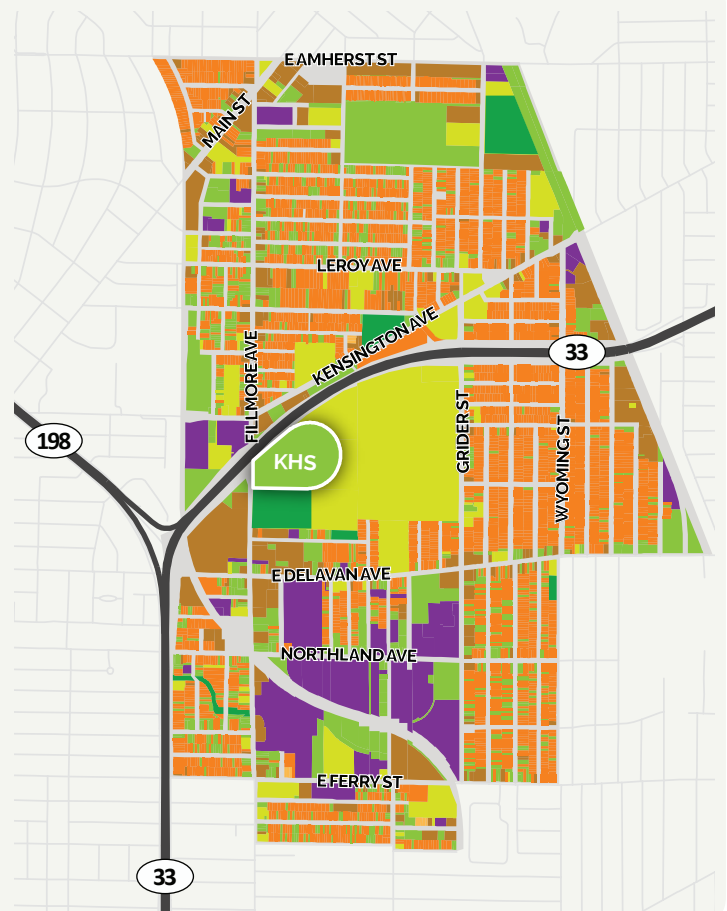
The neighborhood integrates residential blocks with a diverse mix of land uses.

Aside from the ECMC campus and the industrial sites around the Northland Workforce Training Center, much of the neighborhood is devoted to residential and commercial uses. Vacant land can be found in both residential and commercial areas of the neighborhood and makes up more than one-fifth of the overall neighborhood. Only 3% of the neighborhood land is designated as parks and open spaces.

LAND USE
DISTRIBUTION, 2017

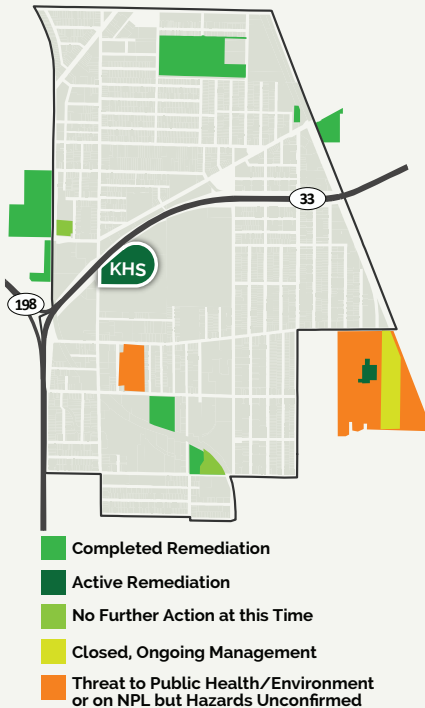


Source: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, 2017.



Several brownfield sites in the neighborhood have been cleaned up, but others remain.

The Kensington Heights study area contains or is near several environmental remediation sites. While some of the large sites in the neighborhood completed remediation, other sites are currently listed as hazardous waste sites on the National Priorities List (NPL).

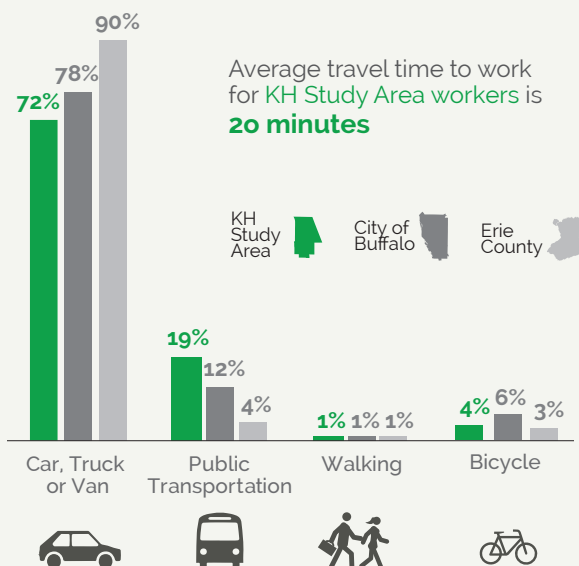


Source: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Remediation Site Boundaries, 2019.

Workers commute by car less and take transit more compared to the city and county.

The vast majority of employed residents drive alone to work. But workers in the Kensington Heights study area are more likely to utilize public transportation compared to workers across the city and county.

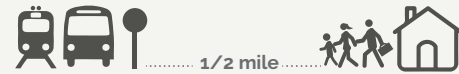
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK, 2017



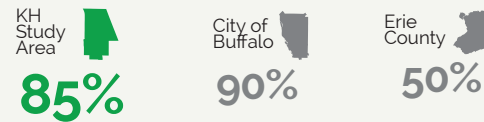
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Most households live within walking distance of public transit.

Public transit can help connect residents to opportunities throughout the city and region. 85% of households in the neighborhood live within walking distance of public transportation.



% of households that live within walking distance to public transportation



Source: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County (2017), transit stops from Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (March, 2019), address points from NYS GIS Program Office (2017), and streets from the NYS Department of Transportation (2017).

2 out of 5 households do not own a vehicle.



HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT A CAR, 2017

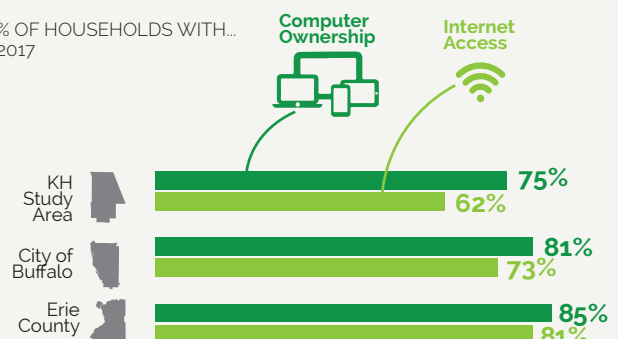


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Most residents live in households with computer access, but many lack internet.

Three out of four households in the study area own a computer, including a desktop or laptop, smartphone, tablet or other type of device. However, only 62% of households have internet service.

% OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH...



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Jobs and Workforce

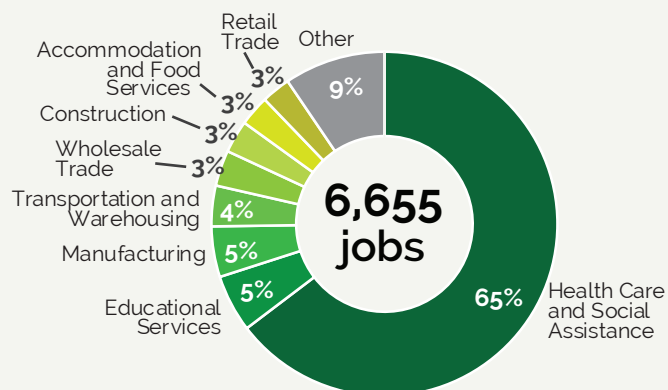
What do the neighborhood economy and workforce look like?

Manufacturing was once the core of the neighborhood economy. While much smaller today, it still makes a vital contribution to neighborhood jobs and infrastructure. Today, the area is a center for health care, largely driven by the presence of ECMC, the area's largest employer. Outside of the health campus, most neighborhood businesses are located along commercial corridors. Employed residents work across a range of industry sectors, but are largely concentrated in service occupations. Unemployment is relatively high, especially among Black workers in the neighborhood. At every level of education, workers in the neighborhood are more likely to be unemployed or outside of the labor force compared to their counterparts across the city.

Health care represents more than two-thirds of area jobs.

Once dominated by manufacturing, today health care is the largest area employer. The high concentration of health care jobs overshadows the presence of notable job concentrations in a range of other employment categories.

INDUSTRY COMPOSITION, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2017. Figures were adjusted to include employment counts at ECMC, which were suppressed from the data set.

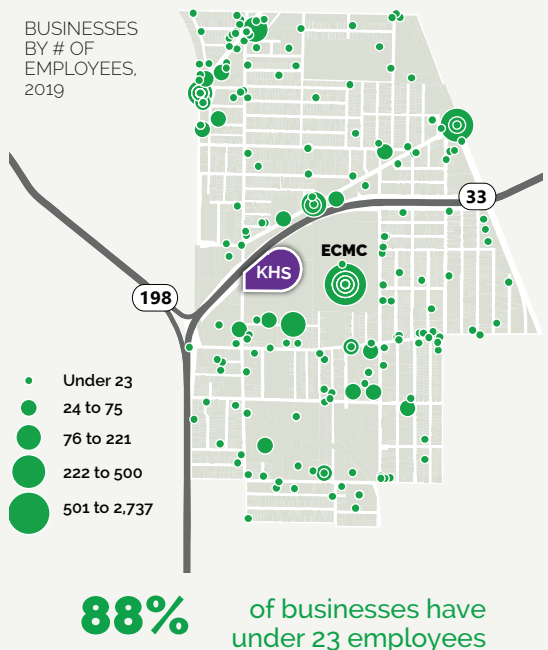
Economy in Kensington Heights Study Area

Jobs	6,655
Workers	3,356
Businesses	345

Source: Jobs and Workers: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015; Businesses: ReferenceUSA, U.S. Businesses Database, 2019.

Most businesses are very small.

The majority of businesses in the study area are small, with fewer than 23 employees. Outside of ECMC, some of the largest employers in the area are clustered around Main Street, along Kensington Avenue, and in the Delavan-Grider neighborhood.



Source: ReferenceUSA, U.S. Businesses Database, 2019.

Most employed residents work outside the neighborhood.

Nearly all employed residents of the Kensington Heights study area commute to workplaces located outside the neighborhood. Many residents commute to work in other areas of the city, particularly downtown Buffalo. Other top destinations for workers in the neighborhood include employment centers in Amherst and Cheektowaga.



**3,356 RESIDENTS
IN THE LABOR FORCE**

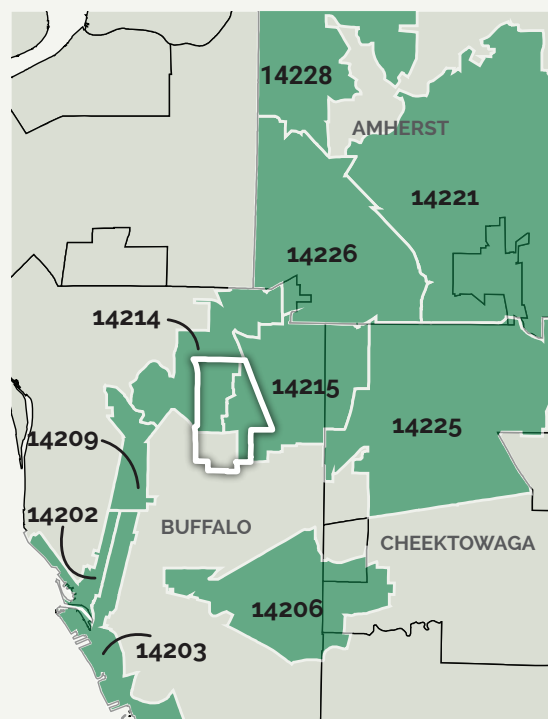
97% working outside the
KH Study Area

3% working in the
KH Study Area

TOP 10 ZIP CODES
WHERE KH STUDY
AREA WORKERS
COMMUTE, 2015

#1	14202	280
#2	14221	218
#3	14225	200
#4	14203	175
#5	14209	129
#6	14214	129
#7	14226	112
#8	14215	104
#9	14228	104
#10	14206	99

of Commuters
from KH Study
Area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015.

Unemployment rates are nearly double that of the city and county.

Despite numerous employers in and around the neighborhood, rates of unemployment are almost twice as high compared to the city and county, and highest among Black residents in the study area (18%).

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2017

16%

KH
Study Area

9%

City of
Buffalo

6%

Erie County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Labor force participation rates are lower than the city.

OVERALL LABOR
FORCE PARTICIPATION
RATE OF WORKING-
AGE POPULATION
(25-64), 2017

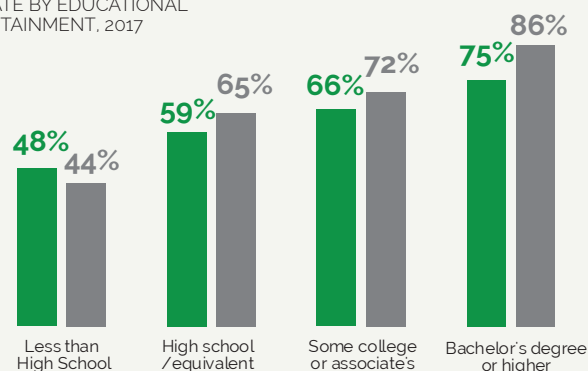
KH
Study
Area

63%

City of
Buffalo

70%

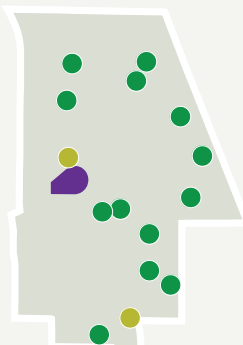
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
RATE BY EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

There is a high concentration of home day cares.

The neighborhood includes **13 family day care homes** (serving 6-12 children) and only **2 child care centers**, with a combined total capacity of nearly 400 child care slots. To put this in perspective, there is 1 child care slot in the neighborhood for every 2 children under age 5 living in the neighborhood.



Source: UBRI analysis of data from NYS Office of Children and Family Services, 2019.

While rates of labor force participation increase with educational attainment, residents in the Kensington Heights study area are still more likely to be unemployed or outside of the labor force compared to their counterparts across the city.

Housing and Neighborhoods

What does housing look like for residents in the neighborhood?

Quality, affordable housing anchors communities. The communities where people live influence many aspects of their lives: where they work and how they get there, the quality of schools that their children attend, their health and safety, even their longevity. Housing is also the single largest expense for households, and many spend more than a third of their income on housing. High housing costs squeeze household budgets leaving few resources for other expenses.

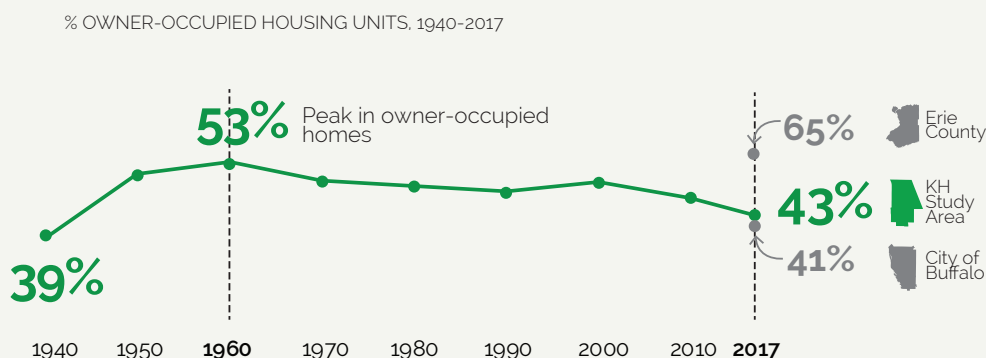
Housing in Kensington Heights Study Area

Housing Units	5,827
Occupied Housing Units	4,810
Median Year Structure Built	1940

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Homeownership rates have been falling since the 1960s, and the majority of households are now renters.

For most of its history, the neighborhood was evenly divided between renters and homeowners. Homeownership rates peaked in 1960, with 53% of occupied housing units being owner-occupied. Today, 43% of housing units are owner-occupied. Two-thirds of occupied housing units were built before 1940.

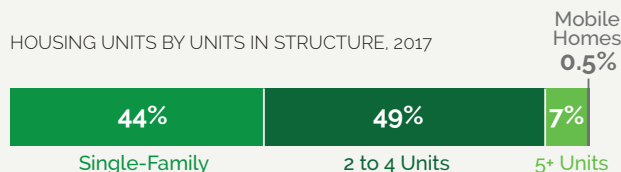


1 in 7 homes is vacant.



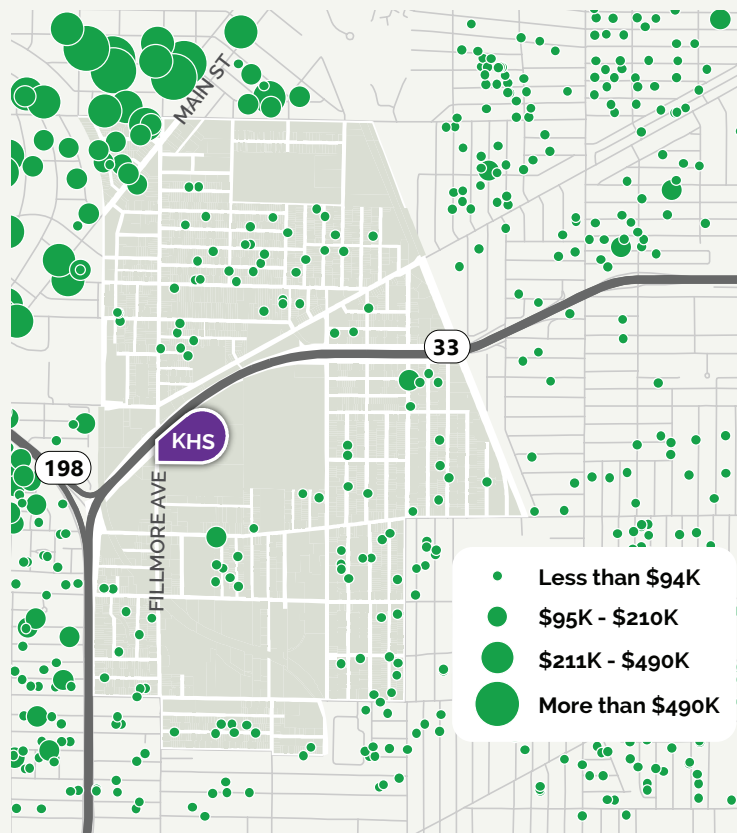
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Aggregated U.S. Postal Service Administrative Data on Address Vacancies, 2018.

Over half of housing units are multifamily.



There have been many home sales in recent years. Homes tend to sell for higher prices west of Main and Fillmore.

Over the past year, single-family homes within the Kensington Heights neighborhood sold for almost 60% less (per square foot) than multi-family homes. Homes on the west side of Main Street also sold for much more than homes in the rest of the Kensington Heights study area.

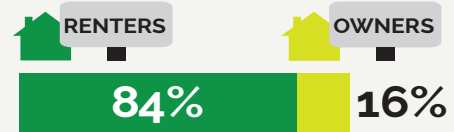


Source: Redfin Data Center, Recent Home Sales, 2018-2019.

Renters are more burdened by housing costs than homeowners.

Over 2,000 households in Kensington Heights (42% of all households) are cost burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on housing. The majority of cost-burdened households are renters.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE, 2017

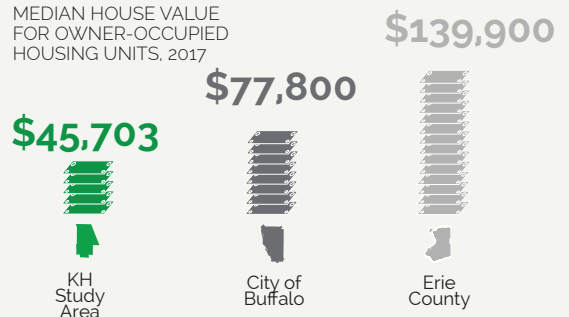


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Median home values are significantly lower relative to the city and county.

The median value of owner-occupied homes in Kensington Heights, \$45,703, is significantly lower than the median value of owner-occupied homes in the city of Buffalo and Erie County.

MEDIAN HOUSE VALUE FOR OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS, 2017

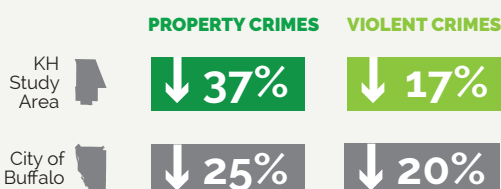


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

PROPERTY CRIMES: Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft

VIOLENT CRIMES: Assault, Murder, Rape, Robbery

% CHANGE IN CRIME RATES, 2012-2017



Source: City of Buffalo Police Department, Crime Incidents, 2019; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Crime rates declined significantly in recent years.

Property crime declined significantly in the Kensington Heights study area over the last five years. Using City of Buffalo data, the property crime rate fell 37% between 2012 and 2017.

Like the property crime rate, the violent crime rate in the study area steadily declined in recent years. The violent crime rate fell 17% between 2012 and 2017, at roughly the same pace as the city overall.

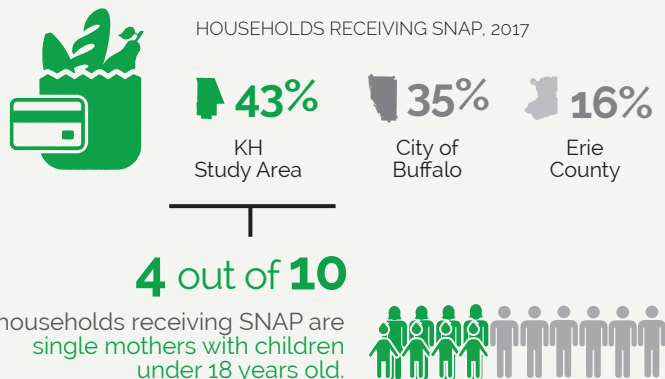
Food Access and Community Health

Is there access to healthy food and other factors for community health?

Healthy food retailers—grocery stores, farmers' markets, cooperatives, mobile markets, and other vendors of fresh, affordable, nutritious food—are critical components of healthy, thriving communities. They are also economic engines in neighborhoods—supplying local jobs and creating foot traffic for nearby businesses. Healthy neighborhoods provide residents with access to parks, clean air, safe streets, and health care and social services.

Many residents experience food insecurity, especially in single-mother households.

More than two in five households in the Kensington Heights study area receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, formerly known as food stamps. Two out of five households receiving SNAP are female-headed families with children.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

There are no supermarkets or grocery stores in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood food environment is characterized by a small network of convenience stores, fast-food restaurants, and dollar (or variety) stores. Accessing healthy food may be a challenge for many residents given the lack of supermarkets, combined with low rates of vehicle ownership and the time required to reach different food destinations by walking.



Source: Infogroup, ReferenceUSA, U.S. Businesses Database, 2017; Grassroots Gardens of Western New York, Garden Inventory, 2019.

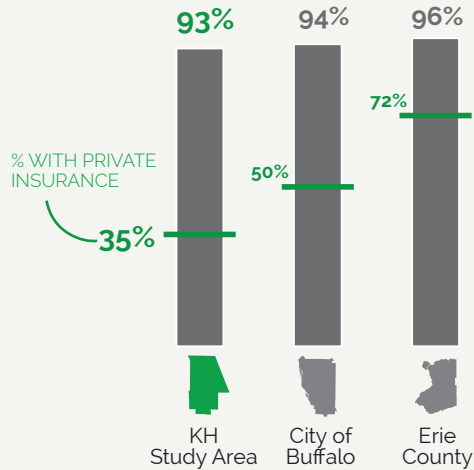
TIME TO WALK TO...



Source: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County (2017), address points from NYS GIS Program Office (2017), food retail location data from InfoGroup (2018), and streets from the NYS Department of Transportation (2017).

Most residents have health insurance, but relatively few have coverage through an employer or private company.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Rates of health insurance coverage are high and comparable to the city and county. But while most residents across the city and county have private insurance, most residents in the Kensington Heights study area rely exclusively on public health coverage.

Residents suffer from chronic conditions at higher rates compared to the city.

Residents in Kensington Heights have higher rates of obesity, asthma, diabetes, and other chronic conditions compared to the city. Healthy behaviors such as physical activity and regular checkups are important to manage these conditions. Nearly 83% of adults in the Kensington Heights study area had a checkup in the last year—a greater share than across the city overall.

	KH Study Area	City of Buffalo
HEALTH OUTCOMES IN ADULTS (AGE 18+), 2018		
Arthritis	34%	29%
Asthma	15%	13%
Diabetes	20%	13%
High cholesterol	76%	73%
High blood pressure	49%	36%
HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND USE OF PREVENTIVE SERVICES IN ADULTS (AGE 18+), 2018		
No leisure physical activity	39%	32%
Obesity	45%	36%
Visited doctor for routine checkup in last year	83%	76%
Visited dentist or dental clinic in last year	51%	58%
Had cholesterol screening	76%	73%

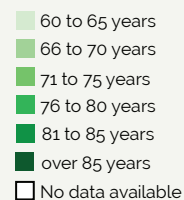
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health, 500 Cities Project Data, 2018.

The average life expectancy of residents is lower compared to the city.

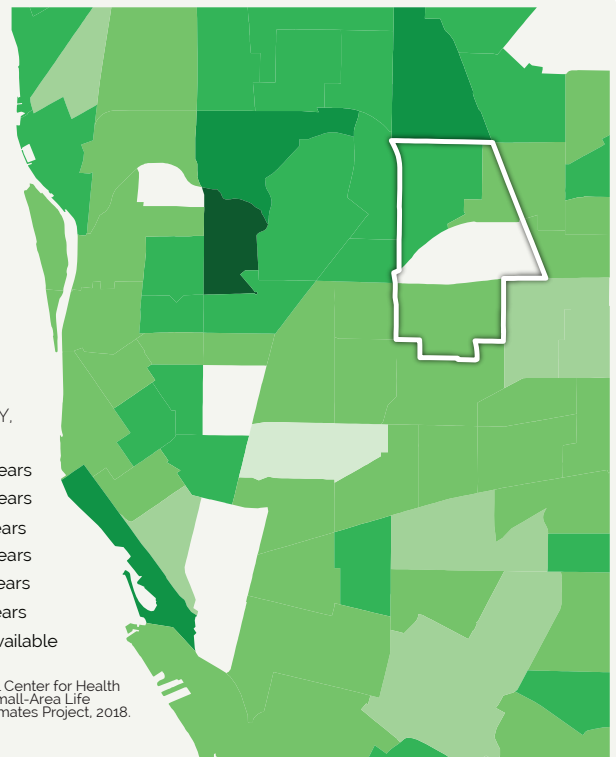
The average life expectancy of residents in the neighborhood is 74, slightly lower than the citywide average of 78. The social determinants of health—factors outside the health care system that impact health such as education, employment, and housing—play a fundamental role in health outcomes and shape health-promoting environments.



LIFE EXPECTANCY, 2018



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project, 2018.



Building a Community Vision Together

What is the community vision for the future of the Kensington Heights site?

Through a series of engagement events and activities during the months of June, July and August 2019, more than 620 community members were engaged to offer insights on the site's future. This section describes that process, highlights of what people said, and a synthesis of key takeaways for considering the future of the site.

Overview

What was the Building Together engagement process? A look at where the engagement team went, who participated, how they provided input, and the central questions asked across all activities.

Overview of Community Engagement

pg. 30

What the Community Said

Across all engagement activities, people were asked to weigh in on the same three basic questions: What makes the area around Kensington Heights special? What are the area's needs? And what would you like to see on the site?

For each of these questions, patterns of the most frequent responses are highlighted and described.

What makes the Kensington Heights area **special**?

pg. 32

What does the Kensington Heights area **need**?

pg. 34

What does the community **want to see** on the Kensington Heights Site?

pg. 36

Guiding Principles

Looking across all comments, a series of guiding principles emerge that spotlight community priorities for what the site can become to positively impact the lives of the surrounding community and its residents.

What are the community priorities to guide future decisions for the site?

pg. 38

Overview of Community Engagement

Building a Community Vision Together



Where in the community?

East Side events and gatherings spots

ECMC Clinic Waiting Room (x2)
ECMC Community Market (x3)
EPIC Delavan Grider Car Seat Safety Event
ECMC Food Truck Friday (x3)
UNYTS Blood Drive
Juneteenth Festival
Northland National Night Out
Leroy National Night Out
Mandela's Market Celebration
Gerard Place Food Express Line

Community meetings

Buffalo Coalition of Block Clubs Meeting
ECMC Care Management Staff Focus Group
Gerard Place Community Dinner
Hamlin Park Taxpayers Association Meeting
Highland Park Association of Block Clubs Meeting
Northland Beltline Taxpayers Association Meeting
Restore Our Community Coalition (ROCC) Steering Committee Meeting
Say Yes Coordinators Meeting

Youth Activities

Math Science and Technology Preparatory School High School Student Focus Group
New Jerusalem Church Vacation Bible School Youth Focus Group

Other Activities

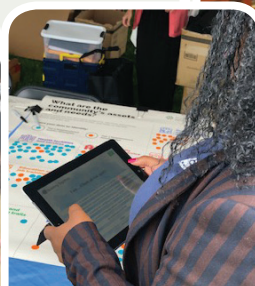
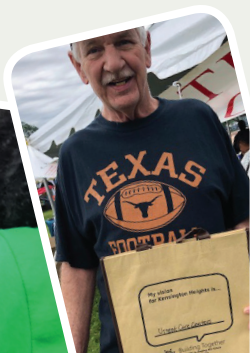
Door-to-door canvassing with local businesses
Great Lakes Health Radio Show, Power 96.5 WUFO

Who participated?

620+ Community members



Tools for engagement



3 Big questions for the community

What makes the area around Kensington Heights special?

What does the area around Kensington Heights need?

What does the community want to see on the Kensington Heights Site?

What the Community Said

What makes the area near Kensington Heights special?

In surveys, focus group sessions, and at community events, the engagement team recorded 260 written comments that answer the question **what makes the community near Kensington Heights special and unique**. Though each comment and perspective was unique, 85% of all comments generally fell into one of six discrete categories or themes. These themes represent perceived community assets and can serve as building blocks for considering the future of the Kensington Heights site.



Strengths in the Kensington Heights Neighborhoods

Sense of community

Many community members highlighted "the people" as the greatest resource of neighborhoods near ECMC and the Kensington Heights site. Comments talked about the importance of long-time residents and homeowners who are not only friendly, but supportive neighbors who look out for each other. Comments cited strong block clubs, numerous churches, and neighborhood institutions as all contributing to the sense of community pride and commitment to improving the area.

Community institutions

Community members cited a range of community institutions that help to shape and support the neighborhood. People cited large anchor institutions like ECMC and the Northland Workforce Training Center, but also cited smaller institutions like the wealth of churches, businesses, block clubs, public schools, and the Delavan Grider Community Center.

Health resources

Given the presence of ECMC, many community members pointed to convenient access to healthcare as a neighborhood strength. Even when describing chronic health challenges in the surrounding area, many community members pointed to health facilities in the area as contributing to community quality of life and accessible job opportunities.

History, heritage and community character

Neighborhood character and community heritage was the second most popular theme that emerged from respondents' views of the best quality of the neighborhoods surrounding ECMC. Neighborhood character mainly refers to the things that make the neighborhood's physical environment unique - historic buildings, style of the homes, presence of parks and old trees, and overall neighborhood walkability. Tied to character were a wide range of comments focusing on the community's heritage. Comments referenced the culture of the people, the history of the location, and the black community as being strengths surrounding Kensington Heights.

Accessible and centrally located

For some, the physical location of the neighborhoods surrounding ECMC were highlighted as the community's greatest strength. Not only is the community home to major workforce development opportunities and health services, but the multitude of bus routes and the neighborhood's proximity to the 33 expressway are seen as positive attributes that allow the community to conveniently connect to the rest of the city and region as well as other neighborhoods.

Momentum

Taking into consideration the location of the neighborhood and recent investments, both residents and workers near the neighborhood alluded to the neighborhood being on an upward trajectory or building momentum. Between job opportunities and neighborhood revitalization efforts, respondents believe the neighborhoods surrounding ECMC have potential for growth and referred to the community as "up and coming."



What the Community Said

What does the community around Kensington Heights need?

Through the survey and an interactive tabling exercise hosted at local events, more than 400 community members offered their perspective on what the community around Kensington Heights needs the most. Provided with a **list of 10 community neighborhood amenities** identified by the Community Advisory Committee, community members were asked to **pick what they see as the top three neighborhood needs** for the area. Participants who wanted to identify a need that was not listed in the ten choices provided, were encouraged to select 'Other' and write-in their perspective.

“Food markets should be a priority”

“Kids in the area need things to do that can help them in life”

“We need more senior housing that is affordable”

“The neighborhood is underserved and has lots of needs”

What the community sees as the top needs in the Kensington Heights area

% of respondents who identified each community amenity as a "TOP 3" neighborhood need



Grocery stores and fresh food options are by far the greatest identified need in the neighborhood. After that, it is less clear about what people identify as needs. Neighborhood residents were more likely to point to service oriented items, like youth services, education and job training, senior services, affordable housing, and health care. People who do not live near the site but may regularly visit the area for work, the hospital, or community commitments, were more likely to highlight recreation, green space, and walking/biking trails as major needs.



What the Community Said

What does the community **want to see** at the Kensington Heights site?

Across all engagements, 795 comments or ideas were shared for the future of Kensington Heights site. Some comments were one word requests, like "housing." Others were lengthy and described a range of items to incorporate into the site. Overall, comments provide a framework of the types of uses people would like to see at the former Kensington Heights site, as well as what they hope future investments of the site will do for the community and its residents.

Each comment was analyzed to understand what particular use or type of development participating community members want to see on the site. Though the 11 ideas highlighted do not represent every single comment made, they account for over 95% of all ideas shared during the Building Together engagement process.

Ranking of preferred future uses of the site

#1 Grocery/Food Store

A grocery or food store was the most frequently suggested idea by both nearby residents and employees who regularly commute into the area for work. Members of neighborhood groups often pointed to a lack of options to buy food (especially healthy options) in the neighborhood. These comments were echoed by survey respondents from people at ECMC or nearby businesses, who suggested a grocery store would be an attractive amenity for people who are on the ECMC medical campus for work or for medical services.

#2 Housing

Housing was the second most popular suggestion for the site, with people often specifying affordable housing, various forms of senior housing, or housing in a mixed use setting. Comments also mentioned housing for in-need populations (like the homeless), single mothers, or housing catering to the patient base at the hospital, such as transitional housing for patients not yet ready to return home, short-term stay options like the Ronald McDonald House, or assisted living.

#3 Recreation Facilities

Numerous comments suggested recreation facilities be incorporated into the future developments at Kensington Heights. People cited all sorts of ideas that fit within this category including: "wellness center," "community gym," "fitness center," "recreation for young people," "playgrounds," "program for kids and seniors," "indoor sports space," and more. Many pointed to the health benefits that such a facility could provide to both residents and patients, employees, and visitors of ECMC.

#4 Retail/ Restaurants

Retail establishments and restaurants were a common theme expressed by many. Some suggested larger stores, such as Walmart or Target, while others envisioned smaller stores or specifically locally-owned stores and those that reflect the demographics of the neighborhood. Generally, people felt retail and restaurants would meet the needs of residents and people at the ECMC campus. For restaurants, many specified their desire to see healthy options.

#5 Community Services

A wide range of comments suggested services that help people better themselves socially, economically, and physically. These comments often suggested things like "tutoring for young people," "spaces for seniors," "meeting spaces," "financial literacy," "life skill training," "health tips for kids," etc. Many of these comments specifically mentioned services that can positively impact the lives of young people, seniors, and families.

#6 Greenspace

Though a handful of people envisioned the site as a park, many more suggested dedicating some of the site to park like features such as "greenspace," "bike and walking paths," "community gardens," "flower gardens." Often these comments were included as complimentary features that would coexist with other desired developments, such as a grocery store or housing.

#7 Medical Facilities

Several dozen comments mentioned the opportunity to build off the site's proximity to ECMC as a way to expand healthcare facilities for part of the site. People offered ideas such as urgent care, family doctors and specialists (like chiropractors), pediatric care, psychiatric and mental health facilities, or a nursing school. As was the case with other comments, many suggesting medical facilities described their ideas with a lens of improving neighborhood health.

#8 Economic and Workforce Development Facilities

A range of comments highlight uses that support equitable economic development goals. Some were general in nature, like "more jobs," "job training," or "economic development." Others were more specific like "incubator space for minority owned businesses." Some also pointed to opportunities that capitalize off the site's proximity to ECMC, while also creating jobs for nearby residents, or even those re-entering the workforce after being released from incarceration.

#9 Arts and Entertainment

Approximately two dozen comments mentioned arts, cultural, or entertainment uses. These comments often mentioned the opportunity to pay homage to black historical and cultural figures through the site. Ideas included art studios or gallery space, small museums, and public spaces that allow for art and entertainment to flourish. A handful of ideas also suggested entertainment geared toward young people such as movie theaters, bowling allies, skating rinks, or petting zoos.

#10 Parking

Approximately a dozen ECMC employees who took the survey highlighted the need for more parking for ECMC employees or visitors to the health campus. Parking requests were often suggested as part of a broader vision for the site that may include other mix of uses. At least one neighborhood resident mentioned parking as an important way to prevent parking pressures associated with ECMC and future development impacting neighborhood residents.

#11 Daycare

Various types of childcare offerings, including daycares and afterschool programming, were suggested as a potential use at the site. Both residents and people who come to the area for work suggested a child care site as something that would meet neighborhood needs while serving the thousands of ECMC employees.

Guiding Principles

What are the community priorities to guide the site's future?

Expand economic opportunity for nearby residents.

Many comments suggested that regardless of the specific re-use of the site, it should be focused on expanding economic opportunity for residents in surrounding neighborhoods.

Increase food access.

A common theme across all engagement is the need for increasing access to healthy food options for the community. Whether it is calling for restaurants, grocery stores, community gardens, or health food stores, increased food access is the biggest priority expressed by the community.

Promote community health and wellness.

Creating a healthy community was a core value expressed in many of the comments. Some tied this emphasis to the site's adjacency to a health campus, while others tied it to the need for healthy options (food, fitness, preventative care, etc.) in the residential areas around the site.

Beautify and green the site and surrounding area.

A wide range of comments suggested the re-use of Kensington Heights should include elements that beautify and green the site with park like features, gardens, and greenspace.

Create a mixed use environment.

Many comments suggested a site that involved a mix of uses. Most suggested residential, like affordable and senior housing, complimented by other uses like a grocery store, retail, recreational amenities, or community services.



Offer productive opportunities for young people.

A great deal of all comments involve opportunities that enhance the lives of youth, whether it involve recreation amenities, youth services, childcare, educational supports, or child-oriented health programs.

Support those most in need.

A focus for some comments involved taking this opportunity to support populations with specific needs, such as the homeless, those with mental health illness, and individuals with various forms of disabilities.

Embrace local culture and heritage.

Local heritage and neighborhood culture are seen as a major asset for the area. Comments suggesting the site's future embrace this heritage – through art, architecture, and the design of public spaces – were made throughout the process.

Enhance neighborhood safety.

Creating a safe haven was a highlighted priority in some comments describing aspirations for the site. Some were general, like "Stop the Violence," while others were specific and mentioned things like lighting or an increased police presence.

DATA SOURCES AND NOTES

About the Site

History of Kensington Heights Site (pg. 10)

The historical profile is based on information from various sources, including: historical maps, newspapers, reports, and other documents obtained from the special collections at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library and the digital collections of The New York Public Library.

1891 – Stone quarries: 1891 map showing the area at Kensington and Fillmore as stone quarries. Image Credit: G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1891. Retrieved from The New York Public Library Digital Collections at <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/a6542abc-e85b-7677-e040-e00a180611e2>.

See also: New York State Museum, *Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the Regents 1895 Vol. 2* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1898); Shane E. Stephenson, *Buffalo's East Side Industry* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2016).

1940s – NYS Veterans emergency housing project: 1950 aerial view of NYS veterans' emergency housing project at the corner of Kensington and Fillmore. Image Credit: *Buffalo Courier-Express*, December 31, 1950. Retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

See also: "\$7,000,000 in Housing, Using State Funds, Starts Here Soon," *Buffalo Evening News*, April 7, 1948, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections; "Kensington-Fillmore Vet Housing Scene of Blaze: Mother Carries Out Two Children," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, January 6, 1949, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections; "State Denies Vet Housing Units Unsafe," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, March 21, 1949, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

1954 – Public housing projects in Buffalo: 1954 map of all public housing projects in Buffalo. Black dots represent planned projects, including Kensington Heights (#15). Image Credit: *Buffalo Evening News*, September 30, 1954. Retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

See also: "Public Housing in Buffalo Marks 20 Years of Progress Under Local Authority," *Buffalo Evening News*, October 30, 1954, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections; "Construction in Fall Scheduled On Three Public Housing Units," *Buffalo Evening News*, June 17, 1954, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

1958 – Displaced elderly residents filled Kensington Heights: 1958 photograph of kitchen area of efficiency apartment for a single occupant in Kensington Heights. Image Credit: Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, 1958 Newsletter. Retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

See also: "Displaced by Expressway: Elderly Filling New Kensington Housing Project," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 5, 1958, retrieved from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Special Collections.

2012 – Building demolition at Kensington Heights: 2012 photograph of the demolition of the first building in the Kensington Heights housing complex. Image Credit: David Torke, fixBuffalo. Retrieved from <http://fixbuffalo.blogspot.com/>.

Today – Kensington Heights Site: 2019 photograph of the Kensington Heights site, fenced off and vacant at the corner of Fillmore and Kensington. Image Credit: Kristopher Walton.

Assets near Kensington Heights Site (pg. 12)

The assets map includes Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis from 2017 parcel data. The image sources for the presented are detailed below:

- 1. PS 84. Health Care Center for Children at ECMC.** Digital image, Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Lydia_T._Wright_School_of_Excellence; accessed July 2019)
- 2. Glenny Park.** Digital image, September 2017, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com: accessed July 2019>)
- 3. MT. Olive Baptist Church.** Digital image, September 2014, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com: accessed July 2019>)
- 4. Delavan-Grider Community Center.** Digital image, October 2012, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com: accessed July 2019>)
- 5. ECMC Hospital.** Digital image, UB Department of Family Medicine, (<http://medicine.buffalo.edu/departments/family-medicine/education/residency/tracks/urban-ecmc.html>; Accessed September 2019)
- 6. Burgard High School.** Digital image, September 2010, Wikimedia Commons (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burgard006.JPG>; accessed October 2019)

7. PS 197. Math Schience Technology Preparatory School. Digital Image, Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo_Public_Schools; accessed July 2019)

8. PS 89. Dr. Lydia T. Wright School. Digital image, Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo_Public_Schools; accessed July 2019)

9. Tri-Main Center. Digital image, September 2014, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com>; accessed July 2019)

10. Northland Workforce Training Center. Digital image, Nitaweb (<https://nitaweb.com/image/shopping-center-in-buffalo-new-york/80/lululemon-shop-opens-at-galleria-mall--the-buffalo-news>; accessed July 2019)

11. True Bethel Baptist Church. Digital image, September 2018, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com>; accessed July 2019)

12. PS 61. Early Childhood Center. Digital image, September 2014, "Street View," GoogleMaps (<http://www.googlemaps.com>; accessed July 2019)

13. Buffalo Museum of Science. Digital Image, Wikipedia, December 2009 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo_Museum_of_Science; accessed July 2019)

14. KeyBank. Digital Image, Twittwe (<https://twitter.com/freyelectric/media>; accessed August 2019)

15. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. Digital image, Archinect People (<https://archinect.com/people/project/92927538/renovation-and-restoration-of-the-casino-mlk-park-buffalo-ny/149934366>; accessed July 2019)

Neighborhood Context

Many of the data points for 2017 are based on a pooled sample of five years of annual survey data (2013 through 2017) from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Because a single year of the ACS data only covers about one percent of the U.S. population, five years of ACS data were pooled together to improve statistical reliability and to achieve a sample size that is comparable to that available in previous years (1940-2010) which are based on the "long form" of the decennial census.

Resident Characteristics (pg. 16)

Population: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2010 Decennial Census; 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Households and Families: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Age: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census; 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Educational Attainment: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed for population 25 years and over.

Race: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2010 Decennial Census; 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Poverty: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. A person's poverty status is based on the person's total family income in the last 12 months with the poverty threshold appropriate for that person's family size and composition. If the total income of that person's family is less than the threshold appropriate for that family, then the person is considered "below the poverty level," together with every member of their family.

Income: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Dollar values are in 2017 dollars.

Neighborhood Connectivity (pg. 18)

Land Use: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, 2017. Land use type is based on the New York State property class codes assigned to each parcel for tax assessment purposes. Note that several parcels were re-assigned to different property class codes to reflect current conditions.

Remediation Sites: UBRI analysis of dataset of remediation site boundaries from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Remediation, March 2019. Dataset includes mapped site borders for environmental remediation sites managed by NYS DEC, including: State Superfund, Environmental Restoration, Brownfield Cleanup and Voluntary Cleanup programs.

Transit Access: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, 2017; transit stops from Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (March 2019); address points from New York State GIS Program Office (2017), and streets from the New York State Department of Transportation (2017). ArcGIS Network Analyst is used to estimate all areas that are within a quarter-mile walk along roadways from every transit stop in the NFTA system. Address points located within residential parcels are selected. Those within a quarter mile of any transit stop are counted and divided by the total number of address points in residential parcels to estimate the percentage of households within a convenient walking distance to a transit stop.

Commuting Modes and Travel Time to Work: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Means of transportation to work is for workers 16 years and over. Travel time to work is for workers 16 years and over.

Vehicle Ownership: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Computer and Internet Access: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Types of computer ownership include desktop or laptop, smartphone, tablet or other portable wireless computer, and some other type of computer. Types of internet access include any combination of a cellular data plan, broadband or high-speed internet service, satellite internet service, dial-up internet service, and any other service that provides access to the internet.

Jobs and Workforce (pg. 20)

Industry Mix: UBRI analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015. Industry sectors are defined by 2-digit NAICS codes: Health Care and Social Assistance (62); Educational Services (61); Manufacturing (31-33); Transportation and Warehousing (48-49); Wholesale Trade (42); Construction (23); Accommodation and Food Services (72); Retail Trade (44-45). Geographic analysis of the data revealed that employment counts affiliated with ECMC were misclassified as professional and technical services and significantly undercounted. To provide a more accurate depiction of employment in the area, 820 professional service jobs in the block group encompassing ECMC were replaced with 3,858 Health Care and Social Assistance jobs, the estimated number of jobs at ECMC or affiliated medical employers.

Businesses: UBRI analysis of data from Infogroup, ReferenceUSA U.S. Businesses Database, March 2019.

Commuting Patterns/Workplace Destinations: UBRI analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015.

Unemployment: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Unemployment rate is for civilian population 16 years and over. The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the civilian labor force (not the total population).

Labor Force Participation: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Labor force participation rate is for civilian population 25 to 64 years. The labor force participation rate refers to the proportion of the working-age population 25 to 64 years that is currently employed or seeking employment.

Child Care Providers: UBRI analysis of data from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, July 2019. This analysis looks at the supply of child care for children from birth to age 5 who are not yet enrolled in elementary school (where relevant, the number of school-age children was deducted from the overall capacity of the child care location). UBRI collected and analyzed 2019 data on the location and maximum capacity of all licensed or registered child care providers in the study area. This includes child care centers; family child care providers; and Head Start and Early Head Start providers. This study excludes family, friend, and neighbor care providers because states typically do not keep records of license-exempt providers. UBRI gathered and copied publicly available data from the

website of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The methodology in this analysis is largely based on the methods employed in the Center for American Progress's 2018 report, "Mapping America's Child Care Deserts." This report defines "child care deserts" as places (census tracts) wherein a ratio of more than three young children for every licensed child care slot. This definition is derived from U.S. Census Bureau findings showing that approximately one-third of young children are regularly in the care of someone who is not a relative. When the number of child care slots is insufficient to reach at least one-third of young children under age 5, the likelihood that parents face difficulty finding child care increases.

Housing and Neighborhoods (pg. 22)

Owner-Occupied Housing Units: U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2010 Decennial Census; 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Residential Vacancy: UBRI analysis of data from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Aggregated U.S. Postal Service Administrative Data on Address Vacancies, 2018.

Units in Structure: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Home Sales: UBRI analysis of data from Redfin Data Center, Recent Home Sales, March 2018-March 2019.

Housing Cost Burdens: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Housing cost burdens are for occupied housing units. Occupied housing units are considered housing cost-burdened if monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income are 30 percent or more. For renter-occupied housing units, monthly housing costs include contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer). For owner-occupied housing units, monthly housing costs include payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; and utilities.

Home Values: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. Dollar values are in 2017 values.

Crime Rates: UBRI analysis of data from the City of Buffalo Police Department accessed from Socrata, 2019 and U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Crime rates were calculated using the total number of crimes divided by the

population and multiplying by 1,000. In this data point, crimes are defined as any reported incident, regardless of the legal outcome of the investigation.

Food Access and Community Health (pg. 24)

Food Insecurity: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average.

Food Environment: UBRI analysis of food retail data from Infogroup, ReferenceUSA U.S. Businesses Database, 2017 and community garden data from Grassroots Gardens of Western New York, Garden Inventory, 2019. Food destination data was classified according to the standard four-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system and included the following categories: restaurant (5812; 5813); dollar store (5331); convenience store (5411: 03); and food market (531104; 5411: 01, 04).

Walk Time to Food Destinations: UBRI analysis of parcel data from Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (2017), address points from New York State GIS Program Office (2017), food retail locations from InfoGroup, ReferenceUSA, U.S. Businesses Database (2018), and streets from the New York State Department of Transportation (2017). Address points located within residential parcels are selected to represent the home location of each household in the neighborhood. ArcGIS Network Analyst is used to estimate the minimum walk time along roadways from every residential address to the closest location of each type of food retail destination. A walk speed of 2.7 miles per hour is assumed.

Health Insurance: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Data for 2017 represent a 2013-2017 average. The Census Bureau broadly classifies health insurance coverage as private health insurance or public coverage. Private health insurance is a plan provided through an employer or union, a plan purchased by an individual from a private company, or TRICARE or other military health care. Public health coverage includes the federal programs Medicare, Medicaid, and VA Health Care; the Children's Health Insurance Program; and individual state health plans. The types of health insurance are not mutually exclusive; people may be covered by more than one at the same time.

Health Outcomes and Behaviors: UBRI analysis of 500 Cities Project data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health.

Life Expectancy: UBRI analysis of data from the National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Small-Area Life Estimates Project, 2018. Data for 2018 represent a 2010-2015 average.

Community Visions

Overview of Community Engagement (p. 30)

Who Participated: At each community engagement activity, the team sought to collect participants' identified connection to the site. The primary method of collecting this information was via the survey or through a tabling exercise where respondents were asked to identify as: (a) a resident of a neighborhood near ECMC; (b) a member of a community organization near ECMC (church, non-profit group); (c) A worker in a neighborhood near ECMC; (d) A current or formal patient/visitor at ECMC; (e) An employee of ECMC; or (f) Other. For focus group sessions when a survey or tabling poster was not used, facilitators asked participants affiliation with the site and took note of the response.

The chart on page 30 provides a summary of participants' connection to the site. Because some people may have multiple connections to the site (i.e. they live near the site but also work at ECMC or a nearby employer), the following assumptions were made when tabulating this graphic: when individuals identified themselves as *a resident of a neighborhood near ECMC*, and another option, they were categorized as "Residents who live in a nearby neighborhood"; respondents who identified as *a worker in a neighborhood near ECMC* and identified with another connection (except for being a resident of a nearby neighborhood), they were categorized as "Employees who commute to the area;" when individuals identified as *a member of a community organization near ECMC*, but did not identify as a resident of a neighborhood near ECMC or work in the area, they were categorized as "Stakeholders from organizations in the area;" individuals who identified as *a current or former patient of ECMC*, but did not select any other identified connection, were categorized as "Current/former ECMC patients." Anyone who selected *other*, or left the question blank were categorized as "Other."

What makes the area near Kensington Heights special? (p. 32)

In the survey, respondents were asked to write-in their response to the question *What do you think are the best qualities of the neighborhoods around ECMC?* During each focus group session, this question was posed as part of facilitated discussion and written transcriptions were produced of how participants responded to that question. Between the survey and comments made during focus group sessions, a total of 260 written comments were generated that answer this question.

Each of the 260 comments were categorized by themes that emerged during the analysis. Six of these themes are described in detail on page 33 and accounted for 222 of the 260 comments offered. They include: *Sense of community* (68 comments); *History, heritage and community character* (48 comments); *Community institutions* (28 comments); *Accessibility and central location* (28 comments); *Health resources* (28 comments); and *momentum* (22 comments).

What does the community around Kensington Heights need? (p. 34)

In the survey and via tabling exercises, participants were provided with ten neighborhood amenities identified by the Community Advisory Committee (*grocery stores and fresh food options; health facilities and services; community centers/service providers; recreation and green space; senior housing/senior services; education and job training; retail and small businesses; biking and walking trails; youth services and affordable, diverse housing options*). Community members were asked to pick their top 3 areas of need for the neighborhoods surrounding Kensington Heights. They were also offered the opportunity to select "Other" and write-in a need not listed.

Via the survey or at tabling exercises, 406 people weighed in with their top three areas of need. The graphic on page 35 illustrates the percentage of respondents that included each of the provided neighborhood needs in their top 3. Additionally, this analysis was done just for people who identify as residents of a nearby neighborhood vs. those who did not identify as a resident of a nearby neighborhood. The results of that analysis are as follows: *grocery stores and fresh food options* was selected as a top 3 need by 69% of all respondents, 78% of residents, and 67% of non-residents; *health facilities and services* was selected as a top 3 need by 10% of all respondents, 14% of residents, and 7% of non-residents; *community centers/service providers* was selected as a top 3 need by 23% of all respondents, 24% of residents, and 22% of non-residents; *recreation and green space* was selected as a top 3 need by 33% of all respondents, 31% of residents, and 36% of non-residents; *senior housing/senior services* was selected as a top 3 need by 25% of all respondents, 33% of residents, and 19% of non-residents; *education and job training* was selected as a top 3 need by 29% of all respondents, 30% of residents, and 27% of non-residents; *retail and small businesses* was selected as a top 3 need by 27% of all respondents, 28% of residents, and 27% of non-residents; *biking and walking trails* was selected as a top 3 need by 17% of all respondents, 14% of residents, and 19% of non-residents; *youth services* was selected as a top 3 need by 33% of all respondents, 37% of residents, and 22% of non-residents.

of non-residents; and affordable, diverse housing options was selected as a top 3 need by 28% of all respondents, 28% of residents, and 22% of non-residents.

What does the community want to see at the Kensington Heights site? (p. 36)

At each engagement opportunity, participants were asked to write a response to “What would you like to see built on the Kensington Heights site?” This was an open-ended required question on the survey, was asked as part of every focus group, and was a central activity at each tabling event, where participants wrote their idea on a reusable grocery bag. In total, 605 comments were collected. However, since many of the suggestions included multiple uses (i.e. a grocery store, with senior housing), a total of 835 specific suggested ideas were collected. Each idea was categorized into themes that emerged during the analysis. Of those 835 comments, 795 fit into one of eleven general re-use categories. The results by magnitude are as follows: *grocery/food store* (154 comments); *housing* (152 comments); *recreation facilities* (109 comments); *retail/restaurants* (92 comments); *community services* (83 comments); *greenspace* (70 comments); *medical facilities* (37 comments); *job training and economic development* (40 comments); *art and entertainment* (23 comments); *parking* (18 comments); and *recreation facilities* (17 comments).

What are the community priorities to guide the site’s future? (p. 36)

Across all comments produced during community engagement, qualitative analysis was performed to identify underlying themes about what they hoped the site would do to positively impact the site in the community. Each comment was codified by 9 themes that emerged out of the analysis: neighborhood safety; food access; beautification; health and wellness; mixed use environment; youth-oriented development; support for those with special needs; culture and heritage; and economic opportunity. Descriptions of these themes are provided on pages 38 and 39.



Building Together



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